PREMIERE ISSUE *(tē · kün) To mend, repair and transform the world.

TIKKUN

SYMPOSIUM:
"What Kind of Tikkun Does the World Need?"
Gar Alperovitz, Norman Birnbaum, Gordon Fellman, Laura Geller, Danny Landes, Marshall Meyer, Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, T. Drorah Setel, Marie Syrkin, Michael Walzer

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What's Wrong With the Right?

Anne Roiphe
Politics and Anger

Robert Alter
Sodom As Nexus

Harry Boyte and Sara Evans
The Sources of Democratic Change

Arthur Waskow
A New Anti-Nuclear Strategy

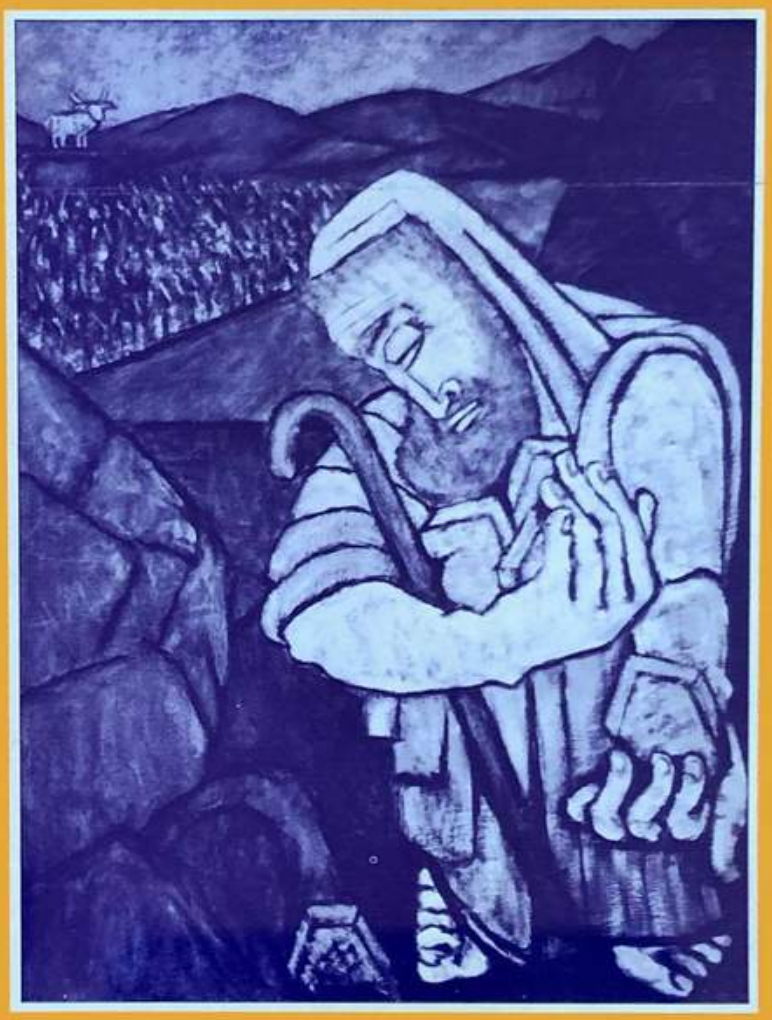
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The Secularization of the University

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Travels of the Last Benjamin of Tudela

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Emotions in the Talmud

REVIEWS
John Felstiner, Stephen Mitchell, Alan Wolfe and Eli Zaretsky



WHY TIKKUN?

Michael Lerner, editor

The notion that the world could and should be very different has deep roots within Judaism and the Jewish tradition. But in the late 1980's it is an idea that seems strangely out of fashion. . .

(see page 3)

Modern thinking has often lost its way by separating the problem of truth from the problem of living, cognition from the total human situation... Reflection alone will not procure self-understanding. The human situation is disclosed in the thick of living.

By whatever we do, by every act we carry out, we either advance or obstruct the drama of redemption; we either reduce or enhance the power of evil.

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

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PUBLISHER'S PAGE

It is with great excitement that we present this Premier Issue of TIKKUN. We think you will find in it a rich array of articles about mending and transforming the world.

Michael Lerner's editorial gives an overview of the perspective guiding TIKKUN and is the first of his discussions on a Jewish approach to American politics. Following the editorial is a series of short, provocative statements, written by several of our National Editorial Board members on what kinds of changes need to be made in the world. Their responses reflect the divergent priorities within our community.

TIKKUN's range of political concern is filled out further by Christopher Lasch's article about the flagrant inadequacy of neoconservative thought that currently dominates the intellectual arena. Yet he also clearly suggests changes that need to be made in the thought of the left. Harry Boyte and Sara Evans make a striking challenge to liberal and radical traditions by insisting that many institutions dismissed by the left as "mainstream" or "conservative" are in fact precisely the places where democratic consciousness is best developed. Arthur Waskow suggests a new strategic focus for the anti-nuclear movement —and in the spirit of TIKKUN, places emphasis on the centrality of religious and ethical vision. Hal Jacobs' piece on Vietnam takes us back to the question of the morality of the Vietnam war, an important thing to reconsider in this time of possible outbreaks of other "Vietnams."

The kind of healing and transformation we seek is needed as much in the Jewish world as in secular politics. The problems are suggested by several authors in the Symposium, and they are addressed by Arthur Green's interesting discussion about the conflict between Judaism and Jewish studies and by Eli Zaretsky's probing analysis of Charles Silverman's *A Certain People* and the film *Shoah*. Yet whenever we talk about change in the Jewish world, we do so with some understanding that criticism must be tempered with compassion for all that Jews have gone through—most significantly, the Holocaust. Anne Roiphe's sensitive discussion of the politics of anger generated by the Holocaust acknowledges the pain and then leads us to ask how we can do politics without denying our legitimate anger.

There is in much of TIKKUN a sense of immediacy, derived from our commitment to healing and transformation. Yet it is our belief that any move towards healing and transformation will be more finely tuned when it is informed with a rich understanding of history, culture, psychology, philosophy and religion. So we are delighted to enter the on-going dialogue on these questions through Robert Alter's piece on the story of Sodom, Jacob Neusner's piece on the emotions in the Talmud, Stephen Mitchell's discussion of the Book of Job, and John Felstiner's review of a contemporary poet. A moving poem by Yehuda Amichai, "Travels of the Last Benjamin of Tuleda," is presented here for the first time in English. Alan Wolfe's fascinating discussion about whether or not sociology is dangerous takes us into the politics of an important social science. Finally, Susan Sobel-Feldman's short story balances the weightiness of the articles with a bit of light-hearted reminiscing.

We have indulged ourselves by making the first issue of TIKKUN longer than subsequent issues will be. During our first year we will come out quarterly, but we change to bi-monthly publication in our second year.

We want TIKKUN to be reader-focused. We welcome your criticisms and suggestions about the magazine and invite you to respond to the articles in this and future issues.

Our gratitude goes to the many people around the country who have given us encouragement and support to begin TIKKUN. We are particularly thankful for the help of the National Editorial Board members. But we are also thankful to the hundreds of people who have written, called and in other ways showed their enthusiasm and commitment to this important project. We will do our best to live up to your trust.



Nan Fink
Publisher

The Founding Editorial Statement

TIKKUN: To Mend, Repair and Transform the World

MICHAEL LERNER

The notion that the world could and should be different than it is has deep roots within Judaism. But in the late 1980's it is an idea that seems strangely out of fashion—and those who still dare to hope often view themselves as isolated, if not irrelevant. In the context of Western societies too often intoxicated with their own material and technological success, in which the ethos of personal fulfillment has the status of "common sense," those who talk of fundamental transformation seem to be dreaming.

"Dreaming" has a different meaning for people rooted in Jewish history and culture. It is a phrase that was used to dismiss the Prophets and their message, and it was a phrase Jews applied to themselves when they first hoped for the return to Zion. For Jews who built a culture and religion out of the experience of slavery, it has always seemed possible to imagine that the dominant regimes of the moment might pass—that the seemingly invincible power of Persia, Greece, and Rome, would ultimately give way. To those who passed through a holocaust unique in history and then experienced a rebirth in the land of their ancestors after 1500 years of Exile, the current triumph of materialist values can seem unimpressive, unlikely to define the future of human history. As King Solomon's ring proclaimed, and as Jewish history has taught us, "This too will pass."

It is this refusal to accept the world as given, articulated in the Prophetic call for transformation, that has fueled the radical underpinnings of Jewish life. The great idol-smashers of the last 150 years, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, articulated a fundamentally Jewish sensibility—at the very moment that they developed a universalistic perspective. The universalistic dream of a transformation and healing of the world, the belief that peace and justice are not meant for heaven but are this-worldly necessities that must be fought for, *is* the particularistic cultural and religious tradition of the Jews.

All the more unfortunate that in recent decades conservative voices in the Jewish world, claiming to speak for all Jews, have publicly celebrated contemporary America as though it were the embodiment of the messianic age. *Commentary* Magazine, originally a voice of liberals and progressive thinking in the first decades after the Second World War, has become a leading voice of neo-conservative thought. With boring predictability, Norman Podhoretz leads the monthly charge of Jewish intellectuals clamoring for respectability by endorsing every move the Reagan Administration can dream up. Meanwhile, forgetting the deep anti-Semitic meaning of President Reagan's trip to Bitburg and his statement that the SS were victims in the same sense as those they murdered, national leaders of Jewish organizations allow themselves to be used by the President to support foreign policy goals opposed by most Americans. While most Jews have not followed these leaders to the Right, there is a public perception that Jews today are less committed to the Prophetic vision and less willing to do the kind of creative and radical thinking that had previously been the hallmark of Jewish culture.

TIKKUN MAGAZINE hopes to provide a voice for those who still dare to hope, for those who are not embarrassed to dream, for those Jews and non-Jews alike who are still moved by the radical spirit of the Prophets and who insist on keeping their message alive.

We hope that voice will reflect important new developments in the Jewish world, especially the emergence of a strong articulation of the needs and interests of Jewish women. The insights of Jewish feminism, combined with its contribution to the development of rituals, poetry, stories, and a new way of understanding Jewish history and theology, are an important part of the community of hope.

In addition, it is not only Jews, much less religious Jews, who are able to hear the Prophetic voice and respond to it. While the editors of this magazine will write editorials using the language and frame of reference of religiously committed Jews, we are publishing articles from non-Jews and from secular Jews as well. We expect to learn from them. So, although TIKKUN speaks from the

standpoint of the Jewish tradition, we hope to create an intellectual arena within which the liberal and progressive camps in American society can discuss the most important intellectual, cultural, and political questions.

Keeping the Prophetic tradition alive, as our spiritual mentor Abraham Joshua Heschel pointed out in his book *The Prophets*, means immersion in the details of daily life. The Greek philosophers spent much of their time talking about abstract concepts of goodness, virtue and justice. Eastern spirituality led its practitioners to the mountains, forests and caves for meditation, and directed their energies away from the daily life of ordinary people, often dismissed as "illusion." But to the Prophets, God's message directed attention to daily life, to the marketplace, to the family and to the state. To the Prophets, each time the powerless were oppressed was a fresh outrage, each time religion was used as a cover for economic immorality was a new affront to God.

The commitment to change the world, to demand justice and love in a world that has given up on these ideals, is not some pious sentiment clouding one's eyes to a hard-nosed look at reality. On the contrary, the rejection of moral neutrality, the committed stance on behalf of the oppressed, makes possible a deeper understanding of the dynamics of culture and society. It is precisely in the process of acting to transform the world that the world reveals its deeper structures and meanings. Yet we shall insist that any social transformation requires a systematic and deep intellectual inquiry —we may get inspiration from the Torah, but we shall also engage in critical thinking that requires intellectual integrity, innovation and sustained analysis. TIKKUN hopes to provide a forum for that kind of intellectual work.

The Liberal and Radical Traditions in Politics

Jewish religion is irrevocably committed to the side of the oppressed. Jewish history began with a slave rebellion and the success of that rebellion shapes our historical memory and our religious sensibility. Shabat, our weekly celebration of the creation of the universe, is also a celebration of our liberation from Egypt. The message of our historical experience is a revolutionary message: the way the world *is* can be radically different—we know, because we were slaves who thought that we would always be in slavery, and then overcame our bondage.

There are many religions that celebrate the grandeur and splendor of the physical universe. Yet the message of the Sabbath is unique: that we not only must stand in radical amazement and awe in the face of creation, but also must remember that the world needs to be and *can* be transformed, that history is not meaningless but aimed at liberation, that the struggle of one people to move beyond slavery (retold each week in the Torah readings) is still a drama with universal meaning through which we can understand contemporary reality.

No wonder, then, that Jews are deeply involved in politics, and strongly committed to both the radical and liberal traditions. Yet our historical memory and religious ideals also give us an independence from these traditions, and a vantage point from which to assess some of their limitations.

". . . the rejection of moral neutrality makes possible a deeper understanding of the dynamics of culture and society."

Jews have a deep commitment to the liberal ideals of democracy, human rights, and fundamental liberties. The insistence on respect for alternative views, the openness that the framers of Rabbinic Judaism encouraged in their endless debate and consideration of a wide range of possibilities, the spirit of dialectical inquiry, the notion that there will always be three opinions on any given matter where there are two Jews discussing it—all these express a Jewish approach that encourages tolerance and diversity. Through much of Jewish history, these attitudes guided the debate amongst the religious elite, although much of Jewish society did not partake in this pluralism and was closed, rigid and illiberal in its actual practices. In the past several hundred years, as Jews grappled with the modern world, we have become strong partisans of liberal values.

Liberal societies have historically been better for Jews—they have protected us from the imposition of the majority's religious and cultural traditions. Yet the commitment to these values has moved past a self-interested expediency—Jews have come to feel a deep commitment to democratic ideals, correctly seeing in them a modern expression of the fundamental dignity of human beings that the Torah originally proclaimed. We have a deep distaste for unjustified abridgements of individual

freedoms. For that reason we have come to distrust dictators and oppressive regimes whether they justified themselves with right-wing or left-wing rhetoric. We would be critical of Soviet totalitarianism even if it did not specifically oppress Jews. Similarly we reject the kind of apologia for unfreedom that is common among Jews of the right—the attempt to distinguish between "authoritarian" policies of right-wing dictators and the supposedly worse "totalitarian" policies of dictators identified with Communism. This same commitment to liberal ideals makes us committed adversaries of Kahana, Sharon, and other anti-democratic forces in Israel,[1] and foes also of the anti-democratic forces on the American Right (including those who have newly become supporters of Israel now that they see a potential for using Israel to advance American military interest.)

But we are not uncritically committed to liberalism. When liberal values are used as a cover for materialism and individualism, we say clearly that these are *not* our values. We stand for tolerance, but not for ethical relativism which is sometimes seen as either the primary justification for or the logical consequence of a commitment to tolerance. We stand for freedom—but not for giving unlimited freedom to corporations so they can exploit the people and resources of the planet. Nor do we necessarily take at face value the claim of Western societies to be the living embodiments of the liberal ideals that they so proudly proclaim. If radically alternative policies to those held by the dominant parties are systematically excluded from serious public consideration, if anti-nuclear and anti-apartheid forces must use civil disobedience to have their views even noticed (and even then, not given a serious public airing), if U.S. military interventions can be financed despite the opposition of a majority of Americans, if freedom of the press actually amounts to freedom only for those with vast economic resources to buy media time or space, if economic power concentrated in the hands of the few pre-shapes the options so that the range of serious political choices becomes dramatically narrowed, then we can get a different kind of unfreedom—an unfreedom that celebrates itself as the paradigm of liberal ideals.

Jews are also drawn to the radical tradition in politics. Radical politics has often adopted the idealism and commitment to justice that are central to the Jewish tradition. The articulation of the needs of the oppressed, the unwillingness to compromise with unfair distributions of power and wealth, the historical link between the Left and the underdog, have brought many Jews into the world of radical politics. The utopian demand for transformation is something we proudly identify with—it remains a central ingredient in Jewish vision.

Yet we are also very critical of the Left. The Left has almost always tried to force Jews into a false universalism—denying the particularity of our historical experience, the validity of our religious insights, the importance of our national survival. Jews have been forced to choose between a loyalty to their own people and a loyalty to universal ideals. This has been particularly striking because the Left has often glorified "national liberation struggles," seeing in other people's insistence on their own customs and traditions a potential force for liberation. Yet it has often been demeaning and destructive towards Jews and Jewish culture.[2] It is this attitude that explains the Left's ability to remain silent about oppression of Jews in the Soviet Union, just as it remains silent about the overt anti-Semitism that characterizes some of the social movements it supports.

Equally serious, the Left persists in equivocating about the bureaucratic totalitarianism of the Soviet Union and about the undemocratic tendencies within third world liberation movements. As a result, they often end up with a caricatured view of the world—Western societies the embodiment of evil, and those struggling against the West representing virtue and liberation. The Left is correct to support struggles to overthrow regimes that have been indifferent to poverty and oppression. Yet, as the Iranian revolution shows, sometimes the new

1. We are also proud of the many ways that Israel has managed to create and sustain a society with a high degree of commitment to liberal and democratic traditions, a commitment that in practice has rarely been matched by any other society equally facing military insecurity. We are deeply angered by those liberals and progressives who apply a double standard towards Israel—critiquing it for the same kinds of abridgements of civil liberties that they find "understandable" given the "context of external threat" in societies like Nicaragua or Cuba. To be committed, as we are, to a radical social transformation does not commit us to the knee-jerk anti-Israel sentiments that too frequently replace serious analysis in the progressive movements.

2. It is often Jews involved in the Left who are in the vanguard downplaying Jewish issues and excusing away anti-Semitic attitudes. Jews have become victims of "internalized oppression," taking the viewpoint of those who disdain them and making it their own in order to neutralize its content. This is not dissimilar to the women in left movements who used to put down "women's issues" as being trivial in the days before a strong women's movement emerged—the same desperate desire for acceptance from those who hold power leads those who are oppressed to deny the legitimacy of their own oppression. Just as the climate of male chauvinism called forth this response by women, so the persistence of covert anti-Semitism in the larger society and in the Left calls forth a self-denigrating response from many Jewish participants in social change movements.

society actually makes things worse. While the Right uses this line of reasoning to justify accommodations with existing oppression—we use it to indicate that our real commitment is to human emancipation.

Our point is that the structure of contemporary political discourse forces us to choose between oppressive state socialisms and American liberalism. But we are reaching for a more complex account of the world.

We live in a moment of unique historical urgency. One lesson of the Holocaust is this: Yes, human beings can be so evil and so inattentive as to allow the systematic destruction of millions of people. Mass murder, far from being unthinkable, is the reality of the 20th century. Just as a lesson of the Exodus is that liberation is possible, a lesson of the Holocaust is that so, too, is mass destruction. The psychic numbing that allows us to live in a society systematically preparing for nuclear war, a society now moving to bring warfare to outer space, must be overcome. The horror of Auschwitz must not be allowed to repeat itself on a global scale. There is no possibility for transformation if we allow a small group of madmen to lead us towards nuclear war.

"We would be critical of Soviet totalitarianism even it it didn't specifically oppress Jews."

If we were just to prevent nuclear war, it would not be enough. There are struggles taking place in the world today that also require our immediate concern and involvement. Most important to us are the struggles against apartheid in South Africa and for economic and political equality for Blacks in the United States; for an end to world hunger and for a reorganization of the world's resources and productive capacities so that poverty can be eliminated both in the U.S. and everywhere else; for the kind of social reorganization that promotes respect and dignity for women and the end to patriarchal oppression; for the democratization of all societies, both those dominated by Soviet-style oppression and those dominated by Western-oriented dictators; for the empowerment of working people against the ability of corporations to dictate what and how things will be produced, and against the bureaucratization and one-dimensionality of daily life that the corporate culture encourages; for the end of wars and the elimination of armaments; for the creation of peace in the Middle East, a peace that preserves the integrity and creativity of Zionist Israel, while simultaneously allowing a similar self-determination and genuine liberation for Palestinians; and for the enhancement of human creativity and freedom and understanding, accomplished through art and literature, through science and philosophy, through music and through the building of new and more authentic social relations.

And yet all this would not be enough. We see these struggles as central, and yet as only part of what life can and must be. We are instructed by Torah to create a society within which it is possible to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are instructed by Mishnah to "Seek Peace and Chase after it." But all this, is only part of what life is about. Just as we are instructed to transform the world, we are also, at the same moment, involved in appreciation, radical amazement, awe and wonder at the Creation. Tikkun olam—the healing, repairing, and transforming of the world, is not only about politics, it is also about our spiritual and emotional lives, and our relationship to God. It is the special power of the idea of the Sabbath that God commands us to celebrate both in connection with remembering the necessity for historical this-worldly political liberation (the going out from Egypt) but also in connection with celebrating what has already been accomplished, and what has already been created.

The Relevance of Judaism to Liberal Politics

The greatest weakness in liberal politics lies in its limited view of human nature. Too often progressive politics projects the image of human beings as needing nothing more than material satisfaction and the right to participate in democratic processes. The image we get of human life is one of isolated individuals holding onto rights. This picture of reality unintentionally reinforces the conception of individuals as fundamentally, perhaps ontologically, independent of each other, and the main problem in the world as interference with that independence. The healthy society is one in which people would be able to stand alone, self-sufficient, and not dependent, weak or needy. The job of social movements is to win back those rights that have been unfairly denied or frustrated by present social arrangements.

The actual practice of modern social movements reinforces this conception. The labor movement encouraged passivity and the isolation of its members from each other, as it developed a professional staff of business agents and union representatives who would win "benefits" and press Congress for legislation. The Democratic Party, faced with the rise of the Right, ran its 1984 campaign on the issue of the budget deficit, oblivious to the emotional issues that attracted people to more conservative politics. Black leaders focus their attention on demands for affirmative action. It's not that any of these kinds of concerns are wrong—rather that when they become the primary way that liberal politics presents itself they narrow the focus on politics and reinforce a distorted conception of human possibility. Our public life must be about more than individuals securing economic benefits for themselves and protecting individual freedoms.

It's only a short step to the pop psychology that articulates and seems to confirm the dominant individualism of the culture. In its right wing form, the message is "Take care of yourself at all costs," "Win through Intimidation," and "You are a fool if you haven't learned to Make Money and Get Power over Others." In its liberal form, the message is, "Autonomy and freedom from the needs of others is the best way to live," and "Set limits, keep firm boundaries, and be sure no one is ever taking advantage of you." The common message from both sides: "You are fundamentally alone, you can't really trust other people, and all relationships start with the individual and work only when the individual has worked out a way to stand strong on her/his own."

Against this view of the world stands the Biblical view, developed throughout Jewish history and incorporated into Jewish culture, folk wisdom, Halakhah [Jewish law], and philosophy. By our account, human beings are most fundamentally *in relationship*. They are part of a family and part of a people, and it is this rootedness in community that is ontologically prior and ethically fundamental. Important consequences follow from this Jewish conception:

- The healthy human being is not the one who has learned to stand alone, but the one who can acknowledge her/his need to be in deep relationship with other human beings and with the community.
- If people are alone and not involved in a rich set of relationships, this is a result of some aberration in the society and should be rectified.
- Individual families get their strength and meaning through participation in a larger community, and the community at any given moment gets its strength and meaning by its relationship to the historical chain of generations that have preceded us and that will follow.

Finally, it is in these relationships with others, and in community, that we gain access to God. Unlike the imagery of the lone individual saint or mystic who connects to God through isolated individual exploration or through a personal and lonely quest, the primary instance of Jewish revelation comes to and through a community, first the community at Sinai, and then the community of Israel seeking God through study, prayer, and social action. As Buber so eloquently taught, the primary word for Jews is not "me" but "I/Thou."

This provides us with our deepest critique of contemporary Western societies. The competitive culture, the philosophy of individualism, the economic structures that encourage war of all against all—these are unacceptable perversions of human possibility. No matter how much new technology and activity a society generates, it cannot, in the long run, be stable and satisfying. Nor can it be ethically acceptable—it contradicts our deepest understanding of what is good for human beings. The specific ways that our society rips us from connectedness with each other and from the organic cycle of life can never be acceptable to anyone rooted in the Jewish tradition. Instead, we are ethically and religiously bound to the healing, repair, and transformation of this social order (tikkun).

Ironically, it has been the Right and not the liberals and progressives who have been able to recognize and articulate this problem most effectively in the political sphere. Precisely because they talk about family, about religion and spirituality, about ethics and traditional values, the Right has been able to command the attention of large numbers of people who, on simple economic grounds, or in terms of deprivation of political and economic rights, should be more attracted to the Democrats and the Left. The irony is that although the Right is able to manipulate the language of community and family, it actually supports a social and economic order that at root shatters solidarity and fragments community and places individual pursuit of private gain as the highest value.

A serious tikkun of politics would involve liberals and progressives beginning to reclaim the family, religion, and ethical values, and framing their program in these terms. But a rhetorical switch is not sufficient—we need a serious rethinking of progressive politics and a restructuring of the liberal agenda. So TIKKUN will encourage a rethinking of issues concerning family, religion, and ethics, not as opportunists trying to jump on the Right's bandwagon, but as Jews with a rich tradition of thought and a deep set of cultural and religious practices that embody a different philosophy than that articulated in the current political arena.

Part of the tikkun we wish to accomplish is precisely to encourage a deeper understanding of human reality and of the special preciousness of human beings to God. In Jewish tradition, human beings are partners with God in finishing creation. We are created in the image of God, graced with freedom and the ability to hear and respond to God's call. We are in this abiding relationship with God: we are not alone.

But even those within the Jewish world who do not articulate these insights by using religious language are still part of a tradition that insists on the ontological primacy of human relatedness and on an on-going historical community—and this leads them to feel the conflict between their Jewishness and the cult of individualism. In this sense, no matter how grateful we are for the tolerance and freedom of liberal societies, Jews must remain essentially critical.

Why A Jewish Magazine

Jewish culture has something very important to offer to the world. The Jewish tradition has insights and rituals and a way of life that could strengthen all those interested in repairing and healing the world. This may be an idea that is hard to swallow for those who grew up within mainstream Jewish communal organizations that sometimes seemed more committed to American values and culture than to changing anything.

American society has treated Jews very well, particularly when we compare our situation here to that of Jews in other countries in the 20th century. For that reason, Jews have tried to temper their criticism of America with an appreciation for all that is unique and wonderful in American life—most importantly, the open-heartedness and tolerance of the American people. Partly for that reason, while hundreds of thousands of Jews participated as individuals in the social movements of the 1930's and 1960's, the official Jewish organizations were mostly very cautious, and the organized Jewish community often shunned association with its Jewish activists. Dominated by people whose experience of anti-Semitism left traumatic scars, the official Jewish community felt that it would be both ungrateful and potentially dangerous to be associated with any serious critique of their American hosts. So while Jewish values led a disproportionately large number of Jews to participate in social change movements, they often experienced themselves as outside the mainstream of the Jewish world, and disapproved of by it.

"For us, America is home, not host."

We speak as a different generation of Jews. For us, America is home, not host—and we do not feel outsiders to this reality, but a constituent part of it. We understand the fears of the generations that went before us, appreciate their devotion to creating safety for the Jewish people, and yet want to recreate the Jewish world and the place of Jews in America.

A tikkun in the Jewish world may also be the most important step in fighting assimilation. Many Jews are alienated from the Jewish community *not* because it is too different from America but because it is too similar. The lavish bar mitzvahs and testimonial dinners, the honoring of those rich enough to give large donations to charity without equally honoring those who give their life energies and intelligence but have no money, the special power given to men and the failure to recognize the creativity and intelligence of women, the experience of Hebrew School as embodying values that parents don't share but want their children "to be exposed to," the experience of synagogue life concerned with externals rather than spiritual growth, the mouthing of values that are not lived in personal life—all these contribute to a disillusionment with Jewish life. To many young people, it appears that the Jewish world is simply a microcosm of the larger values of American society, and not an immanent critique of it. "But if this is so, then why bother to hold onto tradition?" many of them wonder. Why repeat thoughts in Hebrew that everyone else agrees with in English? Why insist on uniqueness if we are just like everyone else? Perhaps, now that ethnicity is

"in" in the larger society, people will hold onto their Jewish identification, go to a Passover seder, attend a lecture or an aerobics class at a Jewish community center—but too often they will remain without a clue that the Jewish tradition has anything deeper to offer.

Nor would this impression, formed in childhood in the 40's, 50's and 60's, necessarily be refuted by a brief visit to the main institutions of Jewish life in the late 1980's. Even many of us who remain deeply committed to the tradition find "the official Jewish world" squaloring in a celebration of its own material success, while paying scant attention to the poverty of others and to the spiritual and moral development of its community. It is sad to see Jews celebrating "making it" as though this were the goal and destiny of Jewish history. There is, of course, nothing wrong with Jews wanting and seeking economic security in America—and we would not be a nobler group if we still lived in poverty, sometimes romanticized as part of the shtetl life in Eastern Europe. But there is everything wrong with equating Jewish life with the endeavor to become materially well-off and accepted. True, class structure was a part of the ghetto life as well, so this distortion is nothing new in Judaism. But what is different today is that American Jews do not feel that they *have* to remain connected to the Jewish world. And you can't combat assimilation unless you have an alternative—a way of life that provides values and insights and an approach to reality that speaks in the authentic voice of our tradition.

"Jews are strongly committed to both the radical and liberal traditions. Yet our historical memory and religious ideals also give us an independence from these traditions, from which to assess some of their limitations."

Ironically, what most Jews who leave the Jewish world are leaving is not authentic Judaism, but rather the watered down versions developed by generations of Jews who sought to sanitize it and make it fit into American reality. That is why the rebellion of younger Jews not only takes the form of assimilation, but also an interest in orthodoxy. Baaley teshuvah, the Jewish returnees to a religious life, often utter the same criticism of the Jewish mainstream as those articulated by Jews who feel far from their Judaism. To those who, having grown up Jewish and who do not expect to find there useful guidance for building a good life or a successful movement of social transformation, TIKKUN MAGAZINE says: "Come and learn, for within this tradition there are riches that are irreplaceable."

Yet it is equally important to emphasize that we have much to learn from non-Jews. TIKKUN is interested in publishing work by Christians, Moslems, atheists and others who broadly share the aim of reconstituting a community of people who feel empowered to act within the Prophetic Tradition and apply its insights to the modern world.

"The hostility to religion within liberal and progressive circles must be overcome."

In addressing both Jews and non-Jews we raised the following question about our approach: "If we want to make this a magazine that will be read and taken seriously by a large section of the liberal and progressive forces, aren't we defeating ourselves by seeming to be so particularistic—coming from one specific religious and ethnic tradition?" Our concern not to be marginalized led us to consider downplaying references to a Jewish religious commitment—and trying to present ourselves in the kind of secularized, anesthetized Jewish light that marks the assimilationist Judaism of our parents' generation. We rejected that route for the following reasons:

1. We think that the absence of commitment to specific traditions and a particular identity has made the liberal and progressive forces seem both impersonal and untrustworthy to many Americans. It's hard to trust people who don't speak out of their own history, their own traditions, their own familial and personal experiences.

2. The hostility to religion within liberal and progressive circles must be overcome. There are religious traditions that are repressive, but there are religious beliefs and practices that can advance the struggle for freedom, as Catholic "liberation theologians" are demonstrating in parts of South America. Anyone seriously interested in changing the world will have to learn to speak to people whose liberatory ideals flow from religious commitment. Precisely because TIKKUN will present

writers who have no interest in religion along with writers who speak from particular religious commitments it is a good place for a dialogue to begin.

3. The pressure to be "universalistic" and to reject a particularistic identity "in order to be taken seriously" is *the* major way that Jews were oppressed in the United States. In Europe and under Arab regimes, Jews were oppressed overtly: legally, economically and through physical violence. American offered a seductive deal: "Give up those elements in your identity that make you stand out and be different and we will let you fit into the society as one of the host of minority groups. Keep your religious ideas and divisions in your private life, and don't let them intrude into the public world of politics and economics."

"Human beings are fundamentally *in relationship*. They are part of a family and part of a people, and it is this rootedness in community that is ontologically prior and ethically fundamental."

What a relief that felt to a people whose physical survival was at issue in Europe! One could keep "Jewish identity" if it was done in quiet and "inoffensive" (that is, private) ways—e.g. by keeping one's Jewishness restrained to weekend synagogue attendance, involvement in the community center and social life. In experiential terms, this amounted to an intense pressure to abandon the part of one's religion that could not easily fit in (e.g. Shabat observance when it conflicted with economic survival, or dressing differently, or speaking Yiddish) and reducing one's Jewishness to a neat, unobtrusive ethnicity. For a new generation of Jews, no longer traumatized by the threat of physical survival, it is no longer clear why we should accept this offer. No one in liberal or progressive communities would think that a Martin Luther King or a Jesse Jackson has marginalized himself because his politics is derived in part from the religious experience of the Black Church, even drawing upon its symbols, songs and language. Jews have a right to be treated similarly.

4. The greatest opposition to being "out as Jews" comes not from non-Jews, but from Jews who have internalized the anti-Semitic norms of the society. The intense sensitivity to "what they will think" is a survival mechanism that every minority group must develop while attempting to survive in a somewhat hostile majority culture. We tend to internalize the external oppression and to enforce upon ourselves the norms we suspect the majority to desire. So it was no surprise to hear women "putting down" those who insisted on raising the question of the status of women, or to hear Blacks who carefully try to remove from within their behavior and psyches any vestiges of Black culture. Similarly it is no surprise to have Jews who will act uncomfortable in the presence of another Jew who is "too Jewish," and will try to reassure their friends or colleagues that they are "not that kind of a Jew." It is these Jews who will be most vicious and unfair in their criticism of Israel, and most forthcoming when it comes to reassuring their friends in the progressive movements that Jews do not need to be counted among the long lists of oppressed groups. For these Jews, TIKKUN's Jewish articles will be a source of embarrassment—and we would not be surprised if they make a special point of letting their friends know that they don't read this kind of magazine.

5. We believe that the liberal and progressive forces, non-Jewish and Jewish alike, including the Democratic party, the labor movement, the women's movement, the anti-nuclear and peace movement, the movements for equality and economic justice—all have something important to learn from Judaism and the experience of the Jewish people. Some of this was articulated in our discussion of "the relevance of Judaism to liberal politics." More of it will become clear as the magazine develops.

"Jewish religion is irrevocably committed to the side of the oppressed."

For all of these reasons, we are willing to take the risk—and create a magazine that intends to be part of the public debate in the United States, that will print articles from a wide variety of liberal and progressive perspectives, and that still sees itself as an expression of Judaism.

It is reasonable to ask that we say something about the specific worldview we hold about Jewish issues that impact on secular politics. While we don't want to summarize all future editorials in this first one, there are two important issues we do want to address.

First, we believe that the most exciting and important development in contemporary Judaism has been the emergence of a movement for women's liberation. We strongly endorse the important attempts of women to reclaim Judaism as their own, and to take a leading role in shaping the future of the Jewish community. We hope to explore the different ways that this process has evolved, including the important work done by orthodox women as well as the contributions of Jewish feminists. We have only begun to see what these changes will ultimately mean for Jewish life. Our commitment to women's liberation means much more than a simple equality—it means reclaiming the parts of women's experiences that have been lost or repressed, learning from the insights of women that have previously been privatized or dismissed, supporting the explorations of women as they develop new rituals and new ways of being Jewish and new forms of political and social action, and understanding that women's liberation is not just about women but about a transformation in what it means to be a human being.

"The most exciting and important development in contemporary Judaism has been the emergence of a movement for women's liberation."

Second, Israel. We are deeply committed to making Israel the "beginning of the flourishing of our redemption." That is, we believe that Israel has the potential to play an important messianic role in history. For that reason, we are often critical of specific government policies, and critical also of those in the religious world who mis-identify the actualities of contemporary Israel with the messianic goals that we need to strive for. It is not just Kahana or Sharon that upset us as we look at Israel, but the entire development of a militaristic mind-set that believes in physical strength rather than in moral righteousness as the key to building a Jewish state.

We are closely aligned with the worldview of the religious peace movement in Israel, articulated under the banner of Oz ve Shalom and Nitivot Shalom—an approach that is passionately committed to the survival of the Jewish state but is equally strongly committed to making Israel a society that embodies in its daily practice, including in its dealing with Palestinians, the moral imperatives of Torah. This is a hard topic for many Jews. The leading Palestinian organizations still call for the dismantling of a Jewish state and encourage acts of terrorism against Jewish civilians who are living in Israel. No amount of talk about "the frustrated hopes of the Palestinians" can ever justify wholesale war against innocent civilians—nor can it justify a worldwide terrorist crusade in which any Jew is in special danger of being murdered just because they are Jewish (totally without regard to their actual relationship to the State of Israel.) Nor are we so naive as to believe that the hostility of Israel's Arab neighbors would disappear if Israel were to propose a just solution to the Palestinian issue. Nevertheless, we are firmly committed to a transformation in the way that Israel deals with Palestinians—a transformation that must entail giving to the Palestinians the same rights of national self-determination that Jews rightly claim for themselves. How that can be accomplished will certainly be the focus of many future articles and debates within this magazine. But that it is a moral imperative flowing directly from our Torah—about this we have no doubt. It is impossible to stay true to the Jewish Tradition without working to heal, repair and transform the situation of Palestinians.

Jews are rightly suspicious of a world that singles out Israel's wrongs for special condemnation, while remaining silent in the face of greater evils perpetrated by the very states that condemn Israel. It is not unusual to hear attacks on Israel's trade with South Africa, for example, but not a word about the much more significant role that the Arab states play in supplying oil to the apartheid regime. It is unbelievable to hear words like "genocide" used to describe Israel's deeply misguided and wrong invasion of Lebanon, while hearing not a word of protest against the real genocidal war being fought between Iraq and Iran (latest estimates of over half a million people killed and both sides using poison gas in violation of the most meagre boundaries of conscience.) Third world and communist countries, most with records of brutal suppression of their own domestic minorities and systematic denials of human rights to their citizens, join together to condemn Zionism as racism in a United Nations sanctimoniously presided over by a former Nazi once involved in shipping Jews to the gas chambers. There seems to be no end to the amount of hypocrisy used by others when judging the Jews.

Yet no amount of correct suspicion about the enemies of the Jewish people should be allowed to silence the valid critiques from within of policies and realities, either in our own Jewish communities or in Israel, that do in fact violate the spirit of Torah Judaism.

"It is impossible to stay true to the Jewish Tradition without working to heal, repair and transform the situation of Palestinians."

We should also add that there is more to talk about in Israel besides its relationship to the Palestinians. Israel is a dynamic and complex society—and it is producing a Jewish culture and society, literature and poetry, philosophy and social experimentation that is often exciting and worth analyzing. We hope to present in these pages aspects of Israeli society that sometimes get lost when all attention is focussed on politics.

A Diversity of Views

There is an old Jewish story that tells of a synagogue that had been without a rabbi for some twenty years, and was now on the verge of being torn apart by arguments about how to do some of the central prayer rituals. Finally, out of desperation they sent a delegation to the old rabbi, who had retired some twenty years before, to inquire what the tradition really was supposed to be. Each side presented their case, denouncing the other side for distorting the true tradition. After they had concluded, the rabbi asked if it was true that each side was sure that their way was right. "Yes," both sides responded. "And both sides seem to think that the other side is deeply mistaken and is about to ruin everything should their views prevail?" asked the rabbi. "Yes," both sides responded, "the other side is going to distort the truth and ruin the community. So what is the tradition?" The rabbi had no problem:—"The state of affairs you describe in our synagogue—THAT IS THE TRADITION."

TIKKUN will stand in that tradition. We have every intention of presenting alternative viewpoints and stimulating debate. Although the editorials will represent the position of our editor, the articles printed will represent a broad diversity of perspectives within the liberal and progressive communities.

Our National Editorial Board represents a wide range of views on almost every issue. Some will find our editorials too immersed in a religious perspective, others will think the religious perspective is too traditional, others that it is too radical. Some members of our National Editorial Board think that we are too critical of Western societies and inadequately appreciative of their strengths, while others think we are dangerously close to anti-communism in our critiques of the Soviet Union. Some think that there should be more space given to politics and less to Jewish issues, others think that they would prefer a magazine that is more broadly philosophical and would not spend too much time involved in discussions of strategies for liberal and progressive movements. Many of them strongly disagree with each other on important philosophical, political and religious issues. What they all share is a strong interest in developing the kind of forum that TIKKUN will provide—and a commitment to have alternative positions be presented in their most sophisticated articulations. Their support and participation in selecting articles is an important contribution to our existence.

We will print not only philosophy and political analyses, but also fiction and poetry, religious debates, literary appreciations and descriptions of feminist rituals. To understand social reality, we need to know how people come to experience their daily lives, how people shape their ideas and their feelings to make sense of the realities in which they work and build families, and how people make sense of their relationships to friends and neighbors. So we will be interested in questions like: Why do people feel distrustful of each other and what ways are there to overcome that distrust? Why is it difficult to have honest communication in groups? What makes people go along with "the official line" on political and social issues when they know that "the line" is off in some important way? Why do people believe that they are more powerless than they are? How does our sexual experience effect our sense of connectedness and our expectations of what is possible in the social world? How and in what ways do the experiences of childhood shape our politics, our approach to religion, and our philosophical orientations? How much is politics and religion simply an attempt to cover up and avoid our deeper recognition of death and meaninglessness? How much does anyone take "the public world" seriously, and how much do people simply look at it as

some external curiosity (at best, a different kind of entertainment), which can be passively watched but can't be entered and transformed? In the years ahead, we shall try to discuss these and related issues, and try to understand the deeper, experiential level that underlies so many theoretical discussions.

"In Jewish tradition, human beings are partners with God in finishing creation."

We welcome your letters and feedback, your ideas for articles and writers, and your involvement. We hope that you will read TIKKUN with other people, talk about the ideas, and share your reactions with us. We also hope that you will tell others about TIKKUN and help us build a real community. Needless to say, if this venture is to survive, we need you to subscribe, and for you to get your friends to subscribe as well.

Finally, a personal note. We are acutely aware of the difficulties in the task we are defining for ourselves. We are reminded of the prayer of the cantor on Yom Kippur who, before attempting to represent the community, first publicly declares the prayer "Hinenee He-anee Mee-Ma-as"—behold, I am not adequate and worthy to take on the task. Rather than enumerate the ways that this is true, we instead want to acknowledge that we approach this task with humility, a sense of humor, and deep thanks to God for allowing us this opportunity to participate in dialogue with those who still struggle to understand, to heal, and to remake this world. □

This is the first in a series of editorials by Michael Lerner on A Jewish Approach to American Politics.

What Kind of Tikkun?

In early 1986 we invited several of the members of our National Editorial Board to write short statements to answer a series of questions we put to them.

The questions were these:

What kind of tikkun (healing, repair and transformation) does the world need?

What intellectual, spiritual, psychological, and religious resources do we have to bring to that tikkun?

What role can *Tikkun Magazine* play in this process?

The answers we received were deep and illuminating. Each reflects a personal set of priorities, often based on a rich individual life experience in the intellectual and political world. Taken together, they reflect a significant statement of an agenda for the future—encompassing differences in perspective, reflecting some of the diversity within our community, yet speaking with the wisdom and ethical vision that Tikkun requires.

We are honored to present the responses by:

Gar Alperovitz
Rabbi Laura Geller
Norman Birnbaum
T. Drorah Setel
Michael Walzer
Daniel A. Landes
Zalman Schachter-Shalomi
Marie Syrkin
Gordon Fellman
Marshall T. Meyer

GAR ALPEROVITZ

Gar Alperovitz is an historian and political economist. His books include Cold War Essays, Rebuilding America *(with Jeff Faux), and* American Economic Policy *(with Roger Shurski). He is currently President of the National Center for Economic Alternatives in Washington, D.C.*

Consider the possibility that neither liberal nor conservative nor radical politics will transform America during the coming generation—the possibility of a deep, enduring, *stalemate*. Such a context would be characterized by:

— A continuation of recurrent, ever deepening recessions. This would extend the pattern of the eight recessions since World War II during which unemployment worsened each decade— moving from 4.5% in the 1950s, to 4.8% in the 1960s, to 6.2% in the 1970s, to 8.0% so far in the 1980s (after reaching a post-war record of 10.7% in 1980-81.)

— The continual circulation of what jobs there are, musical chairs fashion, around America's internal Continental empire—so that at one moment New England would be down and the Southwest up, then the Far West down and the South up, and so on. There would be periodic severe dislocations in specific industries and localities, but the young would move on geographically, chasing the moving jobs, mostly blaming themselves—and certainly not the system—for failure. Occasionally, in bad economic moments the nation would exchange one President for another, but mainly the electorate would simply observe the faltering up-down cyclical process, and the job rotation.

— Periodic urban explosions, and some domestic terrorism, when, for instance, black American youth watching their counterparts on television in South Africa also decide to try to take matters into their own hands. The sporadic and shifting terror-

ism would be the occasion of sporadic and shifting repression. Total repression would be unnecessary.

— Periodic mild wars of intervention—and an occasional large one—would be followed by periods of public discontent and weariness which would restrain policy-makers until the next outburst. Perhaps the time between wars would lengthen—as the space between Korea and Vietnam was longer than the space between World War II and Korea. Perhaps slowly public discontent would limit major interventions, over time.

— Occasional major confrontations between the Superpowers would bring the world ever closer to a nuclear exchange but would continue to avoid disaster. The arms race would continue, slowed occasionally by public protest and mounting costs.

— Political oscillation would continue between Democrats and Republicans, with neither able to muster solutions to the system's major problems, but neither fully collapsing. Republicans would proclaim very tough rhetoric, but on balance intervene less abroad (restrained by the loud objections of Democrats); Democrats, vulnerable to the charge of being soft on Communism, would end up intervening more often, continuing the historic pattern of the 20th Century.

— The slow, very slow, delegitimation of existing political tendencies and parties, and of the economic system, would occur—as no group or party would be able to actually solve the steadily accumulating economic, social, and military problems—and as cultural strains, together with a moral crisis, developed and expanded— between black and white and brown, between religious fundamentalism (left and right) and secular politics, between new age and post-materialist younger generations and the old.

Such a context—that of *sustained stalemate*—is, I believe the most likely enduring and enveloping context of the coming period of our history. It is one of decay—and potential instability. Domestic violence and repression could easily tilt into some form of fascism, and the dynamics of intervention abroad, opposition at home could bring about severe repression. With time and a sustained nuclear build-up there is a statistical likelihood of human, political, or mechanical error leading one day to a thermonuclear exchange.

"All the traditions are worn out, all the creeds abolished; but the new program is not yet *ready* . . . Hence what I call *the dissolution.* This is the cruellest moment in the life of societies . . . "—so wrote Pierre Proudhon in 1860. There are similarities between his time and ours.

What is to be done? Martin Buber used to speak of "reconstruction"—a concept different from reform and different also from revolution. The idea was to draw upon whatever strains of tradition, of values, of experience, of spiritual strength that existed to slowly rebuild the conception and the material institutions of community. Without an evolving experiential basis, the ideal of reform could never sustain itself against the institutions of profit and power, nor could the people themselves sustain the ideal. (Hence, the inevitable failure of liberal reform.)

"Martin Buber used to speak of 'reconstruction'—a concept different from reform and different also from revolution."

The idea of "reconstruction" is particularly relevant to the context of long term stalemate, but it is insufficient. Buber emphasized the importance of local cooperative institutions, but more than the quiet evolution of local co-operation is required. At every level, slowly, there must be a reconstruction of institutions accountable to the public at large—and of structures which give priority to values other than those of profit. A long stalemate permits this; and the necessity of a deeper institutional basis for a new politics requires it.

Such an approach clearly includes local neighborhood, worker-owned and municipal enterprises. Over the coming decade it should be extended to regional institutions which (in a context of deterioration and the failure of both the giant corporation and big government) can slowly become more independent of the market demand for expansion and for continual relocation and dislocation. The original idea of grass-roots democracy in the TVA (before its co-optation) is worth resuscitating.

William Appleman Williams and Robert Goodman are also right, I believe, to remind us how extraordinarily different our very large nation is from virtually all other industrial nations—and that our unique Continental geographic scale ultimately requires devolution to some form of regional self-determination. However difficult it may seem, a longer-term vision of a society of substantially, if not totally independent regions, confeder-

ated in a reconstructed national political structure, needs to be fleshed-out, debated, and proposed as a serious answer to the problem of gigantic scale. Else there is likely to be no response, ever, to the legitimate questions which lie just beneath demagogic right-wing political exploitation of hostility to "big government."

"At every level, slowly, there must be a reconstruction of institutions accountable to the public at large..."

Though Buber's concept of "reconstruction" is essential to breaking out of traditional "either-or" dead-end reform-versus-revolution thinking, it is also inadequate for our own time in history because it does not adequately take account of anger. The context we are entering is one in which resentment must build (it already is growing rapidly). People are being exploited, dislocated, discarded. Either the inevitable anger will be directed at the elites and institutions which obstruct real solutions to real problems, or scape-goats are likely to be found —especially black and Jewish ones at home, and an "evil empire" with designs on freedom abroad.

Progressives do not like to face up to anger; they usually leave the mobilization of resentment to the right-wing. But face up to it we must. The growing anger will require an intelligent political focus, else it will likely destroy us all. This means steadily fashioning new political linkages between a vision of community, a strategy of reconstruction, and an outspoken and tough populist attack on those institutions which oppose the needs of the vast majority.

Finally, there is the question of materialism itself. Even with all our problems, the United States is still the wealthiest nation in the world; were the GNP today divided equally it would provide each family of four with $65,000. It is time to get off the "more is better" ladder. Ours is perhaps the only nation which could truly begin a slow transition towards a society of real equality—and of less materialism, less work, and the more humane and meaningful development of self, of relationship, of community.

There is a growing contradiction between our extraordinary productive potential, and our language of economic pain, burden and sacrifice. The necessary personal choice is the same as the national choice: to draw a line and say enough is enough, and then to begin to build a fulfilling future beyond the dying era of economic inevitability—and to help others, here and abroad, to do the same.

"*Tikkun*—to mend, repair, and transform the world." There is plenty of work to do—especially to think through and clarify our odd historical context and its demanding requirements. All the rest, however, is *not* "commentary," as the mast-head proclaims. All the rest may be nuclear war: unless we fashion a moral alternative capable of absorbing and giving direction to volatile and explosive energies—and an explanation of where we are, how we got here, and where we must go—the inherent instabilities of the context of stalemate, one day, may make *Tikkun*—or "repair"—too late. □

RABBI LAURA GELLER

Rabbi Laura Geller is director of the Hillel Foundation at U.S.C.

Our tradition tells us that our world is broken, that it is not whole. The task of "tikkun olam", repairing the broken world, is ultimately a process of overcoming fragmentation and dichotomy in order to approach wholeness. So many aspects of our world cry out for "tikkun", including our own spiritual lives and our own tradition. Judaism itself needs "tikkun".

As Rachel Adler has pointed out, the paradigm of Rabbinic Judaism is no longer adequate as a model for our Jewish lives. There is an anomaly so overwhelming that it is challenging the traditional understanding of normative Judaism: the anomaly is the experience of Jewish women.

Normative Judaism grows out of the experience of men. Women are viewed as "the Other", as peripheral or marginal. Jewish law, on the whole, is concerned about women primarily as they interact with men, as mothers, daughters or wives. The marginality of women is so pronounced that it is has led Rachel Adler to question whether women are indeed included within the covenant.

The experience of marginality has shaped many women's relationship to Judaism. Consciousness of marginality has led these women to seek to overcome it by transforming the tradition itself. This transformation is "tikkun"; it opens up the possibility of asking a radically new question of Judaism.

What will Judaism become as women's experience is heard, validated and taken seriously?

There are several classic examples of women's marginality in Torah. I will point out just two. The first is in Parashat Lech Lecha, Genesis 12:1: "And Adonai said to Avram: Lech Lecha—Go, really go, from your land, from your birthplace, from your father's house to a land that I will show you." Avram, the lonely man of faith, is the paradigm of Jewish spirituality. The text continues in verse 5: "And Avram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son and all their substance that they had gathered and the souls that they had gotten in Haran and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan . . ." Avram is the paradigm of Jewish spirituality . . . and yet, who am I in the story? Am I the woman who goes along passively, never asking questions, not addressed by God? *I have to become Avram for the story to be about me.* Or consider the second example, described powerfully by Rachel Adler. It is Exodus 19, the description of the epiphany at Mt. Sinai, the moment the Jewish people is created. We know from midrash that every Jew was present at that moment, the moment amidst thunder and lightning and the sound of the shofar when God speaks. In preparation for this central moment of Jewish life, Moses comes down from the mountain and he says to the people: (Gen. 19:15) "Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman." *I have to become a man for the story to be about me.* The models of normative religious experience are male models. To be a woman is to be "Other".

"Women's spirituality begins with the acknowledgement of marginality coupled with an act of courage and faith, an act of tikkun."

Women's spirituality begins with the acknowledgment of marginality coupled with an act of courage and faith, an act of "tikkun". It begins with the decision to stop being the "Other", to understand that the perspective which views reality as a dichotomy between the "Norm" and the "Other" is a limited perspective. It seeks a larger perspective, the largest perspective of all, God's perspective, where concepts of "Norm" and "Other" disappear and we are left with different options, different models of spirituality.

Where are these other models? How can we find them? For me the key is in *lech lecha,* in understanding *lech lecha* not as "go, really go" but with the Chassidic interpretation of the phrase as "Go to yourself", understand your experience as Jewish experience. My experience as a Jewish woman is Jewish experience even though the texts and traditions of normative Judaism may not pay attention to it. Let me offer an example. One day, as I sat in a class in my Rabbinical seminary, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, we studied the tradition of *berakhot-blessings,* blessings of enjoyment, blessings relating to the performance of *mitzvot* (commandments) and blessings of praise and thanksgiving. My teacher explained, "There is a blessing for every important moment in the lifetime of a Jew. Before you eat there's a blessing, after you eat there's a blessing, when you wear new clothes, when you see a scholar, when you see a rainbow, when you hear good news, when you hear bad news . . . there is no important moment in the lifetime of a Jew for which there is no blessing." I remember thinking how right that instinct to say blessings was; for me, it suggested that holiness is present at all times, but it is up to us to acknowledge the presence of holiness through the act of saying *berakhot.* My teacher said again, "There is no important moment in the lifetime of a Jew for which there is no blessing." Suddenly I realized that it was not true. There had been important moments in my life for which there was no blessing. One such moment was when I reached menarche—when I first got my period.

In thinking about menarche, I understood the power of ritual and the need to create ritual which celebrates women's experience. I reflected on the experience of menarche, the anxious waiting, the relief with which I ran to my mother to tell her the news. I recall her telling me that when she got her period, her mother slapped her. Why? My grandmother said, "She was losing blood, she was a little pale. She needed color in her cheeks!" Whatever the reason for this folk custom, the message it conveys is clearly ambivalent. On the one hand, it is a moment of bonding between mother and daughter. On the other hand, the daughter understands that she is being punished for becoming a woman, that sexuality is somehow frightening. During this moment of remembering my experience, it occurred to me that if my mother had welcomed me to young womanhood with a blessing like the *Sh'hechianu,* my feelings about myself, my body and my connection to Jewish tradition might have been different.

(continued on page 110)

The Politics of Anger

ANNE ROIPHE

Memory is the bone and sinew of Jewish life. Without it we lose all shape, all capacity to move forward. But memory of disaster is not altogether benign, it does not sit there in the orchard bearing good fruit; rather like the tree of knowledge in that fateful garden it beckons and threatens and creates complications. After the Holocaust memory fuels rage.

As the survivors, numb with event, began to tell the tale to the children of the land of liberty who yet believed in Jefferson, Edison, Henry Ford and the Lone Ranger, we lost our belief that civilization is the shadow cast by the Messiah across this rotating earth. And after the silence and the years of gathering testimony and the rainbow of Israel spreading over the ash we are still left with our anger and our humiliation. Our lament goes on, and with each passing year we see that we have not digested, ritualized, absorbed the Holocaust, but that like other violent traumas that assault the soul it resonates through our body politic and causes us to twist and turn in ways not always rational or desired.

At this moment it is very important that we see how our political and religious decisions are affected by the Shoah. If we understand our own motives, if we can face our own anger and do our mourning fully then we strengthen ourselves. As we all know we first were silent, ashamed and stunned. This lasted not a matter of months but perhaps of years and then came Elie Weisel and Ann Frank and Andre Schwartz-Bart and a wave of Jewish and non-Jewish revulsion against the Germans and mounting sense of confusion in the intellectual world which was absorbing the fact of Ground Zero along with reality of the camps. We sprouted existentialism, despair both fashionable and real; we had logical positivism which proved that thought was a game and truth an illusion.

American Jews were caught in a cruel bind. We could not betray the six million and yet we felt betrayed by Hashem who had chosen us for a destiny which seemed to end in smoke rather than redemption. We were betrayed by the promises of the enlightenment: halfhearted, lukewarm as they had been we had jumped aboard each "ism" with the excitement of a child on his first carousel ride, a child who has not yet learned that the ride ends at its beginning.

Every few years our scholars uncovered another betrayal, whether it was Roosevelt dallying on bombing the trains or our own American Jewish Community not daring to push, not daring to cry aloud. We argued about the degree of cooperation we had committed. We slowly faced our humiliation, our heroism, our personal victories, our need to hear the witnesses, to become a people who carried together the tale of the witness. To create ourselves as a collective witness we have built a Holocaust industry with libraries and courses, lectures, centers and museums. But even so some things have yet to be clearly expressed.

First a fragment of a survivor's memoir; this is by a woman named Sonja Milner who wrote a small survivor account published by Shengold Press. She writes that when she was 18 years old she was liberated from Auschwitz and was traveling with a friend through the last flares of war. "One day we experienced a sense of deep satisfaction. As we were walking about in the city (Danzig) we saw some Germans lying in the fields. They had fled Danzig and were staying in the fields with their wives and children. A battalion of Russian Soldiers passed by. The soldiers fell upon the Germans and began to rape the young girls, the women and the children. Some ten or twenty of them fell upon a little girl and raped her. We watched and beamed with satisfaction. We were finally being avenged. For a Jew cannot avenge himself. We once thought that if we came out alive we would take vengeance but how could a Jew take revenge? We were sick and weak and hungry. But now we saw how the Russian Soldiers had wrought vengeance upon them; how they had torn them to pieces, those Germans in the fields. We were entitled to that satisfaction. It was a legitimate reaction, a natural, all too human response on our part. At that scene of rape and violence, another picture superimposed itself. It was my own nieces and nephews that I saw being ripped apart by the Germans. My nieces and nephews were seven, five and three years old. Still our revenge was vicarious."

The rage expressed openly here is both horrible and reasonable. We do more than understand it.

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We share it. But at the same time we reject it because after all it turns us into them. It grants them the power to again rip apart our Torah as we ignore the words of our Rabbis, "to save one life, is to save the whole world."

"But what has happened to our fury, our need for revenge and satisfaction? It has resurfaced in disguised form among our politicians and leaders."

But what has happened to our fury, our need for revenge and satisfaction? It has resurfaced in disguised form among our politicians and leaders. Surely we see it in Kahane and the Kach party. "Never again" has come to mean I can do to you what was done to me. I have a moral right because it was done to me. I can and must do anything to protect the Jews—and incidentally I can shout, I can bully, I can terrorize, and stigmatize you as was done to me. This is anger released in the form of a political action. Ultimately it is the need for revenge which fuels the Kach movement. It is far more a response to the Holocaust than a reaction to conditions in the Middle East. Even those of us most deeply opposed to Kahane racism can feel, if we are honest, the thrill of turning the past inside out and doing to others as was done to us. We are not immune from a secret perhaps unconscious satisfaction. As he struts and bullies and shouts we taste the revenge.

After the unprecedented pogroms of Chelminisky in 1648, Sabbatai Zvi, the false Messiah, played out his bitter game on the populace of European Jewry. Sabbatai Zvi was the response of the community to that disaster. Kahane is our false messiah; one of our responses to the Holocaust. While Sabbatai Zvi was inflated by the hope of the Jewish people, Kahane is set aloft by our rage. In his outrageousness he releases our own feelings of helplessness, our desire to do to someone else what was done to us. His followers, like the gangs of brown shirts that maurauded through the streets of Berlin, terrify the Arabs near the settlements, precisely because their anger has taken them beyond considerations of justice and mercy.

In the days of the German terror the paranoid Jew was the true prophet. The paranoid vision of a world out to get you, to kill you was wise and true. The sane trusting human being, the healthy communal friendly Jew was the last to see what his suspicious uneasy, ill-adjusted brother quickly perceived. Those were the days when paranoia was truth. The Jewish community has not forgotten that lesson but did we learn it too well? Paranoia is an illness caused by an excess of rage, a splitting off of one's anger and projecting it onto the actions of others. Our modern Jewish paranoia always teeters between reality and madness. It is very important for our ultimate survival that we distinguish between the two.

When all expressions of anti-Semitism are responded to as if the walls were coming down, as if the S.S. were calling up the corps, then we risk the dangers that befall all madmen who tilt with demons who aren't there. Hallucinating while crossing the street can cause a fatal traffic accident. If a member of a beleaguered minority uses a racial slur against Jews should we assume that all his people are out to get us and that the poor among them are no longer worthy of our concern and effort? If we do not admit even to ourselves our own racial slurs against other people then we risk losing real friends and lining ourselves up with potential enemies. If we cannot see that for every Black who has said Hymietown there is a Jew who has referred to the Schwartz in the laundry, we will become brittle in our thinking and our paranoia will create such a climate of mutual distrusts that we will bring about the very hatreds we are trying to avoid.

It is easy to understand Black anti-Semitism, after all we have started as underdogs, havenots as did they, but we have succeeded in this country in gaining education and power and comfort and they have not. We are not the oppressors but our success mocks, underlines their failure. Jews who have won entrance to all areas of scholarship need not fear the few Blacks who might be given an opportunity under some affirmative action plan. The bugaboo of the evil of quotas is just another way of holding the door against the other and protecting the self when protection is no longer necessary. The anger the affirmative action question stirred in the Jewish community tells us how enraged we still are and how frightened we are that our hard won middle classness could be stripped away. It also reveals a peculiar willingness to keep some one else down when we have the chance. Here again the Jewish revenge is always vicarious and its objects stand-ins for the real enemy who has disappeared into His-

tory, drowned in Chile, died in bed in Kansas or has joined the untouchable soldiers of the Cold War.

If a moderate Arab speaks of peace with Israel voices immediately warn of a trap. We assume the implacable, unremitting hostility of the world. Sometimes this is reality. Sometimes this is paranoia. Our Holocaust history has left us so enraged we are particularly prone to paranoia. Perhaps we have let our recent anger and our hatred push us beyond reason. Are we truly past imagining the pain of another's exile; the possibility of another's willingness to change? Are we forever willing to endure eternal warfare with our neighbors because we assume they would do to us what we now would do to them?

Some Jews bent under the yoke of the paranoid vision have turned to anti-communism as a safe harbour in which to exercise their rage, to vent their suspicions and to perhaps unconsciously take revenge against communities of non-Jews be they Vietnam villagers, Nicaraguan peasants, or Mexican migrant workers. The neo-conservative movement as we read it in *Commentary*, has taken its Jewish anger, its Jewish rage and hidden it, folded it into an identification with the powerful and the strong. They call for bigger and bigger arsenals because Jews once were so powerless. They call for a Jewish identification with those who have instead of those who want because they were so humiliated by their helplessness beneath the Nazi power. By becoming the Court Jews of the Right they can identify with the power and pretend it is theirs. They do not mind humiliating the mentally ill or those on food stamps or those with small farms. The Right in America affords Jews a safe place to vent anger on other helpless peoples who stand in our place as we stand above them. While the neo-conservatives spin out their politics they deny or undo the fact that they were ever helpless themselves. Lucy Davidowicz said at the State of the World Jewry Address in 1984 at the 92nd St. Y in New York City that Bishop Tutu was an anti-Semite and Jews should not support his attempts to end Apartheid. It seems possible that Lucy Davidowicz is gratified that those who carry identity cards, who cannot hold any job they wish, who are excluded from the university are not Jews, but Blacks. This time she and her political allies are friends of the oppressor and in this way they undo the shame of being victimized, the humiliation of being considered undesirable. Now they are the judges and someone else is the pariah. This is the sad result of Jewish rage that has boiled for forty years without finding an object, a release, a catharsis.

The Right in America is always making some porno movie with a menacing Russian Bear. This menace is real for us all and we know that Jews will not survive under the Russian system. But when we simplify complex world problems into a battle between the Evil Empire and the White Knight we fool ourselves. When our fear of Russia leads us to support the rule of Apartheid, Military Juntas and Secret Police who use our technology to torture their disappeared, we Jews are simply taking advantage of the cold war to affirm ourselves as the powerful, the clean, and the good. As Sonja Milner said, "Jews' revenge must be vicarious." Even the objects of our revenge must be stand-ins.

"Some Jews bent under the yoke of the paranoid vision have turned to anti-communism as a safe harbour . . ."

This leads to pretzel politics; the kind that can spoil your appetite. The Rev. Falwell supports Israel and so we will accept his positions on women's issues, on black/white relations, even on prayer in the schools. We pretend not to notice that he is planning a White Christian America that will no longer value its variety or invite in its outsiders. Here is where I see us hallucinating as we are crossing the street. We are not noticing the real enemy remains just as always the ideologue, the zealot, the purist, whose capacity to empathize with real people in real trouble has been drowned in the Baptismal waters of power or drowned out by the loud voice of a God who is not charmed by human variety; always a dangerous condition for Jews.

The Jewish capacity to care for the wounded, its own and others has been based on scripture, on text and on experience. We suffered and could easily imagine suffering. But the Holocaust has altered this simple equation by creating a need in us to express our anger, to overcome our sense of humiliation and this must be accomplished at another's expense. Empathy with others is a virtue of the downtrodden and since we will never again be downtrodden we can dispense with this virtue. Empathy is a handicap in the arenas of power. We all know that a Cold Warrior is not a poor pious Jew who can be shoveled into a ditch at whim. Therefore we will enlist as Cold Warriors.

We have put the destruction of the second temple into our liturgy. The words and music move us to tremble and to grieve but the distance since that defeat, the art of language that surrounds the event, the sense of togetherness and survival one feels on Tisha B'av neutralizes the humiliation and the anger. Time has also done its part. But when it comes to the Holocaust we remain raw. Our nerves are such that we see a threat in the honoring of a Polish priest and no threat in a President who cannot imagine a limit to the nuclear arsenal. We want bigger warheads and more ships to carry them despite the fact that our President is confused between the S.S. and its victims and wants to forget the whole ugly business anyway.

The Who is A Jew question arises out of Holocaust issues embedded as it is in the Law of Return. Here some Jews want to make the decision themselves. The Nazi powers told us who was a Jew and their definition was loose and broad. Now Jews are saying, No, we are the arbiters of our own Nation. We can draw the lines as we will. This taking back of power is not without its victims, not without expression of rage at those parts of the Jewish community it would exile, it would strip of religious authenticity. The narrowest interpretation of Who is a Jew puts Jews in the position of denying refuge to some, potentially denying safety to others. It evokes images of Ships not allowed to dock because their passengers came from a reform synagogue and could not prove their children legitimate, their divorces legal, or their heritage Jewish. While this is all a nightmare fantasy it nevertheless serves the communal purpose of overcoming the humiliation of the past, by doing to others, by becoming the State where once one was the Supplicant. The unfortunate fact that this turns Jew against Jew is not unreasonable if one remembers that trauma almost always produces anger. This anger, when frustrated from finding its rightful target, is turned against the self, causing internal bleeding, insomnia and other pains.

I do not believe it is an accident that the return of some young Jews to an extreme Orthodox or Hasidic life has accompanied our increasing awareness and ability to hear the facts of the Holocaust. In this Post-Holocaust time the average Jew is faced with great doubts about the power and the goodness of this Deity. These doubts provoke anger at God, which then frightens even the sometime believer who may deny his doubts, hide within the ancient certainties and reject the modern world which had in turn rejected his relatives, and their lives so short a time ago.

"Fundamentalism . . . is always fueled by rage at somebody or something that has disappointed beyond tolerance. The Jewish variant . . . is certainly related to our particular sense of helplessness and fury."

It is partially true that the crowd of young men and young women who are turning to our Yeshivas are trying to expiate our possible communal sins as we flirted with secularity and modernity in the pre-Hitler years. It is also likely that they find themselves unable to carry the burden of their theological conflict and so resolve the problem by turning their backs on their more liberal parents, as well as a disappointing and confusing modern world. In their choice they express anger at the failed vision of their parents and disguise and bury their anger at God. The need for exact continuous rigid obedience forms the lid that holds down the anger at God and like other compulsive behaviors, like hand washing and counting, keeps the anger out of consciousness where it can do no danger to the self or others. It becomes important for them to obey every line of the Halacha, to keep Judaism as it was before the emancipation. In this way they express daily their contempt for the world of modernity, for the soil and the seed of the Holocaust. From costume to custom they affirm a Jewish way that feeds on the moats of anger that surround them and separates them off from the others who have been to one degree or another Hellenized and so have become a part of the enemy. Without the Holocaust these communities would have remained a part of Jewish life but would not have drawn significant numbers from the secular world.

Fundamentalism all over the world has become an answer to the confusions of modern torments and nowhere is it without harsh angry judgment and it is always fueled by rage at somebody or something that has disappointed beyond tolerance. The Jewish variant of fundamentalism is certainly related to our particular sense of helplessness and fury in the unfolding of our history.

It is simplistic and useless to reduce all the variety of contemporary experience to one cause. Anger, conscious and unconscious, is not the only

factor that shapes the content of our contemporary Jewish internal life but it is present as a factor, as an element among others, one we must acknowledge in order to gain control over it rather than allowing it to control us.

Inner rage tends to burn out our connections to the real world. It tends to overwhelm reason and to destroy the faces and beings of others. In our anger we can see only ourselves. The inability to imagine the experience of the stranger, of the other, was exactly what made the Holocaust possible. The Nazi success in dehumanizing their victims has left us with such rage that we too can dehumanize, erase the individual faces of others. We must find a way to let our anger burn freely, openly without consuming or perverting our spiritual or National purpose otherwise we remain victims forever. □

What's Wrong with the Right

CHRISTOPHER LASCH

In order to understand what's wrong with the right, we must first understand the basis of its appeal. The conservative revival cannot be dismissed as a "simple political reaction," as Michael Miles wrote some time ago, "whose point is to suppress a radical movement which by its nature poses a threat to the *status quo* distribution of power and wealth." Contemporary conservatism has a strong populist flavor, having identified itself with the aspirations of ordinary Americans and appropriated many of the symbols of popular democracy. It is because conservatives have managed to occupy so much of the ground formerly claimed by the left that they have made themselves an important force in American politics. They say with considerable justification that they speak for the great American middle class: hard-working men and women eager to better themselves, who reject government handouts and ask only a fair chance to prove themselves. Conservatism owes its growing strength to its unembarrassed defense of patriotism, ambition, competition, and common sense, long ridiculed by cosmopolitan sophisticates, and to its demand for a return to basics: to "principles that once proved sound and methods that once shepherded the nation through earlier troubled times," as Burton Pines puts it in his "traditionalist" manifesto, *Back to Basics.*

Far from defending the existing distribution of power, many conservatives, especially those who stress so-called social issues, deplore the excessive influence allegedly exercised by educated elites and see themselves as embattled defenders of values that run counter to the dominant values. They attribute most of the country's ills to the rise of a "highly educated, relatively affluent group which benefits more from America's riches than its less educated fellow countrymen" yet condemns the "values and institutions responsible for producing these riches." Members of this new class, according to Jeanne Kirkpatrick, "shape debate, determine agendas, define standards, and propose and evaluate policies." It is they who allegedly advocate unlimited abortion, attack religion and the family, criticize capitalism, destroy general education in the name of unlimited freedom of choice, replace basic subjects in the lower schools with sex education and values clarification, and promote a new ethic of hedonism and self-exploration. From a conservative point of view, a return to basics demands a democratic movement against entrenched interests, in the course of which traditionalists will have to master techniques of "sustained activism" formerly monopolized by the left.

Even if it could be shown that conservatives misunderstand American society, exaggerate the power of the so-called new class, underestimate the power of the business class, and ignore the undemocratic implications of their own positions, it would still be important to understand how they can see themselves as underdogs in the struggle for the American future. The left, which until recently has regarded itself as the voice of the "forgotten man," has lost the common touch. Failing to create a popular consensus in favor of its policies, the left has relied on the courts, the federal bureaucracy, and the media to achieve its goals of racial integration, affirmative action, and economic equality. Ever since World War II, it has used essentially undemocratic means to achieve democratic ends, and it has paid the price for this evasive strategy in the loss of public confidence and support. Increasingly isolated from popular opinion, liberals and social democrats attempt to explain away opposition to economic equality as "working-class authoritarianism," status anxiety, *resentiment,* "white racism," male chauvinism, and proto-fascism. The left sees nothing but bigotry and superstition in the popular defense of the family or in popular attitudes regarding abortion, crime, busing, and the school curriculum. The left no longer stands for common sense, as it did in the days of Tom Paine. It has come to regard common sense — the traditional wisdom and folkways of the community — as an obstacle to progress and enlightenment. Because it equates tradition with prejudice, it finds itself increasingly unable to converse with ordinary people in their common language. Increasingly it speaks its own jargon, the therapeutic jargon of social science and the service professions that seems to serve mostly to deny what everybody knows.

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Progressive rhetoric has the effect of concealing social crisis and moral breakdown by presenting them "dialectically" as the birth pangs of a new order. The left dismisses talk about the collapse of family life and talks instead about the emergence of "alternative life-styles" and the growing new diversity of family types. Betty Friedan expresses the enlightened consensus when she says that Americans have to reject the "obsolete image of the family," to "acknowledge the diversity of the families people live in now," and to understand that a family, after all—in the words of the American Home Economics Association—consists simply of "two or more persons who share values and goals, and have commitments to one another over time." This anaemic, euphemistic definition of the family reminds us of the validity of George Orwell's contention that it is a sure sign of trouble when things can no longer be called by their right names and described in plain, forthright speech. The plain fact of the matter—and this is borne out by the very statistics cited to prove the expanding array of "lifestyles" from which people can now choose—is that most of these alternative arrangements, so-called, arise out of the ruins of marriages, not as an improvement of old-fashioned marriage. "Blended" or "reconstituted" families result from divorce, as do "single-parent families." As for the other "alternative" forms of the family, so highly touted by liberals —single "families," gay "marriages," and so on—it makes no sense to consider them as families and would still make no sense if they were important statistically, as they are not. They may be perfectly legitimate living arrangements, but they are arrangements chosen by people who prefer not to live in families at all, with all the unavoidable constraints that families place on individual freedom. The attempt to redefine the family as a purely voluntary arrangement (one among many "alternative" living arrangements) grows out of the modern delusion that people can keep all their options open all the time, avoiding any constraints or demands as long as they don't make any demands of their own or "impose their own values" on others. The left's redefinition of the family encourages the illusion that it is possible to avoid the "trap" of involuntary association and to enjoy its advantages at the same time.

The question of the family, which now divides our society so deeply that the opposing sides cannot even agree on a definition of the institution they are arguing about, illustrates and supports the contention that the left has lost touch with popular opinion, thereby making it possible for the right to present itself as the party of common sense. The presumption behind the older definition of the family is that ties of kinship and even of marriage and adoption are likely to be more demanding than ties of friendship and proximity. This is precisely why many people continue to value them. For most Americans, even for those who are disenchanted with their own marriages, family life continues to represent a stabilizing influence and a source of personal discipline in a world where personal disintegration remains always an imminent danger. A growing awareness of the depth of popular attachment to the family has led some liberals, rather belatedly, to concede that "'family' is not just a buzz word for reaction," as Betty Friedan puts it. But since these same liberals subscribe to the new flexible, pluralistic definition of the family, their defense of families carries no conviction. They ask people to believe, moreover, that there is no conflict between feminism and the family. Most women, according to Friedan, want both feminism and the family and reject categorization as pro-family or anti-family, pro-feminist or anti-feminist. Most women are pragmatists, in other words, who have allowed "extremists" on the left and right to manipulate the family issue for their own purposes and to create a "political polarization between feminism and the family." Her suspicion of ideology and her belief that it is possible to have things both ways—even in a crippled economy— place Friedan's argument squarely in the liberal tradition, the very tradition that needs to be rethought and outgrown.

But if the family issue illustrates characteristic weaknesses of American liberalism, which have been effectively exploited by the right, it also illustrates why the right-wing defense of "traditional values" proves equally unsatisfactory. Consider Rita Kramer's book, *In Defense of the Family*. Although this book contains much good sense about childrearing, its explanation of the plight of the family is completely inadequate. Kramer blames the plight of the family on interfering experts, on liberal intellectuals pushing their own permissive morality as scientific truth, on the mass media, and on the bureaucratic welfare state. She exonerates industrial capitalism, "which gets a bum rap on this issue," and she becomes absolutely lyrical whenever she touches on the subject of

industrial technology. She speaks scornfully of those who want to "throw out all the machines and go back to pre-industrial ways of arranging our lives." She insists that we can resist the "numbing and all-pervasive media" and still enjoy the "undeniable blessings of technology." Her position seems to be that the nuclear family is so far superior to any other form of childrearing that its persistence can be taken for granted—if only the experts would go away and leave it alone.

"(Conservatives) unwittingly side with the social forces that contribute to the destruction of 'traditional values'."

This argument takes no account of the evidence that most people no longer live in nuclear families at all. It takes no account of the likelihood that women have entered the work force because they have no other choice, not because they are besotted by feminist ideology and believe there is no other way to fulfill themselves. The last three decades have seen the collapse of the family wage system, under which American enterprise, in effect, invested in the single-income family as the best way of domesticating the working class and forestalling labor militancy. This development is one more that signals the arrival of a two-tiered society. Today it is no longer an unwritten law of American capitalism that industry will attempt to maintain wages at a level that allows a single wage to support a family. By 1976, only 40% of all jobs paid enough to support a family. This trend reflects, among other things, a radical de-skilling of the work force, the substitution of machinery for skilled labor, and a vast increase in the number of low-paying unskilled jobs, many of which, of course, are now filled by women. These are among the "blessings of technology" not considered by Rita Kramer. Meanwhile the consumer ethic has spread to men, as Barbara Ehrenreich points out in her study, *The Hearts of Men.* For thirty years, publications like *Playboy* have been urging men to define themselves not as breadwinners but as sybarites, lovers, connoisseurs of sex and style—in short as playboys. The idea that a man has an obligation to support a wife and family has come under attack not by feminist intellectuals or government bureaucrats but by Hugh Hefner and other promoters of a consumerist way of life.

It is the logic of consumerism that undermines the values of loyalty and permanence and promotes a different set of values that is destructive of family life—and much else besides. Kramer argues that the old bourgeois virtues should be "given a long, hard look before we discard them in the name either of greater self-fulfillment or greater altruism." But these values are being discarded precisely because they no longer serve the needs of a system of production based on advanced technology, unskilled labor, and mass consumption.

The therapeutic ethic, which has replaced the 19th-century utilitarian ethic, does not serve the "class interest" of professionals alone, as Daniel Moynihan and other critics of the "new class" have argued; it serves the needs of advanced capitalism as a whole. Moynihan points out that by emphasizing impulse rather than calculation as the determinant of human conduct, and by holding society responsible for the problems confronting individuals, a "government-oriented" professional class has attempted to create a demand for its own services. Professionals, he observes, have a vested interest in discontent, because discontented people turn to professional devices for relief. But the same principle underlies modern capitalism in general, which continually tries to create new demands and new discontents that can be assuaged only by the consumption of commodities. Professional self-aggrandizement grew up side by side with the advertising industry and the whole machinery of demand-creation. The same historical development that turned the citizen into a client transformed the worker from a producer into a consumer. Thus the medical and psychiatric assault on the family as a technologically backward sector of society went hand in hand with the advertising industry's drive to convince people that store-bought goods are superior to homemade goods.

"Conservatives sense a link between television and drugs, but they do not grasp the nature of this connection any more than they grasp the important fact about news: that it represents another form of advertising, not liberal propaganda."

The right insists that the "new class" controls the mass media and uses this control to wage a "class struggle" against business, as Irving Kristol

puts it. Since the mass media are financed by advertising revenues, however, it is hard to take this contention seriously. It is advertising and the logic of consumerism, not anti-capitalist ideology, that governs the depiction of reality in the mass media. Conservatives complain that television mocks "free enterprise" and presents businessmen as "greedy, malevolent, and corrupt," like J.R. Ewing. To see anti-capitalist propaganda in a program like *Dallas*, however, requires a suspension not merely of critical judgment but of ordinary faculties of observation. Images of luxury, romance, and excitement dominate such programs, as they dominate the advertisements that surround and engulf them. *Dallas* is itself an advertisement for the good life, like almost everything on television —that is, for the good life conceived as endless novelty, change, and excitement, as the titillation of the senses by every available stimulant, as unlimited possibility. "Make it new" is the message not just of modern art but of modern consumerism, of which modern art, indeed—even when it claims to side with the social revolution—is largely a mirror image. We are all revolutionaries now, addicts of change. The modern capitalist economy rests on the techniques of mass production pioneered by Henry Ford but also, no less solidly, on the principle of planned obsolescence introduced by Alfred E. Sloane when he instituted the annual model change. Relentless "improvement" of the product and upgrading of consumer tastes are the heart of mass merchandising, and these imperatives are built into the mass media at every level. Even the reporting of news has to be understood not as propaganda for any particular ideology, liberal or conservative, but as propaganda for commodities—for the replacement of things by commodities, use values by exchange values, and events by images. The very concept of news celebrates newness. The value of news, like that of any other commodity, consists primarily of its novelty, only secondarily of its informational value. As Waldo Frank pointed out many years ago, the news appeals to the same jaded appetite that makes a child tire of a toy as soon as it becomes familiar and demand a new one in its place. As Frank also pointed out (in *The Re-discovery of America,* published in 1930), the social expectations that stimulate a child's appetite for new toys appeal to the desire for ownership and appropriation: the appeal of toys comes to lie not in their use but in their status as possessions. "A fresh plaything renews the child's opportunity to say: this is mine." A child who seldom gets a new toy, Frank says, "prizes it as part of himself." But if "toys become more frequent, value is gradually transferred from the toy to the toy's novelty . . . The Arrival of the toy, not the toy itself, becomes the event." The news, then, has to be seen as the "plaything of a child whose hunger for toys has been stimulated shrewdly." We can carry this analysis one step further by pointing out that the model of ownership, in a society organized around mass consumption, is addiction. The need for novelty and fresh stimulation become ever more intense, intervening interludes of boredom increasingly intolerable. It is with good reason that William Burroughs refers to the modern consumer as an "image junkie."

Conservatives sense a link between television and drugs, but they do not grasp the nature of this connection any more than they grasp the important fact about news: that it represents another form of advertising, not liberal propaganda. Propaganda in the ordinary sense of the term plays a less and less important part in a consumer society, where people greet all official pronouncements with suspicion. Mass media themselves contribute to the prevailing skepticism; one of their main effects is to undermine trust in authority, devalue heroism and charismatic leadership, and reduce everything to the same dimensions. The effect of the mass media is not to elicit belief but to maintain the apparatus of addiction. Drugs are merely the most obvious form of addiction in our society. It is true that drug addiction is one of the things that undermines "traditional values," but the need for drugs—that is, for commodities that alleviate boredom and satisfy the socially stimulated desire for novelty and excitement—grows out of the very nature of a consumerist economy.

The intellectual debility of contemporary conservatism is indicated by its silence on all these important matters. Neoclassical economics takes no account of the importance of advertising. It extols the "sovereign consumer" and insists that advertising cannot force consumers to buy anything they don't already want to buy. This argument misses the point. The point isn't that advertising manipulates the consumer or directly influences consumer choices. The point is that it makes the consumer an addict, unable to live without increasingly sizeable doses of externally provided stimulation and

excitement. Conservatives argue that television erodes the capacity for sustained attention in children. They complain that young people now expect education, for example, to be easy and exciting. This argument is correct as far as it goes. Here again, however, conservatives incorrectly attribute these artificially excited expectations to liberal propaganda—in this case, to theories of permissive childrearing and "creative pedagogy." They ignore the deeper source of the expectations that undermine education, destroy the child's curiosity, and encourage passivity. Ideologies, however appealing and powerful, cannot shape the whole structure of perceptions and conduct unless they are embedded in daily experiences that appear to confirm them. In our society, daily experience teaches the individual to want and need a never-ending supply of new toys and drugs. A defense of "free enterprise" hardly supplies a corrective to these expectations.

Conservatives conceive the capitalist economy as it was in the time of Adam Smith, when property was still distributed fairly widely, businesses were individually owned, and commodities still retained something of the character of useful objects. Their notion of free enterprise takes no account of the forces that have transformed capitalism from within: the rise of the corporation, the bureaucratization of business, the increasing insignificance of private property, and the shift from a work ethic to a consumption ethic. Insofar as conservatives take any note of these developments at all, they attribute them solely to government interference and regulation. They deplore bureaucracy but see only its public face, missing the prevalence of bureaucracy in the private sector. They betray no acquaintance with the rich historical scholarship which shows that the expansion of the public sector came about, in part, in response to pressure from the corporations themselves.

Conservatives assume that deregulation and a return to the free market will solve everything, promoting a revival of the work ethic and a resurgence of "traditional values." Not only do they provide an inadequate explanation of the destruction of those values but they unwittingly side with the social forces that have contributed to their destruction, for example in their advocacy of unlimited growth. The poverty of contemporary conservatism reveals itself most fully in this championship of economic growth—the underlying premise of the consumer culture the by-products of which conservatives deplore. A vital conservatism would identify itself with the demand for limits not only on economic growth but on the conquest of space, the technological conquest of the environment, and the human ambition to acquire godlike powers over nature. A vital conservatism would see in the environmental movement the quintessential conservative cause, since environmentalism opposes reckless innovation and makes conservation the central order of business. Instead of taking environmentalism away from the left, however, conservatives condemn it as a counsel of doom. "Free enterprisers," says Pines, "insist that the economy can indeed expand and as it does so, all society's members can . . . increase their wealth." One of the cardinal tenets of liberalism, the limitlessness of economic growth, now undergirds the so-called conservatism that presents itself as a corrective and alternative to liberalism.

Not only do conservatives have no understanding of modern capitalism, they have a distorted understanding of the "traditional values" they claim to defend. The virtues they want to revive are the pioneer virtues: rugged individualism, boosterism, rapacity, a sentimental deference to women, and a willingness to resort to force. These values are "traditional" only in the sense that they are celebrated in the traditional myth of the Wild West and embodied in the Western hero, the prototypical American lurking in the background, often in the very foreground, of conservative ideology. In their implications and inner meaning, these individualist values are themselves profoundly anti-traditional. They are the values of the man on the make, in flight from his ancestors, from the family claim, from everything that ties him down and limits his freedom of movement. What is traditional about the rejection of tradition, continuity, and rootedness? A conservatism that sides with the forces of restless mobility is a false conservatism. So is the conservatism false that puts on a smiling face, denounces "doomsayers," and refuses to worry about the future. Conservatism appeals to a pervasive and legitimate desire in contemporary society for order, continuity, responsibility, and discipline; but it contains nothing with which to satisfy these desires. It pays lip service to "traditional values," but the policies with which it is associated promise more change, more innovation, more growth, more technology, more weapons, more addictive drugs.

Instead of confronting the forces in modern life that make for disorder, it proposes merely to make Americans feel good about themselves. Ostensibly rigorous and realistic, contemporary conservatism is an ideology of denial. Its slogan is the slogan of Alfred E. Neumann: "What? Me worry?" Its symbol is a smile button: that empty round face devoid of features except for two tiny eyes, eyes too small to see anything clearly, and a big smile: the smile of someone who is determined to keep smiling through thick and thin.

Conservatives stress the importance of religion, but their religion is the familiar American blend of flag-waving and personal morality. It centers on the trivial issues of swearing, neatness, gambling, sportsmanship, sexual hygiene, and school prayers. Adherents of the new religious right correctly reject the separation of politics and religion, but they bring no spiritual insights to politics. They campaign for political reforms designed to discourage homosexuality and pornography, say, but they have nothing to tell us about the connection between pornography and the larger consumerist structure of addiction-maintenance. Their idea of the proper relation between politics and religion is to invoke religious sanctions for specific political positions, as when they declaim that budget deficits, progressive taxation, and the presence of women in the armed forces are "anti-biblical." As in their economic views, conservatives advance views of religion and of the political implications of religion that derive from the tradition of liberal individualism. Liberalism, as a Lutheran critic of the religious right points out, "means straining scripture to mandate specific positions on social justice issues, . . . bending the word of God to fit your political ideas." The religiosity of the American right is self-righteous and idolatrous. It perceives no virtue in its opponents and magnifies its own. In the words of a pamphlet published by the United Methodist Church, "The 'New Religious Right' has . . . made the same mistake committed by the social gospeler earlier in the century. They exaggerate the sins of their opponent and negate any original sin of their own. They have become victims of what Reinhold Niebuhr called 'easy conscience,' or what the New Testament describes as the self-righteousness of the Pharisees." The most offensive and dangerous form of this self-righteousness is the attempt to invoke divine sanction for the national self-aggrandizement of the United States in its global struggle against "godless communism," as if American imperialism were any less godless than Soviet imperialism. In the words of Paul Simmons, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, "Identifying the Judeo-Christian posture with American nationalism is to lose the transcendent and absolute nature of the Christian faith. For Christians and Jews, loyalty to God must transcend any earthly loyalties."

The proper reply to right-wing religiosity is not to insist that "politics and religion don't mix." This is the stock response of the left, which has been caught off guard by the right and remains baffled by the revival of religious concerns and by the insistence—by no means confined to the religious right —that a politics without religion is no proper politics at all. Bewildered by the sudden interest in "social issues," the left would like either to get them off the political agenda or, failing that, to redefine them as economic issues. When liberals finally grasped the strength of popular feeling about the family, they tried to appropriate the rhetoric and symbolism of "family values" for their own purposes, while arguing that the only way to strengthen the family is to make it economically viable. There is truth in this contention, of course, but the economic dimension of the family issue can't be separated so easily from the cultural dimension. Nor can bigger welfare budgets make the family economically viable. The economic basis of the family—the family wage—has been eroded by the same developments that have promoted consumerism as a way of life. The family is threatened not only by economic pressures but by an ideology that devalues motherhood, equates personal development with participation in the labor market, and defines freedom as individual freedom of choice—freedom from binding commitments.

The problem isn't how to keep religion out of politics but how to subject political life to spiritual criticism without losing sight of the tension between the political and the spiritual realm. Because politics rests on an irreducible measure of coercion, it can never become a perfect realm of perfect love and justice. But neither can it be dismissed as the work of the devil (as Jacques Ellul maintains in his recent writings). A complete separation of religion and politics, whether it arises out of religious indifference or out of its opposite, the religious passion of Ellul, condemns the political realm to "perpetual warfare," as Niebuhr argued in *Moral Man and Immoral Society.* "If social cohesion is impossible

without coercion, and coercion is impossible without the creation of social injustice, and the destruction of injustice is impossible without the use of further coercion, are we not in an endless cycle of social conflict? . . . If power is needed to destroy power, . . . an uneasy balance of power would seem to become the highest goal to which society could aspire." The only way to break the cycle is to subject oneself and one's political friends to the same rigorous moral standards to which one subjects one's opponents and to invoke spiritual standards, moreover, not merely to condemn one's opponents but also to understand and forgive them. An uneasy balance of power—now enshrined as the highest form of politics in the theory of interest-group liberalism—can be ended only by a politics of "angerless wisdom," a politics of nonviolent coercion that seeks to resolve the endless argument about means and ends by making nonviolent means, openness, and truth-telling political ends in their own right.

Needless to say, this is not a task either for the new right, for interest-group liberals, or for those on the left who still cling to the messianic hope of social revolution. Faced with the unexpected growth of the new right, the left has asked itself how it can recover its former strength and momentum. Some call for a vigorous counterattack, a reassertion of the left-wing gospel in all its purity and messianic fervor. Others wait passively for another turn of the political cycle, another age of reform. More thoughtful people on the left have begun, however reluctantly, to acknowledge the legitimacy of some of the concerns that underlie the growth of contemporary conservatism. But even this last response is inadequate if it issues simply in a call for the left to appropriate conservative issues and then to give them a liberal twist. The hope of a new politics does not lie in formulating a left-wing reply to the right. It lies in rejecting conventional political categories and redefining the terms of political debate. The idea of a "left" has outlived its historical time and needs to be decently buried, along with the false conservatism that merely clothes an older liberal tradition in conservative rhetoric. The old labels have no meaning anymore. They can only confuse debate instead of clarifying it. They are products of an earlier era, the age of steam and steel, and are wholly inadequate to the age of electronics, totalitarianism, and mass culture. Let us say good-bye to these old friends, fondly but firmly, and look elsewhere for guidance and moral support. □

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Sodom as Nexus: The Web of Design in Biblical Narrative

ROBERT ALTER

The very terms we habitually use to designate the sundry biblical narratives reflect an uncertainty as to whether the stories taken in sequence have something that could be called a structure, and as to what sort of larger configurations they might form. The first eleven chapters of Genesis are usually called the Primeval History, as though they constituted a continuous historical narrative, despite the repeated scholarly arguments that they are in fact an uneven stitching-together of the most heterogeneous materials. On the other hand, we often speak of the Patriarchal Tales or the Wilderness Tales, a designation that suggests something vaguely anthological. Or again, it is common practice to invoke with a certain ring of academic authority the Abraham cycle, the Jacob cycle, the Elijah cycle, but if that term has a precise application for Norse sagas or Wagnerian opera, it seems chiefly an evasion in the case of biblical narrative. We do, of course, talk about the Joseph story and the David Story, but this is only because these are rare exceptions in which the ancient Hebrew writers have given us a relatively lengthy, continuous narrative—apart from a few seeming interpolations—that follows the chronological movement of a central figure's life.

If one's standard of unitary narrative is drawn from self-consciously artful novels like *Madame Bovary,* Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier,* or even, on a more ambitiously panoramic scale, *Anna Karenina,* it goes without saying that biblical narrative is far from unitary. Scholarly opinion has by and large jumped to the conclusion that if biblical narrative is not unitary, it must be episodic. Episodic structure, as Aristotle first observed, means no necessary sequence among the incidents told. In the case of a single author, episodic structure may be quite intentional and often expresses a rejection of hierarchies, an enchantment with the teeming heterogeneity of experience, as in *Don Quixote,* Lesage's *Gil Blas,* or *Huckleberry Finn.* By contrast, the episodic character of biblical narrative, as it is usually represented in scholarly analysis, is the result of editorial inadvertence rather than authorial intention: the anonymous redactors, working under the constraints of authoritative ancient traditions in ways we can no longer gauge, are imagined patching together swatches of very different materials, sometimes splicing two or more versions of the same story sometimes inserting extraneous stories that originated in radically different contexts.

It may be helpful in trying to think about the larger configurations of biblical narrative to keep in mind that only a minority of long narratives anywhere, whether pre-novelistic or novelistic, are consistently unitary. Dickens, for example, often used the devices of tightly sustained suspense of the detective-novel plot, and modern criticism has celebrated the symmetries of his symbolic structures, yet the typical Dickens novel is studded with anecdotal digressions and, in the earlier phase of his career, with interpolated tales. Fielding is justly praised as one of the most architectonic of English novelists—Coleridge rated the plot of *Tom Jones,* along with that of *Oedipus Rex* and Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist,* as one of the three most perfect in world literature—yet both *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews* include long interpolated tales that are different from the surrounding narrative in style, tone, genre, and personages. The instance of Fielding is particularly instructive because it suggests that even a writer so supremely conscious of unified artifice—in *Tom Jones* one might mention the structural symmetry of six books in the country, six on the road, six in town, or the tonal unity conferred by the ubiquitous ironic narrator—might for his own good reasons introduce materials whose chief connection with the main narrative was a matter of shared theme or mere analogy.

Let me propose that something quite similar repeatedly occurs in biblical narrative in the juxtaposition of disparate materials that are purposefully linked by motif, theme, analogy, and, sometimes, by a character who serves as a bridge between two different narrative blocks otherwise separated in regard to plot and often in regard to style and perspective or even genre. Obviously, in the Bible the proportion of such insertions is quite

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unlike what one finds in Fielding, who makes only occasional use of them. Indeed, it may be inaccurate to speak at all of "insertions" in the case of the Bible, for the artful juxtaposition of seemingly disparate episodes is more like a basic structuring procedure, a feature especially evident in Numbers, Joshua, Kings, and, above all, in the Book of Judges, but also discernible elsewhere. This would appear to be the expression of an activity that in recent years has come to be called redactional art, but in what follows I shall speak of the writer rather than the redactor in the interests of accuracy as well as of simplicity, for we need to remind ourselves that the redactor, however enshrined in modern biblical scholarship, remains a conjectural entity, and the more one scrutinizes his supposed work, the more the line between redactor and writer blurs.

Rather than try to describe the overarching design of a whole book or sequence of books, a project that would require a great deal of space for persuasive execution, I would like to demonstrate the general principle by following the biblical text at a point where there seems to be a break in narrative continuity. In fact, the example I have chosen involves what looks like a triple break from the surrounding narrative, but I shall try to show that all three stages of the break are firmly linked together and locked into both the immediate narrative context and into the larger thematic design of Genesis and subsequent books in a way that complicates the thread of meaning.

In Genesis 17, God appears before the 99-year-old Abram, changes his name to Abraham and Sarai's to Sarah as an affirmation of the covenant, and resonantly announces a future of progeny through Sarah—a promise so improbable that it causes Abraham to laugh in disbelief. In the first half of the next chapter, we have the story of the three mysterious visitors who come to Abraham (from what one can make out, they are God himself and two of his messengers), one of whom brings the good tidings that within the year Sarah will bear a son. This time, it is she, overhearing the promise from the tent-opening, who laughs in disbelief, perhaps even sarcastically. Documentary critics have been quick to identify these two sequenced stories as a duplication from two different sources, P and then J. Whether in fact scholarly analysis has succeeded in "unscrambling the omelette" here, to borrow a telling phrase from Sir Edmund Leach, is something I shall not presume to judge. More essential to our purposes is that the writer wants a double version of the promise of progeny, partly for the sheer effect of grand emphasis, but also because he needs first a patriarchal version and then a matriarchal one. In chapter 17, Abraham alone is present before God; the plight of the 90-year-old barren Sarah is mentioned only in passing and in secondary syntactic position after Abraham (verse 17); and male biology is very much at issue in the stress on the newly enjoined commandment of circumcision (though Abraham undertakes it for himself and all his future sons, its placement in the narrative sequence makes it look like a precondition to the begetting of the son, as, analogously, in Exodus 4, the tale of the Bridegroom of Blood, the circumcision of the son is the necessary means for his survival). In the first half of chapter 18, we encounter the inaugural instance of the annunciation type-scene. As a conventional tale, it is pre-eminently matriarchal, for the good news always comes to the wife, often in the absence of the husband. Here, however, perhaps because of the force of the idea of Abraham as founding father, there is a partial displacement from matriarchal to patriarchal emphasis, the angel speaking to Abraham while Sarah eavesdrops on her own annunciation. In any case, it is she who laughs, and it is her biology—the twice stated fact of her post-menopausal condition—that is at issue. This shift, even if it is a somewhat qualified one, from patriarch to matriarch in the second version of the promise is crucial, for in what follows women and sexuality, women and propagation, will be central.

Now, in all other occurrences of the annunciation type-scene,[1] the first two motifs of the conventional sequence—(a) the woman's condition of barrenness; (b) the annunciation—are immediately followed by the third motif of fulfillment (c) the birth of the son (cf. Gen. 25:19-25; Judges 13:1; Sam. 1:2; Kings 4:8-17). Here, however, there is a long interruption before the birth of Isaac at the beginning of Genesis 21. First, God announces to Abraham his intention to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham launches upon his memorable effort to bargain with God over the survival of the doomed cities, starting with the possibility of fifty righteous souls therein and working down to ten (18:17-33). The

1. I have followed out this particular type-scene in "How Convention Helps Us Read: The Case of the Bible's Annunciation Type-Scene," *Prooftexts* 3:2 (May 1983), 115-130. I first proposed the concept of type-scenes as a component of biblical narrative in *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York, 1981), ch. 3.

first half of chapter 19 tells the story of the destruction of Sodom, concluding with what looks like an etiological tale (to explain a geological oddity in the Dead Sea region) about Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt. The second half of the chapter is a very different kind of etiological tale, accounting for the origins of two trans-Jordanian peoples, the Moabites and the Ammonites, in the incestuous copulation of Lot and his daughters. The whole of chapter 20 is then taken up with the second of three versions of the sister-wife story: the patriarch in a southern kingdom (here, Abraham in Gerar) who proclaims that his wife is his sister, in consequence almost loses her to the local potentate, but in the end departs with wife intact, and heaped with riches by the would-be interloper. Since nowhere else are there such interruptions of the annunciation's fulfillment, we are surely entitled to ask what all this has to do with the promise of seed to Abraham. Let me suggest that in the view of the biblical writer, progeny for the first father of the future Israelites involved a whole tangle of far-reaching complications for the adumbration of which these three intervening episodes were necessary, and that Sodom, far from being an interruption of the saga of the seed of Abraham, is a major thematic nexus of the larger story.[2]

We should observe, to begin with, that the dialogue between Abraham and God in the second half of Genesis 18 sets up a connection between the covenantal promise and the story of Sodom by adding a new essential theme to the covenantal idea. The two previous enunciations of the covenant, which take up all of chapters 15 and 17, are ringing promises of progeny and little more: your seed, God assures the doubting Abraham, will be as innumerable as the stars in the heavens. The only condition hinted at is that Abraham remain a faithful party to the covenant but, remarkably, no *content* is given to this faithfulness. It looks almost as if a trap were set for the audience, encouraging them at first to think that the divine promise was a free gift, entered into through a solemn ritual (the sacrificial animal parts of chapter 15) and perpetually confirmed by still another ritual (the circumcision of chapter 17). Now, however, when God reaffirms the language of blessing and the future of nationhood in chapter 18, he adds this stipulation about Abraham and his posterity: "For I have singled him out (new JPS) so that he might instruct his sons and his family after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord *to do righteousness and justice*" (18:19, my emphasis). Survival and propagation, then, depend on the creation of a just society. This idea is immediately picked up as God goes on to warn Abraham of his intention to destroy the Cities of the Plain because of their pervasive wickedness. Abraham, aghast at the possibility that the righteous might be wiped out with the wicked, tosses back the very phrase God has just used about human ethical obligations: "Will the judge of all the earth not *do justice?*" (18:25). The echo of *shofet,* judge, and *mishpat,* justice, will then sound loudly in a jibe about Lot made by the citizens of Sodom, whom he has implored to desist from their violent intentions: "This fellow came to sojourn, and now he presumes to judge, yes, to judge" (19:9). The verb *shofet* also means "to rule," which may be its primary sense here, but the play with "doing justice" of the previous chapter is quite pointed: Sodom is a society without judge or justice, and a latecomer resident alien will hardly be allowed to act as *shofet* in any sense of the word.

As many commentators have noted, the hospitality scene between Abraham and the divine visitors at the beginning of Genesis 18 is paralleled by the hospitality scene between Lot and the two angels at the beginning of Genesis 19—paralleled with a nuance of difference, for Lot's language to the angels is more urgent, in a string of imperative verbs, less deferentially ceremonious than Abraham's language, and here the narrator gives us nothing like the details of the menu and the flurry of preparations for the feast that we are offered in the pastoral setting of the previous chapter. Lot's rather breathless hospitality—is he already scared by what could happen to strangers in his town?—is of course the single exception to the rule in Sodom. This story of the doomed city is crucial not only to Genesis but to the moral thematics of the Bible as a whole (compare the use of Sodom in Isaiah 1 and Judges 19) because it is the biblical version of anti-civilization, rather like Homer's islands of the Cyclops monsters where the inhabitants eat strangers instead of welcoming them. If we wondered momentarily what God had in mind when he told Abraham that the outrages of Sodom—literally, its "crying out"—were so great that they reached the very heavens, we now see all the male inhabitants

2. J. P. Fokkelman provides an excellent discussion on progeny and survival as organizing themes of Genesis in his article on that book in *The Harvard Literary Guide to the Bible,* ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (forthcoming).

of Sodom, from adolescent to dodderer, banging on Lot's door and demanding the right to gang-rape the two strangers. The narrator offers no comment on the homosexual aspect of the threatened act of violence, though it is safe to assume he expects us to consider that, too, abhorrent, but in regard to this episode's place in the larger story of progeny for Abraham, it is surely important that homosexuality is a necessarily sterile form of sexual intercourse, as though the proclivities of the Sodomites answered biologically to their utter indifference to the moral prerequisites for survival.

At this ominous point, in one of the most scandalous statements uttered by any character in ancient literature, Lot's daughters, not previously mentioned, are brought into the story. "Look," Lot tells the assailants, "I have two daughters who have not known a man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you want. But to these men do nothing, for they have come under the shadow of my roof-beam" (19:7). Some have sought to naturalize this outrageous offer by contending that in the ancient Near East the host-guest bond (someone coming under the shadow of your roof-beam) was sacred, conferring obligations that exceeded those of a man to his virgin daughters. The impassive narrator, as is his wont, offers no guidance on this question, but the unfolding of the story, and its contrastive connections with the surrounding narrative, cast doubt on this proposition that Lot was simply playing the perfect ancient Near Eastern host in rather trying circumstances. It is important for what happens at the end of the chapter that the two girls should be virgins, and Lot clearly imagines he is offering the rapists a special treat in proclaiming their virginity. What we are not told, in a shrewd maneuver of delayed exposition, is that both the girls are betrothed. This information is not divulged until verse 14, when Lot, at the angels' insistence, entreats his prospective sons-in-law to save themselves from the imminent destruction. Their response is to think Lot must be joking, *metsaheq,* the same verb of laughter that designates Abraham's and Sarah's response to the promise of progeny, and that here, in polar contrast, becomes a mechanism of skepticism that seals the doom of the two men. Now, at least according to later biblical law, the rape of a betrothed woman is a crime punishable by death (cf. Deut. 22:23-27), and it is reasonable to infer that Lot evinces a disquieting readiness here to serve as accomplice in the multiple enactment of a capital crime directed against his own daughters. The implicit judgment against Lot is then confirmed in the incest at the end of the chapter, to which we shall turn momentarily.

Let me first add a brief comment on the motif of sight and blindness, which helps structure the story thematically and also links it with the surrounding narrative. The transition to Sodom was first signaled visually when Abraham escorted the two visitors out on their way and they "looked down" on Sodom, far below in the Dead Sea plain (18:16). The conclusion of the destruction is symmetrically marked at 19:28 when the next morning Abraham, in the equivalent of a cinematic long shot, "looks down" (the same verb) on the Cities of the Plain and is able to discern columns of smoke rising from the distant ruins. In the Sodom story proper, the angels smite the assailants with blindness so that they are unable to find the door of Lot's house. Then, before carrying out the terrible devastation, the angels warn Lot not to look back; and, most famously, when his wife does just that, she is turned to a pillar of salt. I don't pretend to know precisely what this taboo—also attested to elsewhere—of looking back, or looking on the destruction, meant in the imagination of the ancient folk. I would observe, however, that the taboo against seeing has regular sexual associations in the Bible (as, of course, it also does in psychoanalytic terms). To "see the nakedness" of someone is the standard biblical euphemism for incest. Genesis 19 does not use that idiom, but this rampant mob struck with blindness at a closed door is, after all, seeking forbidden sexual congress, and the story ends with a tale of incest.

That episode (19:29-38) is presented in an unsettling manner of impassive factuality, the narrator providing no indication whether the double incest should in any way be condemned. It would sadly reduce the story to think of it simply as a satiric representation of the dubious origins of two enemy peoples, the Moabites and the Ammonites, for its more important function is to tie together several thematically significant connections with the immediate and larger context of biblical narrative. Lot, we recall, has fled with his two daughters to the city of Zoar, which, as a special dispensation for his sake, has alone been saved from destruction among the Cities of the Plain. But Lot is afraid to stay in Zoar, whether because he fears still another wave of cataclysm or Sodom-like behavior on the part of

the Zoarites, and so he flees once more with his daughters, this time to the rocky hill-country above the Dead Sea plain, where they take refuge in a cave. The despairing daughters—who, we should remember, enjoyed prenuptial status when we first encountered them—conclude that the whole country, or rather the whole earth (*erets*), has been laid waste, and that there is no man left to lie with them. On two successive nights, then, they get their father drunk, and, the first-born going first, each takes a turn in bed with him and is impregnated by him. Twice we are told that "he knew not when she lay down and got up," a wry play on the sexual meaning of the verb, for he knows his daughters well enough in the other sense, knows them without "seeing" them. Thus the man who precipitously offered his betrothed daughters to gang rape now is tricked into deflowering them himself.

"Propagation appears at the beginning of Genesis as a divinely ordained imperative for humanity. But as the moral plot of human history rapidly thickens into the most terrible twists of violence and perversion, it becomes progressively clear that propagation and survival are precarious matters, conditional, in the view of the Hebrew writers, on moral behaviour."

This strange story alludes to the aftermath of the Deluge, and that connection in turn may help us see why it is placed precisely here in the Abraham narrative. The destruction of the Cities of the Plain is a second Deluge: there, iniquitous humanity was destroyed by water; here, by fire. A concrete link between the two is probably suggested by the writer's choice of a graphic verb, "The Lord *rained down* on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord, from the heavens" (19:24). The framing of the sentence by repeating "the Lord" at both ends, and the odd syntactic obtrusion of "from the heavens" at the very end, reinforce this sense of cataclysm showering from heaven to earth (no earthquake this), like the earlier devastation when the floodgates of the heavens were flung open. After the Deluge, Noah plants a vineyard and forthwith gets drunk. It is precisely in his state of inebriation that Ham his son "sees his nakedness" (the idiom implicit in the alluding text is explicit in the text alluded to) and incurs his father's curse when Noah wakes from his drunken stupor and discovers what has happened. (There is a long tradition of exegetical opinion, whether right or wrong, that more than mere seeing has happened: many say, a sexual act, and in the opinion of some medieval exegetes, castration, which readily reminds us of analogues in Greek myth.) Interestingly, Ham's two brothers then cover their naked father with a cloak by walking backwards with it into the tent, taking care never to look behind them, in symmetrical contrast to the unfortunate Mrs. Lot (see Gen. 9:20-27).

The Noah-Lot conjunction brings us back to the notion of the physical survival of group or species made conditional on moral performance. Abraham, the man who has in this very sequence demonstrated his sense of justice by daring to call God himself to the standard of justice, has one son, by his concubine, and will soon have a second son by his legitimate wife. Against these, Lot has two daughters, who as daughters figure, alas, in ancient Near Eastern imagination more as conduits for male seed than as the true progeny itself. Beginning with the son to be born within the year, from Abraham's loins a great people will spring, destined to be a blessing, as God has repeatedly promised, to all the nations of the earth. Lot's daughters, imagining that a second cataclysm has laid waste all the earth, desperately conclude that the only way to "keep the seed alive" (19:32, 34) is by turning back to him who begot them. The propagation is carried out, but the two peoples that derive from it will carry the shadow of their incestuous origins in the (folk-) etymology of their names, Moab, from-the-father, and Benei Ammon, sons-of-kin; and perhaps we are encouraged to infer that in their historical destiny these peoples will be somehow trapped in their own inward circuit, a curse and not a blessing to the nations of the earth, in consonance with their first begetting.

At this point, it might seem logical for the narrative to revert to the fulfillment of the promise of offspring to Abraham. Instead, still another episode, taking up a whole chapter, intervenes. For the second time, Abraham goes to a southern kingdom, in this case Gerar in the Negev rather than Egypt and, as before, having announced that Sarah is his sister, finds she is taken into the harem of the local ruler. Now, it seems to me a piece of modern simplemindedness to say, as is conventionally done,

that since Abraham would appear to have learned nothing from the previous near-disaster in Egypt (Gen. 12:10-20), we must conclude that this is a duplication of sources, and a particularly clumsy one, at that. I do not think the biblical writers were concerned with consistent narrative verisimilitude in quite this way, or in any case, such concerns could be overridden by the requirements of what I shall call compositional logic. Let me stress that I am not addressing myself to the issue of whether this thrice-told tale originated in different sources but rather to the compositional effect the writer achieves in retelling it as he does. (I will set aside the third occurrence of the story in the Isaac narrative, Genesis 26, as beyond the scope of the present discussion.) For our purposes, it is important to note that the story of Abraham and Sarah in Gerar is strikingly different from the story of Abraham and Sarah in Egypt in regard to both details and expositional strategy. Most of these differences, as we shall see, flow directly from the placement of the Gerar story directly after the destruction of Sodom and before the birth of Isaac.

In Genesis 20, no mention is made of a famine as the reason for the patriarch's temporary sojourn in the south. And, indeed, a famine at this point, just after Abraham has been promised the imminent birth of a son and after the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, would throw the narrative out of balance, introducing still another catastrophe at the moment before the great fulfillment. Sarah's beauty, much stressed in Genesis 12 in conjunction with the clearly implied concupiscence of the Egyptians, is not referred to here. Perhaps that may be because of her advanced age at this point in the narrative, though I'm not sure this is a consideration that troubled the writer. In any case, there seems to be a desire to shift the emphasis from Sarah's sexual attractiveness to the mere fact that the future mother of Isaac is evidently appropriate to take into a harem. In this version, Abraham offers no explanation at the beginning for his odd stratagem of passing Sarah off as his sister ("lest they kill me for my wife"); that comes only at a late point in the story in his nervous attempt at self-exculpation to the offended Abimelech. Abimelech, in turn, is assigned a much more elaborate role than Pharaoh in the earlier version, and the terms of that role have a great deal to do, I think, with the immediately preceding story of Sodom.

When God appears to Abimelech in a dream to threaten him with death for taking a married woman (this, too, a contrast to Pharaoh, whose only communication from the Lord is through physical affliction), the Gerarite king responds in moral indignation: "Will you slay even innocent people?" (20:4). The Hebrew here is a little peculiar, for strategic reasons having to do with the two previous chapters. The word for innocent, *tsadiq,* also means righteous, and is the very term Abraham used when he challenged God: "Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked so that the righteous would be like the wicked. Far be it from you. Will not the judge of all the earth do justice?" (18:25). It is for this reason that death is threatened to Abimelech but not to Pharaoh, so that Abimelech can be made, in a brilliant ironic turn, to take up Abraham's own recently stated moral theme. Abimelech cries out against the possibility that God might slay a righteous "people" *(goy),* apparently referring to himself. As an idiom, this is anomalous enough in biblical Hebrew to have encouraged emendations of the text, but it is a word-choice that makes perfect sense against the backdrop of Sodom, where an entirely wicked people was destroyed. The Gerar story presents an initial parallel with the Sodom story that immediately swerves into sharp contrast. Here also, two strangers come into a town, and one of them is promptly seized for the purpose of sexual enjoyment—but then she has, after all, been passed off as an unmarried woman. The moment Abimelech discovers Sarah's actual status, he speaks as a model of conscience, and he scrupulously avoids touching her.

God identifies Abraham as a "prophet" with powers of intercession, which seems appropriate just after Abraham has made his great effort to intercede on behalf of Sodom. The punctilious Abimelech nevertheless feels, with some justice, that Abraham has behaved badly: "Things that should not be done you have done to me" (20:9). When Abraham finally responds (to the king's first challenge he remains silent, as though at a loss for words), he spells out his fears in the following language: "For I thought, surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me for my wife" (20:11). Abraham, in other words, assumes that Gerar is another Sodom, while Abimelech's behavior demonstrates that the contrary is true. The issue of judge and justice first raised in chapter 18 is here seen to involve a shifting interplay of peoples and performance,

with by no means all instance of justice set up on the side of Abraham and his seed. For this reason, the livestock and slaves that Abraham acquires in Egypt seem to accrue to him almost without an agency except the divine one (Gen. 12:16), whereas here we witness Abimelech both performing and announcing acts of munificence, and adding, to boot, a thousand pieces of silver to the livestock and slaves.

There is one final way in which the Gerar story diverges from the Egypt story that most vividly illustrates how carefully the latter episode has been placed in the surrounding narrative configuration. Of Pharaoh we are told that the Lord afflicted him and his household with "great plagues" *(negaim)*. The nature of these plagues is not specified, but surely the term is used to heighten the effect of foreshadowing in Genesis 12, which looks forward far more directly than does Genesis 20 to a time when Abraham's descendants, once more threatened with starvation, will sojourn in Egypt and will need God to heap plagues on Pharaoh and his people in order to obtain their release from enslavement. (It is fitting that this most explicit adumbration of the sojourn in Egypt should be placed at the very beginning of the Patriarchal narratives.) In Gerar, on the other hand, we are first told not of plagues but only of a death-threat by God—significantly, a threat not only to Abimelech but to his entire household, or perhaps his entire people—which, as I have indicated, aligns the story with the destruction of Sodom. Then, at the very end of the episode, it is revealed that Abimelech and his whole palace have in fact also been suffering from an affliction ever since Sarah entered the harem, an affliction of a specified character: "For the Lord had closed fast every womb in the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife" (20:18). The very next words in the text—we should keep in mind that in the ancient scroll there would have been no indication of the chapter-break introduced by a much later tradition—are, "and the Lord remembered Sarah as he had promised." Indeed, given the perfect tense of the verb and the reversal of the usual predicate-subject order, the actual implication of the statement, within the paratactic constraints of biblical Hebrew, is something like: But in contrast, God remembered Sarah as he had promised.

Propagation appears at the beginning of Genesis as a divinely ordained imperative for humanity. But as the moral plot of human history rapidly thickens into the most terrible twists of violence and perversion, it becomes progressively clear that propagation and survival are precarious matters, conditional, in the view of the Hebrew writers, on moral behavior. This idea is first manifested on a global scale in the Deluge story, and we have seen why the writer feels it is important to invoke the Deluge in his representation of the aftermath of Sodom. Precisely because of the biblical writer's sense of history as an arena fraught with danger, it would be too simple, too smooth, for the narrative of the founding father to proceed uninterrupted from divine promise to the initiation of the covenanted people through the birth of a son. Unusual shadows must be cast over the way to fulfillment. The first of these is biological: the extreme old age of the patriarch, and especially, of the matriarch, which has no equivalent in any of the other annunciation type-scenes. Beyond that, the three intervening episodes of the destruction of Sodom, the act of incest between Lot and his daughters, and the sojourn in Gerar convey to us an urgent new sense of perilous history which is the thematically needed prelude to the birth of Abraham's son. As the biblical imagination conceives it, neither national existence nor the physical act of propagation itself can be taken for granted. A society that rejects the moral bonds of civilization for the instant gratification of dark urges can be swept away in a moment; the elemental desire for survival in a seemingly desolate world may drive people to desperate means, to a kind of grim parody of the primeval command to be fruitful and multiply; the very danger of illicit sexuality may blight a kingdom with sterility, until the favored man intercedes, the near violation of the stranger woman is transformed into princely reparation, and the innocent intentions of the afflicted man are publicly recognized. The historical scene Isaac is about to enter is indeed a checkered one, and he and his offspring will have troubles enough of their own, in regard to both moral performance and physical survival.

As to the larger unfolding design of biblical literature, Sodom, firmly lodged between the enunciation of the covenantal promise and its fulfillment, becomes the great monitory model, the myth of a terrible collective destiny antithetical to Israel's. The biblical writers will rarely lose sight of the ghastly possibility that Israel can turn itself into

Sodom. When Isaiah, having begun his prophecy by mordantly referring to Israel as "sons" who have betrayed their father, goes on to liken the people to Sodom and Gomorrah, we are meant, I think, to recall the full tension of interplay between Genesis 19 and Genesis 17-18 (sons). Still more shockingly, when the author of Judges 19 wants to represent in the Benjaminites at Gibeah a wholly depraved society, he adopts a strategy of elaborate allusion, borrowing not only the narrative predicament of two strangers taken in by the only hospitable inhabitant of a violently hostile town but also reproducing nearly verbatim whole sequences of narratorial phrases and dialogue from Genesis 19. Here the host has but one virgin daughter to offer to the mob in place of the demanded male visitor, and so he makes up the tally of two proffered women by adding the visitor's concubine. This being a version of Sodom without divine intervention, the denouement is grimmer. The visitor is no angel in any sense of the term, and instead of striking the assailants with blindness, he thrusts his concubine out into the street where she is gang-raped all night long. At daybreak he finds her expiring on the threshold, and compounding the real act of mayhem with a symbolic one, he hacks her body into twelve pieces which he sends to the tribes of Israel in order to rally them against Benjamin. As we might expect, the writer has drawn from the Sodom story not only the grisly plot but also its principal thematic ramifications. The Gibeah story, like that of Sodom,[3] is prefaced by two hospitality episodes: the lavish and finally importunate hospitality of the concubine's father to the estranged couple, and then the ill-fated hospitality of the old man—like Lot, not a native of the place but a resident alien—at Gibeah. The depravity of the town results in its destruction, not through supernatural means but in a bloody civil war (Judges 20). And here, too, what is finally at issue is the survival of the group. Thus we have the peculiar story in Judges 21 of the tribes of Israel taking a vow not to give their daughters in marriage to the Benjaminites, which places the latter in the male equivalent of the plight of Lot's daughters, who fear "there is no man on earth to lie with us." The tribes then regret their vow, fearing that "a tribe of Israel will be cut off," and so they are compelled to devise two rather bizarre strategems, the first a violent one, for providing the Benjaminites brides. One is not sure whether the very end of the Lot story, in which taboo copulation produces ambiguous offspring, is meant to be part of the pattern of allusion. In any case, this extraordinary instance of Sodom *redux*, where pervasive viciousness triggers an upheaval that calls a people's futurity into question, provides a fitting conclusion to the Book of Judges as an account of the chaotic period when "there was no king in Israel, each man did what was right in his own eyes."

3. I was first alerted to the fact that the hospitality episode of Genesis 18 is part of the pattern of allusion through an astute seminar paper by Nitza Kreichman.

"Historical and moral reality was . . . too untidy, too quirky, too precipitously changeable, to lend itself to the schematism of a highly defined structure. At the same time, there was nothing purely fortuitous, nothing intrinsically episodic in reality and everything, however perplexing, was ultimately linked to everything else in the large movement of God's purpose through the difficult medium of history."

What may be inferred from the example of Sodom about the way the various pieces, small and large, of biblical narrative fit together? The tendency of more than a century of scholarly analysis has been powerfully atomistic, encouraging us to imagine the Bible as a grand jumble of the most disparate and often contradictory materials. In strictly literary terms, this is a conclusion that simply does not hold up under a close inspection of the sundry texts and their interconnections. There are, of course, elements of overlap and incongruity between different texts; but one should not mistake every allusion or recurrence of a convention for a stammer of ancient transmission, and what is often called a "contradiction" may prove to be either the imposition of provincially modern norms of consistency or, as in the case of the sister-bride story, may be an inconsistency deemed secondary by the writer to the primary concern of thematic composition. In the foregoing discussion, I have edged away from the term "structure" because it may suggest an architectural solidity and symmetry not entirely characteristic of biblical narrative. *Tom Jones* is a book that pre-eminently has a structure; I doubt if one could say the same of the Book of Genesis, not

to speak of the larger narrative sequence that runs from Genesis to the end of Kings. Nevertheless, the way the Sodom episode reaches back multifariously into the Abraham narrative, and further still to the Deluge and ultimately the creation story, and forward to the future history of Israel, suggests that there is elaborate if irregular design in this large complex of stories. It might be better to think of it less as structure than as finely patterned texture, in which seemingly disparate pieces are woven together, with juxtaposed segments producing among them a pattern that will be repeated elsewhere with complicated variations.

Perhaps it could not have been otherwise for the Hebrew writers. Historical and moral reality was in their sense of it too untidy, too quirky, too precipitously changeable, to lend itself to the schematism of a highly defined structure. At the same time, there was nothing purely fortuitous, nothing intrinsically episodic, in reality: everything, however perplexing, was ultimately linked to everything else in the large movement of God's purpose through the difficult medium of history. Let me suggest that this tension between the baffling untidiness of the surface and deep design is worked out formally in the very texture of biblical narrative in the way each of its seemingly discrete units is tied in to what goes before and after. It is easy enough to admire the artistry of biblical narrative within the limits of an episode, and much keen analysis in recent years has been devoted to just that task. But it is equally important to see how the episode is purposefully woven into larger patterns of motifs, symbols, and themes, keywords, key phrases and plots, for otherwise we are likely to under-read the individual episodes and grasp at best imperfectly the broader horizon of meaning toward which the biblical writers mean to lead us. □

The Lesson of the Vietnam War

HAROLD JACOBS

On April 30, 1975, the Vietnam war ended. Twenty years of American effort to create an anti-Communist South Vietnam had resulted in an unmitigated defeat. The fall of Saigon, while a glorious culmination of hardship and struggle for the victors, was a traumatic, divisive, and remorseful experience for tens of millions of Americans. When South Vietnamese President Duong Van Minh unconditionally surrendered to the Communist forces, Colonel Bui Tin, who accepted the surrender from Minh, remarked, "You have nothing to fear. Between Vietnamese there are not victors and no vanquished. Only the Americans have been beaten."[1]

But not all Americans viewed the ending of the Vietnam war as a defeat. Those who were active in the anti-war movement experienced the outcome of the war as both a validation of their politics and an act of social justice. They had opposed American military intervention in the name of what they took to be higher values: the right of the Vietnamese people to self-determination and national independence. They viewed the American effort as illegal, immoral, and unjust: they anticipated that with the withdrawal of the American presence a policy of national unity and reconstruction would be implemented in keeping with the promises made to the Vietnamese people during the war by the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP), the National Liberation Front (NLF), and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam (PRG).[2]

What instead followed in the wake of the Communist battlefield victory in Vietnam was the replacement by the VCP of the above set of goals for others, namely, forced reunification and the rapid socialization of the south. Critics, both from within and without Vietnam, have maintained that the April 25, 1976 reunification elections to an all-Vietnam National Assembly were far from democratic. Moreover, the elections occurred against a backdrop of widespread political manipulation and repression.[3] By the end of 1978, the world witnessed a growing exodus of Vietnamese boat people and the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.

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The Reagan administration in its eagerness to reverse the non-interventionist tendencies in American foreign policy that grew out of the defeat in Vietnam—the so-called Vietnam syndrome—has seized upon post-war events in Vietnam to argue that devoid of the American presence, Vietnam has turned into a gulag and an aggressor state and that, therefore, the anti-war movement had been deluded and wrong in opposing the United States' war aims in Vietnam. Unreconstructed critics of the Vietnam war maintain that, however much they might deplore unnecessary or arbitrary restrictions on personal freedom, the outcome of the Vietnamese revolution is a matter for the Vietnamese to work out for themselves and in no way justifies past or future American interference in Vietnamese affairs.

This debate has more than academic significance. Washington's strategy of global counter-revolution is the outcome of a post-World War II foreign policy aimed at containing or defeating popular revolutionary movements in the Third World. Successive American administrations, disguising their neo-colonial ambitions by giving lip service to democratic values, have sought to deny to radical nations the very self-determination and national independence that America has traditionally claimed for itself. As the United States seeks to aggressively assert its anti-Communist objectives throughout the Third World through its protected and subsidized surrogates and to pursue these objectives by military means, the Vietnam war takes on added meaning. Will some hapless nation, now or in the future, have to go through the devastation and immeasurable suffering imposed upon the Vietnamese people in order to curb America's global ambitions and military interventions? Hopefully, the lesson of Vietnam will instead prevail.

The sordid history of the United States' intervention in Vietnam is well-documented; the "facts"

1. As quoted in John S. Bowman (ed.), *The Vietnam War: An Almanac* (New York: World Almanac Publications, 1985), p. 345.
2. See Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up? American Protest Against the War in Vietnam 1963-1975* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985).
3. For a critique of these developments, see Truong Nhu Tang, *A Viet Cong Memoir: An Inside Account of the Vietnam War and Its Aftermath* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), pp. 259-282. For a defense of these developments, see Wilfred Burchett, *Grasshoppers & Elephants: Why Vietnam Fell* (New York: Urizen Books, 1977), pp. 248-258.

are generally not in dispute.[4] The movement for national liberation in Vietnam, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh, sought to build an independent and unified Vietnam. In August 1945, the Viet Minh took power throughout all Vietnam, north as well as south, and declared the country free of French colonial control. The French responded by waging a nine year war to re-colonize what was now the independent state of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). While American interest in Indo-China dates back to President Roosevelt, direct American involvement begins with the defeat of the French at Dienbienphu in 1954. A succession of Presidents from Eisenhower up until Nixon became increasingly committed to containing the Communist movement in Vietnam by creating a separate anti-Communist state in the south.

Whatever claims the United States made about fostering democracy in Vietnam were belied by its support for French colonialism, having largely paid for the French war effort, and by its sponsorship of a series of repressive and corrupt regimes in South Vietnam, beginning in 1954 with that of Ngo Dinh Diem. During the course of the war, the United States utilized a variety of political, military, and economic strategies to achieve its goals, including: the creation of a large army and a police state in the south; the formation and manipulation of a series of client regimes in the south; depopulation of the countryside in the south to deprive the guerrillas of their base of support; enormous infusions of military and economic aid; the gradual introduction of over a half-million United States combat troops; the carpet bombing of the north. The stupendous fire power, the chemical defoliation of the countryside, the vast demographic upheavals, the intrusion of an alien culture, the devastating psychological and economic impact of the war—all contributed to the disintegration of the social fabric of South Vietnam. But the dubious and self-serving arguments the United States used to justify its military intervention and escalations could not hide the simple fact that America was waging a counter-revolutionary war to prevent a Communist regime from consolidating its power after a long and arduous anti-colonial struggle.

The price the United States was willing to pay, in casualties and dollars, to achieve its anti-communist aims in Vietnam was tremendous. Approximately 58,000 Americans lost their lives in Vietnam and 314,000 were wounded; South Vietnam reported approximately 186,000 military personnel killed in the war and 500,000 wounded; North Vietnam and the NLF lost approximately 1,000,000 dead in combat; Vietnam, as a whole, is estimated to have lost over 400,000 civilians in the war and suffered at least 935,000 wounded. The total tonnage of bombs dropped by the United States over North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos came to about 8 million (approximately four times the tonnage used in World War II by all sides). The war cost the United States $150 billion in direct expenses, while indirect expenses would total at least that and probably more.[5]

Instead of the peace with honor President Nixon claimed to be pursuing, this dishonorable war had a more fitting end—defeat with disgrace for the United States. It should come as no surprise that the anti-war movement refuses to retract its opposition to the brutal and massive acts of American aggression that occurred in Vietnam. Nor will it allow these criminal acts to be forgotten or reinterpreted so as to whitewash the records of those individuals responsible for the tragedy.

Although the United States lost the war, the devastation it caused left Vietnam in ruins and with seemingly intractable problems. The reunification of the country now known as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) was completed in 1976. The VCP had gone back on its pledge to allow the south to carry out a national democratic revolution, led by the NLF and the PRG, suitable to the south's own situation. Unification with the socialist revolution in the north was to have taken place gradually on the basis of equality and respect for the characteristics of each zone and without coercion by either side. The VCP instead forthrightly exercised its power, based on its control of the armed forces, to create as soon as was feasible a unified socialist state. The decision of the VCP to move rapidly toward socialist transformation without an extended period of transition exacerbated the economic crisis produced by the war. Economic difficulties and widespread political disillusionment with the

4. For a useful sketch of the history of the Vietnam war, see Jayne Werner, "A Short History of the Vietnam War," *Monthly Review* 37, no. 2 (June 1985), pp. 14-21. For a comprehensive history of the Vietnam war, see Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War: Vietnam, the United States, and the Modern Historical Experience* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985).

5. All estimates are taken from John S. Bowman (ed.), *The Vietnam War*, p. 358.

heavy-handed manner in which the unification and national reconciliation policies were carried out by the VCP led, by the late seventies, to the exodus of over 100,000 boat people from Vietnam and to a pervasive sense of alienation among all sectors of Vietnamese society. Vietnam's difficulties stem from a variety of other sources, as well—regional entanglements in Cambodia and conflict with Communist China; the high cost of maintaining the fourth largest military establishment; and the economic embargo imposed by the advanced capitalist states of the West.[6]

Not only was the economy a casualty of the war and rigid ideology, so too was the future of the promised national democratic revolution. The VCP had gone back on its pledge to allow the south to carry out a national democratic revolution, led by the NLF and the PRG, suitable to the south's own situation. Unification with the socialist revolution in the north neither took place gradually on the basis of equality and respect for the characteristics of each zone nor without coercion by the VCP. The result, as the former Minister of Justice of the PRG, Truong Nhu Tang, declared from exile in Paris, was that: "Instead of national reconciliation and independence, Ho Chi Minh's successors have given us a country devouring its own and beholden once again to foreigners, though now it is the Soviets rather than the Americans."[7] Within a year after the end of the Vietnam war, counterrevolutionaries and those opposing immediate reunification and socialism were disenfranchised.[8] Some 300,000 people, made up mostly of officers, state officials, and party leaders from the defeated regime in the south, were arrested and sent to re-education camps. It appears their incarceration was extended well beyond the government's pledge of thirty days, even to the point of years. Moreover, since neither a uniform code of law Vietnamese revolution is a matter for the Vietnamese to work out for themselves and in no way justifies past or future Ameriorities gave precedence to its consolidation of power rather than to the reconstruction of the country, outrages of every description were perpetrated by the government in the early post-war years.[9]

6. William J. Duiker, "Vietnam in 1985: Searching for Solutions," *Asian Survey* XXVI, no. 1 (January, 1986), pp. 102-111.
7. Truong Nhu Tang, *A Viet Cong Memoir*, p. 310.
8. Wilfred Burchett, *Grasshoppers & Elephants*, pp. 248-251.
9. Truong Nhu Tang, *A Viet Cong Memoir*, pp. 280-282.

However much the anti-war movement may justifiably deplore post-war developments in Vietnam, they must be understood in the context of the American intervention. Just as many people today argue that the original socialist vision of the founders of Israel would have had a much better chance of fulfillment had Israel not been faced with implacable military foes, so it is reasonable to argue that the massive acts of barbarism perpetrated by the United States in Vietnam decisively distorted the direction that otherwise might have been followed by the VCP. It is hard to imagine the trauma created by a war that caused over 1.5 million Vietnamese deaths and another 1.5 million Vietnamese wounded. Moreover, the vast destruction of the peasantry, the countryside and the arable land through systematic bombings and defoliations created a food crisis and a social crisis that would have staggered any leadership no matter how well intentioned. Americans are being hypocritical and immoral if they now point a finger of blame at the very society that they did so much to destroy.

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The distortions in Vietnamese life are not a product of the anti-war movement's naivete. If anything, they are a result of twenty years of intransigence by successive American administrations to accepting anything short of a battlefield solution in Vietnam. The tempo and manner of reunification in Vietnam would have been totally different had the United States permitted the implementation of the January 27, 1973 Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam signed by representatives of the DRV, the United States, the PRG, and the Republic of Vietnam.[10] Those disenfranchised in the south after the war by the VCP would then have had a hand in drafting the conditions under which elections for a South Vietnamese National Assembly would take place, and that body would have decided for or against reunification and socialism. Moreover, had victory come to the NLF as a result of an earlier American withdrawal prompted by the massive anti-war demonstrations in 1966 and 1967, the NLF and other

10. Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War*, pp. 431-453.

progressive forces in the south would have been in a much stronger position to define their own path.

The Vietnam war demonstrates that if the United States is willing to inflict almost unlimited carnage on a country, that is, if the United States is willing to massively bomb civilian populations and destroy the ecology and life support systems of a society, then it can succeed in leaving behind punishing socio-economic damage. In that situation, people trying to rebuild the country afterwards may find themselves resorting to undemocratic methods and may even abandon some of the goals that originally led them into battle. But it is truly ironical when the very society that inflicts that violence and pain on another then turns around and uses the distortions thereby generated as proof that their aggression was right in the first place. This has overtones of the kind of thinking that led Nazi concentration camp guards to dehumanize their victims and then use the resulting dehumanized regressions on the part of *some* of their victims as proof that these victims were subhuman after all and therefore deserved the mass murder being prepared for them.

The real lesson of Vietnam is that military superiority does not guarantee political victory. The United States has shown, and continues to demonstrate in Nicaragua, that it can impose tremendous hardship and suffering on a people struggling for their own self-determination and national independence and even undermine their ability to create the society they desire.[11] But if there are no limits to American arrogance, there are at least limits to American power. America's inability to cope with the strategies of a protracted people's war in Vietnam, even when in command of the most formidable array of arms, caused it to suffer the greatest military reversal in American history. The Vietnamese have shown that what ordinary people think and do, as they struggle to overcome overwhelming obstacles and take their future into their own hands, can make a profound difference and must be entered into the account of realpolitik. Similarly, the anti-war movement demonstrated that the American government cannot wage an extended and bloody war that is perceived as unjust by a significant number of its own people, or at least that it cannot do so without paying a costly political price. The United States can throw its weight around, but that does not mean it can thereby obtain its desired consequences.

"Those who marched and demonstrated, who went to jail or who were shot, who gave up jobs or postponed careers for the sake of insisting that the U.S. leave Vietnam alone, should indeed be proud that they stood on the side of a morality that still commands our respect."

"No more Vietnams" should not mean, as the Reagan administration maintains, that the United States must succeed where it previously failed. This is a vain hope based on a serious misreading of what happened in Vietnam. Rather it should mean that America should no longer seek to impose on other nations through military power the kind of regime it thinks would be in America's best interest. If the anti-war movement of the sixties helped bring this understanding into political consciousness, and if the resistance to United States military intervention in Nicaragua is in part a result of that legacy, those who marched and demonstrated, who went to jail or were shot, who gave up jobs or postponed careers for the sake of insisting that the United States leave Vietnam alone, should indeed be proud that they stood on the side of a morality that still commands our respect. □

11. William I. Robinson and Kent Norsworthy, "Nicaragua: The Strategy of Counterrevolution," *Monthly Review* 37, no. 7 (December 1985), pp. 11-24. The authors note that: "According to the Ministry of the President, in addition to the more than 12,000 deaths, direct and indirect economic losses resulting from the war are over $1.3 billion, an overwhelming amount for a country of 3 million inhabitants, one that earns less than $400 million per year in foreign exchange."

Travels of the Last Benjamin of Tudela

YEHUDA AMICHAI
edited and translated by
STEPHEN MITCHELL

You ate and were filled, you came
in your twelfth year, in the Thirties
of the world, with short pants
that reached down to your knees,
tassels dangling from your undershawl
sticky between your legs in the sweltering land.
Your skin still smooth, without protective hair.
The brown, round eyes you had, according
to the pattern of ripe cherries, will get used to
oranges. Orange scents. Innocence.
Clocks were set, according
to the beats of the round heart, train tracks
according to the capacity of children's feet.

And silently, like a doctor and mother, the days bent over me
and started to whisper to one another, while the grass
already was laid flat by the bitter wind
on the slope of hills I will never walk on again.
Moon and stars and ancient deeds of grownups
were placed on a high shelf beyond
my arm's reach;
and I stood in vain underneath the forbidden bookshelves.
But even then I was marked for annihilation like an orange scored
for peeling, like chocolate, like a hand-grenade for explosion and death.
The hand of fate held me, aimed. My skies were the
inside of the soft palm wrapped around me, and on the outside:
rough skin, hard stars, protruding veins,
airplane routes, black hairs, mortar-shell trajectories
in silence or in wailing, in black or in radiant flares.
And before I was real and lingering here
the heart's shoulders carried an anguish not mine.
and from somewhere else ideas entered, slowed-down
and with a deep rumble, like a train
into the hollow, listening station.

You were educated in a Montessori kindergarten. They taught you
to love doing things alone, with your own hands
they educated you for loneliness. You masturbated
in secret: nocturnal emissions, diurnal additions. "I'll tell your father."

Yehuda Amichai is the leading poet in Israel.

Rosh Hashana halls echoey and hollow, and white
Yom Kippur machines made of bright metal, cogwheels
of prayers, a conveyor belt of prostrations and bows
with a menacing buzz. You have sinned, you have gone astray
inside a dark womb shaped like the dome of a synagogue,
the round, primordial cave of prayer,
the holy ark, gaping open, blinded you
in a third-degree interrogation. Do you confess? Do you confess?
I confess before Thee in the morning with the sun out. What's your name? Do you
surrender? You have transgressed, you are guilty, are you alive?
How do you? ("Do you love me?") You have remembered, you have forgotten.

You came via Haifa. The harbor was new, the child was new.
You lay on your belly, not so you could kiss the holy ground,
but to duck from of the shots of 1936. British soldiers
wearing cork sun-helmets of a great empire,
envoys of a crumbling kingdom, opened for you
the new kingdom of your life. "What's your name?" Soldiers
opened for you with arms of engraved tattoo: a dragon, a woman's breasts
and thighs, a knife and a primeval coiled serpent, a large
rose and a girl's buttocks. Since then the tattoo's
words and pictures have been sinking into you, without being seen
on the outside. The words sink further and further in a continuous
engraving and pain, down to your soul, which is itself an inscribed scroll
rolled up like a mezuzah the whole length of your inner body.
You have become a collector of pains in the tradition of this land.
"My God, my God, why?" Hast thou forsaken me. My God, my God. Even then
he had to be called twice. The second call
was already like a question, out of a first doubt: my God?

I haven't said the last word yet. I haven't
eaten yet and already I'm filled. My cough isn't
from smoke or from illness. It is a concentrated

and time-saving form of question.
Whatever happened is as though it never happened and all the rest
I don't know. Perhaps it is written in the difficult books on the shelf,
in the concordances of pain and in the dictionaries of joy,
in the encyclopedias with pages stuck together like eyes that don't want
to let go of their dream at dawn, in the terrible volumes of correspondence
between Marx/Engels, I/you, God/he,
in the Book of Job, in the difficult words. Verses
that are deep cuts in my flesh. Wounds long
and red from whip lashes, wounds filled with white salt, like the meat
that my mother would salt and kosher so that there wouldn't be any blood,
just pink blood-soaked salt, just pains that are
a searing knowledge, *kashrut* and purity.
The rest—unknown and estrangement in the dark.
Like the brothers in Egypt
we will wait, bending down in the darkness of our knees, hiding
submissive faces, till the world can't hold back any longer
and weeps and cries out: I am Joseph your brother! I am the world!

In the year the war broke out I passed by your mother's belly
in which you were sitting already then curled up as in the nights with me.
The rhythm of orange-grove pumps and the rhythm of shots were our rhythm.
It's starting! Light and pain, iron and dust and stones.
Stones and flesh and iron in changing combinations
of matter. Render unto matter that which is matter's. Dust, dust,
from man thou art and unto man shalt thou return. It's starting!
My blood flows in many colors and pretends to be red
when it bursts outside. The navel of the beloved, also,
is an eye to foresee the End of Days. End and beginning in her body.
Two creases in the right buttock, one crease in the left,
glittering eyeglasses next to white skin of belly, an eyebrow
arched in the scream of the eye, black soft silk over
taut skin of heavy thighs. Shoulder distinct
and prominent, crossed by a strap of strict black cloth.
Shoulder and shoulder, flesh and flesh, dust and dust.

All the days of his life my father tried to make a man of me,
so that I'd have a hard face like Kosygin and Brezhnev,
like generals and admirals and stockbrokers and financiers,
all the unreal fathers I've established
instead of my father, in the soft land of the "seven kinds"
(not just two, male and female, but seven kinds
beyond us, more lustful, harder and more deadly than we are).
I have to screw onto my face the expression of a hero
like a lightbulb screwed into the grooves of its hard socket,
to screw in and to shine.
All the days of his life my father tried to make
a man of me, but I always slip back
into the softness of thighs and the yearning to say the daily blessing
who hath made me according to his will. And his will is woman.
My father was afraid to say a wasted blessing.
To say *who hath created the fruit of the tree* and not eat the apple.
To bless without loving. To love without being filled.
I ate and wasn't filled and didn't say the blessing.
The days of my life spread out and separate from one another:
in my childhood there were still stories of kings and demons
and blacksmiths; now, glass houses and sparkling
spaceships and radiant silences that have no hope.
My arms are stretched out to a past not mine and a future not mine.
It's hard to love, it's hard to embrace
with arms like that.
Like a butcher sharpening knife on knife,
I sharpen heart on heart inside me. The hearts
get sharper and sharper until they vanish, but the movement of my soul remains
the movement of the sharpener, and my voice is lost in the sound of metal.

Sometimes I want to go back
to everything I had, as in a museum,
when you go back not in the order
of the eras, but in the opposite direction, against the arrow,
to look for the woman you loved.
Where is she? The Egyptian Room,
the Far East, the Twentieth Century, Cave Art,
everything jumbled together, and the worried
guards calling after you:
You can't go against the eras! Stop!
The exit's over here! You won't learn from this,
you know you won't. You're searching, you're forgetting.
As when you hear a military band
marching in the street and you stand there and hear it moving
farther and farther away. Slowly, slowly its sounds
fade in your ears: first the cymbals, then
the trumpets hush,
then the oboes set in the distance,
then the sharp flutes and the

little drums; but for a very long time
the deep drums remain,
the tune's skeleton and heartbeat, until
they too. And be still, selah. Amen, selah.

Forty-two light-years and forty-
two dark-years. Gourmand and glutton,
guzzling and swilling like the last Roman emperors
in the second-hand history books, scrawls of demented painting
and the writing on the wall in bathrooms,
chronicles of heroism and conquest and decline
and vain life and vain death.
Coups and revolts and the suppression of revolts
during the banquet. In a nightgown, transparent
and waving, you rose in revolt against me, hair
flying like a flag above and hair bristling below.
Ta-da, ta-daaaaaaa! Broken pieces of a bottle
and a shofar's long blast. Suppression of the revolt with
a garter-belt, strangulation with sheer stockings,
stoning with the sharp heels of evening-shoes.
Battles of a gladiator armed with a broken bottle neck
against a net of delicate petticoats, shoes
against treacherous organdy, tongue against prong,
half a fish against half a woman. Straps and buttons,
the tangle of bud-decorated bras with buckles
and military gear. Shofar-blast and the suppression of it.
Soccer shouts from the nearby field,
and I was placed upon you, heavy and quiet
like a paperweight, so that time and the wind
wouldn't be able to blow you away from here
and scatter you like scraps of paper, like hours.

"Where do you feel your soul inside you?"
Stretched between my mouth-hole and my asshole,
a white thread, not transparent mist,
cramped in some corner between two bones,
in pain.
When it is full it disappears, like a cat.
I belong to the last generation of
those who know body and soul separately.
"What do you think you'll do tomorrow?"
I can't kick the habit of myself. I gave up
smoking and drinking and my father's God:
I gave up everything that might accelerate my end.

The smell of the new bicycle I was given
when I was a child is still in my nostrils, the blood
hasn't dried yet and already I'm searching for calm, for other gods,
gods of order, as in the order of Passover night: the four
questions and their ready-made answer, reward and punishment,
the ten plagues, the four mothers, egg, shankbone, bitter herbs,
everything in order, the one kid, the familiar soup, the reliable
matzohballs, nine months of pregnancy, forty
plagues on the sea. And the heart trembling a little
like the door for Elijah the Prophet,
neither open nor closed. "And it came to pass at midnight." Now
the children have been put to bed. In their sleep
they still hear the sounds
of chewing and grinding: the world's big eat.
The sound of swallowing is the sound of history,
belch and hiccup and gnawing of bones are the sounds of history,
bowel-movements are its movements. The digestion. In the digestion
everything begins to look like everything else:
brother and sister, a man and his dog, good people and bad people,
flower and cloud, shepherd and sheep, ruler and ruled
descend into likeness. My experimental life also is descending. Everything
descends into the terrible likeness. Everything is the fruit of the bowels.

[*Turn around now.*] Ladies and gentlemen, observe the hollow
passing down the back and deepening between the buttocks. Who
can say where these begin and where
the thighs end; here are the bold buttresses
of the pelvis, columns of legs,
and the curlicues of a Hellenistic gate
above the vagina. The Gothic arch that reaches
toward the heart and like a reddish Byzantine flame between
her legs. [*Bend down into a perfect arabesque.*]
A crusader influence is evident in the hard jawbones,
in the prominent chin. She touches the earth with both palms
without bending her knees, she touches
the earth that I didn't kiss when I was brought to it
as a child. Come again, ladies and gentlemen, visit
the promised land, visit my tears and the east wind,
which is the true Western Wall. It's made of
huge wind-stones, and the weeping is the wind's, and the papers
whirling in the air are the supplications that I stuck between
the cracks. Visit the land. On a clear day,
if the visibility is good, you can see
the great miracle of my child
holding me in his arms, though he is four
and I am forty-four.
And here is the zoo of the great beloved,
acres of love. Hairy animals breathing
in cages of net underwear, feathers and brown
hair, red fish with green eyes,

hearts isolated behind the bars of ribs
and jumping around like monkeys, hairy fish,
snakes in the shape of a round fat thigh.
And a body burning with a reddish glow, covered
with a damp raincoat. That is soothing.

I want to make a bet with Job,
about how God and Satan will behave.
Who will be the first to curse man.
Like the red of sunset in Job's mouth,
they beat him and his last word
sets in redness into his last face.
That's how I left him in the noisy station
in the noise, among the loudspeaker's voices.
"Go to hell, Job. Cursed by the day
when you were created in my image. Go fuck your
mother, Job."
God cursed, God blessed. Job won. And I
have to kill myself with the toy pistol
of my small son.

I lived for two months in Abu Tor inside the silence,
I lived for two weeks in the Valley of Gehenna,
in a house that was destroyed after me and in another
house
that had an additional story built on it, and in a house
whose
collapsing walls were supported, as I
was never supported. A house hath preeminence over a
man.
Sit *shiva* now, get used to a low seat
from which all the living will seem to you like towers.
A eulogy is scattered in the wind-cursed city, old
Jerusalem clamors in the stillness of evil gold.
Incantations
of yearning. The air of the valleys is lashed by olive
branches
to new wars, olives black and
hard as the knots in a whip, there is no hope between
my eyes, there is no hope between my legs in the double
domes of my lust. Even the Torah portion for my Bar
Mitzvah
was double, *Insemination / Leprosy*, and tells
of skin diseases shining with wounded colors,
with death-agony red and the Sodom-sulfur yellow of
pus.
Muttered calculations of the apocalypse, numerology of
tortures,
sterile acrostics of oblivion, a chess game
with twenty-four squares of disgust.
And Jerusalem too is like a cauldron cooking up a swampy
porridge, and all her buildings are swollen bubbles,
eyeballs bulging from their sockets,
the shape of a dome, of a tower, of a flat or sloping roof,
all are bubbles before bursting. And God
takes the prophet who happens to be near him at the
moment,
and as if with a wooden spoon he stirs it up, stirs and stirs.

I'm sitting here now with my father's eyes
and with my mother's graying hair on my head, in a house
that belonged to an Arab, who bought it
from an Englishman, who took it from a German,
who hewed it out of the stones of Jerusalem which is my
city;
I look at the world of the god of others
who received it from others. I've been patched together
from many things, I've been gathered in different times,
I've been assembled from spare parts, from disintegrating
materials, from decomposing words. And already now,
in the middle of my life, I'm beginning to return them,
gradually,
because I want to be a good and orderly person
at the border, when they ask me: "Do you have anything
to declare?"
So that there won't be too much pressure at the end,
so that I won't arrive sweating and breathless and
confused.
So that I won't have anything left to declare.
The red stars are my heart, the distant Milky Way
is the blood in it, in me. The hot
khamsin breathes in huge lungs,
my life is close to a huge heart, always inside.

My beloved is Jobesque. It happened in
summer, and the elastic straps
of her clothing snapped with the twang of a
taut string.
The wailings of
labor pains and rattle of death-agony already in a first
night of love.
Rip, riiiiiip of light clothing,
because it was summer, the end of a heavy summer of
thin, light clothing. A shofar like the hiccup
of a sick man. And in the beginning of the month of Elul
the blower blew the ram's horn and his face was sheepish
like a ram's face and his eye was bulging and glassy and
rolled
in its socket like the eye of a closed tank. And his mouth
was caught in the
shofar, with no way to escape.
Jobesque: we met in the flight of the hemlock. With legs
spread apart
wider than the spreading of wings, beyond the borders
of your body.
In love always, despair lies with you now
and your movements and the writhing of your limbs and
your screams with him
are the same as with me.

Sometimes I feel my soul rolling
as if it were inside an empty barrel. In the dull sound
of a barrel pushed from place to place. Sometimes
I see Jerusalem between two people

who stand in front of a window, with a space
between them. The fact that they aren't close and loving
allows me to see my life, between them.
"If only it were possible to grasp the moment
when two people first become strangers to each other."

This could have been a song of praise to
the sweet, imaginary God of my childhood.
It happened on Friday, and black angels
filled the Valley of the Cross, and their wings
were black houses and abandoned quarries.
Sabbath candles bobbed up and down like ships
at the entrance to a harbor. "Come O bride,"
wear the clothes of your mourning and your splendor
from the night when you thought I wouldn't come to you
and I came. The room was drenched in the fragrance
of syrup from black, intoxicating cherries.
Newspapers, scattered on the floor, rustled below
and the flapping wings of the hemlock above.
Love with parting, like a record
with applause at the end of the music, love
with a scream, love with a mumble of despair
at walking proudly into exile from each other.
Come O bride, hold in your hand something made of clay
at the hour of sunset, because flesh vanishes
and iron doesn't keep. Hold clay in your hand
for future archaeologists to find and remember.
They don't know that anemones after the rain
are another archaeological find, a document of major
importance.

Tanks from America, fighter-planes from France,
Russian
jet-doves, armored chariots from England, Sisera's
regiments
who dried the swamps with their corpses, a flying
Massadah,
Beitar slowly sinking, Yodfat on wheels, the Antonia,
ground-to-ground
ground, ground-to-air air, ground-to-sky sky. Massadah
won't fall again, won't fall again,
won't fall again, Massadah won't. Multiple automatic
prayer beads and also in single shots. Muezzins armed
with
three-stage missiles, paper-rips and battle-cries
of holy wars in all seven kinds,
shtreimls like mines in the road and in the air, deep
philosophical
depth charges, a heart lit up with a green light inside
the engine of a red-hot bomber, Elijah's ejection-seat
leaping up
at a time of danger, hurling circumcision knives,
thundering
dynamite fuses from heart to heart, a Byzantine tank
with a decorated window in which an icon appears
lit up in purity and softness, mezuzahs filled with
explosives, don't kiss them or they'll blow up, dervishes
with powdered rococo curls, the Joint Chiefs of Staff
consisting of Job, his friends, Satan, and God, around a
sand-table.
A pricking with bannered pins in the live flesh
of hills and valleys made of naked
humans lying in front of them,
underwater synagogues, periscope rabbis,
cantors out of the depths, jeeps armed with women's hair
and with wild girls' fingernails, ripping their
clothes in rage and mourning. Supersonic angels
with wings of women's fat thighs,
letters of a Torah scroll in ammunition straps, machine
guns,
flowers in the pattern of a fortified bunker,
fingers of dynamite, prosthetic legs of dynamite,
eight empty bullet-shells for a Hanukkah menorah,
explosives of eternal flame, the cross of a crossfire,
a submachine gun carried in phylactery straps,
camouflage nets of thin lacy material
from girlfriends' panties, used women's dresses
and ripped diapers to clean the cannon-mouth,
offensive handgrenades in the shape of bells,
defensive handgrenades in the shape of a spice box
for the close of the Sabbath, sea mines
like the prickly apples used as smelling-salts on Yom
Kippur
in case of fainting, half my childhood in
a whole armored truck, a grandmother clock
for starting a time-egg filled with
clipped fingernails of bad boys
with a smell of cinnamon, Durer's
praying hands sticking up
like a vertical land-mine, arms with an attachment
for a bayonet, a good-night fortified with sand bags,
the twelve little minor prophets
in a night ambush with warm breath,
cannon barrels climbing like ivy, shooting
cuckoo shells every fifteen minutes: cuckoo,
boom-boom. Barbed-wire testicles,
eye-mines bulging and hurting,
aerial bombs with the heads of
beautiful women like the ones that used to be carved
on ships' prows, the mouth of a cannon
opened like flower petals,
M.I.R.V., S.W.A.T., I.C.B.M., I.B.M.,
P.O.W., R.I.P., A.W.O.L.
S.N.A.F.U., I.N.R.I., J.D.L., L.B.J.,
E.S.P., I.R.S., D.N.A., G.O.D.
Sit down. Today is the day of judgment. Today
there was war.

I am a man approaching his end.
What seems like youthful vitality in me
isn't vitality but craziness,
because only death can put an end to this craziness.
And what seem like deep roots that I put down
are only complications on

the surface: a disease of knots, hands cramped in spasm,
tangled ropes, and demented chains.

I am a solitary man, a lonely man. I'm not a democracy.
The executive and the loving and the judicial powers
in one body. An eating and swilling and a vomiting
power,
a hating power and a hurting power,
a blind power and a mute power.
I wasn't elected. I'm a political demonstration, I carry
my face above me, like a placard. Everything is written
on it. Everything,
Please, there's no need to use tear gas,
I'm already crying. No need to disperse me,
I'm dispersed,
and the dead too are a demonstration.
When I visit my father's grave,
I see the tombstones lifted up by
the dust underneath:
they are a mass demonstration.

I think about forgetting as about a fruit that grows larger
and larger,
and when it ripens it won't be eaten,
because it won't exist and won't be remembered:
its ripening is its forgetting. When I lie on my back,
the bones of my legs are filled
with the sweetness
of my little son's breath.
He breathes the same air as I do,
sees the same things,
but my breath is bitter and his is sweet
like rest in the bones of the weary,
and my childhood of blessed memory. His childhood.

I didn't kiss the ground
when they brought me as a little boy
to this land. But now that I've grown up on her,
she kisses me,
she holds me,
she clings to me with love,
with grass and thorns, with sand and stone,
with wars and with this springtime
until the final kiss. □

Yehuda Amichai is generally acknowledged as Israel's leading poet and one of the most popular poets writing anywhere today. The excerpt printed here is taken from *The Selected Poetry of Yehuda Amichai,* edited and translated by Chana Bloch and Stephen Mitchell, to be published in 1987 by North Point Press; these stanzas form less than half of the complete poem.

Benjamin of Tudela (second half of the twelfth century) was the greatest medieval Jewish traveler; his account of his journey through Provence, Italy, Palestine, Syria, Persia, and Egypt is contained in his famous *Book of Travels.* The second Benjamin was Israel Joseph Benjamin (1818-1864), a Rumanian explorer who styled himself Benjamin II; he described his experiences searching for the Ten Lost Tribes in a book entitled *Five Years of Travel in the Orient, 1846-1851.* The third Benjamin was the hero of a satiric novel. *Travels of the third Benjamin,* by the Yiddish writer Mendele Mokher Sforim (Shalom Abramowitsch). The last, of course, is Amichai, who when he wrote this poem happened to be living on Tudela Street in Jerusalem.

Stephen Mitchell's books include Dropping Ashes on the Buddha, Into the Whirlwind: A Translation of the Book of Job, *and* The Selected Poetry of Rilke.

The Sources of Democratic Change

HARRY C. BOYTE AND SARA M. EVANS

Today, we remember Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s remarkable capacity to appeal to a broad range of communities through his celebration of America as a great cultural and racial mosaic. Thus Albert Vorspan, writing in the *New York Times* on the first Martin Luther King holiday, January 20, 1986, described his appeal to the Jewish people: "We loved him because he cherished the glory of racial and religious diversity. He saw the civil rights revolution not as a black rebellion but as a covenant of white and black, Christian and Jew, standing together for decency." What is often forgotten, however, is that King's Dream was not only a vision for America's future; it was also, in part, a description of a remarkable, living reality in the civil rights movement itself. The history of that movement —like other great democratic movements of our age, such as the struggle for democracy in the Phillipines in recent months—is redolent with stories of people from different races and religious backgrounds finding common ground and developing a broader, even transformative understanding of the movement's goals.[1]

How do such democratic movements emerge and where do they find their sustaining bases of inspiration? A new generation of social history, especially, suggests crucial insights. Such history draws attention to the voluntary tradition as the seedbed of democratic change.

Voluntary associations, ranging from churches and synagogues to service and self help organizations, neighborhood groups, ethnic or small business organizations, union locals, farm cooperatives, recreational clubs, and PTAs, constitute a vast middle ground between private identities and large scale institutions. They are places that ordinary people can often "own" in important ways, spaces grounded in the fabric of daily, communal life with a public dimension that allows mingling with others beyond one's immediate circles of family and friends. They are institutions which people can sometimes shape and reshape, use as alternative sources of information about the world, employ as media for connecting with others in ways more substantive than transitory coalitions or other brief encounters.

Such voluntary groups, complex and imperfect as they are necessarily in the real world, nonetheless are unique sources of democratic experiment and energy. An understanding of their dynamic possibilities suggests the need for a reworking of progressive strategy and vision, alike.[2]

Throughout American history, voluntary associations with a more open, egalitarian and participatory cast—what we call "free spaces"— have been the primary settings where people have been able to act with independence, dignity and vision. When such associations become activated in new ways in the course of social movement, they can provide critical experiences of democratic sociability, teaching the skills and values of citizenship at the same time groups seek changes in broader social structure. The richness and vitality of public life in free spaces stands in marked contrast to the static, thin quality of "public" in reactionary or backward looking, parochial protests. Such dynamics have begun to become clear to social historians. But their broader implications have yet to be explored.

The customary left wing, positioned as critic and "outsider," appeals to people's real experiences of having been victimized and abused by the dominant culture. But the left's analysis of local voluntary institutions sees such settings as simply the agencies of the status quo, not as resources for transforming it. Douglas Kellner summarized the usual argument: "Dominant ideology is transmitted through an ideological apparatus consisting of the family, school, church, media, workplace and social group." Thus the left has held that the *delegitimization* of such associations is the necessary precondition for progressive action. Collective solidarity is forged by "masses": those whose ties

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1. Vorspan quoted from *New York Times*, January 20, 1986; Andrew Young interviewed on the civil rights movement, *New York Times*, January 15, 1986.

2. A sense of exhaustion on left and right forms a major theme in the 20th anniversary issue of *The Public Interest*, Winter, 1985.

to communal roots of place, religion, ethnicity and so forth have become sundered.

"Throughout American history, voluntary associations with a more open, egalitarian and participatory cast, what we call "free spaces" have been the primary settings where people have been able to act with independence, dignity and vision."

Behind such *strategic* arguments on the left, moreover, is a specific view of the future inherent in the range of socialist ideologies. Socialism—a word which first appeared in the writings of Robert Owen as a militantly secular alternative to any religiously based visions of the future—came to mean, most formally, the "socialization of the means of production" accomplished by government action. But the concept of "socialization" itself entails a basic theory of social transformation that retains a powerful hold over modern intellectuals who have long since developed doubts about the simple nationalization of industry. Put simply, the socialist vision of the "new man" (and, more recently, "new woman") rests upon the conviction that progress necessarily entails the continuing replacement of all rooted, traditional and communal identities with modern, rational forms of association of the sort that characterize large institutions. Even the most democratic and humane expressions of socialist policy, such as the social democratic programs of Europe, envision the state as taking on more and more functions previously performed by voluntary groups. And they display, in practice, a marked hostility toward independent, voluntary initiatives.[3]

American liberals have often looked more kindly on voluntary associations, but have simultaneously rendered them marginal to "real politics." Throughout the 20th century, indeed, mainstream progressive approaches have echoed the views of Herbert Coly, long time editor of *New Republic* who argued that the "great community" of the federal government would replace local and voluntary community settings as the arena of citizenship. In the modern world, Coly argued, citizens no longer had to "assemble after the manner of a New England town-meeting," since new forms of mass communications and large scale organization meant "the active citizenship of the country meets every morning and evening and discusses the affairs of the nation with the newspaper as an impersonal interlocuter." Through various public agencies and electoral reforms—regulatory commissions, civil service, nonpartisan local elections, direct election of senators, and women's suffrage and protection of minority voting rights—citizens would be able to develop a "loyal realization of a comprehensive democratic social ideal." The democratic social ideal, in turn, would gradually tame and replace the ravages of unbridled free-market capitalism. In fact, as Michael Harrington has argued convincingly, behind such a theory of government has been an "invisible social democratic movement" in America, comprised of national labor unions and other national reform groups. American social democracy uses a different vocabulary than its European counterparts but shares an essentially similar understanding of social progress. Today, to the extent that terms like "economic democracy" simply substitute for traditional socialist language but retain its underlying content, they too convey the images of uprootedness and deracination at the heart of progressive theory.[4]

Finally, more recent theories of social change found in many parts of the peace movement, among radical ecologists, cultural feminists and others have sought to reconnect political and social action with deeper wellsprings of human motivation. Indeed, out of these diverse forms of activism comes an identifiable stance, what has come to be known as the "Green Parties" in the European context and elsewhere. The Greens claim to represent alternatives to conventional left and right alike, and challenge modern notions of progress that have ravaged the earth. Green politics embodies what political scientist Arthur Stein calls "alternative values such as cooperation, more simple living, eco-community, and recognition of

3. Douglas Kellner, "Ideology, Marxism and Advanced Capitalism," *Socialist Review* No. 42 (1978), p. 53; the left's view of social change and the future is discussed at length in Harry C. Boyte and Sara E. Evans, *Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), especially in Chapters 4 and 6; on the history of the word, "socialism," see, for instance, Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford, 1976), pp. 238-243.

4. Herbert Coly, *The Promise of American Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1909), pp. 139, 453; Michael Harrington makes this argument about the American social democratic movement, what he calls the broad "democratic left," well in *Socialism* (New York: Bantam, 1972), chapter XI; some who have suggested the theme of economic democracy—Derek Shearer, one of the contemporary originators of the term stands out here—have sought to ground it in American populist traditions much more historically resonant in the culture than socialism.

the interdependence of all life forms." Seen as alternative models of community or prophetic perspectives on critical social problems, this sort of protest, like prophetic movements in the past, can help catalyze and encourage cultural and social options and possibilities far beyond their own immediate participants. But taken as *the model* for movement building, Green politics has severe limitations. Indeed, if the left seeks to politicize every dimension of human experience, the approach which emerges most characteristically from the Greens is the *personalization* of politics, the effort to translate one's heart-felt opinions and values directly into organizational forms, political expressions and public policies. The result is an array of experimental groups, ranging from moral witnesses against problems like the arms race and environmental degradation to religious efforts influenced by Eastern spiritualism, alternative living communities, simplified life styles, groups run by consensus decision-making and the like.

The problem is that, like the liberal-left, Green political action is distanced from those very environments where democracy acquires living meaning in most people's lives. Throughout the recent literature in this vein one finds a striking preference for the new, the alternative, and the morally unambiguous. Yet mainstream voluntary settings from churches and synagogues to PTAs and the Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls, are in fact the places where most Americans learn democratic values and skills. And they are the main instruments through which most people express democratic aspirations, in time of social unrest. In discounting such institutions, the Greens (and other ultrademocrats), like much of the liberal-left, cut themselves off from the very people whose support they must have to realize their goals.[5]

Modern conservatives criticize this progressive distancing from mainstream voluntary settings. In theoretical terms, neoconservatism has its roots in the 1950s, when social critics like Robert Nisbet argued that totalitarianism required the destruction of every sort of independent voluntary association. Even the most innocent, like musical clubs, were outlawed by the Nazis, for instance, because they were organized "for purposes, however innocent, that did not reflect those of the central government." Current theorists like Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus have drawn on this tradition to advance the concept of "mediating structures," communal groups that they believe make up bulwarks against the dangers of modern life and the all-encompassing state. "The best defense against the threat," writes Berger, " are those institutions, however weakened, which still give a measure of stability to private life. These are, precisely, the mediating institutions, notably those of family, church, voluntary association, neighborhood and subculture." Progressives' failing is that they see mediating institutions as barriers to "progress." Thinking on the left, conservatives charge, is "abstract, universalistic, addicted to what Burke called 'geometry' in social policy . . . The great concern is for the individual ('the rights of man') and for a just public order, but anything 'in between' is viewed as irrelevant, or even an obstacle, to the rational ordering of society."[6]

Such arguments are not simply academic. Thoughtful conservatives like George Will have observed that much of Ronald Reagan's appeal has been based on this criticism of liberals. "Mondale's notion of community," writes Will, "was [that] the people would be prodded by the central government into a 'national' community . . . Reagan's message [in contrast] has been more complex than the 'rugged individualism' of simple-minded conservatism." Instead, in the elections of both 1980 and 1984, Reagan spoke "the new language of the small republic renaissance." He called for "an end to giantism" and for "a return to the human scale . . . of the local fraternal lodge, the church organization, the block club, the farm bureau." Both election verdicts represented resounding support for such an appeal.[7]

Thus conservatives have effectively pointed to major shortcomings in conventional progressive

5. For a sampling of "Green" literature, see for instance Fran Peavey, *Heart Politics* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1986); Kirkpatrick Sale, *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Version* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1985); Arthur Stein, *Seeds of the Seventies: Values, Work and Commitment in Post-Vietnam America* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1985); Fritjof Capra and Charlene Spretnak, *Green Politics: The Global Promise* (New York: Dutton, 1984); Joan Bodner, Ed., *Taking Charge of Our Lives: Living Responsibly in the World (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).*

6. Robert A. Nisbet, "The Total Community," in Marvin E. Olsen, Ed., *Power in Societies* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), p. 423; William Schambra, *The Quest for Community and the Quest for a New Public Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1983), also describes Nisbet's central role in modern conservative thought; Will largely follows Schambra's argument about Ronald Reagan; Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus, *To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1977); Peter Berger, *Facing up to Modernity* (New York: Basic, 1977), p. 134; Berger and Neuhaus, *To Empower*, p. 5.

7. George Will, "The Real Campaign of 1984," *Newsweek* September 2, 1985.

view points. But conservatives themselves have been on the whole simply critical and reactive, warning of the dangers of the "great state" and rhetorically invoking traditional values and settings. From the viewpont of conservatives in the 1960s, the expansive, democratic spirit that emerged in the civil rights movement was simply incomprehensible. And their counterparts today fail to see the democratic vision incubating in a variety of citizen movements, from campaigns for nuclear disarmament and the anti-apartheid struggle to contemporary feminism.

"Neoconservatives and the left both see voluntary institutions as bulwarks of order and the status quo."

For neoconservatives, like the left, voluntary institutions are seen simply as bulwarks of order and the status quo. Indeed, the very rationale for smaller scale settings is precisely what conservatives see as their function in providing order, stability and resistance to change. As Berger put it, "without mediating structures, the political order is unsettled by being deprived of the moral foundation on which it rests." Such conservatives fail to see that mediating institutions are in fact the wellspring of constructive social change.

This perspective, ironically, undermines the very community institutions neoconservatives profess to champion. Every community is left on its own. The corrosive impact of unbridled capitalism and the marketplace on values of family, religious faith, neighborhood and the like is ignored. Acquisitive individualism becomes the measure of "success" in the public world. And no model of collective action is imaginable through which people can regain control over massive economic dislocations, from plant closings to hazardous waste dumps or acid rain, nor does any notion appear of how different communities might join *together* to pursue a common good. Despite President Reagan's eloquent invocation of "families, communities, workplaces and voluntary groups" as the true source of the "invincible American spirit," he has defined such values in *private* terms, not as sources of citizenship or democratic vision. In his first inaugural address, he defined the American people as "a special interest group." In subsequent years, the administration has proven strikingly hostile to virtually every independent grass roots citizen initiative.[8]

In fact, voluntary associations throughout American history have been the main source of rich, vital and democratic public life and democratic change. The strength of such groups, from a democratic perspective, is that they have an independent existence and reality different from personal relations, on the one hand, or large and impersonal relations on the other. The stuff of authentic "politics" involves conflict, argument and debate as well as problem solving and the search for justice. Indeed, it is often through a clash of opinion and approach, in the context of certain shared and overarching aims, that a generalized and authentically democratic appreciation of the common good emerges. Democracy, in these terms, means more than a simple transformation in unjust structures to allow wider and more active participation. It also means a schooling in citizenship through which ordinary people learn public skills and gain deepened appreciation for cooperative and democratic values. Democratic social movements, efforts whose goal is an enlarged democracy, are also vehicles for such schooling because their foundations are relatively open, participatory voluntary groups.

Free spaces are never a pure phenomenon. In the real world, they are always complex, shifting and dynamic. They are partial in their forms of democratic participation, marked by lingering parochialisms of class, gender, race and other biases of the groups which maintain them. Moreover, there are no easy or simple ways to sustain democratic participation and values of civic virtue and broader vision in the face of broader environments that undermine such principles. Democratic movements have had widely varying degrees of success in sustaining themselves, in spreading their values and ideas to larger audiences, in changing the world. They have, with different outcomes, addressed—or failed to address—problems such as the bureaucratic state, the issue of size in organizations, the role of experts, the power of conventional media to define leadership and movement message. Movements have sought to hold leaders accountable through different measures, from direct

8. Berger, *Facing Up*, p. 135; Reagan, quoted from *New York Times*, August 20, 1985; the way Reagan privatizes such themes is described well in Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California, 1985); this analysis is also developed at length in Harry Boyte, Heather Booth and Steve Max, *Citizen Action and the New American Populism*, forthcoming from Temple University Press in the fall of 1986.

election to widespread dispersal of information, or they have failed to develop such measures. And they have drawn upon and transformed threads in people's cultures and heritages, weaving ideas into new sets of values, beliefs and ways of looking at the world. Together, these new elements make up in democratic movements what might be called "movement cultures," visions of the sort that were articulated with such eloquence by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Free spaces are observable at the heart of every broad, democratic movement in American history, from the struggle for independence to movements against slavery; from the CIO of the thirties to the civil rights struggle, early student movements of the sixties through the neighborhood and citizen movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Again and again throughout our history, Americans have articulated a broad and inclusive vision of direct participation and civic virtue that renews and enriches earlier conceptions of democracy. With varying degrees of success they have fashioned the practical skills and organizational means to seek to realize their aspirations.

For all their variation, moreover, free spaces also have certain common features, observable in movements varying widely in time, aims, composition and social environment. They are defined by their roots in community, the dense, rich networks of daily life; by their independent, voluntary aspects; and by their public or quasi public character as participatory environments which nurture values associated with citizenship and a broader vision of the common good. In democratic movements, people speak not as members of "interest groups" nor simply as *victims* of oppression and injustice. Rather they gain the confidence, spirit and self-confidence that allows them to claim their strengths, articulate positive and broader visions, and even begin to speak for the "whole people," understood more expansively. And they begin to redefine the role of government, from seeing it as the *solution* to problems (or, conversely, as "the problem") to seeing it as the public's servant, instrument of citizens in the self-organized community. In a full way, the dynamics and character of free spaces can only be understood in the concreteness of particular stories, where people gain new skills, a new sense of possibility and a broadened understanding of whom "the people" include. A sketch of different movements also highlights different aspects of free spaces.

Under slavery, the very possibility of thinking and speaking in ways that opposed the dominant culture depended upon the creation of community institutions that slaves "owned" themselves, about which slaveowning whites had little knowledge. The black church especially played this crucial role as a *free* space. Christianity was originally taught to the slave population as a "program for pacification," an effort to adapt the rebellious captives to the discipline of the slave labor system by destroying native customs and traditions. Yet from the beginning, slaves recast what they learned by drawing on the African past and discovering subversive themes within Christian teachings and scripture. Within their places of worship—often on the margins of plantations, in secret, well-hidden areas called "hush harbors," sometimes in independent black churches which appeared wherever possible—slaves could socialize, dream of freedom, sometimes even plot insurrections. For the black community, the preacher was the mediating figure with the white world. He fought for control over spaces, finances, and the life of the service. And he hid its subversive dimensions from view, nurturing hope and spirit among his congregation while he "bided his time" and looked for signs.

It was this ancient tradition of independent black churches and black religious leadership which formed the heart of the civil rights movement. Many factors came together after the Second World War to produce the historic stage—the experience of the war itself, fought in part against brutal racism; the Supreme Court decision outlawing segregated schools; economic changes which led to growing black urban populations in the Deep South; the example of independence movements in Africa and elsewhere, and other developments. But the movement across the region drew its language and themes powerfully from black religious traditions and institutions. Even where ministers proved hesitant, the churches became drawn into the struggle through the activities of church members. Most activists, moreover, had gained their skills and aspirations in the church. As William Chafe described in Greensboro, North Carolina, for instance, "The churches provided a training ground for political leaders and a meeting place where the aspirations of the black community could find collective expression." In Birmingham, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth summed up the entire heritage when he replied to a local sheriff's attempt to

prohibit ministers from encouraging congregations to participate in a boycott: "Only God can tell me what to say in the pulpit." Out of such religious traditions, in turn, came conviction about the transformative power of nonviolence, the democratic possibilities of American society, and Martin Luther King's Dream of men and women of all races and religions, "bound together by a single garment of destiny."[9]

One can make a similar argument about the importance of autonomous institutions like churches, clubs, artisan and ethnic associations and saloons for the emergence of working class protest and culture throughout American history. But for a highly mobile and culturally uprooted work force, the issue of independence has been inseparably tied to the question of rooted communities. Indeed, in the case of American workers' movements, the possibility of group action has depended critically upon the survival, sustenance and sometimes the retrieval of historical memories and the recreation of voluntary associations that can bridge fragmented worlds of work and community life. Radicals with popular following in American labor history have not been those who have lost "all but their chains," but rather those with something to lose. To the extent that alternatives to centralized and competitive capitalism have gained a following among working people, they have typically not been framed in traditional left-wing language of socialism and class struggle, but rather in a more communitarian, republican and populist idiom. Terms like "cooperative commonwealth" have moved Americans in ways that visions of a Soviet America or nationalized industry never have.

The history of feminist movements in America shifts primary focus to the public aspects of free spaces. For women to claim their citizenship rights, they required environments in which they could develop public identities and skills, simultaneously drawing upon and changing traditions that defined women in terms of family and personal worlds. In the 19th century, home missionary societies, moral reform clubs, movements like the Women's Christian Temperance Union, women's schools and prayer groups furnished the free spaces in which women gained a sense of their own strength and independence. As WCTU leader Frances Willard noted about the temperance crusade, for instance:

> *Perhaps the most significant outcome of this movement was the knowledge of their own power gained by the conservative women of the Churches. They had never even seen a 'women's rights convention,' and had been held aloof from the 'suffragists' by fears as to their orthodoxy; but now there were women prominent in all Church cares and duties eager to clasp hands for a more aggressive work than such women had ever before dreamed of undertaking.*[10]

In the student and civil rights movements of the 1960s, women found specifically female social spaces within the contexts of struggle and political action that gave them a new sense of their own abilities, new skills and a new language of "participatory democracy" and "beloved community." When the movements failed to apply egalitarian ideals to women themselves, young female activists repoliticized the bonds among women which had long been seen as merely "social." Small consciousness-raising groups emerged across a vast range of women's networks, from lesbian bars to Catholic orders of nuns and Evangelicals, for the E.R.A., in which women could compare experiences and learn that what had seemed individual and personal hurts and injustices were widely shared. Such groups—sometimes called in fact "free spaces"—became the seedbeds of a new feminism.

Finally, populist movements rooted in rural America have illustrated the powerful and complex roles of traditional ideologies and in particular the importance of participatory experiences that can teach values of racial tolerance and the common good. During the 1880s small farmers in the rural South and West created thousands of purchasing and marketing cooperatives in their efforts to escape crushing debt loads and domination by banks and merchants. In addition to their economic function, moreover, such cooperatives, drawing upon older institutions like the Grange and rural churches, proved for a time a remarkable, independent cultural space. As historian Alan Brinkley has noted, the populist movement that emerged on the cooperative foundations represented "the constructive efforts of thousands of communities to build institutions and establish values that would

9. William Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights (New York: Oxford, 1980), p. 25; Shuttlesworth, quoted from Aldon Morris, Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Free Press, 1984); pp. 79-80.

10. Frances Willard, quoted from Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism and Temperance in Nineteenth Century America* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), p. 100.

permit an alternative economy (and alternative value system) to the competitive, centralizing tendencies of industrial capitalism." When people act out of hope—and seek alliances with other groups of the powerless, as white farmers often did with blacks, they also are able, often, to demonstrate a new spirit of generosity and tolerance. The first populists were not without prejudices. But they advocated measures like education for blacks and voting rights that made the movement seem like a revolutionary threat to the white supremacist racial order, and, interestingly, to the system of gender roles as well, since women could participate fully as members and officers in the cooperatives. Studies have found that the cooperatives had in their leadership foreign immigrants in numbers considerably larger than their percentage of the population. It was the *defeat* of the cooperatives and the Populist Party which emerged from the movement that led to the bitter legacy of "populist" racist demagoguery, strident anti-Semitism and narrowly construed nationalism which is often associated with populism today. [11, 12]

"It was the defeat of the cooperatives and the Populist Party that led to the bitter legacy of racist demagogery, strident anti-Semitism and narrowly construed nationalism."

In sum, free spaces are the places where "democracy" has acquired living meaning again and again in American history. An understanding of their role in American movements for change, moreover, not only suggests new ways to look at the history and dynamics of social protest. More broadly, it also strongly points to the need for progressive approaches today different than the statism of the liberal-left, on the one hand, or the personalism of the Greens on the other.

A focus on free spaces highlights the incompleteness and partiality of the strategies widespread among progressives active on many different issues. Moral witnesses, alternative institution building, and prophetic criticisms are important elements in the process of social change, as are election campaigns, large scale coalitions and, at times, massive public actions. But the heart of effective, majoritarian change involves ongoing education and action through those mainstream, locally based voluntary networks with which most citizens identify and through which they seek to make a difference.

An understanding of free spaces, moreover, not only highlights different *means* of social change but also indicates different *ends* as well. A vocabulary of democratic action that draws from free spaces in America is, necessarily, far richer in cultural and historical resonances than conventional progressive politics, which often sounds today like a planner's manual. It celebrates the marvelous cultural particularities of America. It also finds the overarching themes and symbols to express what Albert Vorspan termed our common "covenant for decency." Finally, that covenant's meaning needs reworking. No longer can the socialist ideal of men and women joined in "new communities" amputated from their histories be taken as the guiding theme. Nor can an ever-enlarging government sphere be seen as the appropriate programmatic expression. A more democratic and egalitarian society will rest, necessarily, upon a rich pluralism of free, nongovernmental associations. Through such free spaces, we can take initiatives on our own terms. And we can reflect, together, on what it means to be citizens in a land founded on the promise of "liberty and justice for all." □

11. Here, history repeats itself. Thus, a virulent brand of anti-Semitic and racist right wing populism has recently emerged in rural areas of the country suffering distress. Less visibly but crucially important, however, there has also developed a progressive populism in rural areas, embodied in organizations like Citizen Action, Minnesota COACT, the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition and others, that offers the main alternative to politics of fear, scapegoating and demagoguery. As *The New York Times* of January 5, 1986, put it, hundreds of "progressive populist groups" now "are building new alliances with unions, with groups of small-business owners, and with other organizations such as national conservation groups." Such alliances, growing out of mainstream voluntary networks with a relatively open and democratic character, have brought people of diverse races, religions and backgrounds together around work on issues of common concern—and in the process have taught mutual respect.

12. *Free Spaces*, Chapter Five; Alan Brinkley, "Richard Hofstadter's *The Age of Reform*, A Reconsideration," *Reviews in American History*, 13, (1985), p. 467; on immigrant participation, see for instance, Walter K. Nugent, *The Tolerant Populists: Kansas Populism and Nativism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

The Book of Job

STEPHEN MITCHELL

I.

One of the milder paradoxes that shape this greatest Jewish work of art is that its hero is a Gentile. Its author may have been as well. We know nothing about him, nothing about his world; he is even more anonymous than Homer. With Homer, at least, we can picture a society of competing principalities, each with its warriors and court and ceremonial feasts where the bard recites his ancient songs to the accompaniment of the lyre, like blind Demodocus in the *Odyssey*. But there is not the slightest bit of evidence about the author of *Job*: not when or where he wrote, or for what kind of audience. When we try to imagine him, we are left with a blank, or with one of those patriarchal figures dressed in bright monochrome robes who suddenly appear, devout and straight-nosed, between the pages of illustrated Bibles.

Yet however foreign the poet originally was, his theme is the great Jewish one: the theme of the victim. "Someone must have slandered J., because one morning he was arrested, even though he had done nothing wrong." That is what makes it the central parable of our post-Holocaust age, and gives such urgency to its spiritual power.

II.

When the great Tao is forgotten,
goodness and piety appear.
Tao Te Ching

To introduce his poem, the author retells a legend that was already ancient centuries before he was born[1]. It concerns a righteous man who for no reason has been deprived of all the rewards of his righteousness; in the midst of great suffering he remains steadfast and perfectly pious, still blessing the Lord as before. "You have heard of the patience of Job," the Epistle of James says, and it is this legendary, patient Job—not the desperate and ferociously impatient Job of the poem—who, ironically enough, became proverbial in Western culture.

We can respect the legend on its own naive terms, and can appreciate the skill with which the author retells it: the chilling conversations in heaven; the climax where Job submits, as if he were a calmer, more insightful Adam who has just eaten the bitter fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and, eyes opened, knows that he is naked. But if we read the prologue more seriously, less objectively, we may be slightly repulsed by its hero's piety. There is something so servile[2] about him that we may find ourselves siding with his impatient wife, wanting to shout, "Come on, Job; stand up like a man; curse this god, and die!" The character called "the Lord" can do anything to him—have his daughters raped and mutilated, send his sons to Auschwitz—and he will turn the other cheek. This is not a matter of spiritual acquiescence, but of mere capitulation to an unjust, superior force.

When we look at the world of the legendary Job with a probing, disinterestedly satanic eye, we notice that it is suffused with anxiety. Job is afraid of God, as well he might be. He avoids evil because he realizes the penalties. He is a perfect moral businessman: wealth, he knows, comes as a reward for playing by the rules, and goodness is like money in the bank. But, as he suspects, this world is thoroughly unstable. At any moment the currency can change, and the Lord, by handing Job over to the power of evil, can declare him bankrupt. No wonder his mind is so uneasy. He worries about making the slightest mistake; when he has his children come for their annual purification, it is not even because they may have *committed* any sins, but may have had blasphemous *thoughts*. The superego is riding high. And in fact, at the climax of his first speech in the poem, Job confesses that his "worst fears have happened; / [his] nightmares have come to life" (3:25). This is not a casual statement, added as a poetic flourish. Anxieties have a habit of projecting themselves from psychological into physical reality. Job's premonition turned out to be accurate; somewhere he knew that he was precariously balanced on his goodness, like a triangle on its apex, just waiting to be toppled over. There is even a perverse sense of relief, as if that heavy, responsible patriarch-world had been groaning toward deliverance. For any transformation to occur, Job

Stephen Mitchell's books include Dropping Ashes on the Buddha. *His translation of the* Book of Job *will be published in 1987 by North Point Press.*

1. Scholars have placed *Job* anywhere between 800 and 300 B.C. There are Sumerian versions of the legend dating from 2000 B.C.
2. "My Servant Job" can also, in Hebrew, mean "my slave Job."

has to be willing to let his hidden anxieties become manifest. He must enter the whirlwind of his own psychic chaos before he can hear the Voice.

As Maimonides was the first to point out, Job is a good man, not a wise one. The ascription of "perfect integrity," which both the narrator and "the Lord" make, seems valid only in a limited sense. The Hebrew says *tam v'-yashar*, which literally means "whole (blameless) and upright." Well, yes: Job has never committed even the most venial sin, in action or in thought. (For that very reason, his later agony and bewilderment are more terrible than Josef K.'s in *The Trial.*) In a broader sense, though, Job is not whole. He is as far from spiritual maturity as he is from rebellion. Rebelliousness—the passionate refusal to submit—is, in fact, one of the qualities we admire in the Job of the poem:

> *Be quiet now—let* me *speak;*
> *whatever happens will happen.*
> *I will take my flesh in my teeth,*
> *hold my life in my hands.*
> *He [God] may kill me, but I won't stop;*
> *I will speak the truth, to his face.*
>
> (13:13 ff.)

If we compare the legendary figure with the later Job, especially in the great summation that concludes the central dialogue, we can recognize that even his virtue lacks a certain generosity and wholeheartedness. That is why the bet doesn't prove much. Job is too terrorized, from within his squalor, to do anything *but* bless the Lord: for all he knows, there might be an even more horrible consequence in store. The real test will come later, in the poem, when he feels free to speak with all of himself, to say *anything*.

There is a further irony about *tam v'-yashar*. When Job is handed over to the good graces of the Accuser, he is turned into the direct opposite of what the words mean in their most physical sense. He becomes *not-whole*: broken in body and heart. He becomes *not-upright*: pulled down into the dust by the gravity of his anguish.

The author moves us to heaven after the prologue's first scene, and we may be tempted to admire his boldness. But heaven, it turns out, is only the court of some ancient King of Kings, complete with annual meetings of the royal council and a Satan (or Accusing Angel). As below, so above. Jung, in his *Answer to Job*, makes the point that, psychologically, the Accuser is the embodiment of "the Lord's" doubt. In a more naive version of the legend, the god in his divine myopia would himself doubt the disinterestedness of his obedient human and would decide to administer the test on his own. Here, though the Accuser ostensibly plays the role of the villain, it is "the Lord" who provokes him. "Did you notice my servant Job?" (1:8) How can the Accuser not take up the challenge? After all, that's his job.

"Yet however foreign the poet originally was, his theme is the great Jewish one: the theme of the victim . . . That is what makes it the central parable of our post-Holocaust age . . ."

As Jung also points out, this god is morally much inferior to the prologue's hero. We would have to be insensitive or prejudiced not to be nauseated by the very awareness of "the Lord's" second statement to the Accuser: "He is holding on to his wholeness, even after you made me torment him for no reason" (2:3), and by the calm cruelty of "All right: he is in your power. Just don't kill him" (2:6).

Nevertheless, if we want to be serious about the poem, we mustn't take the legend too seriously. There is a profound shift when the verse dialogue begins; the change in language is a change in reality. Compared to Job's laments (not to mention the Voice from the Whirlwind), the world of the prologue is two-dimensional, and its divinities are very small potatoes. It is like a puppet show. The author first brings out the patient Job, his untrusting god, and the chief spy/prosecutor, and has the figurines enact the ancient story in the puppet-theater of his prose. Then, behind this, the larger curtain rises, and flesh-and-blood actors begin to voice their passions on a life-sized stage. Finally, the vast, unnameable God appears. How could the author have returned to the reality of the prologue for an answer to the hero of the poem? That would have meant "the Lord" descending from the sky to say, "Well, you see, Job, it all happened because I made this bet . . ."

No, the god of the prologue is left behind as utterly as the never-again-mentioned Accuser, swallowed in the depths of human suffering into which the poem plunges us next.

III.

If you bring forth what is inside you, what you bring forth will save you.
The Gospel According to Thomas

When Job discovers his voice after the long silence, he doesn't curse God explicitly, as the Accuser said he would. But he comes as close as possible. He curses his own life, and in doing so curses all of life—an ultimate blasphemy for those who believe that life is an ultimate good. (We may recall another great sufferer, Oedipus at Colonus, whose chorus offers something very similar to Job's death-wish as its wisdom: It is best never to have been born; next best is to leave the womb and die immediately.) In his curse, Job allies himself with the primal forces of darkness and chaos, and with the archetypal symbol of evil, the Serpent Leviathan, whom we will meet again at the poem's conclusion. He must hurtle to the bottom of his despair before he can begin to stand up for himself.

At the end of the prologue, when they are introduced to us, the three friends who come to comfort Job are entirely correct in their behavior. How much delicacy and compassion we can feel in the author's brief account: "Then they sat with him for seven days and seven nights. And no one said a word, for they saw how great his suffering was" (2:13). But they can't remain silent once Job becomes active in his anguish. Theirs is the harshest of comforting. They don't understand that Job's curses and blasphemies are really cries of pain. They *can't* understand, because they won't risk giving up their moral certainties. Their rigid orthodoxy surrounds an interior of mush, like the exoskeleton of an insect. Unconsciously they know that they have no experience of God. Hence their acute discomfort and rage.

The friends and Job all agree that God is wise and can see into the hearts of men. He is not the kind of character who would allow a good man to be tortured because of a bet; nor is he a well-intentioned bungler. Given this premise, they construct opposite syllogisms. The friends: *Suffering comes from God. God is just. Therefore Job is guilty.* Job: *Suffering comes from God. I am innocent. Therefore God is unjust.* A third possibility is not even thinkable: *Suffering comes from God. God is just. Job is innocent.* (No *therefore.*)

Even if the friends are right about God's justice, their timing is bad. In fact, they don't speak to Job at all; they speak to their own terror at the thought of Job's innocence. And though they defend God's justice, they can't afford to understand what it is. "If the wrong man says the right thing, it is wrong." So they are driven into their harsh God-the-Judge and their harsh judgments, like greater men after them who tried to justify the ways of God to men.

Any idea about God, when pursued to its extreme, becomes insanity. The idea of a just god absorbs all justice into it and leaves a depraved creation. Like proto-Calvinists, the friends extend their accusation of guilt to all mankind. Man becomes "that vermin, man, / who laps up filth like water" (15:16), and their god is revealed as a Stalinesque tyrant so pure that he "mistrusts his angels / and heaven stinks in his nose" (15:15).

Ultimately the dialogue is not about theological positions but human reactions. Afraid of any real contact with Job and his grief, the friends stay locked inside their own minds. The same arguments are wheeled out again and again, with more and more stridency, until they become merely boring. In the third round of the dialogue, in fact, the text itself becomes defective,[3] as if it had broken down from the force of the friends' stuttering rage.

What makes their arguments bearable, and sometimes even thrilling, is the power of language that the poet has granted them. In this he has acted with the instinctive generosity of a great poet, endowing the friends with a life and passion almost as intense as Job's. His language is the most concrete of poetic idioms. Every idea or emotion has become an image, so vivid and sinewy that verse after verse fills the reader with an almost physical delight. Thus Bildad, talking about the wicked man's precarious safety:

> *His peace of mind is gossamer;*
> *his faith is a spider's web.*
> (8:14)

Or Eliphaz, asking Job how he can be so sure he is right:

> *Are you the first man to be born,*
> *created before the mountains?*
> *Have you listened in at God's keyhole*
> *and crept away with his plans?*
> (15:7 f.)

3. In the Massoretic (traditional Hebrew) text, Bildad's last speech, for example, contains only five verses, and Zophar's is missing entirely.

Or Zophar, in disgust:

> *But a stupid man will be wise*
> *when a cow gives birth to a zebra.*
>
> (11:12)

The friends, nevertheless, are supporting actors, and our attention is focused on Job. His speeches are a kaleidoscope of conflicting emotions, addressed to the friends, to himself, to God. His attitude shifts constantly, and can veer to its direct opposite in the space of a few verses, the stream of consciousness all at once a torrent. He wants to die; he wants to prove that he is innocent; he wants to shake his fist at God for leaving the world in such a wretched shambles. God is his enemy; God has made a terrible mistake; God has forgotten him; or doesn't care; God will surely defend him, against God. His question, the harrowing question of someone who has only heard of God, is "Why me?" There is no answer, because it is the wrong question. He will have to struggle with it until he is exhausted, like a child crying itself to sleep.

In these speeches it is obvious that Job is a different character from the patient hero of the legend. He is no longer primarily a rich man bereft of his possessions and heartbroken over his dead children (they are never even mentioned in the poem). He has become Everyman, grieving for all of human misery. He suffers not only his own personal pain, but the pain of all the poor and despised. He is himself afflicted by what God has done to the least of these little ones.

In a wonderfully ironic sense, the Accuser's dirty-work has resulted in an epidemic of accusations. Once that archetypal figure disappears, he is absorbed into the poem as if by some principle of the conservation of energy. The more the friends become Job's accusers, the more Job becomes the accuser of God. His outrage at the world's injustice is directed straight to the creator of that world. There are no detours or half-measures, no attempt to deflect ultimate responsibility by blaming a devil or an original sin.

> *He [God] does not care; so I say*
> *he murders both the pure and the wicked.*
> *When the plague brings sudden death,*
> *he laughs at the anguish of the innocent.*
> *He hands the earth to the wicked*
> *and blindfolds its judges' eyes.*
> *Who does it, if not he?*
>
> (9:22 ff.)

This may be blasphemy, but it is true. Job's straightforwardness is itself a kind of innocence, and is what the god of the epilogue refers to when he tells the friends, "You have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has."

All this bewilderment and outrage couldn't be so intense if Job didn't truly love God. He senses that in spite of appearances there is somewhere an ultimate justice, but he doesn't know where. He is like a nobler Othello who has been brought conclusive evidence that his wife has betrayed him: his honesty won't allow him to disbelieve it, but his love won't allow him to believe it. On the spikes of this dilemma he must remain impaled. That is what makes his cry so profoundly moving.

"His question, the harrowing question of someone who has only heard of God, is 'Why me?' There is no answer, because it is the wrong question."

The Book of Job is the great poem of moral outrage. It gives voice to every accusation against God, and its blasphemy is cathartic. How liberating it feels *not* to be a good, patient little God-fearer, scuffling from one's hole in the wall to squeak out a dutiful hymn of praise. Job's own voice has freed him so that he can move from the curses of his first speech to the final self-affirmation as his own attorney for the defense. There, with oaths of the gravest dignity and horror, he becomes upright again in his wish to "stand before [God] like a prince" (31:37). It is this passionate insistence that carries him into the eye of the whirlwind. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness," as another Jewish teacher said, "for they shall be filled."

Of course, the answer Job receives is anything but what he expected. Heart-stirring as the summation is, he remains lost in his own concepts, and there is no small irony to his final plea, "If only God would hear me." For if we needed a sensory metaphor to describe the experience of intimacy, hearing might be the last sense we would choose. No, far more than vindication will occur: a plea will be granted that Job wouldn't have dared to make, a question answered that he wouldn't have known how to ask. God will not hear Job, but Job will see God.

IV.

To men some things are good and some are bad. But to God, all things are good and beautiful and just.

Heraclitus

If God's answer comes from an objective whirlwind, it answers nothing, and can only be the magnificent, harsh, and notoriously unsatisfactory harangue that most interpreters have found. As rational discourse, it reduces itself to this: "How dare you question the creator of the world? Shut up now, and submit." After several pages of eloquent browbeating, Job can do nothing but squeak what amounts to, "Yes sir, Boss. Anything you say." God apparently wants the unquestioning piety of the friends, and Job returns to the exact position he had at the end of the prologue, cringing in the dust. Compared with the endings of the *Illiad* or the *Commedia* or any of the major works of Shakespeare, this would be a wretched climax: so uneconomical, so anticlimactic indeed, that it seems more like a pratfall than a finale. We need to penetrate more deeply.

What does it mean to answer someone about human suffering? For there *are* answers beyond the one-size-fits-all propositions of the theologians. But these answers can't be imposed from the outside. They will resonate only where the questioner lets them enter. Above all, they require a willingness to accept what can be excruciating to the ego. Often we find such reality unbearable. The light is so brilliant that it hurts, as in the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and we retreat to the softer glow of a familiar, comfortable grief.

There is never an answer to the great question of life and death, unless it is my answer or yours. Because ultimately it isn't a question that is addressed, but a person. Our whole being has to be answered. At that point, both question and answer disappear, like hunger after a good meal.

"God is subtle, but not malicious," Einstein said in a different context. We have to listen to the Voice from the Whirlwind in a more oblique mode, as if its true meaning lay inside the logical framework of its words. First, we should notice how the answer consists mostly of questions (a good Jewish trait). In their value and insistence, these questions acquire a peculiar quality. They sound in our ears as a ground bass to the melody of their content, and eventually function like a kind of benign subliminal message, asking a fundamental question that will dissolve everything Job thought he knew.

The closest we can get to that question is *What do you know?* During their dialogue, Job and the friends agree about the limits of human understanding, but none of them suspects how absolute those limits are. In order to approach God, Job has to let go of all ideas about God: he must put a cloud of unknowing (as a medieval Christian author expressed it) between himself and God, or have the Voice do this for him.

The content of the Voice's questions, aside from their rhetorical form, gives another kind of answer. Each verse presents Job with an image so intense that, as Job later acknowledges, he doesn't hear but *sees* the Voice. He is taken up into a state of vision, and enters a world of primal energy, independent of human beings, which includes what humans might experience as terrifying or evil: lightning, the primordial sea, hungry lions on the prowl, the ferocious war-horse, the vulture feeding her young with the rotting flesh of the slain. Violence, deprivation, or death form the content for many of these pictures, and the animals are to them as figure is to ground. The horse exults *because* of the battle; without the corpses, the vulture couldn't exist in her grisly solicitude. We are among the most elemental realities, at the center of which there is an indestructible power, an indestructible joy.

This world-view is, of course, in direct opposition to the Genesis myth in which man is given dominion over all creatures. It is a God's-eye view of creation before man, beyond good and evil, marked by the innocence of a mind that has stepped outside the circle of human values. (When I was a very young Zen student, caught up in the problem of evil, I once asked my teacher, "Why does shit smell so bad?" He said, "If you were a fly, it would taste like candy.")

There is another text that can be contrasted: the peaceable kingdom of First Isaiah, where the wolf lies down with the lamb. Beside Job's vision, this seems a naive version of paradise, and as elusive as its direct descendent, the Marxist End-of-Days; since Isaiah still equates the humane with the human, his desire turns the wilderness into a zoo, stocked with nonviolent wolves and vegetarian lions. The Voice, however, doesn't moralize. It has the clarity, the pitilessness, of nature and of all great art. Is the world of flesh-eaters really a demonic parody of God's intent? And what about our compassion for the prey? Projecting our civilized feelings onto the antelope torn

apart by lions, we see mere horror: nature red in tooth and claw. But animals aren't victims, and don't feel sorry for themselves. The lioness springs without malice; the torn antelope suffers and lets go; each plays its role in the sacred game. When we watch from even the periphery, as in a television film, we can sense the dignity this relationship confers on both hunter and hunted, even in the midst of great pain.

What the Voice means is that paradise isn't situated in the past or future, and doesn't require a world tamed or edited by the moral sense. It is our world, when we perceive it clearly, without eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. It is an experience of the Sabbath vision: looking at reality, the world of starving children and nuclear menace, and recognizing that it is very good. In the fourteenth of his *Job* etchings, Blake drew small sketches of the first six days of creation in the margin (up to but not including the creation of man) and in the center, above God, he drew the angels who embody seventh-day consciousness, illustrating one of the most beautiful verses in all literature:

> *b'ron-yahad kokhvay voker / vayari'u kol-b'nay elohim*
> [*"while the morning stars burst out singing/ and the angels shouted for joy!"*]
> (38:7).

If we pay attention to the images themselves, our impression is not at all of a bullying god. Each metaphor describing creation in human terms has a large, ironic humor to it. As if God were really a gigantic carpenter, measuring the earth with a cord, cutting a path for the thunderstorm, etc. How else can he talk to Job about such cosmic energies, except in Job's language and with a cosmic amusement? Poignancy and humor are the essence of these images: the rain falling in the desert and for a brief time making the whole landscape spring into life and color, not for the sake of any human eye; the thunderclouds and lightning-bolts hypothetically lining up like Disney cartoon figures to do Job's bidding; light and darkness as lost waifs who need to be escorted home; the wild ass that wanders in continual hunger and laughs at its enslaved cousins in the cities of men; the fierce exultation of the war-horse:

> *Do you give the horse his strength?*
> *Do you clothe his neck with terror?*
> *Do you make him leap like a locust,*
> *snort like a blast of thunder?*
> *He paws and champs at the bit;*
> *he exults as he charges into battle.*
> *He laughs at the sight of danger;*
> *he does not wince from the sword*
> *or the arrows nipping at his ears*
> *or the flash of spear and javelin.*
> *With his hooves he swallows the ground;*
> *he quivers at the sound of the trumpet.*
> *When the trumpet calls, he says "Ah!"*
> *From far off he smells the battle,*
> *the thunder of the captains and the shouting.*
> (39:19 ff)

We have here a whole world of the most vivid, exuberant life, where every being is the center of an infinite circle. It is far from the human-centered world of final causes that we find in the rest of the Bible. The only parallel to it in Western literature is Whitman's "Song of Myself."

Job's first response is awe. He can barely speak. He puts his hand over his mouth, appalled at his ignorance.

But there is more to come. The Voice now, in a series of gruff, most ironical questions, begins to speak explicitly about good and evil. "Do you really want this moral sense of yours projected onto the universe?" it asks, in effect. "Do you want a god who is only a larger version of a righteous judge, rewarding those who don't realize that virtue is its own reward and throwing the wicked into a physical hell? If that's the kind of justice you're looking for, you'll have to create it yourself. Because that is not *my* justice."

"The Book of Job is the supreme poem of moral outrage."

The answer concludes with a detailed presentation of two creatures, the Beast and the Serpent. These have certain similarities with the hippopotamus and the crocodile, especially the herbivorous, river-dwelling Beast, which is depicted in a distinctly Egyptian landscape. But the images are hardly naturalistic, and become less so as we move from the phallic Beast to the huge, fire-breathing, invulnerable Serpent. Both creatures are, in fact, central figures in ancient near-eastern eschatology. They are the embodiments of evil that the sky-god battles and conquers at the end of time, just as he conquered the sea and the forces of chaos in creating the world at the beginning of time. (In the cozier mythology of the early rabbis, the good Lord, after killing the two beasts,

slices and serves them up to the righteous at the never-ending banquet that is heaven.)

This final section of the Voice from the Whirlwind is a criticism of conventional, dualistic theology. "What is all this foolish chatter about good and evil," the Voice is saying, "about battles between a hero-god and some cosmic opponent? Don't you understand that there *is* no one else in here?" These huge symbols of evil, so terrifying to humans who haven't seen, or won't acknowledge, the destructive Shiva-aspect of God, are presented to us as God's playthings. They are part of the continuum of nature, which runs seamlessly from angel to beast. "The roaring of lions," as Blake wrote, "the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword, are portions of *eternity* too great for the eye of man." Job's vision ought to give a healthy shock to those who believe in a moral god. The only other source in the Bible that approaches it in kilowatts is a passage from the anonymous prophet known as Second Isaiah (45:7): " I form light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Unnameable do all these things."

These passages may remind us of the radiant, large-hearted verse in which Jesus of Nazareth gives his reason for loving our enemies: "That you may be children of your father who is in heaven: for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends his rain on the just and on the unjust." Though in *Job* even the concept of God as a father (or mother) is gently mocked, not only in the metaphor of the primal sea being wrapped in swaddling clothes, but in the tender and very beautiful verses about the rain:

> *Does the rain have a father?*
> *Who has begotten the dew?*
> *Out of whose belly is the ice born?*
> *Whose womb labors with the sleet?*
>
> *(38:28 f.)*

Does the rain have a father? The whole meaning is in the *lack* of an answer. If you say yes, you're wrong. If you say no, you're wrong. God's humor here is rich and subtle beyond words.

V.

> *Considering that, all hatred driven hence,*
> *The soul recovers radical innocence*
> *And learns at last that it is self-delighting,*
> *Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,*
> *And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will.*
>
> Yeats

We come now to Job's final speech. To misunderstand it will be to miss his transformation, and to destroy the harmonic structure that gives a book its meaning. If Job's response is unworthy, then God's answer is unworthy. One is a mirror-image of the other.

This is partly a matter of translation. The King James and most other versions present us with a Job who, in his last words, "abhors himself / and repents in dust and ashes" (42:6). They do this on the shakiest of philological grounds;[4] though understandably, because they are thinking with orthodox Christian ideas and *expecting* to find penitence and self-abasement as the appropriate response to the righteous, ill-tempered god they expect to find. Nor is this only a Christian mindset. (For example, the joke about the rabbi who on Yom Kippur walks to the front of his congregation, pounds his chest, and shouts, "I am worthless, Lord, I am worthless." Then the president of the synagogue walks to the front, pounds his chest, and shouts, "I am worthless, Lord, I am worthless." Next, to the surprise and scandal of everyone, the wimpy little beadle walks to the front, pounds his chest, and shouts, "I am worthless, Lord, I am worthless." The rabbi turns to the president and sneers, "Look who's saying he's worthless!")

But self-abasement is just inverted egoism. Anyone who acts with genuine humility will be as far from humiliation as from arrogance. *Wherefore I abhor myself* indeed! How could this poet, after a venture of unprecedented daring, end with a hero merely beaten into submission? Thereby proving that the friends' degraded opinion is correct after all, since Job, by acknowledging that he is a vermin among vermin, acknowledges the god who mistrusts his angels and in whose nose heaven stinks.

Job's response will not accommodate such whimpering. He has received his answer, and can only remain awe-stricken in the face of overwhelming beauty and dread. At Alamogordo on July 16,

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4. *The first verb, 'em'as*, means "to reject" or "to regard as of little value," never "to abhor or despise." Since the object has somehow dropped out of the Massoretic text, it must be supplied by the translator. "Myself" is based on a misunderstanding of the verb. A sounder interpretation, first proposed in the ancient Syriac version, would be: "Therefore I take back [everything I said."]

In the second half of the verse, the verb, as used in *Job*, always means "to comfort." The phrase *nihamti 'al* means "to be comforted about" or possibly "to repent of," but not "to repent in or upon." Nor does *'afar va-'efer* indicate the place where Job is sitting. This phrase, which occurs once before in *Job* and twice elsewhere in the Bible, always refers to the human body, which was created from dust and returns to dust. So the literal meaning is: "and I am comforted about [being] dust."

1945, Robert Oppenheimer responded to another kind of vision by remembering a verse from the *Bhagavad Gita:* "I [God] am death, the shatterer of worlds." And indeed, the only scriptural analogy to God's answer (the other Biblical examples, except for the burning bush, are of a lesser god) is the vision granted to Arjuna in chapter 11 of the *Gita*, in which that prince experiences, down to the marrow of his bones, the glory and the terror of the universe, all creation and all destruction, embraced in the blissful play of the Supreme Lord. The manifestations there are more cosmic than in *Job*, and the realization of God as "the Self seated in the heart of all creatures" is far clearer. But Job's vision is the more vivid, I think, because its imagination is so deeply rooted in the things of this world. Reading the two together, we are likely to feel even more powerfully the earthliness that moved the author of *Job* to write in such magnificent, loving detail of the lioness and the wild ass and the horse, those creatures as radiant in their pure being as the light that is "brighter than a thousand suns."

Job's final words issue from surrender, not from submission, which even at its purest, in the "Naked I came..." of the prologue, is a gesture in a power transaction, between slave and master or defeated and conqueror; it is always a mode of spiritual depression. Surrender, on the contrary, means the wholehearted giving-up of oneself. It is both the ultimate generosity and the ultimate poverty, because in it the giver becomes the gift. When Job says, "I had heard of you with my ears; / but now my eyes have seen you" (42:5), he is no longer a servant, who fears god and avoids evil. He has faced evil, has looked straight into its face and through it, into a vast wonder and love.

Instead of bursting into fervid adoration as Arjuna does, Job remains a hairsbreadth away from silence. His words are a miracle of tact. We are not told the details of his realization; that isn't necessary; everything is present in the serenity of his tone. All we know is that his grief and accusations, his ideas about God and pity for man, arose from utter ignorance. But we can intuit more than that. A man who hungers and thirsts after justice is not satisfied with a menu. It is not enough for him to hope or believe or know that there is absolute justice in the universe: he must taste and see it. It is not enough that there may be justice someday in the golden haze of the future: it must be now; must *always* have been now.

From this point of vision, the idea that there are accidents or victims is an optical illusion. This statement may seem cruel. Certainly it is a difficult statement. How could it not be? Paradise isn't handed out like a piece of cake at a Sunday-school picnic. But the statement is not cruel. It is the opposite of cruel. With the personal will surrendered, future and past disappear, the morning stars burst out singing, and the deep will, contemplating the world it has created, says, "Behold, it is very good."

Job's comfort at the end is in his mortality. The physical body is acknowledged as dust, the personal drama as delusion. It is as if the world we perceive through our senses, that whole gorgeous and terrible pageant, were the breath-thin surface of a bubble, and everything else, inside and outside, is pure radiance. Both suffering and joy come then like a brief reflection, and death like a pin.

He feels he has woken up from a dream. That sense, of actually seeing the beloved reality he has only heard of before, is what makes his emotion at the end so convincing. He has let go of everything, and surrendered into the light.

VI.

And there, beyond words, the poem ends. But the author added a prose epilogue, since stories need to be finished, and fairy tales want to end happily ever after. This epilogue has upset and offended many modern readers. "How," they ask, "can Job bear to enter a new life after all the agony he has been put through? And how can he accept brand-new children as a replacement for his murdered sons and daughters? What a mockery."

We need to realize, though, that the author has changed language again, and thereby changed realities. We have descended to the smaller humanity of the old legend. Here the new children *are* the old children: even though Job's possessions are doubled, he is given seven sons and three daughters, as before, all of them instantaneously grown up; they have sprung back to life as gracefully as the bones of a murdered child in a Grimm's tale. On another level, all the possessions, and the children too, are outer and visible signs of Job's inner fulfillment, present beyond gain and loss. ("The Mes-

siah will come," Kafka said, "only when he is no longer necessary.") Job's anxiety has vanished. Even his god, though he still cares about burnt offerings and ritual expiation, is not split into a Lord and an Accuser, and no longer needs to administer loyalty tests. Indeed, he rewards Job for having said that the righteous aren't rewarded, and mildly punishes the friends for maintaining that the wicked are punished.

"It is as if the world we perceive through our senses . . . were the breath-thin surface of a bubble, and everything else . . . is pure radiance."

Blake, who with all his gnostic eccentricities is still the only interpreter to understand that the theme of this book is spiritual transformation, makes a clear distinction between the worlds of the prologue and of the epilogue. In his first illustration to *Job*, he draws the patriarch and his wife seated at evening prayer, with bibles open on their laps, their children kneeling around them; the sheep are drowsing, the dogs are drowsing, they themselves look up to heaven in drowsy piety, with all their musical instruments hanging silent on the central tree. The last engraving, however, shows a world transfigured: it is sunrise, the whole family is standing up, bright-eyed, each exuberantly playing his favorite instrument.

The most curious detail in the epilogue is the mention of Job's daughters. In this new world they are not inferior to their brothers and do not have to go to *their* houses for the annual celebration. Indeed, they are dignified equally by being given a share of Job's wealth as their inheritance. Each is named, while the seven sons remain anonymous. The names themselves—Dove, Cinnamon, and Eye-shadow—symbolize peace, abundance, and a specifically female kind of grace. The story's center of gravity has shifted from righteousness to beauty, the effortless manifestation of inner peace. "And in all the world there were no women as beautiful as Job's daughters" (42:15).

There is something enormously satisfying about this prominence of the feminine at the end of *Job*. The whole yin side of humanity, denigrated in the figure of Job's wife, and in Job's great oath looked upon as a seductive danger, has finally been acknowledged and honored here. It is as if, once Job has learned to surrender, his world too gives up the male compulsion to control. The daughters have almost the last word. They appear with the luminous power of figures in a dream: we can't quite figure out why they are so important, but we know that they are.

The very last word is a peaceful death in the midst of a loving family. What truer, happier ending could there be? □

Transarmament 2000: The Spirit and the Strategy

ARTHUR WASKOW

There are two governments on the face of the earth—sometimes it seems to boil down to just two men—that can in twenty minutes' time condemn the human race and every other species to a painful universal death. This past January, the head of one of those governments proposed that his government and ours set as a goal that by the year 2000 we eliminate from the planet the deadly machines that can eliminate us. (They are usually called "nuclear weapons" and "H-Bombs", but these are misnomers. It is more accurate to call each one an instant portable Auschwitz.)

The Gorbachev proposal was first greeted with a kind of cautious warmth by Ronald Reagan, who said he was grateful that the Soviets were putting the total elimination of the danger of nuclear destruction on the agenda. Yet since then the more detailed responses of the Reagan Administration have sidestepped the Year 2000 proposal. And the American mass media have treated the proposal as a dream—utopian at best, propagandistic at worst. Merely a dream.

Is "zero nukes"—or a number so low that deterrence is preserved but the destruction of all life is made impossible—an empty dream? Is it true that the *very best* we can imagine is what the movement for a "bilateral verifiable freeze" proposed? The "Freeze" proposal was that the Soviet Union and the United States both stop developing or deploying any new nuclear "weapons". The proposal left utterly unclear what would come next—but if the Freeze were all we did, it would leave the world still frozen in the shadow of some 50,000 instant portable Auschwitzes. *One hundred* times as many as would halt photosynthesis and blot out life on earth. Waiting for a paranoid submarine captain or a computer glitch.

To go beyond that Freeze—is it just a dream? It was Theodor Herzl who said, about the utopian vision of a Jewish state, "If you will it—it is not a dream". Fifty years later, it was a reality.

If you will it, it is not a dream. Is there any way to turn this dream into reality? Is there any way to walk a path, step by step? To muster the courage and intelligence that will keep us going no matter what government demurs—even the one that proposed the dream (as it very well might if the process really got going) or even a future U.S. government we ourselves elect on a promise to carry out the dream? And is there any reason to aim this dream at the Year 2000?

I think that we can create such a path, and I think that the Year 2000 is exactly the right date for the goal. I will say why in a moment. But first let us look more carefully at where we are starting from in terms of American public opinion.

This moment has interesting similarities to a moment one generation ago, in the effort to end racial segregation and protect civil rights—the moment of time around 1957 or 1958. That was a few years after the Supreme Court school desegregation decision of 1954, just as today we are four years after the pastoral letter of the Catholic bishops on nuclear "deterrence".

The Bishops' statement, like the Court's ruling, was both a symptom of change in public thought and a stimulus to further change. At the level of mind and heart, religion and culture, by 1957 one could sense that new winds were blowing; but in national policy, little had changed. In the election of 1956, civil rights had been an issue to shrug off. Congress was considering "civil rights acts" that were meaningless. Schools in the South were resisting change.

Not till 1960, with the sit-ins, did the new majority in heart and mind even begin to make a new majority in politics and policy. Not till 1964 and 1965 did Congress pass serious laws protecting civil rights and voting rights. Change came slowly. Yet when it came, it went far beyond the Supreme Court's ruling; for the changes have had the effect of shifting the power relations of blacks to whites in many states, and transforming the public roles of blacks throughout America.

Winning great victories of social change like that victory over segregation is like freezing water that is hot. It must be cooled, and cooled, and cooled, and

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cooled. For hours it refuses to become ice . . . and then!

In exactly this way, we are living in the "cooling" time. In the last five years there has emerged a "new majority" of desire to halt the nuclear arms race. That new majority is being moved by profound religious and spiritual feelings of commitment to the preservation of life on the Earth. As in the late '50s, the new sense of the world is being nurtured in religious communities and congregations, the heartland of American society; among women's groups; and among public-spirited professionals like scientists, lawyers, physicians, and teachers. Yet this desire has not "crystallized"; it has not been turned into public policy. Why not?

In the broadest sense, we have not unified some deep contradictions inside ourselves— unified them in such a way as to free our "wholeness" to act. We have not yet unified some contradictions within the religious impulse itself—contradictions between the attractions of apocalypse and the attractions of hope. We have not yet unified the worlds of spirituality and politics into the kind of action that can be spiritually rooted without becoming religious triumphalism. And we have not yet dealt with what seems to be the contradiction between our fear of Soviet domination and our fear of nuclear holocaust. We must deal with all three of these chasms in our thought and action if our work is to be successful.

First, the religious impulse is stronger in America now than it was in the '50s—but also more ambivalent. The world-wide religious resurgence which has given new and deeper energy to the movement to protect the earth by preventing nuclear holocaust has *also* given new intensity to apocalyptic expectations— almost holding out a welcome to nuclear holocaust. And even those of us who feel that our opposition to the arms race is rooted in religious tradition and experience have not looked sharply enough at the ambivalent meanings of the religious resurgence. From now till the year 2000, religious movements all over the world are likely to grow in number and intensity—and this growth will have an important effect on the dangers of nuclear holocaust and the possibilities of nuclear disarmament. In many different traditions, the religious resurgence is being energized in part by fear of and anger at technology-run-amok which is both symbolized and characterized by the danger of nuclear holocaust.

In addition, there is a specific tug toward religious intensity that will be affecting many Christians as they more and more focus on the year 2000. In the Christian calendar, that date is the end of the "second millennium." The cultural coloration that Christianity has given even non-Christian cultures during the last several centuries will mean that many other cultures, too, will feel the approach of the year 2000 as a special event. And millennial expectations will not seem merely magical or numerological. For millennial visions of terror and glory will seem to be confirmed, not refuted, by the "triumphs" of science and by that fact that more and more governments (and maybe non-governmental groups) will have access to H-bombs and may be more willing to use them. There will be great dangers of "small" nuclear wars between small countries or between religious movements. Whether such wars happen or not, there will be more fear and more fury in the world.

In practically all religious and cultural traditions, there are visions of the days of peace and justice, as well as of catastrophe. There are religious impulses that we would call prophetic and messianic—as well as impulses toward apocalypse. It should be possible—though not easy—to focus the new religious energy around averting the impending danger of Hell on Earth, and moving toward the vision of peace. The 1990s and especially the year 2000, offer a symbolic attraction toward this kind of action that *might* be so powerful as a symbol that it becomes powerful as politics.

"Suppose that by August, 1995, treaties come into force that require arrangements for the elimination of practically all nuclear weapons by the year 2000 . . ."

Suppose we were to set ourselves the following goal: *that by August, 1995, 50 years after Hiroshima, treaties come into force that require and specify arrangements for the elimination of practically all nuclear weapons by the year 2000, the "new millennium."*

How might we get such a treaty by 1995? Imagine the following chain of history at the "policy" level: (We will come back to the questions of how to create the transmission belt from a new majority of hearts and minds into a new majority in policy.)

1. A new U.S. Administration committed to nuclear disarmament *or at least willing to experiment and to be pushed by a strong public* (as the Kennedy-Johnson Administration was on civil rights) is elected in 1988 and reelected in 1992.
2. In January, 1989, the new U.S. Administration announces a one-year moratorium on all new U.S. nuclear "weapons" testing on deployment, and asks USSR reciprocation.
3. By August, 1989, the U.S. and the USSR have ratified a treaty for a mutual, verifiable freeze on production, testing, and deployment of new nuclear weapons, and of weapons in space; and the U.S. Congress has passed a law mandating preparation of a detailed civilian-reconversion plan to operate with 10%-per year reductions of nuclear "weapons."
4. In January, 1990, U.S. announces it will undertake a 10% reduction in its own nuclear arsenal by the end of 1990, and asks the USSR to reciprocate.
5. In August, 1990, U.S. and USSR agree to treaty embodying procedures for verifiable 10% reductions in both their nuclear arsenals each year for five years.

If we take this scenario of history seriously, we must ask ourselves a crucial question: What actions are needed now, and next to now, if we are to reach the take-off point by 1988?

Here is where we must create "transmission belts" from hearts-and-minds to politics. In the civil rights movement, the key element in moving new hearts and minds into new action was the involvement of people in *direct* action to end segregations—action of *their own*, whether strong (sit-ins) or mild (Woolworth boycotts). These actions did not always or necessarily risk death or prison (though some people did risk, and suffer, both). The key element in them was that they gave people a way to feel *morally more whole* since their action *in their own lives* came closer to representing their ideas and desires. Even where these began as mild actions, they released new energies for deeper action.

The crucial moral base for these actions—as belief in racial equality was for the desegregation movement—is the widespread belief that *new* nuclear weapons are both unnecessary and extremely dangerous—the belief that was crystallized in the proposal for a nuclear Freeze. These energies would have to be mobilized around the Freeze—not only as protests. This belief now needs to be turned into the framework for direct involvement — not only urging the Freeze upon the government but also acting upon it in life. This means not only protests like June, 1982 in Central Park, or like the Ribbon around the Pentagon, but very *mild but very real withdrawals* from actual participation in the production of any *new nuclear* "weapons." Thus—the Freeze (No New Nukes) would become something that individuals, families, and groups can actually do.

Imagine the following examples of such action:

1. A consumer boycott of one major nuclear-weapons contractor, with cities, states, businesses joining this boycott and offering support to workers who quit such jobs. (INFACT, the creator of the Nestle boycott, has begun focusing on General Electric with this possibility in mind.)
2. A single day of non-cooperation with nuclear weapons, *all across the country*, vigils, sit-ins, discussion meetings at work places, nuclear weapons bases, Congressional offices, etc., on the model of the decentralized Vietnam Moratorium.
3. A pledge by a reasonably large number of people (one million?) that if by a given April 1 that number of people had joined in a covenant to withhold at least $1 from their telephone tax or income tax payments and to enclose a protest statement with their taxes, they would *all* do it. The campaign to collect one million names could itself be important, life-giving, and exciting—analogous to a petition drive for signatures to put a candidate or a referendum on the ballot.

These actions are intended to be as mild as possible while still requiring some actual personal disengagement from *new additions* to the arms race—in worktime, or in money. Obviously, stronger actions, if done in nonviolent ways, may create more movement. But so far disarmament activists have assumed that there is either "protest"—which seem ineffectual—or very risky resistance. *Mild* withdrawal must be made an important option.

If there were growing bodies of people who took such morally committed actions focused on the political system, what changes in American culture and politics could we imagine that would act as indices of change, as way stations toward a decision to halt the arms race?

- Hiroshima Day becomes a formally recognized and broadly observed day of memorial and hope in almost all main-stream Christian and Jewish denominations.

- A major world boycott of a leading nuclear-"weapons" maker with a big consumer involvement (e.g. G.E.) leads to its abandoning nuclear contracts.
- A broad body of rabbis from all strands of Jewish life announce that in their judgement Jewish history, teaching, and tradition prohibit working in jobs that contribute to the deployment of any nuclear weapons.
- Two Roman Catholic bishops actually stand trial for tax refusal.
- Twenty U.S. Senators and one hundred Representatives announce they will vote *NO* on any military budget that includes more spending for more nuclear "weapons" (i.e. for more instant Auschwitzes) and will also use filibusters, quorum calls, etc., to attempt to prevent their passage, since they violate all moral standards.

Because the basic impulse infused in this sort of action is a search for moral wholeness *within the individual as well as in the broader world,* the kind of world-view involved in this approach tends to be "spiritual" or "religious", whether it is embodied in a formal denomination or not. This impulse should be encouraged, not squashed; old rituals should be given new life, and new rituals should be created.

"It should be possible—though not easy—to focus the new religious energy around averting the impending danger of Hell on Earth, and moving toward the vision of peace."

What does all this matter, in terms of changing governmental policy? Why not focus simply and directly on winning elections?

Organizing entirely around elections can be self-destructive if the election is lost (or even if it seems to be "won" by the election of a mildly sympathetic candidate). Organizing without any regard to elections can be self-destructive, if the influence generated has no leverage on national policy. Organizing in such a way as to keep spirit, knowledge, and commitment high in a non-electoral framework that has a built-in capacity for affecting elections may be an extremely important approach.

In practical terms, what does it mean to organize in a non-electoral framework that can move into elections? The Shalom Center, the national organizing and resource center for Jewish community work to prevent a nuclear holocaust, has developed one approach that may be useful as model or stimulus. The Shalom Center has worked to weave the threads of Jewish teaching about how to prevent nuclear holocaust into the fabric of the Jewish festival year, drawing on the authentic and relevant themes of each festival.

So at Passover, The Center has focused on Pharaoh's threat to murder all Israelite baby boys as a model for the Pharaonic danger of the H-bomb. At Tisha B'Av, the mid-summer memorial day of the Babylonian and Roman destructions of the Temple in Jerusalem, The Center has connected that disaster with the destruction of Hiroshima and the danger of the destruction of the earth. On the anniversary of the Biblical Flood and Rainbow, The Center has urged addressing those events as metaphors of the future Flood of Fire and the need for a renewed covenant of life.

And most especially, The Center has focused on Sukkot, the fall harvest festival when Jews build "sukkot"—vulnerable booths or "tabernacles" with leafy roofs, open huts that are the exact opposite of fallout shelters or Star Wars "invulnerable shields." The Center has made this a time of Sukkah Shalom—and since in every even-numbered year the festival is followed a few weeks later by an American election, the Sukkah Shalom project in those years will focus on moving "From Harvest Booth to Voting Booth." During the festival, Jews will reactivate their basic commitment to Shalom as a crucial fact in how they choose to vote. They will intertwine ritual with voter education, will invite candidates to visit the Sukkah to test themselves by its standards, will apply the meaning of Sukkot to specific policy stances.

The underlying approach here is that the *basic* framework for organizing is religious, and the rhythms of time are ancient and eternal. The rhythms of election campaigns are to be contained *within* deeper truths—not to dominate them, but also not to be ignored by them. And as "organizing strategy," this means that people who move according to a "different Drummer" can nevertheless respond to the electoral music when it matters.

Finally, there is one other chasm in the political psychology of Americans that must be bridged, one other contradiction that must be unified. Alongside the deep fear that most Americans have of the H-Bomb, there is another strong fear: that of the Soviet Union. The two fears operate against each other, each preventing effective action in pursuit of the changes that the other would inspire. Thus policy is paralyzed. Out of fear of the Soviet Union,

we will not act to end the threat of nuclear holocaust. Out of fear of nuclear holocaust, we will not act to change the Soviet Union.

The key to ending this paralysis is understanding the assumption beneath it: the assumption that running the nuclear arms race, even though dangerous, is necessary because only doing so will change the Soviet Union.

Suppose Americans were to change their minds about this assumption? Suppose we concluded that the nuclear arms race does *not* change the Soviets (except to make them act worse); that *the nuclear arms race leads to impotence, not to power.* Then enormous political energy would be freed to work against the nuclear arms race and for "transarmament"—for some new ways of carrying on U.S. foreign policy that *can* actually reduce repressive and imperialist behavior by the Soviet Union.

The new energy would be released at two levels. At one level there could be a political realignment in which Americans with a major interest in opposing Soviet repression at home and abroad would work *with,* rather than *against,* Americans with a major interest in achieving world-wide nuclear disarmament. At another level, there could emerge new energy from a new sense of "moral wholeness," because we would not have to sacrifice one deeply held value—either life or freedom—in order to preserve the other. We would not have to paralyze ourselves by letting them paralyze each other.

To give reality to such a political and moral realignment, it would be necessary for us to work out a strategy of *transarmament.* Just as supporters of disarmament have argued that it is necessary to plan to convert the domestic economy from producing nuclear weaponry to producing civilian goods so that jobs and profits would not be wiped out, so we need to plan for "conversion" of American foreign policy. We have long argued that American "superiority" in nuclear weapons and preparations to fight a "counterforce" or "controlled" nuclear war in the hope of forcing the Soviets to back down in a major crisis, do not actually help us win political victories over the Soviets. The arms race does not change the Soviet Union in ways that we desire; in fact, the faster the arms race the more repressive and militant the Soviet Union becomes. So we need to look at what behavior by the United States *has* actually helped change Soviet behavior in directions that we desire.

As the United States stops allocating money, brains, and time to the nuclear arms race, it would shift some of those resources into new, more effective forms of action overseas—calculated to strengthen those elements and institutions in the Soviet Union most oriented to openness and negotiation. In this way a strategy of transarmament would become part of public policy, a companion piece to the measures for reducing the nuclear weapons race and the military budget that we have imagined might be pursued from 1989 till 2000.

What would those measures be? It is hard to say—hard because we have been so addicted to the nuclear arms race as a way of controlling Soviet behavior that we have rarely tested other approaches in a conscious deliberate way.

But there is some evidence. For those who care especially about reducing Soviet repressiveness and strengthening the human rights of such Soviet citizens as the Jewish community and other dissidents, there is one period and kind of change in Soviet behavior on which we can draw. That is the period from 1972 to 1979—compared to the period from 1980 to the present. While serious Soviet/American arms-control negotiations and important commercial deals were under way, large numbers of Soviet Jews were permitted to leave the Soviet Union. When the Soviets felt rebuffed on Most Favored Nation trade arrangements, the numbers dropped—until detente warmed again. But when the Second Cold War began in 1980 and both trade and arms-control were abandoned, Soviet Jewish emigration dropped to almost zero—and has stayed there for six years.

"Alongside the deep fear that most Americans have of the H-Bomb is another strong fear: that of the Soviet Union. The two fears operate against each other . . ."

This record may reflect a simple trade-off—that Soviet officials were willing to trade freedom for Jews in exchange for commercial and political arrangements that they like. Or it may reflect a deeper process—one in which more repressive political forces within the Soviet Union are strengthened by the fear and rigidity of an arms-race cycle, and less repressive forces are strengthened by the hope and experimentation of detente.

It is true that the detente period was not able to sustain itself—and that we must learn much more about how to keep the process moving, keep encouraging the Soviets to change their behavior. But the point is that in the arena of transarmament, it is possible to keep on learning; in the realm of portable Auschwitz and nuclear winter, it is not. Indeed, one of the most profound differences between counterforce strategy and transarmament strategy is that the first cannot be tried out, tested, and revised without running an enormous risk of destroying the world; transarmament is amenable to experiment and revision. Counterforce rests on idolatrous arrogance—the belief that monstrous energies can be kept under absolutely precise control, as if human beings were perfect; transarmament accepts that we have much to learn that we will learn only from imperfect practice. With transarmament we do not have to have perfect answers before we begin.

Perhaps the question whether we are willing to experiment with an imperfect strategy points to the most profound difference between the kind of religious impulse that is apocalyptic and the kind that is prophetic, even messianic. The apocalyptic mood cannot abide imperfection. It would rather—or thinks God would rather—see the world destroyed than see us live in it along with the Soviet Union. It would rather put in place a "perfectly" "rational" system of computerized, controlled nuclear counterforce warfare than learn from the fuzzy, frustrating, exhausting process of inventing "arms" that actually reach out—like human arms—to change the world.

What we need to remember, and renew, is the religious impulse that is rooted in the love of God's creation—imperfect as it is; that takes a hand in the process of repairing what is broken; that finds joy in the knowledge that there is much we do not know. Drawing on *that* aspect of the religious impulse, we can celebrate our growth of consciousness in the 1980s, and move on with more hope than fear to make a world without H-bombs by the year 2000. □

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The Virtues of the Inner Life in Formative Judaism

JACOB NEUSNER

I. Emotions and the Virtues of the Inner Life

If we think of such feelings as joy or sorrow, anger or despair, humility or arrogance, hope or confidence, we know, but only in particular, what in general we mean when we speak of emotions. Synonyms for "emotions" are such words as "feelings," and, in the classical religious thought of the West, "affections." In the definitive writings of Judaism, "our sages of blessed memory," who defined the Judaism of the dual Torah of Scripture and the Mishnah and explained and expanded both into the enduring religious world-view and way of life for Israel, the Jewish people, taught what Israel is supposed to feel. The very notion that sages "teach" feelings must strike the reader as puzzling. In general we tend to take for granted two things.

First, feelings just come. They happen within and are private. So they are not only personal, but they also are not subject to processes of thought and reflection that may be shaped by teaching and governed by law. How can people teach us what, in our hearts, we are supposed to feel?

Second, emotions define us as individuals. So, by definition, they lie outside the framework of what is public, social, and cultural. If a religious tradition proposes to tell us how to feel, we may respond as individuals, in the name of our individuality dismissing the affective message as essentially beside the point.

In the past two decades important figures in philosophy and psychology have called into question these two deeply-rooted convictions about the individual and private character and the social irrelevance of affections. They have argued that how we feel, as much as what we think, characterizes us as part of a distinct culture and society. Emotions constitute judgments, one says. Feelings should be viewed as social constructions, not radically personal responses, argues another. Now, as I said, our sages in Judaism assuredly treat the emotional life in exactly the same way in which they sort out matters of the soul and mind. In what way? All things that matter may be holy or profane. Our task as human beings demands that we sanctify our emotions as much as carry out actions of holiness, that is, religious deeds. So with reference to *mitzvot,* the performance of holy deeds, "...who has sanctified us by the commandments, and commanded us to...," that is, the blessing that turns a secular action into a religious deed, expresses the main idea. Israelite women and men are commanded to feel as much as to do or affirm, for example, to serve God "with all your heart," as much as "with all your soul and power."

"Since Israelites in the doctrine of formative Judaism are commanded to love God, it follows that an emotion, love, becomes holy."

Since Israelites in the doctrine of formative Judaism are commanded, specifically, to love God, it follows that an emotion, love, becomes holy. How so? It is when the affection of love is directed to God. The same emotion, love, may become not only profane but sinful when it is directed to the wrong objects, self or power for example. Accordingly, our sages in the definitive holy books of Judaism make plain their conviction that feelings too come to the surface as matters of judgment. Emotions constitute constructions for which, they hold, we bear responsibility.

The repertoire of approved and disapproved feelings remains constant through the half-millennium of the unfolding of the canon of Judaism from the Mishnah through the Talmud of Babylonia. So I want to know why. The question takes on urgency in light of important shifts and changes characteristic of the treatment, in the same books of formative Judaism, of other critical questions. As we shall see, questions of exegetical method, or teleological focus and definition and of doctrinal and symbolic substance elicit diverse answers as the literature unfolded while the sages' message for the heart remained the same. How, in the formative history of Judaism, shall we account for the

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distinctive and limited character of the emotional vocabulary taught by our sages as the language of faith?

My answer: first, the emotions encouraged by Judaism in its formative age, such as humility, forbearance, accommodation, a spirit of conciliation, exactly correspond to the political and social requirements of the Jews' condition in that time. Second, the reason that the same repertoire of emotions persisted with no material change through the unfolding of the writings of the sages of that formative age was the constancy of the Jews' political and social condition.

"The repertoire of approved and disapproved feelings remains constant during the half-millennium from the Mishnah through the Talmud of Babylonia. Why?"

In the view of the sages at hand, how I am supposed to feel in ethos matches what I am expected to think. In this way, as an individual, I link my deepest personal emotions to the cosmic fate and transcendent faith of that social group of which I form a part. Emotions lay down judgements. They derive from rational cognition. The individual Israelite's innermost feelings, the microcosm, correspond to the public and historic condition of Israel, the macrocosm.

What Judaism teaches the private person to feel links her or his heart to what Judaism states about the condition of Israel in history and of God in the cosmos. All form one reality, in supernatural world and nature, in time and in eternity wholly consubstantial. In the innermost chambers of deepest feelings, the Israelite therefore lives out the public history and destiny of the people, Israel. The genius of Judaism, reason for its resilience and endurance, lies in its power to teach Jews in private to feel what in public they also must think about the condition of both self and nation. The world within, the world without, are so bonded, that one is never alone. The individual's life always is lived with the people.

II. Emotion as Tradition

An epitome of the sages' treatment of emotions yields a simple result. Early, middle, and late, a single doctrine and program dictated what people had to say on how Israel should tame its heart. So far as the unfolding components of the canon of Judaism portray matters, emotions therefore form part of an iron tradition. That is, a repertoire of rules and relationships handed on from the past, always intact and ever unimpaired, governed the issue. The labor of the generations meant to receive the repertoire and recipe for feeling proved one of only preserving and maintaining that tradition. While the formative centuries of the history of Judaism overall mark a period of remarkable growth and change, with history consisting of sequences of developments in various substantial ideas and generative conceptions, here, in the matter of emotions, it does not.

While the Mishnah casually refers to emotions, e.g., tears of joy, tears of sorrow, where feelings matter, it always is in a public and communal context. For one important example, where there is an occasion of rejoicing, one form of joy is not to be confused with some other, or some context of sorrow with another. Accordingly, marriages are not to be held on festivals (M.M.Q. 1:7). Likewise mourning is not to take place then (M.M.Q. 1:5, 3:7-9). Where emotions play a role, it is because of the affairs of the community at large, e.g., rejoicing on a festival, mourning on a fast day (M. Suk. 5:1-4). Emotions are to be kept in hand, as in the case of the relatives of the executed felon (M. San. 6:6). If I had to specify the single underlying principle affecting all forms of emotion, for the Mishnah it is that feelings must be kept under control, never fully expressed without reasoning about the appropriate context. Emotions must always lay down judgments. We see in most of those cases in which emotions play a systemic, not merely a tangential, role, that the basic principle is the same. We can, and must, so frame our feelings as to accord with the appropriate rule. In only one case does emotion play a decisive role in settling an issue, and that has to do with whether or not a farmer was happy that water came upon his produce or grain. That case underlines the conclusion just now drawn. If people feel a given sentiment, it is a matter of judgment, therefore invokes the law's penalties. So in this system emotions are not treated as spontaneous, but as significant aspects of a person's judgment. It would be difficult to find a more striking example of that view than at M. Makh. 4:5 and related passages. The very fact that the law applies comes about because the framers judge the farmer's feelings to constitute, on their own and without

associated actions or even conceptions, final and decisive judgments on what has happened.

"While the Mishnah casually refers to emotions, where feelings matter it is always in a public and communal context."

Tractate Abot presents the single most comprehensive account of religious affections. The reason is that, in that document above all, how we feel defines a critical aspect of virtue. The issue proves central, not peripheral. The doctrine emerges fully exposed. A simple catalogue of permissible feelings comprises humility, generosity, self-abnegation, love, a spirit of conciliation of the other, and eagerness to please. A list of impermissible emotions is made up of envy, ambition, jealousy, arrogance, sticking to one's opinion, self-centeredness, a grudging spirit, vengefulness, and the like. People should aim at eliciting from others acceptance and good will and should avoid confrontation, rejection, and humiliation of the other. This they do through conciliation and giving up their own claims and rights. So both catalogues form a harmonious and uniform whole, aiming at the cultivation of the humble and malleable person, one who accepts everything and resents nothing.

True, these virtues, in this tractate as in the system as a whole, derive from knowledge of what really counts, which is what God wants. But God favors those who please others. The virtues appreciated by human beings prove identical to the ones to which God responds as well. And what single virtue of the heart encompasses the rest? Restraint, serves as the anecdote for ambition, vengefulness, and, above all, for arrogance. It is restraint of our own interest that enables us to deal generously with others; humility about ourselves that generates a liberal spirit towards others.

So the emotions prescribed in tractate Abot turn out to provide variations of a single feeling, which is the sentiment of the disciplined heart, whatever affective form it may take. And where does the heart learn its lessons, if not in relationship to God? So: "Make his wishes yours, so that he will make your wishes his" (Abot 2:4). Applied to the relationships between human beings, this inner discipline of the emotional life will yield exactly those virtues of conciliation and self-abnegation, humility and generosity of spirit, that the framers of tractate Abot spell out in one example after another. Imputing to Heaven exactly those responses felt on earth, e.g., "Anyone from whom people take pleasure, God takes pleasure" (Abot 3:10), makes the point at the most general level.

When the authors of compilers of the Tosefta finished their labor of amplification and complement, they had succeeded in adding only a few fresh and important developments of established themes. What is striking is, first, the stress upon the com munal stake in an individual's emotional life. Still more striking is the Tosefta's authors' explicit effort to invoke an exact correspondence between public and private feelings. In both realms emotions are to be tamed, kept in hand and within accepted proportions.

I cannot imagine a more stunning tribute to the power of feeling than the allegation, surfacing in the Tosefta, that the Temple was destroyed because of vain hatred. That sort of hatred, self-serving and arrogant, stands against the feelings of love that characterize God's relationship to Israel. Accordingly, it was improper affections that destroyed the relationship embodied in the Temple Cult of old. Given the critical importance accorded to the Temple cult, sages could not have made more vivid their view that how a private person feels shapes the public destiny of the entire nation.

The Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Talmud) continues this tradition. Temper marks the ignorant person, restraint and serenity, the learned one. In general, we notice, where the Mishnah introduces into its system issues of the affective life, the Yerushalmi's authors and compilers will take up those issues. But they rarely create them on their own and never say much new about those they do treat. What we find is instruction to respect public opinion and cultivate social harmony.

What is most interesting in the Yerushalmi is the recognition that there are rules descriptive of feelings, as much as of other facts of life. These rules tell us how to dispose of cases in which feelings make a difference. The fact is, therefore, that the effects of emotions, as much as of opinions or deeds, come within the rule of law. It must follow, in the view of sages, the affective life once more proves an aspect of society. People are assumed to frame emotions, as much as opinions, in line with common and shared judgments. In no way do emotions form a special classification, one

expressive of what is private, spontaneous, individual, and beyond the law and reason.

The Bavli (Babylonian Talmud) carried forward with little change the now traditional program of emotions, listing the same ones catalogued earlier and no new ones. The authors said about those feelings what had been said earlier. A leader must be someone acceptable to the community. God then accepts him too. People should be ready to give up quarrels and forgive. The correspondence of social and personal virtues reaches explicit statement. How so? The community must forebear, the individual must forgive. Communal tolerance for causeless hatred destroyed the Temple; individual vendettas yield miscarriages. The two coincide. In both cases people nurture feelings that express arrogance. Arrogance is what permits the individual to express emotions without discipline, and arrogance is what leads the community to undertake what it cannot accomplish.

"I cannot imagine a more stunning tribute to the power of feeling than the allegation that the Temple was destroyed because of vain hatred."

A fresh emphasis portrayed in the Bavli favored mourning and disapproved of rejoicing. We can hardly maintain that the view came to expression only in the latest stages in the formation of the canon. The contrary is the case. The point remains consistent throughout. Excessive levity marks arrogance, deep mourning characterizes humility. So many things come down to one thing. The nurture of an attitude of mourning should mark both the individual and the community, both in mourning for the Temple, but also mourning for the condition of nature, including the human condition, signified in the Temple's destruction.

A mark of humility is humble acceptance of suffering. Suffering now produces joy later on. The ruin of the Temple for example served as a guarantee that just as the prophetic warnings came to realization, so too would prophetic promises of restoration and redemption. In the realm of feelings, the union of opposites came about through the same mode of thought. Hence God's love comes to fulfillment in human suffering, and the person who joyfully accepts humiliation or suffering will enjoy the appropriate divine response of love.

Another point at which the authors of the Bavli introduce a statement developing a familiar view derives from the interpretation of how to love one's neighbor. It is by imposing upon one's neighbor the norms of the community, rebuking the other for violating accepted practice. In this way the emotion of love takes on concrete social value in reinforcing the norms of the community.

The strikingly fresh medium for traditional doctrines in the Bavli takes the form of prayers composed by sages. Here the values of the system came to eloquent expression. Sages prayed that their soul may be as dust for everyone to tread upon. They asked for humility in spirit, congenial colleagues, good will, good impulses. They asked God to take cogniznce of their humiliation, to spare them from disgrace. The familiar affective virtures and sins, self-abnegation as against arrogance, made their appearance in liturgical form as well.

The basic motif is simple. Israel is estranged from God, therefore should exhibit the traits of humility and uncertainty, acceptance and conciliation. When God recognizes in Israel's heart, as much as in the nation's deeds and deliberation, the proper feelings, God will respond by ending that estrangement that marks the present age. So the single word encompassing the entire affective doctrine of the canon of Judaism is alienation. No contemporary, surviving the Holocaust, can miss the psychological depth of the system, which joins the human condition to the fate of the nation and the world, and links the whole to the broken heart of God.

We therefore find ourselves where we started, in those sayings which say that if one wants something, he or she should aspire to its opposite. Things are never what they seem. To be rich, accept what you have. To be powerful, conciliate your enemy. To be endowed with public recognition in which to take pride, express humility. So too the doctrine of the emotional life expressed in law, scriptural interpretation, and tales of sages alike turns out to be uniform and simple. Emotions well up uncontrolled and spontaneous. Anger, vengeance, pride, arrogance—these people feel by nature. So feelings as much as affirmations and actions must become what by nature they are not. If one wants riches, seek the opposite. If one wants honor, pursue the opposite. But how do you seek the opposite of wealth? It is by accepting what you

have. And how pursue humility, if not by doing nothing to aggrandize oneself? So the life of the emotions, in conformity to the life of the reflection and of concrete deed, will consist in the transformation of what things *seem* into *what* they ought to be. Here we have an example of the view—whether validated by the facts of nature or not—that emotions constitute constructs, and feelings lay down judgments. So the heart belongs, together with the mind, to the human being's power to form reasoned viewpoints.

"The heart belongs, together with the mind, to the human being's power to form reasoned viewpoints."

This theory of the emotional life, persistent through the unfolding of the canonical documents of Judaism, fits into a larger way of viewing the world. How shall we describe this mode of thought? It seems to me we may call it an *as-if* way of seeing things. That is to say, it is *as-if* a common object or symbol really represented an uncommon one. Nothing says what it means. Everything important speaks metonymically, elliptically, parabolically, symbolically. What lies on the surface misleads. What lies beneath or beyond the surface—there is the true reality.

How shall we characterize people who see things this way? They constitute the opposite of ones who call a thing as it is. Self-evidently, they have become accustomed to perceiving more—or less—than is at hand. Perhaps that is a natural mode of thought for the Jews of this period, so long used to calling themselves God's first love, yet now seeing others with greater worldly reason claiming that same advantaged relationship. Not in mind only, but still more, in the politics of the world, the people that remembered its origins along with the very creation of the world and founding of humanity, that recalled how it alone served, and serves, the one and only God, for hundreds of years had confronted a quite different existence. The radical disjuncture between the way things were and the way Scripture said things were supposed to be, and in actuality would some day become, surely imposed an unbearable tension. It was one thing for the slave born to slavery to endure. It was another for the free man sold into slavery to accept that same condition. The vanquished people, the broken-hearted nation that had lost its city and its temple, that had, moreover, produced another nation from its midst to take over its Scripture and much else, could not bear too much reality. That defeated people, in its intellectuals, as represented in the sources we have surveyed, then found refuge in a mode of thought that trained vision to see other things otherwise than as the eyes perceived them. Among the diverse ways by which the weak and subordinated accommodate to their circumstance, the one of iron-willed pretense in life is most likely to yield the mode of thought at hand: things never are, because they cannot be, what they seem. The uniform tradition on emotions persisted intact because the social realities of Israel's life proved permanent, until, in our own time, they changed.

III. Constancy and Change

If the reader concurs that early, middle, and late in the formation of Judaism, emotions are portrayed in essentially one way, then the obvious questions must now come to center-stage: So what? You may fairly ask why we should regard as a fact demanding explanation the simple observation that a single view of human nature, including permissible and forbidden feelings, predominates among a coherent social group of intellectuals. People take for granted, not entirely without reason, that the sages' culture defined itself along traditional lines. A mark of the disciple of the sage was imitation of the master, the sage. A critical doctrine of the Judaism defined by the sages of the rabbinical canon emphasized that people memorized the received books of rules and exegesis and made decisions (as in any tradition of jurisprudence) in line with those already made. A list of those definitive traits of the book-culture portrayed by the canon would encompass pages of items characteristic of a traditional, stable, uniform, and therefore constant culture—a tradition.

Why expect anything else? Because in other respects, Judaism does change. I shall point to three sets of facts that suggest a revolution in the formation of Judaism, one that took place in the fourth century.

IV. Change in the Use of Scripture

The first change revealed in the unfolding of the sages' canon pertains to making books out of the collection of exegesis of Scripture. Why is that an innovation? Because the Mishnah, and the exegetical literature that served the Mish-

nah, did not take shape around the explanation of verses of Scripture. The authorship of the Mishnah and its principal heirs followed their own program, which was a topical one. They arranged ideas by subject matter. But in the third, and especially, in the later fourth centuries, other writings, entering the canon, took shape around the explanation of verses of Scripture, not a set of topics. What this meant was that a second mode of organizing ideas, besides the topical mode paramount for the Mishnah, the Tosefta, the Yerushalmi (and the Bavli later on), now made its way.

Collections of scriptural exegesis represent a totally new kind of book in their sort of Judaism. No one previously in rabbinic Judaism, so far as we know, then nearly four hundred years in the making, had ever conceived of compiling or writing that kind of book of biblical exegesis. But afterward, the composition of such collections, using the names of Talmudic heroes and pseudepigraphically assigning to them a wide variety of opinions, rapidly became a literary and theological convention in Judaism. So one acceptable mode of creative expression in the profoundly traditional world of Judaism turned out to have come to full exposure at just this time, in just this place. They now sought, through biblical exegesis, to link the Mishnah to Scripture, detail by detail. In this context the making of books out of exegesis of Scripture represented a striking change in what by the early fourth century were well established traditions on the matter.

I need not exaggerate the importance of the new principle for the literary organization of learning and tradition, around the framework of books of Scripture as much as tractates of the Mishnah. I need merely point to the fact that in the unfolding of Judaism in its formative age, in critical matters of aesthetics and the formation of learning, changes did take place. In the affairs of the heart, we see none.

V. Change in the Definition of the Generative Symbol

The generative symbol of the literary culture of the sages, the Torah, stands for the system as a whole. "Torah," revelation, defines the classification for what is true. Now at the beginning of the canonical development in the Mishnah, the Torah bore, as its principal points of reference, first, the Scriptures. Second, it bore the level of highest authority, as distinct from the lesser authority of the sages, and, third, a range of familiar meanings, such as a scroll of the revealed Scripture. At the end, from the Yerushalmi onward, the symbol of the Torah took on yet another meaning, one that, when Judaism had reached its final form at the end of this period, proved distinctive and characteristic. It was the doctrine that, when Moses received the Torah at Mount Sinai, it came down with him in two media, written and oral. The written Torah was transmitted, as its name says, through writing and is now contained in the canon of Scripture. The oral Torah was transmitted through the process of formulation for ease in memorization and then through the memorization of memories of sages and their disciples, from Moses and Joshua to the most correct generation.

That doctrine of the dual Torah, that is of the Torah in two media, came about in response to the problem of explaining the standing and authority of the Mishnah. But the broadening of the symbol of the Torah first took shape around the figure of the sage. That symbolism accounted for the sages' authority. Only later on, in the fourth century, in the pages of the Yerushalmi, did the doctrine of the dual Torah reach expression.

So in the unfolding of the documents of the canon of Judaism, the generative symbol of Torah reveals a striking change. Beginning as a rather generalized account of how sages' teachings relate to God's will, the symbol of Torah gained concrete form in its application to the dual Torah, written and oral, Scripture and Mishnah. Within the unfolding of the canonical writings, such a shift represents a symbolic change of fundamental character.

Let us begin the work of spelling out the thesis at hand by surveying the meanings imputed to the symbol of the Torah. In the Judaism that took shape in the formative age, everything was contained in that one thing. How so? When we speak of *torah,* in rabbinical literature of late antiquity, we no longer denote a particular book, on the one side, or the contents of such a book, on the other. Instead we connote a broad range of clearly distinct categories of noun and verb, concrete fact and abstract relationship alike. "Torah" stands for a kind of human being. It connotes a social status and a sort of social group. It refers to a type of social relationship. It further denotes a legal status and differentiates things and persons, actions and status, points of social differentiation and legal and

normative standing, as well as "revealed truth." In all, the main points of insistence of the whole of Israel's life and history come to full symbolic expression in that single word. If people wanted to explain how they would be saved, they would use the word Torah. If they wished to sort out their parlous relationships with gentiles, they would use the word Torah. Torah stood for salvation and accounted for Israel's this-worldly condition and the hope, for both individual and nation alike, of life in the world to come. For the kind of Judaism under discussion, therefore, the word Torah stood for everything. The Torah symbolized the whole, at once and entire.

The message of Abot, as I said, was that the Torah served the sage. How so? The Torah indicated who was a sage and who was not. Accordingly, the apology of Abot for the Mishnah was that the Mishnah contained things sages had said. What sages said formed a chain of tradition extending back to Sinai. Hence it was equivalent to the Torah. The upshot is that words of sages enjoyed the status of the Torah. The small step beyond, I think, was to claim that what sages said was Torah, *as much as what Scripture said was Torah.*

And, a further small step (and the steps need not have been taken separately or in the order here suggested) moved matters to the position that there were two forms or media in which the Torah reached Israel: one [Torah] in writing, the other [Torah] handed on orally, that is, in memory. This final step, fully revealed in the Yerushalmi, brought the conception of Torah to its logical conclusion. Torah came in several media, written, oral, incarnate. So what the sage said was in the status of the Torah, was Torah, because the sage was Torah incarnate.

The Yerushalmi's theory of the Torah thus carries us through several stages in the processes of the symbolization of the word Torah. First transformed from something material and concrete into something abstract and beyond all metaphor, the word Torah finally emerged once more in a concrete aspect, now as the encompassing and universal mode of stating the whole doctrine, all at once, of Judaism in its formative age.

Why is that fact important to us? Because once more it indicates how, if we read the canonical literature in the order in which we have read it here, the successive documents yield a picture of change and development. The symbol of the Torah changed in manifest and important ways. The doctrine of affections did not.

VI. Change in the System's Teleology

The third striking change in the literary culture at hand reshaped the statement of the goal and purpose of the system as a whole. The Mishnah at the outset placed its focus upon the sanctification of Israel, in a grid formed by nature and supernature. At the other end of the canon, in the Talmud of Babylonia, Judaism emerged as a system aimed at the salvation of Israel, in a grid defined by this world and the world to come, or more commonly by this age and the age of the Messiah. So the teleological statement of the system, originally not defined in eschatological terms at all, in conclusion appealed to the coming of the Messiah to explain why people should do things and what would happen if they did. While the Mishnah and the earlier writings, those that reached closure in the third and earlier fourth centuries, rarely appealed to the teleology supplied by a messianic eschatology, from the Talmud of the Land of Israel onward, principal components of the canon promised the coming of the Messiah as the reward for right action. It follows that the canon as a whole reveals a shift in the statement of goals and ends, from a teleology lacking eschatological focus and emphasizing the steady state of sanctified stasis, to one promising movement from here to eternity.

The Mishnah's framers constructed a system of Judaism in which the entire teleological dimension reached full exposure while hardly invoking the person or functions of a messianic figure of any kind. The Mishnah's framers present us with no elaborate theory of events, a fact fully consonant with their systematic points of insistence and encompassing concern. Events do not matter, one by one. The philosopher-lawyers exhibited no theory of history either. Their conception of Israel's destiny in no way called upon historical categories of either narrative or didactic explanation to describe and account for the future. The small importance attributed to the figure of the Messiah as a historical-eschatological figure, therefore, fully accords with the larger traits of the system as a whole. Let me speak with emphasis: *If, as in the Mishnah, what is important in Israel's existence was sanctification, an ongoing process,*

and not salvation, understood as a one-time event at the end, then no one would find reason to narrate history. Few then would form the obsession about the Messiah so characteristic of Judaism in its later, rabbinic mode. The salvific figure becomes an instrument of consecration and so fits into a system quite different from the one originally built around the Messiah.

When, in analyzing the foundation of Judaism, we move from the species, eschatology, upward to the genus, teleology, we find ourselves addressing the motives and goals of the mishnaic system. The system is so constructed as *not* to point toward a destination at the end of time. But still it does speak of last things. Accordingly, we ask, where, if not in the eschaton, do things end? The answer provided by Abot, the Mishnah's first apologetic, is clear. Death is the destination. In life we prepare for the voyage. We keep the law in order to make the move required of us all. What is supposed in Abot to make the system work, explaining why we should do the things the Mishnah says, is that other end. I mean it is the end to which history and national destiny prove remote, or, rather, irrelevant. Abot constructs a teleology beyond time, providing a purposeful goal for every individual. Life is the antechamber, death the destination; what we do is weighed and measured. When we die, we stand on one side of the balance, while our life and deeds stand on the other.

When we come to the Yerushalmi (and the Bavli afterward), the situation once more changes, but now, radically. The figure of the Messiah looms large in both documents. The teleology of the system portrayed in them rests upon the premise of the coming of the Messiah. If one does so and so, the Messiah will come, and if not, the Messiah will tarry. So the compilers and authors of the two Talmuds laid enormous emphasis upon the sin of Israel and the capacity of Israel through repentance both to overcome sin and to bring the Messiah. "The attribute of justice" delays the Messiah's coming. The Messiah will come this very day, if Israel deserves. The Messiah will come when there are no more arrogant ("conceited") Israelites, when judges and officers disappear, when the haughty and judges cease to exist, "Today, if you will obey" (Ps. 95:7). What alternatives are excluded? First, no one maintains the Messiah will come when the Israelites successfully rebel against Iran or Rome. Second, few express eagerness to live through the coming of the Messiah, the time of troubles marking the event, with the catastrophes, both social and national, that lie in wait. The contrast between this age and the messianic age, moreover, is drawn in some measure in narrowly political terms. Servitude to foreign powers will come to an end. That view proves entirely consistent with opinion, familiar from some of the exegetical collections, that Israel must accept the government of the pagans and that the pagans must not "excessively" oppress Israel.

In the hands of the framers of the late canonical literature of Judaism, the Messiah serves to keep things pretty much as they are, while at the same time promising dramatic change. The condition of that dramatic change is not richly instantiated. It is given in the most general terms. But it is not difficult to define. Israel must keep God's will, expressed in the Torah and the observance of the rites described therein. So Israel will demonstrate its acceptance of God's rule. Accordingly, the net effect is to reinforce that larger system of the Judaism of Torah study and the doing of religious duties expressed partially in the Talmuds of the Land of Israel and of Babylonia, with their exegesis of the Mishnah, and partially in the various exegetical compositions organized around the order and program of some of the books of Scripture.

The appearance in the Talmuds of a messianic eschatology fully consonant with the larger characteristic of the rabbinic system—with its stress on the viewpoints and proof-texts of Scripture, its interest in what was happening to Israel, its focus upon the national-historical dimension of the life of the group—indicates that the encompassing rabbinic system stands essentially autonomous of the prior, mishnaic system. True, what had gone before was absorbed and fully assimilated. But the talmudic system, expressed in part in each of the non-mishnaic segments of the canon, and fully spelled out in all of them, is different in the aggregate from the mishnaic system.

We should not overestimate the character of the shift from the mishnaic to the talmudic system. The change is noteworthy only because of the contrast to the stability of the doctrine of affections. But, in fact, there is a deeper harmony between the Mishnaic and the later talmudic doctrine of teleology and therefore of history, a harmony that, moreover, points toward the explanation of the

cogency characteristic of the canonical treatment of emotions. In fact, what happened was that the rabbinic system of the Talmuds transformed the Messiah-myth in its totality into an essentially historical force. If people wanted to reach the end of time, they had to rise above time, that is, history, and stand off at the side of great ephemeral movements of political and military character. That is the message of the Messiah-myth as it reaches full exposure in the rabbinic system of the two Talmuds. At its foundation it is *precisely* the message of the teleology without eschatology expressed by the Mishnah and its associated documents. Accordingly, we cannot claim that the talmudic system in this regard constitutes a reaction against the mishnaic one. We must conclude, quite to the contrary, that in the Talmuds and their associated documents we see the restatement, in classical-mythic form, of the ontological convictions that had informed the minds of the second century philosophers of the Mishnah. The new medium contained the old, enduring message: Israel must turn away from time and change, submit to whatever happens, so as to win for itself the only government worth having, that is, God's rule, accomplished through God's anointed agent, the Messiah.

"Submit, accept, conciliate, stay cool in emotion as much as in attitude, inside and out—and the Messiah will come."

I need not repeat the simple observation that the affective program of the canon, early, middle, and late, fits tightly in every detail with this doctrine of an ontological teleology in eschatological disguise. Israel is to tame its heart so that it will feel that same humility, within, that Israel's world view and way of living demand in life, at large. Submit, accept, conciliate, stay cool in emotion as much as in attitude, inside and outside—and the Messiah will come.

VII. Wimp or Warrior: Who is Israel and Why?

We now recognize that, in the formation of Judaism, some things changed, others remained constant. What changed? Fundamentals of Judaism: the generative exegetical method, the critical symbol, the teleological doctrine. What remained the same? The equally profound program of emotions, the sages' statement of how people should feel and why they should take charge of their emotions. The same books, read in the same order, that reveal the one in flux portray the other in stasis. No one can imagine that Jews in their hearts felt the way sages said they should. The repertoire of permissible and forbidden feelings hardly can have defined the broad range of actual emotions, whether private or social, of the community of Israel. In fact, we have no evidence about how people really felt. We see only a picture of what sages thought they should, and should not, feel.

"The unchanging repertoire of feelings strikingly contrasts with the shifts and turns of critical components of Judaism as they emerge in the same authoritative writings."

But, as I have stressed, the unchanging repertoire of feelings strikingly contrasts with the shifts and turns of critical components of Judaism as they emerge in the same authoritative writings. Writings that reveal stunning shifts in doctrine, teleology, and hermeneutical method lay from beginning to end the one picture of the ideal Israelite. It is someone who accepts, forgives, conciliates, makes the soul "like dirt beneath other people's feet."

Given the situation of Israel, vanquished on the battlefield, broken in the turning of history's wheel, we need hardly wonder why wise men advised conciliation and acceptance. Exalting humility made sense, there being little choice. Whether or not these virtues found advocates in other contexts for other reasons, in the circumstance of the vanquished nation, for the people of broken heart, the policy of forbearance proved instrumental, entirely appropriate to both the politics and social condition at hand.

How so? If Israel produced a battlefield hero, the nation could not give him an army. If Jewry cultivated the strong-minded individual, it sentenced such a person to a useless life of ineffective protest. The nation required not strong-minded leadership but consensus. The social virtues of conciliation moreover reinforced the bonds that joined the nation lacking frontiers, the people without a politics of its own. For all there was to hold Israel together to sustain its life as a society would have to come forth out of sources of inner strength. Bond-

ing emerged mainly from within. So consensus, conciliation, self-abnegation and humilty, the search for acceptance within the group—these in the literary culture at hand defined appropriate emotions because to begin with they dictated wise policy and shrewd politics.

Israel could survive only on the sufferance of others. Israel therefore would nurture not merely policies of subordination and acceptance of diminished status among nations. Israel also would develop, in its own heart, the requisite emotional structure. The composition of individuals' hearts would then comprise the counterpart virtues. A policy of acceptance of the rule of others dictated affections of conciliation to the will of others. A defeated people meant to endure defeat would have to get along by going along. How to persuade each Jew to accept what all Jews had to do to endure? Persuade the heart, not only the mind. Then each one privately would feel what everyone publicly had in any case to think.

"A defeated people, meant to endure defeat, would have to get along by going along."

That, I think, accounts for the persistence of sages' wise teachings on temper, their sagacious council of conciliating others and seeking the approval of the group. Society, in the canonical writings, set the style for the self's deepest sentiments.

VIII. Were the Rabbis Wrong?

Many Jews in modern times, both in the State of Israel and in the Exile, maintain that the rabbis were wrong. Jews should display battlefield courage to produce heros, great women and men. Restraint, conciliation, meeting the other half way—these do not represent attitudes and feelings for heros, those who, in Zion, now build the Jewish nation, or who, in the Exile, construct an assertive community in a free and open society. Equals do not conciliate. They confront. Free men and women assert. They do not draw back and dissimulate. Humility masks cowardice, some feel, and arrogance merely carries to an extreme the virtue of the stout heart.

But no, I think not. The rabbis were not wrong. They were right then, and they are right for our century too—and not only for Israel in exile and in the homeland but for humanity at large. They were right then because the sages of the formative age of Judaism proposed for Israel the formation of exactly that type of personality that could and did endure the condition and circumstance of the Exile. In rejecting the heroic model of Bar Kokhba and the Messiah-general's arrogance and affirming the very opposite, the sages who defined Judaism in the first seven centuries A.D. and whose heirs expanded and developed the system they had defined made the right choice. They are right today because only through conciliation and forbearance can humanity survive.

Life in exile, viewed as living in other peoples' countries and not in their own land, meant for Israel, as Judaism conceived Israel, a long span of endurance, a test of patience to end only with the end of time. That life in exile required Israel to live in accord with the will of others. Under such circumstances the virtues of the independent citizen, sharing command of affairs of state, the gifts of innovation, initiative, independence of mind, proved beside the point. From the end of the Second Revolt against Rome in 135, to the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, Israel, the Jewish people, faced a different task.

The human condition of Israel therefore defined a different heroism, one filled with patience, humiliation, self-abnegation. To turn survival into endurance, pariah-status into an exercise in Godly living, the sages' affective program served full well. Israel's hero saw power in submission, wealth in the gift to be grateful, wisdom in the confession of ignorance. Like the cross, ultimate degradation was made to stand for ultimate power. Like Jesus on the cross, so Israel in exile served God through suffering. True, the cross would represent a scandal to the nations and foolishness to some Jews. But Israel's own version of the doctrine at hand endured and defined the nation's singular and astonishing resilience. For Israel did endure and endures today.

"Many Jews in modern times maintain that the rabbis were wrong. Jews should display battlefield courage . . ."

If, then, as a matter of public policy, the nature of the personality of Israelite as wimp proved right, within the community too the rabbis were not wrong. The Jewish people rarely enjoyed instruments of civil coercion capable of preserving social order and coherence. Governments at best afforded

Jews limited rights over their own affairs. When, at the start of the fifth century, the Christian-Byzantine Roman government ended the existence of the patriarchate of the Jews of the Land of Israel, people can well have recognized the parlous condition of whatever Jewish authorities might ever run things. A government in charge of itself and its subjects, a territorial community able routinely to force individuals to pay taxes and otherwise conform where necessary—these political facts of normality rarely marked the condition of Israel between 412 and 1948. What was left was another kind of power, civil obedience generated by force from within. The stress on pleasing others and conforming to the will of the group, so characteristic of sayings of sages, the emphasis that God likes people whom people like—these substitutes for the civil power of political coercion imparted to the community of Israel a different power of authority.

A system that made humility a mark of strength and a mode of gaining God's approval, a social policy that imputed ultimate virtue to feelings of conciliation, restraint, and conformity to social norms had no need of the armies and police it did not have. So the vanquished nation every day would overcome the one-time victors. Israel's victory would come through the triumph of the broken heart, now mended with the remedy of moderated emotion.

"But we should not miss the enormous costs of the rabbis' prescription for the life of moderated emotions, unstated feelings, restrained affections."

The sages' affective policy for the affections not only responded in exact measure to Israel's condition in the early centuries of our era. Today it also meets the needs of our own sorry century. For our country, with its stress on individual initiative and enterprise, may not safely survive the costs of a culture of solitaries. It would not vastly limit individual rights to ask, for once, for sustained attention to the public good. I advocate that democratic capitalism that rests on individual initiative in the public interest can require the private person to restrain some part of the need for brutal and unlimited self-expression. Moving from the social to the political, we recognize still more clearly the relevance of a foreign policy of a public humility joined to inner strength. For in a world always tottering toward the abyss of the ultimate war, each nation must conduct itself as though it were in exile. Why so? Because unless all countries always take account of the will of others, no nation in the end will endure. We shall surpass others only in humility, or we shall not survive.

But we also should not miss the enormous costs of the rabbis' prescription for the life of moderation emotions, unstated feelings, restrained affections. That tamed heart, always alert to the will and wish of the other, always needs taming. So we are supposed to control emotions that generate enormous energy: arrogance, self-aggrandizement, resentment, envy, above all anger. These affections, so commonly paired by sages with the approved ones, well up and overwhelm the heart. In repression, in perpetual denial, such feelings for a time remain within, but gathering force, ultimately explode. That same history of an Israel of patient endurance and conciliation contains episodes of remarkable violence.

But more than in public policy, repression of feeling in the inner life of the community rarely succeeds for long. If a person cannot express anger one way, he or she will find some other. Envy, self-aggrandizement, competition—these feelings correspond to the hierarchical mind of each person, finding place in relationship to others. Those Talmudic sages' communities I observed, for example, as a student in centers of learning of the Torah of the sages in both Jerusalem and New York City, turn conciliation into a ritual, humility into a mode of aggression. They murder with words. More than that, I recall, pretense of self-abnegation masked scarcely-disguised feelings of hostility and aggression. And what form did they take? It entailed endless disparagement of others, gossip without mercy, wolf-packs daily out in search of blood, bloody character-assassination, imposition on the individual of the ill-will of an implacable hostile, unconciliatory community. I did not discover in the Torah-circles a Godly community.

So the rabbis cannot be held right on how we should feel, if what validates their affective doctrine and makes them right becomes a mere rite of conformity, suppression of feeling, repression of the natural heart. Neither nations nor individuals can long sustain so unnatural a condition as, on the surface, feelings of humility and moderated feeling define. Why not? Because nations end up in bloody rebellion, and individuals find acceptable modes of

murder, using the sharpened tongue instead of the stiletto.

But the rabbis spoke not only of the good impulse and not to wholly good people. They spoke of the evil impulse. They knew to whom they spoke. What they said was not to repress the evil impulse but to transform it into an instrument of Godly service. So too out of those impermissible emotions, arrogance, for instance, they proposed that we make motives toward sanctification. The holy people, made up of jealous men and arrogant women, would learn to take jealousy and arrogance and turn the heart to the service of that merciful God who jealously wants the whole of the human heart. True, humility may turn into a ritual of hypocritical pretense, and conciliation into a mode of collective tyranny. But humility can also tame the heart. A genuine desire to accommodate the other can turn a human being into a true *Mensch,* in God's image, in God's likeness. On that, speaking of the nation and of society, the rabbis were never wrong, and they are not wrong now. □

Jewish Studies and Jewish Faith

ARTHUR GREEN

It is about a hundred and fifty years since the passionate and ongoing concern of Jewry with its own past combined with an emerging sense of critical history in the West to create an intense, almost religious pursuit of the history of Judaism among a highly dedicated cadre of Jewish scholars. First in Germany, later in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, the so-called Wissenschaft des Judentums or *hokhmat yisra'el,* the scientific study of Judaism, itself became a major factor in the ideology and self-image of a new breed of *talmidey hakhamim,* Jewish scholars who were not sages in the traditional sense but rather savants specializing in the sources of Judaism, viewing them through a critical-historical lens. While this Wissenschaft sought to proclaim itself a non-ideological, "purely objective" form of scholarship, the wisdom of hindsight allows us to realize that such untainted objectivity in fact eluded all of nineteenth century historiography, the "Science of Judaism" included. Wissenschaft sought to present to the West an image of Judaism as an enlightened, liberal, tolerant faith, the legacy of an unjustly maligned people who even in the darkest hours of persecution had composed dirges and laments in elevated Hebrew style, who had never forsaken their sacred mission, here mostly interpreted as one of human ennoblement through cultural creativity. The emerging self-image of German Jews as the embodiment of *Bildung* or enlightened edification, of which George Mosse and others have written, was buttressed by the image of what the true Judaism had been all along, as selected and presented by Wissenschaft scholars.

The emergence of Wissenschaft also brought forth in the Jewish domain a new concept of the scholar himself, one quite alien to the spirit of Judaism throughout its history. I speak here of the bifurcation between sage and scholar, between the pursuit of wisdom and that of learning, and ultimately between the study of Torah as a religious obligation and the forging of scholarly research into a surrogate religion of its own. Throughout prior Western history, in Christian and Islamic as well as Jewish circles, learning and wisdom were to be pursued as a single goal. True, there were "fools within the domain of Torah," but it was the yeshivah or bet midrash alongside the monastery and the madrasa that preserved learning in the West for a thousand years or more. The Renaissance humanist, layman though he might be, was a continuer of this tradition, one who sought to be edified and made wise by learning. But it was a partially tragic by-product of the struggle of universities and scholars to free themselves from ecclesiastical control, a struggle with which we may well sympathize, that sage and scholar were to be divorced in the Western mind. The scholar was now to be responsible only to his own *ecclesia,* the temple of learning with its high alter of objectivity, approachable only through the very sort of critical self-distancing from the materials studied that ultimately was to render the personal search for wisdom an illegitimate one in the university. Thus were some thousands of the finest and most searching young minds to enter a state of voluntary exile from the West in the late twentieth century, turning to the ashram, the zendo, and, yes, even to the yeshivah to seek that which the university could not permit itself to provide.

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The Jewish scholar remained, to be sure, something of a stepchild in the German academic universe. Judaica was not taught in the great universities of Germany, whose theological faculties to this day exist either under Catholic or Protestant auspices. Where it was taught, it was as a form of research into Oriental or ancient languages and cultures rather than as religion. Most Jewish scholarship was carried on under Jewish auspices in independent theological seminaries, great centers of learning that flourished in Berlin, Breslau, Vienna and elsewhere for nearly a century. Here rabbinic training itself was in varying degrees converted into Wissenschaft, and the ideal central

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European rabbi, at least of the liberal variety, was a *Rabbiner Doktor* who would, at very least, author a monograph on the history of Jewry in his own region, if not undertaking research in some more esoteric academic subject. This combination of scholarship and rabbinic career lent a strong apologetic coloring to the supposedly objective study of Judaism: in fact both the rabbi himself and the Judaism he professed were lent respectability by the academic robes in which they were garbed.

In America, Jewish scholarship existed only in rudimentary form until the eve of the Second World War. The faculties of the Jewish Theological Seminary and Hebrew Union College included a number of first-rate scholars, almost all of them trained in Europe. A few lone individuals, most notably Harry Austryn Wolfson at Harvard and Salo Baron at Columbia, were forging careers for themselves in the more open American secular academy, but their impact upon the masses of Jewish immigrants and their children was nil. It was only the forced migration of Judaica scholars in the Hitler era, as a part of the general wandering of the German Jewish intelligentia to America, that laid the groundwork for the emergence of Jewish Studies as an academic area that has seen such tremendous growth in this country since the 1960's. That same emigration also took a major portion of European Judaica scholarship to Erez Israel, making the Hebrew University in Jerusalem the world's greatest single center for research in this field.

The emigre scholars found in America a situation of rare openness to the growth and acceptance of their interests. A breed of young American Jews, mostly third generation, were anxious to absorb their rather more profound, and certainly more theologically sophisticated, versions of Jewish learning than those otherwise available on the American scene. The same universities which had worked to exclude Jews only a few decades earlier were and are still vying with one another to offer programs in Jewish Studies. I am not entirely sanguine about the reasons for this sudden love affair with Judaica research. I believe that smart development officers, at about the time financial crisis due to rising costs hit the universities, made the judgement that Jews were a population of high income and great willingness to spend large sums for education, both for their own children and toward the maintenance of those institutions where they were welcomed. Judaic Studies courses had at least the partial effect of an advertising campaign addressed to Jewish parents and donors, saying with the proper veneer of academic elegance: "Your dollars welcome here!" This calculation was encouraged both by the growing respectability of ethnic identity in general in the late 60's, and by the wave of philo-Semitism that characterized most thinking American Christians, including those who ran departments of religion in the universities, as they began to come to terms with the question of Christian responsibility for the holocaust. Hence, beginning in the 1960's, the chief locus of Judaic research in the United States shifted from the theological seminaries to departments of religion, near east studies, history, and so forth in the secular universities.

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Scholars themselves viewed this new acceptance of Judaica in the general academy with joy. Not only did it make for tremendous growth, jobs for their students, increased research, grants, and so forth; it was also the final realization of the Wissenschaft dream. Judaica had come into its own, celebrating in the American academy a degree of legitimacy it had never been able to achieve in Europe. The cost of this acceptance was only dimly perceived at first, and has become truly apparent only after some decades of living with the new situation. To say it succinctly, Jewish scholarship can no longer serve as the handmaiden of Jewish apologetics. The university scholar, unlike his seminary colleague, cannot teach that Judaism is the unique repository of truth, that it is "better," either morally or theologically, than other faiths, or even comfortably preach the values of its continued existence. To be sure, the very fact of teaching Judaism, including Hebrew sources, to new generations of students does make for Jewish continuity. But the content of the professors' message can hardly dare to allow itself to be the same as that of the rabbis. Here the content of objective research has caught up with itself, and its implications can no longer be ignored.

Critical scholarship has accepted since its inception that Judaism has undergone change and evolution, has known that the religion of Jeremiah was not that of Akiva or Maimonides, and that outside influences and cultural setting have had tremendous impact on the religious life of Jewry. But as long as seminary and rabbi were the bearers of this learning, its implications did not have to be fully faced. A critical Talmudist could avoid the knotty problems caused by Biblical criticism; for his research, the canon was acceptable as a *fait accompli*. One could show, in that setting, how Judaism had encountered paganism, Agnosticism, or Greek philosophy, and had "triumphed" with a new and higher religious synthesis. But in the general university such manipulations were out of place. Just as we would not want to see our religion department colleagues of Catholic or Protestant backgrounds advocating the superiority of their faiths, celebrating the "triumphs" of Catholicism or Lutheranism over all their foes, we Jews of the academy have learned to be cautious about our own uncritical enthusiasm for Judaism. This is why many a Jewish parent has been disappointed by the inability of the Jewish Studies professor to provide "answers" to the personal dilemmas and Jewish ambivalences of the young. The truth is that we put these scholars in a terribly difficult position, glorying in their efforts to have Judaica treated as a full member of the university curriculum, but then treating them as though they were our personal representatives on the college campus. It is hard to have it both ways, though some of us scholars have probably revelled in that dual role which gives expression to our own ambivalences.

But the secular university as a setting for Jewish Studies has made yet another demand, one still more pernicious from the viewpoint of traditional Judaism. Not only must we set aside our preference for Judaism over other faiths or truth or value systems; we are also forced to "bracket" for the purposes of teaching and research our faith in God itself. The methods by which religion is studied in the university are those of history and philology, part of the traditional humanities curriculum, and, increasingly over the past decades, anthropology, psychology, and sociology, from the social sciences. While some naive souls still claim these as value-free academic methods (as value-free as was the older Jewish Wissenschaft!), when applied to a historical and revelation-centered faith such as Judaism, their impact is devastating. There is no place for religion as a divine rather than a human creation in the general academic community. A scholar who submitted an article to the Journal of the American Academy of Religion or the Journal of Biblical Literature assuming that Scripture was quite literally the Word of God would be a laughing stock. To be sure, there are journals where such assumptions are welcome, but these are sustained almost exclusively by faculty in evangelical seminaries rather than in recognized university departments.

"There is no place for religion as a divine rather than a human creation in the general academic community."

To say it directly, then, Jewish Studies in the academic mode deny that the Torah is the revealed word of God. This disbelief, characterizing most of non-Orthodox Jewry and not a few unhappy would-be Orthodox souls since the dawn of modernity, is confirmed by scholarship in countless ways. The inner inconsistency of the Biblical text, noted already by Jewish interpreters of the Middle Ages, is added to a great mound of archaeological evidence and, most significantly, to comparative studies. What does a pious Jew do when he learns that there are other groups in the Ancient Near East who claim that their gods gave them books from heaven? That the ascent to the mountain-peak where the sky opens and the hero is taken into heaven is an old Babylonian tale? That the figure of Moses himself, from the tales of his birth to the radiance of his face, fits into patterns of myth well-documented among human communities far and wide?

One possibility, of course, is that of intellectual gamesmanship. "God, in giving the Torah, intentionally used patterns well-established among humans for purposes of His own" or "God caused societies throughout the world to develop patterns of this sort in order to prepare humanity to receive His Torah." But these are sufficiently straining of credibility to work only for those who really need them, whose commitments to faith are made for reasons other than these, and who then use them as buttressing.

Most modern Jews have long ago given in on this issue. We do no believe our religion to be "true" in the way that the medievals would have had it. Many of us, however, still cling to a sense of Judaism's uniqueness, despite our literal disbelief in its re-

vealed character. In the tradition of Ahad ha-Am or Yehezkel Kaufmann we consider the Bible and the rabbinic tradition to be the greatest of human creations in the realm of religion, and the Jews to be uniquely "chosen", in some mostly undefined sense, as the singular bearers of holiness in the world. This sense of absolute uniqueness is also borne away by the study of Judaism and Jewish history in a comparative context. The open-minded scholar who has had any contact either with the Tibetan or Hopi Indian traditions, to name but two, is forced to realize that we are not alone in claiming to be a civilization dedicated to the divine and bringing a religious message of great power, creativity, and depth to the human race. Of course we are unique, in the sense that each of these religious cultures has a particular character nowhere exactly duplicated. The combination of elements that makes for Judaism exists nowhere else in the world. But the same can be said for any of the greater or lesser faith-traditions of humankind.

This is not to say that the effect of scholarship on the faith of Judaism is entirely corrosive—not at all. I believe it provides for a clearing of the air and helps to set Jewish theology on a creative and modern—or post-modern—course. No longer able to base our religious life on a historical or pseudo-historical claim, we are forced to seek out other foundations for the Jewish religious continuity to which we, as a living community, remain committed. While the claims of the tradition may not be historically valid, they remain valid in a much more existentially important way: in the magnetic power they still have for us, in the richness of insight we still find in them, in the familiar intimacy with which they still address the Jew who stands open to them. Our Judaism is forced to confront the truly *religious* character of its power in our lives.

We will probably never know, historically, which if any of the tribes that made up ancient Israel was ever in Egypt . . . . but we know the reality of *yetsi'at mitsrayim*. Just ask any survivor of the camps in Europe if the Exodus is a reality.

The *mishkan* or tabernacle in the wilderness may never have existed, according to the scholars, but may have been an idealized retrojection from Temple or even post-Temple times. But the *mishkan* in the heart, the true tabernacle according, at least, to the Hasidic masters, that one surely exists, for you and I have been there. On the altar in that *mishkan* Jews still offer their daily verbal sacrifices, one in the morning, one in the evening.

There may never have been—in history—an Abraham, an Isaac, or an event at Mount Moriah, but have we Jews not been witness to a thousand Akedahs and more?

We do not know that Sinai itself happened as the Bible says it did. But how many of us in our lives as religiously sensitive Jews have not stood in that stillness and heard, if not the thundering sounds of Moses' Sinai, at least the still small voice of Elijah's?

All this is to say that the truth of religion inhabits a universe of discourse quite entirely different than that of history, and a separation of their claims from entanglement with one another will ultimately be helpful. The great happenings recorded in our Scriptures should in the proper sense be seen as mythical, that is as paradigms to help us encounter, explain, and enrich by archaic association the deepest experiences of which we as humans are capable. We do or do not feel ourselves commanded to live the life of the *mitsvot* not because God did or did not dictate them to Moses on the mountaintop long ago, but because we as Jews, a living faith community in the present, feel ourselves touched by a transcendent presence that is made real in our lives through the fulfillment of these forms. Or do not. It is in faith, the struggle to realize the divine presence in our lives as individuals and as a Jewish people, not in history, where the core of our Judaism must reside.

Many of us who engage in Jewish Studies using the methods of the secular academy are ourselves, in one way or another, committed Jews who take our religion seriously. Sometimes we feel constrained to wear two hats, that of the academic and that of the Jew. Yet we find it hard to bifurcate our minds along the lines suggested by the Orthodox scientist. Dealing as scholars with the very sources that our tradition considers holy, we are not able to say "this is science; that is religion." Even in terms of the motivation that brought us to careers in Jewish scholarship, such a separation is impossible for us. The same love for the tradition and the Jewish past that lies at the heart of our personal commitment to Judaism is what brought us to a life of studying these sources, even in the critical mode. And in a way that it is sometimes hard for the positivist within us to appreciate, our love of these sources and commitment to them are in no way diminished by the critical or comparative methods with which we study them.

Recent development within the academy itself are beginning to point the way toward a resolution of this dilemma. Scholars of religion are beginning to speak of the need to study religion *in its own terms,* and are viewing its interpretation in the language of the social sciences as inappropriately reductionistic. This is not to say that they support the truth claims of any particular tradition, but that they recognize the religious as representing a unique domain of human experience that cannot be explained away by reference to social or psychological needs. To misappropriate a Talmudic rubric, *ha-peh she-asar hu ha-peh she-hittir,* the same academy that denies the legitimacy of religion on one level may support it on another. In its retreat from functionalist modes of explaining all human behavior, including religion, part of the academy is admitting, with much caution, that the great religious and mythical systems represent insightful mappings of the human psyche, and that their teachings, while not reflecting accurate history, geology, astronomy, or physics, do offer the one who knows to read them a profound view of the collective inner experience of humanity.

Until this point we have been treating the Jewish tradition as though it were a monolith, bearing a certain total set of truth-claims that must be either accepted, rejected, or, as we have now proposed, re-read on another level. But it is precisely in seeing Judaism and the Jewish experience as varied, rather than monolithic, that Jewish scholarship has made what is perhaps its most important contribution. It is here that I want to concentrate the remainder of my remarks.

A history of Judaism from the point of view of the phenomenology of religion has yet to be written. The ways in which classic patterns of myth, symbol, and archetype survived the great transformations wrought by Biblical religion and reappeared, *mutatis mutandis,* in rabbinic and later Judaism, are yet to be fully traced. The unique element of diaspora, spreading the Jews throughout the Western world at an early and crucial stage in our religion's development also needs here to be taken into account. The traditions that grew out of that monotheistic and iconoclastic revolution in ancient Canaan, overlaid with memories of Babylonian exile and its Persian aftermath as well as with evidence of early contacts with Greece and Rome, were carried throughout the known world by bands of faithful wanderers. Yet who would dare say that Judaism, even of the most pious and traditionalist sort, remained unaffected by the cultural patterns of those in whose midst particular groups of Jews happened to settle? It is not at all clear that a Jew in Spain of the twelfth century and one in Poland or Bohemia some five hundred years later, even if performing the very same ritual actions, were in fact "doing the same thing" from the phenomenologist's point of view. Distinctive religious subcultures emerged within the history of Jewry. Even in latter-day terms, if one thinks of Lithuania, Italy, and Yemen, highly diverse images of Judaism come to mind. These, it should be added, were not necessarily mirror-images of the non-Jewish cultures amid which they flourished. Jewish communities themselves, separated by distances of both time and space, created cultural and religious life-patterns that differed seriously both from one another and from the "host" cultures in whose shadows they existed. Any account of the spiritual life of Jewry undoubtedly is in need of the word "varieties" somewhere in its title.

"Scholars of religion are beginning to speak of the need to study religion *in its own terms . . .*"

What is it then that the co-inhabitants of this religious and cultural phenomenon known as Judaism have in common? First it must be said that they are all Jews, and this is no mere tautology. Judaism is the religious path of a distinct national group, one that has defined itself in ethnic as well as religious terms throughout the ages. The shared legacy of national symbols, including language, land (held dear, as history has shown, despite long absence), and common history, is quite inseparable from Jewish religious identity. Yet the historian of religion must probe further, asking what it is within this legacy of the past that makes for the vital and ongoing thread of Judaism as a religious enterprise. In this search, one is first tempted to go the route of essentialism: somewhere at the core there must be an "essence of Judaism" that all its bearers hold in common. This was, in fact, the path taken by most presentations of Judaism for the Western reader in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of course this essence was usually articulated in theological terms, and then often in terms not unsurprisingly accommodating either to the writer's particular stance within the Jewish religious community or to the properly liberal and Western values which an author might have thought his readers would find most comfortable. Thus ethical

monotheism, the struggle against idolatry, and a vague commitment to the "rule of law"—though not to particular laws—were emphasized by liberal Jewish writers, while *halakhah* in its specific sense, but also expanded to "the halakhic mind", was brought to the fore by traditionalists.

Aside from the obviously self-serving quality of some of these presentations, the attempts at arriving at such an essence have been largely discredited in Jewish scholarly circles due to recent development in historical research. Essentialism always wound up positing a "mainstream" in the history of Jewry; those who diverged from the ideal were then characterized as minor "fringe" groups of dissenters, ultimately to be cut off from the ongoing stream of Jewish history. But the work of mid-twentieth century Jewish scholarship has almost entirely discredited the notion of any theological mainstream. Erwin R. Goodenough, researching the archaeological remains of Jewry throughout the Eastern Mediterranean world, gave the lie to the widely held view that a rabbinic "mainstream", puritanical, iconoclastic, and uncompromisingly anti-syncretistic, dominated Palestinian and Babylonian Jewry in the first centuries of the common era. Harry A. Wolfson has shown how thoroughly Jewish philosophers from Philo to Spinoza were part and parcel of the Western philosophical tradition, often having more in common intellectually with their Christian and especially Muslim counterparts than they did with Jews who stood outside philosophy. Above all, Gershom Scholem and his studies of medieval Jewish mysticism and seventeenth-century Sabbatian messianism have had a revolutionary impact on the field of Jewish Studies as a whole. Scholem has forced us to realize that the notions of "mainstream" were posited largely out of ignorance and sustained by the selective suppression of evidence, reflecting cultural biases to which historians, only slightly less than theologians, were themselves subject.

What, then, if not theological essentials, serves as the binding substance for the variety of Jewish spiritual expressions? It seems safe to begin with the *text* itself. All Judaisms since approximately the first century C.E. have had in common a defined body of sacred Scripture. Though exegetical license has indeed reigned free, it is not fair to assume that the text has made no claims on those who are faithful to it. These claims, the ones least bendable by interpretation, exist first in the realm of religious deed and second, but by no means insignificantly, in that of religious language, imagery, and style.

The relative unanimity of pre-modern Jews in matters of religious action, codified as *halakhah* or the "path" is well-known. The commandments of the Torah as defined and elaborated by the early rabbis were accepted as binding by all Jews, excepting the Karaite minority, at least from the early middle ages down to the seventeenth century, and in most cases later. There were, to be sure, ongoing debates both as to the details of the law and in the seemingly large matter of just what constituted the six hundred and thirteen commandments of the Torah itself. But these were dwarfed by the overwhelming unanimity in most matters of praxis. It was this uniformity of life-pattern that allowed for Moses Mendelsohn's claim in the eighteenth century that Judaism was in fact a matter of "revealed legislation", allowing, of course, precisely for the wide berth of intellectual freedom that he as an enlightener sought. This view of Judaism, though thoroughly discredited by the nineteenth century essentialists, was based in the reality of long experience with one aspect of the tradition, the relative unanimity of deed and form.

Deeds, of course, are an aspect of symbolic speech, especially so when they take the regularized and repeated form of ritual. Alongside this type of speech-act, then, contemporary scholarship suggests that Judaism (like any religious tradition) has a unique pattern of verbal tropes and rubrics that constitute a unifying style of expression, one that transcends even great chasms in theological meaning. Any theology of Judaism, for example, must claim to believe in God; monotheism is embodied in the essential trope of *shema' yisra'el.* A theology that denies the truth of the *shema'* or openly proclaims belief in a multiplicity of heavenly powers can hardly claim a place within Judaism. But the range of meaning given to the *shema'* remains quite open; the One may be the unity of ten powers, as for the Kabbalist, or the *shema'* may attest to the absolute oneness of God and world, as for the HaBaD *hasid.* The fact that both of these views stand in utter contradiction to the theology of the Hebrew Bible constitutes no real problem for their being a part of Judaism, but stands rather as a monument to the exegetical "success" and freedom of these latter-day thinkers.

Another such basic trope is the belief in *Torah min ha-shamayim,* the revelation of Torah. Again, a Judaism without some sort of revelation-theology is inconceivable, but the range of beliefs as to exactly what was given at Sinai or was spoken by what sort of divine voice, or the degrees of difference

between inspiration, creativity, and revelation, is tremendous. This is especially so if one takes into account the great variety of modern Jewish positions on the matter, but is true also within the classical sources to a surprising degree, as shown in the writings of the late Abraham Joshua Heschel. Realistically speaking, the rabbinic claim that one must believe that each and every word was divine comes down to mean that whoever can find no place for *some* concept of *Torah min ha-shamayim* has rejected an essential rubric of Jewish discourse, thus placing himself outside the theological concensus of Israel.

Do we then propose naught but a new essentialism, one of tropes and rubrics rather than one of dogmas and ideas? It should not be difficult to compile a list of essential religious vocabulary of which the would-be Jewish theologian could make rather free use. Of course the matter is not quite so simple. Having used rather obvious and easily-labelled examples, what we speak of is really a literary and theological *style*, one carried in part by the mention of certain key terms, but hardly reducible to them. The ways in which the terms are used, the frequency with which they appear, how they are juxtaposed with one another, and a whole host of other more-or-less intangibles collectively constitute the religious language of Judaism. The well-trained eye of a text scholar or ear of a "native speaker" learns to detect unusual patterns, shifts in meaning, changes of emphasis, even in the seemingly most standard bits of rabbinic discourse. Especially interesting here are two late genres of pre-modern Jewish theological literature. Scholem's studies of the seventeenth and eighteenth century documents in which Sabbatian heresy was masked behind the language of traditional piety are instructive in illuminating the outermost limits of Jewish religious language and the ways in which even an exaggeratedly pietistic Jewish style can be distorted to produce radically new meanings. Similarly, the literature of Hasidism, though hardly "heretical" in the same way, offers the careful reader a chance to explore the traditional language and style of Judaism pushed to the extreme, as the masters used it to legitimize the particular religious values for which they stood.

The Judaism that all held in common was, we are claiming, a shared religious language, rooted in a body of sacred Scripture and anchored to daily life by a prescribed pattern of deeds. Like any language in currency over a wide geographical area and through the course of many centuries, it evolved, changed, grew, and developed its own varied "dialects." A multiplicity of religious types found within it sufficient breadth and depth to express their differences of vision and understanding; even those labelled as "sinners" or "heretics" in times of controversy continued to make use, often the most creative use, of this religious language.

In modern times, of course, the language itself has suffered a serious challenge, as the weakening of its own faith-claims combined with the tremendous assimilatory pressures on Jewry to greatly diminish the hold it has on the Jewish people. As we enter the post-modern era we encounter great numbers of Jewish religious seekers who are strangers to this language and struggle to place themselves in relation to it. Here too the contribution of scholarship may prove to be a positive one. By demonstrating the remarkable flexibility and room for growth this language has shown in the past, we may provide the paradigm for the needed growth, expansion, and new creativity that it will have to embrace if it is to serve the Jewish people as they face a dramatically new and yet uncertain future. □

Double Bill

SUSAN SOBEL-FELDMAN

Stuie Zelinsky married an Irish girl which killed his mother. But that was many years after I knew him. When he was my friend, he wore horn-rimmed spectacles, a yarmulke and was the president of the pre-med fraternity at Brooklyn College. He chain smoked Marlboros. Heady credentials in my girlhood milieu.

I met him when I was dating Paul Rosenzwig, Stuie's frat brother and real life brother of my friend Sheila. Paul was very serious and as I had been dubbed an 'intellectual'—not pretty enough for Cheerleaders and at least an A minus average—everyone said Paul and I were perfect. So we dated around for six months with the usual stumbling and bumbling on sofas and back seats.

Sheila was already dating Stuie and constantly regaling me with his merits. I was wise enough to know how to wade my way through her epic accounts; Greek gods did not come in Jewish packages.

When we met at last, it was rather romantic, though scarcely Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer across the *West Side Story* gym floor. Paul had decreed that the four of us should double date and go to the Hayden Planetarium Sky Show. Given the tenor of my relationship with Paul, this was the sort of thing we did and I pretended to like.

The four of us sat that rainy day in the darkened theater, eyes skyward, listening to a sonorous voice detail the early Babylonian concept of the constellations. I was seated between Paul and Stuie, Sheila was on Stuie's right. Paul was absentmindedly holding my hand. So it was with some surprise, I felt another hand grasp my knee. Into my ear, Stuie Zelinsky whispered his first words of love. "There's a double bill at the Waverly: *Letter to Three Wives* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice.*" I gasped, as much from his hand cutting off the circulation in my leg, as from anticipated excitement.

I never did learn how Stuie Zelinsky had ascertained my secret vice, my real passion, my true calling—*Le Cinema.* I summoned up my finest female wiles culled from hours of studying Bette's best in *Jezebel* and suddenly developed the world's worst cramps. Taking his cue, Stuie gallantly offered to drive me home as it was his car. We hastily assured the Rosenzwig siblings that we would not interfere with their afternoon's pleasure. Paul did give my hand a brief squeeze though his eye was firmly fixed on the Centaur.

My wonder at Stuie Zelinsky turned to true awe when we by-passed the ticket booth at the Waverly. "My pop," Stuie explained, "owns a film distributing company. I'm buddies with most of the theatre managers in town." Awe quickly became adoration.

The double bill was followed by a double cappuccino at the Cafe Reggio on MacDougal Street and then an hour's fooling around in Stuie's car. We did this for three dates running and finally broke from a clinch, the same thought running through our minds, succinct like the subtitle of a Bergman film.

Stuie lit a cigarette as I straightened my sweater. "Toots," he said in a voice that years later would be a famed bedside manner, "this ain't working'." I nodded in agreement. "You know why?"

Stuie lit me a cigarette from his own and gave it to me—one of the many things I learned under his tutelage. I took a deep drag, narrowed my eyes and tried to look like Rita Hayworth, not easy at sixteen. "Yeah. We like each other too much."

"Okay. Now what?" my no-longer Lochinvar asked.

"Well," I said quite firmly, "me and my friend Stuie Zelinsky should arrange a time to see the Wyler films at the Thalia." He grinned at me and I felt the only instant's regret I knew at not having fallen in love with him.

It was an affair of convenience for both of us. Our parents were pleased at our continued intimacy. Mine were doing veritable handsprings that I was dating an Orthodox boy. Although Mrs. Zelinsky felt my family was not of the first circle (my parents attended one of those *nouveau* houses of worship which had begun to lean away from hard-line Orthodoxy—men and women were permitted to sit together), I was at least passable at the Passover Seder.

So Stuie and I learned to lie for each other and cover our most non-kosher peccadillos. We confided everything in each other, shared the best and

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the worst, and saw more than five movies a week for nearly three years. A perfect friendship.

"Listen to what my mother read in the latest issue of TV Guide," Stuie told me one night after we had rendezvoused at Jahn's Ice Cream Parlor. I'd spent the evening with an Italian boy with eyes like Robert Taylor in *Waterloo Bridge.* My date seemed to take it in stride that I was picked up and dropped off at places other than my home. For all familial intents and purposes, Stuie Zelinsky was my steady beau. "One of the stars of *Mission Impossible* is a former Yeshiva boy and says morning prayers each day on the set. From this little item, my mother has deduced that I should be able to do the same thing at med school each day. "My mother," Stuie intoned, "is nuts. And you can take that, babe, as an official diagnosis."

"Did you ask your mother about what you would do if you had an exam on a holiday?"

Stuie groaned. "Please, no more metaphysics. I listened to an argument in the student lounge today about whose side we'd fight on if Israel and American went to war."

"That's easy," I said. "I'd stick with the good ole U.S. of A. They don't draft women." Stuie took his glasses off, polished them on the edge of his woolen vest, and blinking, looked around the room. "You look like Peter Lorre," I said, "only taller."

"In *The Maltese Falcon?*" he asked hopefully.

"No," I said. "In *Secret Agent.*"

"Oh sure," Stuie said, "he was taller in *Secret Agent.*"

This appellation turned out to be prophetic. Although Stuie and I had become quite adept at covering up for each other in order to purchase our social freedom, it was nothing compared to the strategems we had to employ once Stuie fell in love with 'the bird.'

It was what we called Robin . . . a kind of code name . . . not merely a joke but a necessary means of communication. We always suspected our parents eavesdropped, albeit innocently, on our conversations. So we were scrupulous in making sure they learned nothing from us. The extraordinary thing is that neither my parents, nor to my knowledge the Zelinskys, ever questioned what we meant by 'the bird.' Exactly what budgie did they think we were talking about?

Robin Sheryl Kahn, sophomore at Barnard College for Women, was undeniably beautiful. She was also undeniably brilliant. I deduced this from the volumes of Simone Weil and Sartre she carried with her. She was majoring in Romance Languages, spoke mellifluous French and Italian, and had never seen one, much less the entire canon, of Jean Arthur films. But Stuie Zelinsky loved her. And as I was the decoy during the years of their romance, I got a chance to see, if not understand it all.

They met at the most film set of settings we have in New York—FAO Schwarz. Stuie was on his way home from the dermatologist when he passed the figure of a girl in a long black coat trimmed in Persian Lamb. "Like Lara in *Doctor Zhivago,* except her hair was nearly jet black," he reported to me later. He stood beside this vision staring at a collection of dolls, thinking this girl was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen.

They stood in silence some time and then Robin said, "Which do you like best?"

"I'm not sure," oh-so-clever and oh-so-dumb but ever cautious Stuie said. He stared at the array before him, not having the foggiest notion of one doll from another.

"I like Marmee best, I think." Here she pointed to a doll in cap and apron. At Stuie's still confused look she said, "Marmee . . . as in *Little Women.*"

"Never saw it," Stuie said.

"You mean read it," Robin replied.

"Right, I mean read it."

"Oh it's one of my favorite books . . . I think most boys overlook Alcott . . . too busy reading Robert Louis Stevenson, I guess."

"Right," Stuie said, desperately hoping they wouldn't have to discuss *Treasure Island* as he hadn't seen that either.

They began walking together. Then they had a cup of coffee as Stuie dodged in and out of literary allusions or illusions, I should say. He manufactured an errand up at Columbia in order to see her back to her dorm room. They walked along Amsterdam Avenue. By 79th Street they had shared cogent facts from their histories (Stuie's was a compendium of pseudo-truths), by 92nd Street they were holding hands, and by 112th Street, in front of St. John the Divine, they kissed.

Stuie Zelinsky came to know just about every conductor on the #1 IRT subway train as he shuttled back and forth between hearth and heart. I tried to ascertain what it was that he and Robin talked about, but Stuie could never recall any but the barest facts. Oddly enough, for Stuie's loquacity was famous, 'the bird' did most of the chattering. She

had traveled a good deal, lived for a year in France, been to Casablanca. She talked of these things with easy aplomb and Stuie listened, mesmerized by the scenarios she unfolded. It was like Desdemona and Othello, but in reverse.

And what did she think of him? Well, he certainly was a good kisser. And nothing like the Ivy Leaguers that generally made up her dance card. She told him he was 'funny' and 'cute.' She bought him little stuffed animals which he kept hidden at the bottom of his closet, beneath old copies of *Playboy*. He bought her books of poetry, which he made me pick out as I was now a nominal English Lit major. And I think they missed the point time and again. They were like people who watch a film and never stay to see the credits, unaware that anything other than imagery has gone into the making of the scenes.

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"There's going to be a wedding at the Plaza Hotel," Stuie announced one day through a haze of blue-brown smoke.

We were sitting in Dave's apartment on Bleecker Street. Dave was David Kramer, second year law student, my then-affianced. In my sophomore year at NYU, I had gone to a McGovern rally. I found myself caught up not in causes, but in the arms of a sturdy-looking young man as the crowd surged out into Washington Square Park. Dave didn't look like anyone I had ever seen in any movie; he always looked exactly like himself. And I came to love him not all at once, but slowly, as he reeled his certainties out before me. He was glad that I liked going to the 'movies' and I never tired, for my part, in convincing him of the distinction of being a lover of 'films.'

Once, after a particularly bad day in which nearly everything that could go wrong in the life of a twenty-year-old had gone wrong, Dave asked me who was my favorite movie star. I thought it a dumb question and told him so.

"You're right. I'm a jerk," he said sheepishly.

He looked very forlorn and I felt very guilty. Taking his hand I said, "Actually, it's not so dumb. Who's your favorite movie star, sweetie?"

"Tippi Hedren," he pronounced.

"Tippi Hedren? You must be kidding . . . she's like a log . . . no life, no vivacity." I was off and running then and within fifteen minutes had done a thorough examination of Hitchcock's cool blonds.

When at last I paused for breath, Dave kissed my temple and murmured, "Feeling better?" How could I not fall in love with the man?

Stuie Zelinsky, for his part, was always particularly grateful that I had fallen in love with Dave. My beau's apartment provided Stuie with a stopping-off point in his travels to and from Barnard—which he called the 'bird's cage.' Oh the horrors of having a girlfriend in an all-girls' college dorm! Dave and I soon learned to take a hint, and with metaphorical quarter in hand, left the lovers alone and went off to the movies.

"Who's getting married?" Dave asked as Stuie settled down in the big armchair, his long legs stretched out in front of him. We all lit cigarettes and sank back to talk. It was one of our best times—Sunday night, the hour before *Sixty Minutes* would capture our attention. Each week, Stuie would drop Robin back at her dorm and come to share in our traditional repast of Chinese food, eaten, of course from the cartons. It tasted better that way back then—don't know why.

"A cousin of Robin's from Great Neck. I met her once and her boyfriend. Incredible jerks." He paused, blew out some tentative smoke rings and said, "I need a tux."

I thought about this for a minute and then said, "This is your entree into the Kahn clan."

"Yup," Stuie said. "How much do you think it will cost to rent a tux?"

I recognized this ploy. Stuie would concentrate on some banal minutia in order to avoid a larger question. So I let him and Dave discuss formal attire for a while.

I knew Stuie had never met Robin's family though she went home for holidays . . . not *our* holidays, of course. The Kahns celebrated Christmas and Easter, while *Tishah B-av* was still a biggie in our homes. Needless to say, Stuie did not partake of the Kahn celebratory suppers. And the Zelinskys still knew nothing about Robin—their son's treks into Manhattan were supposed to be visits to me. There was something then that I thought was oh so romantic about the secrecy of Stuie and his Robin. Dave, however, my pragmatic practitioner, pointed out that Stuie Zelinsky was a paragon of the path of least resistance.

Of Robin's parents, Stuie gleaned several facts. They were very wealthy—Daddy dealt in real estate. Dave had family in Philly and they told us that Mr. Kahn was a major slum lord. I never told

this to Stuie, caught up as I was as an accomplice in the conspiracy of their *passion.*

Stuie dutifully arrived late the following Sunday afternoon and gave a full report on the nuptials. "The wedding was disgusting," he said.

He lit a cigarette and his voice had that peculiar strain of newly-inhaled smoke as he murmured, "Robin looked simply lovely." There was still just an edge of awe in his voice each time he talked about her. She was indeed an exquisite, almost doll-like creature—so very beautiful, so very earnest. But she had, I think, no sense of frivolity. All of her humor was weighed with whimsy . . . epigrams. I found her tiring to be with and Dave had pronounced her, "an incredibly beautiful, but boring broad."

"How were Ma and Pa Kettle?" I asked.

"Very tan," Stuie said. "I felt a bit like Fred MacMurray," he continued brightening just a bit, "being grilled as the prospective bridegroom."

"Honorable intentions?" Dave asked.

"No, actually not. I think they were less concerned about my present interest in their daughter than in my future interest in the bank. Mrs. Kahn seemed very worried about my choice of med school and ultimate specialty. She called it," he said, making a face as if he had swallowed something vile, "my field of expertise."

"How d'ya do?" I asked.

"Not bad," he said. "Mostly, I lied. Told them I was a shoe-in at Harvard and that I intended to specialize in biliary surgery." To our puzzled looks Stuie explained, "Gall stones. Big bucks in gall stones."

We hadn't talked much about this beyond Stuie's simple declaration that he was interested in general medicine . . . a family practice. I knew what Stuie Zelinsky loved was people . . . kids . . . old people. The nuts and bolts of medicine were merely tools to him. What he wanted to do was make people feel better. I had readily understood that. What Dave saw at Stuie's constant equivocation, I knew was Stuie's attempt to cause the least pain to the least number of people. It wasn't that he liked playing both ends to the middle. It was just his way of avoiding the little twists. He was, when I knew him, the most extraordinary innocent.

When Dave and I finally announced our engagement that spring, Stuie knew the jig was up. In a matter of days, word reached the Zelinskys; Flatbush is, after all, a small town.

His parents were especially sweet to him then as they assumed their son must be nursing a broken heart. While they had never adored me, they had accepted their son's unswerving devotion over the last years. They assured him, however, that he would soon find himself a 'really nice girl.' Actually, I was thrilled with the implied blot on my reputation. Breaking Stuie Zelinsky's heart made me infinitely interesting in the eyes of our community. It was the one splash of romance I ever had.

Stuie didn't get into Harvard . . . he didn't even apply. He was, of course, accepted at NYU and Einstein. And had intended always to go to the latter. He had written for an application to Yale, but never filled it out. I know because I typed for him.

That spring was a time of determinations. Yet Stuie seemed unable to confront his options. I suppose he hoped that somehow the cavalry would ride in at the end and save him. I wasn't actually sure then if Robin, her parents or the Zelinskys were the Indians. But it was Robin's acceptance into the French program at Yale that finally forced Stuie's hand. Wisely, perhaps he had a premonition, he decided to tackle Robin before his parents.

I spent most of one Saturday evening fidgeting around. Dave realized that something was really wrong; *Romance* with Greta Garbo and Gavin Gordon was on Channel 9, but I couldn't sit through it. He tried nuzzling my neck, but I was nervously chewing on my cuticles. With a sigh he asked, "What's up?"

"Stuie Zelinsky is going to propose to the bird tonight."

"Ah." So we sat like expectant parents waiting for my friend.

When Stuie came in, the look on his face should have sufficed. He took out a small ring box and said, "Want to see a one-carat perfect blue-white solitaire?" He gave a little laugh. "Now I know why they call it that."

"Didn't she like the ring?" Dave asked.

"She never saw it—we never got that far."

"What happened?"

Stuie lit a cigarette, stretched out on the couch. "I took her to dinner at the Oak Room. Everything was really beautiful. Robin was really beautiful. But I couldn't tell you about the food . . . honestly, I didn't taste a thing. Robin was talking on and on about our being at Yale and how great it was all going to be." He paused for a long moment and I knew that everything that had been in soft focus

had now become sharp and clear. "Robin had already worked out our years together at Yale, our first townhouse, our first swimming pool."

"Sounds promising to me," Dave said. "How did you then not end up engaged?"

Stuie took a deep drag on his cigarette. "We left the Plaza and I had this sudden inspiration. I hailed one of the horse-drawn carriages and told him to take a turn in the park."

"Oh Stuie," I breathed, "that's lovely."

"That's what I thought." On my friend's face gathered a frown, a deepening of lines I had not known existed. "I turned to take Robin in my arms when she said, 'What's that god-awful stink?'"

"What?"

Stuie shook his head and said, "I mean, I had my lips buried in her hair . . . this was the big clinch . . . camera dollys in for a close-up . . . 'I love you, Robin . . . please marry me.' And what does my heartthrob, the woman of my dreams, say at this moment? 'The horse,' she tells me, 'stinks!'"

We all sat silent for a time. Then Dave asked, "What did you do?"

"When we got out of the carriage, I finally did kiss her. I kissed her good night and put her in a cab back to her dorm. The funny thing is," Stuie said with the first bitter fruits I had ever heard in his voice, "she doesn't know it's good-bye."

I think I understood then, for the first time, the attraction between these two people; each held fast to illusion. But the great tragedy was that it wasn't a shared illusion. It was like the double image on the faulty frame which merely obscures the two originals.

In the Emergency Room at Albert Einstein Medical Center, Stuie Zelinsky, M.D., met and fell in love with Colleen Agnes McGrath. She was a dental hygienist from Queens, apple-cheeked with a high, loud laugh. I never found out what emergency brought her there.

Several years later, we received a printed card from Stuie Zelinsky announcing the establishment of a family practice in Joliet, Illinois. Oh, we always exchange New Year's cards though—the new year of the Roman calendar—and include pictures of our respective kids. And out of force of habit, I sometimes scribble beneath the printed text a comment here or there on the films I still drag Dave to see. □

Is Sociology Dangerous?

ALAN WOLFE

Books reviewed:

Arlie Russell Hochschild, The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling. *Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.*

Kristin Luker, Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood. *Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.*

Robert N. Bellah, Richard Masden, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life. *Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.*

I.

To the student radicals of the 1960s, sociology was a hopelessly compromised enterprise. We were unsure whether its chief flaw was relevance or irrelevance, but in that impatient atmosphere of impending crisis, both seemed equally egregious. Thus we attacked Talcott Parsons for building word pyramids of ever increasing abstraction that ignored the real world, while simultaneously denouncing others whose work for police and other armed forces paid the real world far too much attention. "Pourquoi sociologie?," wrote French sixtyeighters on their posters; for them, as for us, it was axiomatic that in a corrupt society, knowledge would inevitably serve power.

I recall these moments not to engage fashionably in self criticism; then, as now, social inquiry without a critical consciousness tended toward the vapid. My point concerns instead the rather automatic assumption that "their" sociology was the dominant form, while "ours" was necessarily underground. If anything, the history of the discipline suggests otherwise. Sociology developed as an alternative to reliance on both the market and the state. It asked the question of whether people can find other ways to tie themselves together than the amoral claim of self-interest or the oppressive use of state power. What stands out as the great exception in its development is not that some of us thought it could serve radical ends, but that others believed it could work toward conservative ones. If the books discussed here are any indication, sociology is once again responding to its historical mission, uncovering an understanding of the world that is fundamentally antagonistic to those convinced that a proper blending of markets and militarism can enhance the good life.

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II.

There was never a time when sociology was easily welcomed into the halls of established knowledge. No sooner did philosophers, theologians, and critics begin to ask questions about the nature of the social bond than conservatives detected a threat to law and order. The great German historian of the nineteenth century, Heinrich von Treitschke, devoted his second doctoral dissertation to the new danger. Writing in 1858, von Treitschke argued that any nation should have a "science of the state," one that would outline the conditions necessary for social order. But a science of society could only lead to trouble. Sociology, von Treitschke warned, encouraged "social utopianism" and "revolutionary ideas." The domination of state over society in German daily life was matched by a domination of political science over sociology in German academic theory.

Von Treitschke's ideas influenced German academic life up until the end of World War II. In the second decade of this century, when both Max Weber and Ferdinand Tonnies had developed German sociology to the highest point in the Western world, sociology still faced serious obstacles winning acceptance as a legitimate discipline. Carl Heinrich Becker, who would become Minister of Education in Prussia, submitted a plan that would create chairs of sociology in all the universities in the state. Georg von Bulow, like Treitschke a historian, responded that any attempt to find social laws in history constituted a threat to the individual; besides, he claimed, after a sociologist delivered one lecture, what would he find to talk about? No wonder that Weber considered himself a lawyer and economist, while the most innovative sociologist of the day, Georg Simmel, never received a prestigious university professorship.

"The aim of sociology, in short, is not public policy, but public philosophy."

German hostility toward sociology was no doubt influenced by the fact that the man who invented the term, Auguste Comte, was French. But France was only slightly more welcoming to the discipline than its neighbor. In the 1870s, when Alfred Espinas refused to delete Comte's name from his doctoral dissertation, his examiners forced him to suppress its introduction. Espinas was a good friend of Emile Durkheim's (later they would have a falling out), and it took Durkheim three decades to win acceptance of sociology in Parisian intellectual life. Durkheim was attacked from every conceivable political direction. His insistence on the primacy of social structure led many to denounce him as anti-individualist, while his role as a defender of Dreyfus convinced conservatives such as Ferdinand Brunetiere that far too much individualism had been let loose in France. When in 1913 Durkheim was finally rewarded with a chair in sociology at the University of Paris, the historian Daniel Halevy wrote: "The word socialist was unsuitable.

The more prudent word sociology was chosen. A keen enthusiast, with limited powers of thought but good organizing ability, a man called Durkheim, had started using it ten years ago..."

Durkheim, although from time to time attracted to a most respectable form of socialism, was anything but a radical; it may far more be the case that resistance to his ideas, like those of the German Simmel, was due to anti-Semitism, not anti-socialism. To the reactionary elites of nineteenth century Europe, sociology, socialism, and Judaism were part of a package, one we now call modernity. Simmel himself wrote a famous essay called "The Stranger," in which he pointed out how groups needed members kept at a distance to comment on and revitalize their affairs. His concept was a metaphor for the Jewish intellectuals of the period attracted to sociology.

Conservative hostility toward sociology is anything but a historical relic. The right-wing revival of recent times has brought with it a renewed attack on those who scrutinize society. In Great Britain, for example, the Centre for Policy Studies, an organization of aggressive monetarist economists, has attacked sociologists as "ideological imperialists," committed to "politicized sociology taught as religious dogma." (Their own faith in the market is, of course, scientific, neither political nor dogmatic.) A formal inquiry convened by the Thatcher government investigated the Industrial Research Unit at Warwick University and found it "unfairly biased towards the trade unions." Lord Rothschild, who would play a leading role in reorganizing the social sciences in Great Britain, has claimed that sociology is "chronically affected by bias."

Given these kinds of sentiments, Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Education and Science, made an effort to abolish the Social Science Research Council of Great Britain. Sir Keith appointed Lord Rothschild to investigate the Council and make recommendations. To the government's surprise, Rothschild called the sacking of the SSRC "intellectual vandalism" and urged that funding for the social sciences be insulated from both governmental and market pressure. (His respect for the social sciences in general was obviously higher than his feelings for sociology in particular.) Joseph responded by abandoning his efforts to abolish the SSRC, insisting instead that its name be changed. (Any name was all right to Sir Keith so long as the word science was not in the title.)

"Sociology may well have dangerous implications for conservatives, regardless of the particular politics of the sociologists."

On January 1, 1984, the SSRC officially became the Economic and Social Research Council. Funding for the social sciences was drastically slashed, a full one-third from 1981 to the present. Many sociologists in Great Britain interpret these changes as a reflection of the government's hostility toward the Marxist current in the field. It certainly seems clear that the Thatcher government does not wish to spend funds on social research inconsistent with its own outlook on the world. The ESRC has abolished all disciplinary designations, so that there is no more funding for any specific social science. While such a move could in theory encourage broad scholarship, its effect has been the opposite. There is, according to officials at the ESRC, a tendency for both applicants and the Council itself to seek "value for money"— research that offers an immediate payoff to policymakers.

This story is not that dissimilar from what happened in the United States. While the Reagan administration has tried consistently to cut funds for everything that does not kill, in few areas were its plans more drastic than in federal funding of the social sciences. In its first year, Reagan's Office of Management and Budget sought a 75% cut in funds for the social and economic programs within the National Science Foundation, an obvious step toward abolition. The "black book" of OMB, its statement of budgetary justification, noted that "the support of these sciences is considered of relatively lesser importance to the economy than the support of the natural sciences."

Reagan's effort to eliminate federal support for the social sciences was ultimately unsuccessful. The various professional associations, from anthropology to geography, banded together and held the cuts to 26%, winning surprising support in Congress. But the terms of the debate clearly changed in the process. By showing how the social sciences can help increase productivity to compete with the Japanese, social science officials downplayed, somewhat unfairly, the notion that social investigation is important in its own right, whether "relevant" or not.

Consider, for example, the fate of the one office in the federal government that has sponsored more innovative social research than any other, the Center for the Study of Metropolitan Problems, located in the National Institute of Mental Health. Headed by Elliot Liebow, author of the classic fieldwork study *Talley's Corner*, the Center has consistently given funds to those investigating the social consequences of America's economic and political priorities. In August 1981, when the budget battle over NSF was taking place, a new set of "research guidelines" for NIMH precluded funding for any projects with the word "social" in the title. (The actual wording of this memo is as follows: "Unless specifically focused on mental illness or mental health, NIMH does not support studies of large-scale social conditions or problems e.g., poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing or slums, divorce, day-care arrangements, accidents, and criminal behavior; social classes and groups and their interrelations; the structure and functioning of groups, institutions, or societies; social roles and career determinants; cultural beliefs and values..."). This fight the administra-

tion won. Liebow's "shop", against which this directive was written, was renamed. Proposals to NIMH for social research dried up. The Social Research Group at the University of California, Berkeley, hurriedly changed its name (to the Alcohol Research Group). On this issue there could be no question that the Reagan administration's efforts were, as Philip Handler, former president of the National Academy of Sciences, said of the social science cuts in general, "dictated not so much by financial constraints as by social philosophy." One should add the proviso, however, that the social philosophy in question is one that believes that society should have no social philosophy at all.

Do the opponents of sociology know something that its adherents have missed? Sociology may well have dangerous implications for conservatives, regardless of the particular politics of the sociologists. Neither Durkheim nor Simmel, for example, were men of the left, yet radical implications in their work spring up from time to time. (Simmel, long after his death, has become an inspiration for the German Greens; Durkheim, interpreted by Talcott Parsons as a conservative functionalist, is now viewed as fascinated by the underside of society.) Much the same can be said for current sociology. What is ultimately dangerous about sociology is, finally, its subject: society itself. As the books under consideration here make clear, to ask the question of what holds society together is to focus inevitably on the human work and capacity for creative action and thought of ordinary people. Unlike both economics and political science, sociology is based on a worldview that is inherently democratic.

III.

Of all the books published in sociology over the past few years, I will try to illustrate the field's potential with three. All are published by the University of California Press and had their inspiration in the conditions of West Coast life. (The same place that has given the world Ronald Reagan and religious fundamentalism, where American culture constantly creates itself anew, has also given rise to some of the most creative speculation about the transformation of American life in its post-modern phase.) These are not necessarily the best books, or even representative ones, in the field. (Paul Starr's analysis of American medicine and Theda Skocpol's comparative study of revolutions are perhaps more typical works in sociology.) But these three books, in my opinion, help reveal the hidden texture of American life with vision and power.

Arlie Hochschild's *The Managed Heart* deals with what she calls "emotional labor," defined as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display." Most, though not all, of her book examines the demand placed on airline attendants, whose job requires them to offer to customers reassurance, friendliness, sexual allure, and courage—specific aspects of the person that were at one time considered private. "If we can become alienated from goods in a goods-producing society," writes Hochschild, "we can become alienated from services in a service-producing society." The consequences of that alienation, for both the individuals involved and for society as a whole, become her subject.

Just as the mines—dark, subterranean, and dirty—seemed to symbolize for nineteenth century critics the world of industrial capitalism, the airplane—above the earth, hermetically sealed, and in constant motion—says something about the conditions of life in twentieth century capitalism. Societies generally consider it a sign of progress to move from one of these worlds to another, to replace dirty and physical work with clean and mental work. Without question, planes are an improved work environment compared to mines, but Hochschild would rather remind us of the price that comes with such progress. As exploitive as physical labor may have been, it still left those who performed it in possession of their thoughts and feelings; their work demanded their bodies, not their hearts. The totalitarian implications involved in selling one's feelings on the market in return for a wage are far greater in a "modern" service oriented economy than in the grimier industrial one. If our personalities belong not to ourselves, but to those who can pay for them, we can no longer automatically assume that there are autonomous individuals out there in possession of their specific selves.

When the self is shifted from the private world of personality to the public world of commerce, artificiality replaces authenticity as a dominant characteristic of the social structure. It would not surprise a reader of Hochschild's book to learn that Americans have now twice elected a president known not only for his conservative ideology, but also for his mastery of the idea that public life is nothing but the successful management of emotions. The pervasive feeling that there is no center in American life, no hard and fast values impervious to manipulation and exploitation, can in part be explained by the price that emotion can now command on the market.

Emile Durkheim drew a famous distinction between the sacred and the profane, between the ordinary activities of trade and exchange and that part of society held in reverence by all that symbolizes common values. Ever since, cynics have wondered whether Americans hold anything sacred; Erving Goffman, tongue, no doubt, in cheek, once responded that they do. It is the individual we hold sacred, Goffman claimed, why else so much ritualistic behavior over clothes and make-up? Yet if Hochschild is correct, then not even the individual qualifies for the realm of the sacred, for anything that can be bought and sold, including our smiles, is by definition profane.

At a time when communities throughout America compete rigorously with each other to attract service sector jobs, it is worth remembering that the exploitation of emotional labor is still exploitation. But there are implications in Hochschild's study that go beyond immediate policy ques-

tions. The question she is asking, it seems to me, concerns the reach of the social. Despite conservative charges that sociology would downplay the individual, society itself seems to have done very nicely on that score. If society, as Hochschild shows, reaches down into the psyche, manipulating the heart to sell goods, elect candidates, or select some individuals out for promotion over others, then it no longer makes sense to relegate the study of individual feelings to a discipline called psychology. Nor does it make sense to elevate the realm of politics and economics to the highest priority while ignoring the realm of feeling. A managed heart, in other words, can no more tell what it feels than an owned mind can express what it thinks or a bought body what it desires. The first task of the sociologist is to carve out a place for the self, to develop a strategy that would enable people to find their authenticity in contrast to a public world of artificial images and an individual world of traded feelings.

It is precisely this concern with authenticity that gives Kristin Luker's *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* its power. The heart of Luker's book is an effort to interview activists in the right-to-life movement and from these interviews to compose a composite picture of their worldview. (There are also chapters doing the same for feminists involved in defending abortion, but, more familiar, they are less interesting.) Right-to-lifers believe that men and women are fundamentally different; women, in particular, are, in their view, best suited for the labor-intensive, emotionally involved work of child-rearing. From their perspective, American society is losing its traditional and moral roots, and one of the symptoms (or causes) is the fact of working women. What to the feminists is a sign of liberation becomes for the anti-abortionists one more indication that American society is anti-child and anti-family. Something has to be held sacred for society to have any meaning, and for them it is the family and the moral values associated with it. Abortion, for them, is not a matter of public policy; it is symptomatic of an entire world in disarray. "Pro-life people," Luker concludes, "like . . . pro-choice people . . . have a consistent, coherent view of the world, notwithstanding the fact that like anyone else, they cannot always bring their behavior in line with their highest ideals."

Luker's relativism—her presentation of the worldviews of two radically different political perspectives, as if they should be accorded equal respect—has caused critical commentary from feminists and admiration from conservatives. Peter Berger, a well-known conservative sociologist, has praised Luker's book as the best the profession can offer, while Carol Joffe, for example, has criticized it for ignoring the political context of active right-wing mobilization. I think both miss the point. Feminists, by emphasizing "choice", have unwittingly succumbed to a liberal, marketplace ideology in the matter of abortion and need to address the issue in moral terms if they are ever to stop the backlash against it.

But conservatives equally misread Luker's message, for her methodology is radically democratic and bound to upset defenders of any status quo. What can more reveal the radical potential in sociology than its willingness to accord a hearing to those with whom we may disagree? If Hochschild is correct that artificiality has replaced authentic emotion as the dominant language of our culture, then what one hears from Luker's respondents is a real cry of pain. These people, are, as Carol Joffe is correct to point out, often manipulated by hard-core right-wingers, often men, who have ulterior objectives in mind, but that in no way diminishes the fact that a significant number of Americans are in personal anguish over the moral failings of their public life. At a time when public discourse is so cheap, we should welcome the cry from the heart that Luker has uncovered even if we may be appalled at the uses to which it is put.

Luker's interviewing techniques, based as they are on what the anthropologist Clifford Geertz has called "thick description," bring out the complexity that people feel in their lives when forced to think out loud. Many in the right to life movement, for example, talk about the "rights" of the unborn, leading supporters of abortion to dismiss them as cynical. (The rights of humans stop at birth, is one way the left has characterized conservatives who oppose both abortion and social welfare programs.) Yet it is difficult to believe, after reading what a Chicana activist has to say about abortions for her people or an Irish sympathizer talking about Great Britain's policies there, that all anti-abortion activists are cynically manipulating language. Many of those to whom Luker talked believe that the fetus is a person and its destruction one more indication of how little our society respects the person. Take away the public rhetoric, and underneath one finds the right-to-life movement's shock troops talking language not that dissimilar from the left's: the moral dissolution of society; violence against those incapable of defending themselves; identification with the weak; even opposition to the intrusion of marketplace values into the realm of what ought to be sacred.

"What can more reveal the radical potential in sociology than its willingness to accord a hearing to those with whom we may disagree?"

It is this capacity to hear what ordinary people are saying that makes Luker's book an example of sociology's affinity with the human capacity for self-expression. Her work also illustrates a theme that runs throughout *Habits of the Heart*, the book by Robert Bellah and his four colleagues. After talking to what is clearly an unrepresentative sample of Americans about their fundamental values, the authors of *Habits of the Heart* conclude that there are two languages in American life: a first, public discourse emphasizing economic growth, liberal individualism, and military strength; and a second, more private and introspective language

that worries about the consequences of the first. Luker's right-to-lifers fit the point perfectly. In public debate, they are shrill, dogmatic, and manipulated, but in private reflection, they worry about who we are as a people and how we came to be that way.

Habits of the Heart aspires to be a major work, a statement both of what sociology is and should be capable of doing. In this, I think, it succeeds. The authors show an America working very much at cross purposes. "Modern individualism," they write "seems to be producing a way of life that is neither individually nor socially viable, yet a return to traditional forms would be to return to intolerable discrimination and oppression." Bellah and his associates are primarily concerned with how Americans negotiate the contradictory demands placed on them, how they respond to and deal with the fact that their ideology and their social structure are in wild contradiction to each other. For no people believe more in liberal individualism, yet have created a complex society that can only work based upon social cooperation.

Like Hochschild, Bellah and colleagues are writing about—and to some degree from—the heart. Indeed it may be that what differentiates sociology from political science and economics (even the Marxist variety) is that it takes the heart as its subject matter and attempts to write in a socially meaningful way about the emotions and feelings of ordinary people. The Americans interviewed in this book are confused about those feelings, to say the least. Defining themselves by the ethic of success, they find themselves speaking a language of cost benefit analysis, mute when life involves moral choice. Committed to process, especially those inclined toward therapy, they have little sense of the ultimate destination they are progressing toward. Hostile toward public objectives, they talk sophisticatedly about private ones. Listening to them speak, the authors wonder "if psychological sophistication has not been bought at the price of moral impoverishment."

Clearly what the authors of this book aim to provide is some of the moral enrichment they find missing in American life. In an important appendix to their work, they discuss their methodology, and with it, their vision of sociology. For them, as for the classical thinkers in the sociological tradition, the social sciences should not be mere techniques of research, but should aim at breaking through to the humanities in order to contribute to "a form of social self-understanding or self-interpretation." The aim of sociology, in short, is not public policy, but public philosophy. America once had a public philosophy, a set of moral guidelines that defined the meaning of citizenship. It no longer does, in part because of pervasiveness of liberal individualism. Sociology began by looking for the bonds that hold society together. If *Habits of the Heart* is any indication, it now sees itself not only trying to find the social bond, but intervening to supply one. Like the Bible and the tradition of republican virtue, which once constituted basic texts of American moral life, the tradition of sociology itself "has insisted on an idea of society as a reality in itself, not something merely derived from the agreement of individuals."

IV.

From books like these, one can begin to obtain a sense of why sociology is a danger to the conservative mind. To be a sociologist is to believe that there is more to the world than the struggles for wealth and power. In the vision of Thomas Hobbes, so fundamental to the world of political science, only the violence implicit in the sovereign's authority can hold society together. Adam Smith, the darling of economists ever since, held that an invisible hand guided by trade and economic exchange would fashion the general good out of the private interests of all. From its inception, sociology questioned these twin assumptions of bourgeois life. The major premise of the sociological temperament was, and still is, that neither force nor self-interest can by themselves give meaning to the common experiences that people share.

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A healthy society presupposes, then, a social bond, but not just any social bond. Robert Nisbet, a contemporary conservative sociologist, has argued that sociology originated out of the fear of anarchy unleashed by the French Revolution. But the thinkers Nisbet cites are essentially theologians; their mission was to reimpose a discredited order, the bond of God, not of society. Sociology, in other words, has a dual, and often contradictory, mission. On the one hand, the great sociologists of the nineteenth and early twentieth century—Marx, Weber, and Durkheim—were all modernists, unwilling to return to a world of hierarchy held together by superstition and a belief in fate. But their commitment to modernity was in all cases tentative. Each raised disturbing questions about the direction of the modern world. But even more, all of them were ambivalent about modernity's single greatest social invention: the market. The modern world, in short, gave society the capacity to plan, to take fate into the hands of people, thereby making society possible. But it also brought with it the market and liberal individualism, thereby loosening the social bond and, by implication, making society impossible.

Thus the intellectual task of sociology: to see whether or not it was possible to accept reason and rationality as the driving force of modern life, yet still find the kinds of links between people that tradition and religion once provided. Sociology, to borrow a phrase that Robert Merton used in another context, was ambivalent. Is there tradition without the confines of ortho-

doxy? Can one have modernity without the market? Is it possible to accept such features of rational planning as economic growth and the welfare state, yet to maintain simultaneously the *Geimeinschaft* virtues of localism, face-to-face interaction, and decentralized authority? Can individual freedom necessary to bring out the best in the person be reconciled with the collective planning necessary to bring out the best in society? Will equality undermine authority? Summing up the entire project of modern social theory, sociologists attempted to answer a question first posed by Hegel: if there is liberty, can there also be *Sittlichkeit* —a moral order?

"The battles of modernity," Bellah and his colleagues write, "are still being fought." Indeed they, like all good sociologists, are still fighting them. What comes across most powerfully in all these books is the degree to which America cannot make up its mind how modern it wants to be. We praise ourselves for leaving behind the industrial revolution, only to inherit the alienation inherent in managed emotions. Right wing activists put their faith in the market, and then bemoan the lack of moral standards that the market always brings in its wake. We feel most comfortable with an ideology of liberal individualism, even while recognizing deep within ourselves how unsatisfying it is in the face of our deepest ethical concerns. Americans, if these books are to be believed, long for a solution to the dilemma of modernity. Sociology tells them that they cannot have one, at least not an easy and straightforward one. For that very reason, sociology can never be welcome in a culture that believes either fully in the world of tradition and orthodoxy or the world of rational self-calculation.

America at the moment is experiencing two contradictory urges, ones that have almost nothing else in common except their opposition to the ambivalence of the sociological temperament. On the one hand we are being urged by our leaders to give ourselves over completely to the market. Not only our jobs and our commodities will be privatized, but also our prisons, schools, and firestations. If belief in the market constitutes one of the pillars of modernity, we are being asked to become supermodern, to allow the force of calculation and self-interest to underlie everything we do. Yet just as the present administration demands adherence to a market that respects no tradition or constituted authority other than itself, it also, given its ties to the religious right, promotes respect for orthodoxy and received truth in religious belief. We who are to give ourselves unquestionably to the rationality of the market are simultaneously expected to march just as unquestioningly into the irrationality and superstition of the most primitive of theologies. A society that puts equal amounts of faith in both computers and creationism is not a society receptive to an intellectual tradition that questions both tradition and the modern world.

"To be a sociologist is to believe that there is more to the world than the struggles for wealth and power."

Into this jumble of confusing imperatives and contradictory longings has stepped academic sociology. The books discussed here have something to say about our condition. They tell us, first, that we continue to be victimized by our blind faith in the market. There was a time, in the late 1920s, when the market produced economic bankruptcy. Now it is producing moral bankruptcy as well. Second, we are barely capable of recognizing our condition. The logic of the managed heart has reduced our authentic responses to programmed reiterations of publicly held ideology that have little in common with the actual circumstances that force choices upon us. Third, our traditions have failed to produce alternatives for us, not only the conservative traditions of faith, but also many of the traditional leftist remedies that would alter material conditions, but leave moral discourse unchanged. And fourth, once we come to realize the limits of liberal individualism we must turn toward the ties that grow organically out of interaction with each other if we are to have an effective alternative to the ties imposed from above in the form of military strength or police protection.

If these are the implicit, and often explicit, messages contained in ongoing sociological research, then one can begin to understand the conservative reluctance to provide funds for it. When Americans tire of their present infatuation with the market and the military, there may be a place for them to turn if sociology continues to do its job. Sociology is not, and never will be, a revolutionary manifesto. But by combining tradition with modernity and recognizing the limits of each, sociology can play a unique role in helping us find our bearings. The French sociologist Alain Tourraine has said that we are caught between two Gulags: that of the market and that of the state. If we are to be neither atomistic individuals spending all our time calculating our self- interest nor abject subjects responding to the imperatives of governmental authority, we shall have to turn to sociology to tell us about the world that exists in between. □

Survival, Jewish History and The Present Moment

ELI ZARETSKY

Book and film review:

Charles Silberman, A Certain People: American Jews and Their Lives Today. *Summit, 458 pp. $19.95.*

Claude Lanzmann, Shoah, *a film.*

In discussing these works together, it is not my intention to compare them. *Shoah* is a transcendent work of art, *A Certain People,* high-level journalism. Both, however, offer important insight into the story of twentieth century Judaism and both suggest that now, as in the past, the history of the Jews throws a special and unexpected light on the unfolding of Western culture itself.

Silberman's warmly written and carefully researched work is concerned with the recent past and present situation of American Jews. It is essentially directed against two related fears: 1) that anti-Semitism is increasing in America and 2) that through intermarriage or secularization American Judaism itself is in a state of decline. The repeated theme of the book is that American Jews are accepted enough, successful enough and committed enough to Judaism to be able to relax, enjoy the fruits of their labor and luck, and look forward to the future. Silberman ends his book with Moses' injunction to the twelve spies sent out to survey the Promised Land: "Look about carefully what manner of land it is, for some lands produce strong people and some weak. If you find the inhabitants dwelling in open places, then, know that they are mighty warriors, and have no fear of hostile attack. If, however, they live in fortified places, they are weaklings and, in fear of strangers, seek shelter behind their walls."

Although one of the charms of *A Certain People* is its frequent use of personal anecdotes of opinion, Silberman appears unaware that the mere fact that he felt called upon to write such a long, tendentious and well-documented book in order to urge optimism is itself worth reflecting upon. *A Certain People* clearly acknowledges the existence of widespread fear and self-doubt among American Jews. Silberman musters extensive facts and argumentation against these fears, as if they were merely the result of lack of information. In fact, the existence of these doubts among American Jews suggests far more confusion and weakness in the sense of corporate identity than Silberman's book ever acknowledges.

A Certain People is divided into three parts entitled "An American Success Story", "A Jewish Success Story" and "Notes on the Future". "An American Success Story" concerns the decline of anti-Semitism in recent American life, not only among gentiles but among Jews. In contrast to upwardly mobile Jews in America during the first half of the twentieth century, such as Walter Lippman and Bernard Berenson, who were deeply ashamed of their Judaism, Silberman argues that upwardly mobile Jews since World War II ("And they *are* being promoted", he writes enthusiastically) share in the general American acceptance and pride in ethnic identification. The bulk of Silberman's discussion concerns the falling away of anti-Semitic barriers to Jewish "success" in the universities, exclusive clubs, business, medicine, journalism, real estate, even organized crime. "A Jewish Success Story" concerns the "renewal" of American Judaism as expressed through such forms as activist support for Israel, fund-raising, the popularity of Jewish studies in the University, the growth of the havurah movement, and the return of once-secular Jews to religion ("I had not known how deeply Jewish I was"). Some readers may be particularly interested in Silberman's lengthy discussions of the complicated issues of intermarriage and conversion phenomena which, in his interpretation, suggest confidence in the survival of American Judaism. In considerable depth, Silberman argues that intermarriage is inevitable in a pluralistic society and that the subsequent conversion of non-Jewish spouses, along with other forms of conversion, more than replenish the lost population and resources of American Judaism.

"Silberman never considers... that Judaism has its own set of values by which it might judge its own history and the history of America."

Finally, Silberman writes that "the energy being released by the Jewish woman's movement is likely to provide the most important source of religious renewal." But, while movingly documenting the activities of female Jewish leaders and activists, he never really captures what is powerful and exciting in this movement. The reason is that Silberman never addresses the question of the content of Judaism itself and therefore does not discuss how the infusion of Judaism with the suppressed experiences and insights of half of its membership promises to develop or transform that content. Instead, he merely documents increased activity and participation—"energy"—and not its meaning.

Silberman's concluding section is largely focused on electoral politics, especially the continued commitment of American Jews to the Democratic

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Party and the possibility, much discussed during the 1984 Presidential campaign, of a Jewish shift to the right. Silberman writes as if all American Jews are well-off and successful and therefore he grants the logic that would place them in the party of the "haves" a certain plausibility. At the same time he sees the Democrats as the party of pluralism, diversity and tolerance and suggests that these are the real interests of American Jews. "American Jews are secure," he sums up, "secure enough, in fact, to risk displeasing a second-term Republican president by remaining liberal Democrats." This section, though limited in scope, is more persuasive than the other two.

"The real subject of the film (Shoah) is, first, unconsciousness."

A Certain People reflects, without transcending, the core values of the educated, middle-class Jews it seeks to describe. The fact that it is as sincere, intelligent and as committed to Judaism as it is, makes all the more striking the shallowness of the conception of Judaism it espouses. Rather than posing the question of the meaning or significance of Jewish national history, Silberman takes as his standard of success, the survival, mobility and ethnic diversity that are the manifest values of American culture itself. In judging the "success" of American Judaism, Silberman uses no standards that are intrinsic to Jewish history itself. The same values by which he weighs the "progress" of American Judaism can be applied to any other ethnic or racial minority within American society: Afro-Americans, Polish-Americans, Italian-Americans, even women. These standards are the crumbling of "prejudice," including self-hatred, the persistence of group identification and upward mobility. By these standards the *content* that gives the group its identity is rendered nugatory. If, for example, Judaism survives, as argued three decades ago by Will Herberg in his *Protestant, Catholic, Jew,* as a "religion", the particular content or beliefs of that religion become a "private" or "cultural" matter: what counts is group identification and acceptance, per se. The "success" that Silberman has traced, therefore, is the success of the assimilationist and pluralizing tendencies of American liberalism, as judged by itself.

Silberman never considers the possibility that Judaism has its own set of (sacred) values by which it might judge its own history, as well as the history of America in which it has played an important role. Without a perspective concerning these values, the really critical questions that Silberman touches on—such as the relation of Judaism to feminism and to American blacks—as well as the issues that Silberman fails to raise—such as the relation of the America Jewish community to its own poor, to the poor in general and to the Jewish people elsewhere in the world, as well as to the reality of American liberalism, necessarily remain unexplored. "Judaism", understood as an ethno-religious group within a pluralist framework, may well survive, even prosper, but it can never be clear to what end.

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In arguing, against Silberman, that for American Jews it is not survival and acceptance that is at issue but rather the values and traditions that Jews embody, I do not intend to counterpose American Jews to any other group that has suffered at the hands of the dominant majority(ies) in America. On the contrary, I intend to place American Jews alongside those numerous forces in the black community, among women, and in other ethnic minorities that have argued similarly. The strongest voices in these oppressed groups have consistently rejected mere assimilation, even when accompanied by the persistence of a group culture, and instead have asserted the relevance of unique, traditional, frequently communal values, generally critical of American liberalism, whose critical value would be blunted or lost if their specificity were not respected.

For all Jews, of course, these values derive from the Torah tradition and from Jewish history. Jews have perceived themselves as having a unique mission—to live according to Torah—in their own eyes, in the eyes of the community and, above all, in relationship to God. This "mission" sense of responsibility transcends any particular historical situation and it is in light of this mission that Jews have always judged themselves. While the Jewish concept of "chosenness" has always been ambiguous and debated, Jews have always understood their history as making an important contribution to the non-Jewish world and, in my view, any Jewish interpretation of chosenness in terms of superiority is a defensively motivated distortion of the core sense of living with a transcendent purpose, whose nature is always partly undefined and unfinished.

Nonetheless, Silberman is right to assume that whatever the purpose of Jewish history, it must begin with the problem of survival. This theme is clearly central to the Torah as well as to the history of the Jews during the epoch of the ancient empires. And it defines Jewish history in the modern West, a world shaped by the establishment of nation-states in which the Jews, until the establishment of Israel, remained a "people". As will become clear when I discuss *Shoah* the question of survival remains the starting point of any discussion of the present state of Judaism. My criticism of Silberman is that, in contrast to *Shoah,* he does not move beyond this starting point. Between the problem of physical survival posed by the Holocaust and the survival of the Jews as an ethno- religious minority within a pluralist culture, there remains much to be said.

The meaning of Jewish history only begins to be grasped when it is placed within the broad contours of Western history. First, the generative role of the ancient Hebrew is nowhere fully conceptualized in any overview of Western culture with which I am familiar. By this I mean the unique Hebrew conception of monotheism

which, as adopted and developed by both Christianity and Islam shapes the entirety of Western cultural history and distinguishes it from the other major centers of world civilization: India, China, Africa, Meso-America and the Pacific islands. The idea of a God who creates the Universe, and is thereby prior to it, as opposed to God(s) who emerge from the universe, marks the crucial distinction between religion, with its idealist worldview, and magic, which aims at subduing the material world. This conception of God is linked to the ideas of a personal soul and of a righteous community, concerned with social justice, in their unique Western form. The downplaying of the significance of this conception in the West's account of its own development has implications for far more than the history of the Jews, for it is linked to racialist attempts to trace Western history to classical Greece and Rome (downgrading the significance of the ancient Near East in general) and to the failure to grasp the commonality between Judaism and Christianity on one hand, and Islam on the other.

"The extraordinary shallowness and inability of modern Western civilization to understand itself may well be seen by its relationship to the Holocaust which it itself produced."

Of more immediate significance for understanding the place of the Jews within Western history is the problem of anti-Semitism. The form of anti-Semitism that we presently know took shape in the wake of the rise of Christianity, during the last centuries of the Western Roman Empire. These centuries marked the emergence of Western civilization as *Christian* civilization. To grasp the meaning of this fact, it is necessary to consider what is meant by a civilization: it is an ethically regulated way of life based on core values on behalf of which the individual regulates or, as Max Weber wrote, rationalizes his or her life. By definition, a civilization suppresses certain individual tendencies, desires or attitudes and encourages others. Civilization, as Freud continually reminded us, is achieved at great cost. Because Western civilization is a Christian civilization, the Jews (as the negation of Christianity within its own homelands, and as its own progenitor) have served as the focus for much of what has been thrust aside in the course of becoming "Christian", i.e., in the eyes of Christian anti-semitism: demandingness, aggressiveness, sensuality, greedy materialism, sexual pleasure, lack of self-control and a sense of ethnic belongingness.

Thus, the standard explanation of anti-Semitism—that Jews rejected the message that Christ brought, as well as Christ himself, is accurate but incomplete. Jews embody, through projection, that which has become repressed in the effort to become Christian. Thus, anti-Semitism and Christianity are not so easily separated as the liberal pluralist outlook would lead us to believe. Judaism and Christianity are no mere "religions", another form of consumer choice in the epoch of secularization. "Jewishness" is deep in the tissue and bones of all Christians. Conversely, insofar as Jews have lived as members of Western civilization, "Christianity", in the sense of its ideals and values, has become inextricable from their thoughts and feelings.

Therefore, the attempt to retain a connection in depth with Jewish history and to grapple with its commitment to transcendent meaning is not only a "religious" choice, in the sense that "religion" has in a secular, pluralist society. To attempt to live as a Jew certainly involves one in a consideration of the history and present situation of the West. In particular, Jewish identity today involves a commitment to particularity and to a concrete tradition and set of values. In this sense, the situation of Jews is similar to the situation of women who hold to the unique contributions of women to modern culture and do not define feminism solely in terms of "equal rights", to the situation of Afro-Americans who do not define "progress" by their "acceptance" by white America, or to any other historically oppressed group.

The general value of the Jews' commitment to maintaining their unique history was well understood by many of the greatest modern Jewish thinkers such as Gerschom Scholem and Walter Benjamin who, thereby, were also among the greatest modern thinkers. Growing up in the "enlightened" Germany of the early twentieth century they held to Judaism because they saw in it—and not only in it—a point of opposition to the assimilationist, "progressive" and bourgeois values of their parents. In the case of Scholem this led to his enormous deepening of our understanding of the meaning of Judaism through his revival of Jewish mystical and messianic traditions. In the case of Benjamin, his early rejection of assimilationist rationality led to his uniquely brilliant deepening of the connections between Marxism, modernism and the irrational roots of authority and meaning. Although there are important differences between bourgeois assimilationism of early twentieth century German Jewry and the pluralist Judaism that Silberman applauds, they share in common a subordination of Judaism to the "rational" outlook of the modern middle classes. Our task, like that of Benjamin and Scholem, is to renew Judaism, not only because of its intrinsic value but also because it serves as a point of critique against the dominant —once Christian, now capitalist— values of the larger society.

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This framework may help make it possible to appreciate the enormous achievement of Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*. The extraordinary shallowness and inability of modern Western civilization to understand itself may well be seen by its relationship to the Holocaust which it itself produced. The most highly honored synthesis of world history, William McNeill's *The Rise of the West*, devotes fifty pages to

the twentieth century but does not even mention the event. As Lanzmann well understands and clearly documents, no one alive today is really prepared to feel and experience the kinds of things that would have to be felt and experienced for there to be any genuine comprehension and transcendence of that event. His film, therefore, is not at all about the Holocaust; it is about the universal defensiveness and denial that surrounds our limited memory of the Holocaust, a defensiveness that includes not only Germans and Poles, but which extended at the time to the victims, and now extends to the survivors, the historians, the filmmakers and the audience of the film.

Rather than attempting to describe the Holocaust, Lanzmann systematically records the various ways in which the Holocaust is represented by those most deeply involved in it: especially survivors, local observers and guards. The form of this nine and a half hour film—with not a wasted minute in it—alternates between extremely slow interviews with participants, slowed down further by a symphony of translations, during which the viewers are mostly involved in watching the faces of those being interviewed. These sections alternate with lengthy sections of the landscapes, forests, railroads, pits, rivers, ruins and villages near and in which the destruction of European Jewry occurred. The landscapes and the recurrent sound and image of the terrible trains create a meditative breathing space in which the experience of the recollectors can be not so much remembered as felt. The length of the film is justified not only because of the quality of the interviews and footage, and the artistry of the aural and visual editing, but because that kind of length is necessary—if one is to begin to contemplate the event—a shorter movie risked being another item of mass consumption experience for hurried, urban professionals.

But *Shoah* accomplishes far more than this: it is also an interpretation of the causes, nature and, to some degree, consequences, of the Holocaust. Among the themes that the film develops are these: the nature of German and Polish culture; the relation of capitalism, bureaucracy and the fetishism of technology to the Holocaust; and the international nature of the event, brought out by the shooting in a variety of cities: Berlin, Warsaw, Tel-Aviv, New York, Cleveland, *et al,* as well as by the many languages that embroider the work: German, Hebrew, Polish, French and English. Among other things, Lanzmann brings into relationship the superstitious, selfish anti-Semitism of the Polish peasants who lived near the camps, and the urbane, civilized and cold murderousness of such middle-class Germans as Herr Steir who, insists, he knew nothing about the destination of the trains he organized such as "that camp—what was its name? It was in the Oppeln district . . . . I've got it: Auschwitz!"

Shoah is both a work of art and history based upon Raoul Hilberg's theory of a "bureaucratic destruction process" according to which there was no single decision for extermination —not even a budget—but rather "a series of minute steps taken in logical order," a theory that suggests how deeply the Holocaust came out of the central, rationalizing tendencies of modern bureaucratic-technological and capitalist society. Throughout the work, Lanzmann connects the Holocaust not only to history but to the present: to the fact that the same truck company that manufactured the earliest engines of killing is still producing trucks and with the same bureaucratic mentality; the same railroads, bridge trestles and roads are being used with the same mindlessness with which they were used to destroy so many; the nightlife in Berlin is shown to be as vacuous as it was during the heyday of the war and the streetlife of contemporary Warsaw shown to be equally authoritarian.

Given the range that the film covers, it is tempting to say that it is of universal applicability: that it concerns South Africa and nuclear war and Latin America as well as the Holocaust: and it does! But if it only did that, it would ultimately betray its subject matter and thereby lose its relevance to other expressions of modern racism and destructiveness. Instead Lanzmann never lets us forget that it was the destruction of the European Jews that the Holocaust intended and achieved—and that the motivation behind it was a consistent, raging and insatiable anti-Semitism. Lanzmann brings this out explicitly in a scene in front of a contemporary Polish church in which the parishioners, surrounding the sole survivor from their nearby camp, discuss the nature of their anti-Semitism and its inextricable connection to their Christianity. Nor is it ever forgotten elsewhere in the film. Anti-Semitism, *Shoah* suggests, is central to the project of Western civilization and the proper response is not a "tolerance" and "pluralism" that can only end by "tolerating" anti-Semitism.

"The meaning of Jewish history only begins to be grasped when it is placed within the broad contours of Western history."

The real subject of the film, therefore, is, first, unconsciousness. For nine and a half hours Lanzmann shows that while people talk, fidget, smile and digress, while cameras roll and audiences dream, there is unfolding a world of pain and suffering and death of which we remain largely unaware, which can only be represented, never grasped directly. Lanzmann shows this as it can only be shown, concretely: the reality, not of the gas-filled truck, of train cars so crammed with people that they could not sit for ten and twelve day journeys, of "undressing rooms", of barbers at the door to the gas chambers, of the chambers themselves, disguised as showers, of ovens and of heaps of bone and human ash—not this reality, but the reality of the experience of the millions who died.

Ultimately, though, this is a movie about consciousness, about remembering as opposed to forgetting. Throughout Lanzmann behaves as a man ob-

sessed with the ambition to know all and, using a brilliant battery of interviewing devices he helps or forces his subjects to remember and by this method, everything in *Shoah* seems strikingly contemporary. Ultimately, too, Lanzmann shows —for the movie is in no way pessimistic—the resistance to the Holocaust, explored at length in the longer second half, a resistance made all the more triumphant by the fact that Lanzmann explores at length the difficulties to be found in the path of any genuine resistance to an unconsciously driven force such as the Holocaust.

What can we learn from *Shoah?* First, that survival *is* the fundamental problem of Jewish history. But, in addition, that the kind of survival that is possible for the Jewish people requires a challenge to the structures of thought and feeling—whether bureaucratically rational or magical and obscurantist—that require repression of the truth. The plausibility of Silberman's book stems from the centrality of the issue of survival to Jewish history. Silberman's claim is that, in America at least, this issue is settled. *Shoah* demonstrates the superficiality of Silberman's belief that Jewish survival is consistent with a social order that requires continuous deception, whether in the realm of ideas or through force. □

Claims

JOHN FELSTINER

Poetry review:

Shirley Kaufman, Claims. *The Sheep Meadow Press, 80pp. $13.95.*

"Chosen," Shirley Kaufman calls one of the poems in this new sequence:

Leaves are the color of burned-out
tanks on the road to Jerusalem.
Obsolete
armor. Grapes in the market
already smell of wine,
and the flies tap sugar
from their overstuffed skins.

We think we can smell the rain too,
smashing its tiny mirrors in the north
as if what we waited for
might come.

Chosen for what? The live carp
flap in their vats. They think
they should be flying.
I take one home in a plastic bag.

You need not have seen those tanks, left as they fell in 1948 along the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road. For the color of autumn leaves, any old rusted metal will do—a rake, a barrel hoop, a plowshare. But in 1948 it took flame first, then rain and sun for years to make a rough dark russet that now makes a figure of speech.

Shirley Kaufman left San Francisco for Israel in 1973, at the age of fifty. *Claims,* the fourth book in a distinguished career, extends her vision and with it her voice. She has always found images in the world around her, most often the natural world, but now more than before she finds that nature touched closely and sometimes corrosively by history. So too, of course, is human nature touched. While the title word "Chosen" lingers unexplained over this poem, there's still shopping to do. Go up close enough to smell wine in the grapes—you may come away disheartened by the flies.

Disheartened, yes, but look how the language has done it: the flies "tap" sugar, from "overstuffed skins." Shirley Kaufman brings you up close, here and in the second stanza too, with the rain "smashing its tiny mirrors," and again back in the market, where the live carp "flap in their vats." Someone who will see and can say things that clearly, who stays close to her world—we can trust such a writer.

Her title has been ticking away during the poem—in the market, in the longing for rain after a parched summer—as if the word "chosen" were a nagging thought, an unanswered question. Then it surfaces: "Chosen for what?" But immediately, honestly, she spots the carp who want to be looked at in their impossible messianic dream. She is of the chosen people and can "take one home in a plastic bag."

It feels late in this poem, a bit late for the grapes, and the rain may be late in coming. Yet if Shirley Kaufman senses disheartening news in the promised land, living there has also rendered her more than ever sensitive to the other sort of news, the everyday fresh resurgences of things—and of people too. She begins the prologue to her book, "Jacaranda":

Because the branches hang down
with blossoms
for only a few weeks, lavender clumps
that let go quickly
and drop to the ground,

because the flowers are so delicate
even their motion through the air
bruises them . . .—

and right there I want to pause, drawn close enough to slow their fall—the perfect line breaks do this—and to see something we don't ordinarily see. The logic here seems fundamental: when blossoms let go, when flowers bruise, we've learned the larger dimension of loss. The poem concludes:

what's settled for is not nearly
what we are after, claims
we keep making or are made on us.
But the recurrence of change
can still surprise us, lilac
that darts and flickers
like the iridescent head of a fly,
and the tree making us
look again.

It comes down yet again to that red wheelbarrow celebrated by William Carlos Williams: so much depends upon noticing the live clarity of things.

Claims, Shirley Kaufman calls this organic sequence of 62 poems. The strength of them, what counterpoises the losses they note, is that she takes the personal and historical claims made upon her and absorbs them as her own claims. Her book has three parts: "Two Directions," "Histories," "Small Comforts." In the first, memories of a rain-filled Seattle childhood carry the poet often painfully back to her parents and then further back to their own memories of Poland and Russia. At the same time she asks herself, "What are you doing in Jerusalem?"

For that question, her poems have to bring into focus Mount Moriah, where Abraham took Isaac, the Sinai, the mountains of Moab in Jordan, the Dead Sea, the Dome of the Rock where Mohammed flew to heaven, the Via Dolorosa—places that surge up against the footsoles of anyone keeping her balance in the Holy Land. The last poem of part one follows the ferries across Puget Sound to prophets' caves in the Judean desert and ends on a ridge in Jerusalem, with "black goats looking for something green."

"Histories," the second part, opens with a marvelous poem called "Déjà Vu," extending the trail of Biblical

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women in all Shirley Kaufman's books. Sarah and Hagar, Abraham's wife and servant, meet among tourists in the mosque on the Temple Mount—Imagine! after all these years—and we get a sense of experiencing something we've experienced once before:

They bump into each other at the door,
the dark still heavy on their backs
like the future always coming after
them.
Sarah wants to find out what
happened
to Ishmael but is afraid to ask.
Hagar's lips make a crooked seam
over her accusations.

So these two mothers, Hebrew and Egyptian, "walk out of each other's lives/like the last time," Sarah to her cool villa while Hagar buys some figs and "climbs the dusty path home."

"Déjà Vu," without any cloying, manages to domesticate the Arab-Israeli conflict even while deepening it mythically. By "domesticate" I don't mean "tame," but is it enough, this bringing the conflict home? It is certainly the only beginning. Shirley Kaufman finds her integrity, she makes herself integral to place and time, by ranging disparate poems throughout this book: Poland and Seattle then the Sinai desert, archaeology then this morning's marketing, the City of David then her own balcony, friends whose son has just fallen then a Vilna mother in the summer 1939, arranging a baby's blanket: "How careful she is/to get the edges straight."

"A complicated search," Shirley Kaufman has called this engagement with two or three places and times. No doubt her fine work translating Israeli poets such as Abba Kovner and Amir Gilboa, themselves emigres from Europe to Palestine, has taught her something about settling in a new land whose language itself creates a kind of Biblical *déjà vu*.

The "Small Comforts" entitling part three of *Claims*—spring poppies, walking with her husband, playing with kittens, a ripe melon—appear small only against what looms over them: the burned-out tanks, military graveyards, occupied territories. Take this brief poem for instance:

Trees find their shapes again,
as the world blanches. It must be
morning.

At the window I can make out
the dim outlines
of the domes the towers lit by
the dawn.

On the sill the dove sleeps
over her two damp birds.
She built a nest in the pot of geraniums
and yesterday they hatched,
little homemade bombs.
They are not Jews or Arabs.

The simple dawn each morning might be comfort enough, and then there are "the domes the towers"—mosques just discernible in Jerusalem's Old City. Instead of an olive branch, the dove brings small explosions of homemade truth.

Often, as with these doves, I wonder whether our intimate truths can withstand the violence around us. What insures Shirley Kaufman's poems against sentimentality is the crisp tact of her imagery, the surprise of her figures, her revealing turns of phrase and line, and over and over again a self-questioning that obviates despair. You can see how honestly her verse and her mind work in a poem such as "Roots in the air," where

Over my head
the Bengal ficus
dangles its roots like seaweed . . .

one tree makes a hundred
out of the steaming soil it comes from,
replanting itself.

Not here.
The roots are shaggy
with trying in this land.
No earth, no water,
what are they doing
in the light?

"Not here," says the exile, or at least "Not yet."

Shirley Kaufman's book closes with a poem that recalls her prologue, "Jacaranda," with the blossoms bruising as they fall and "the tree making us /look again." In her closing poem, "Autumn Crocus," she goes "near the edge of Jerusalem" and watches men climbing into olive trees and beating the branches so the dark fruit drops. "The families"—they are Arab, but she doesn't need to say so—"The families move in and out/of the dust" to gather the olives.

October again.
The rains are coming, the steep cold
and the festering idleness.

The women are sorting the bitter crop.
In the empty fields small
clusters of lavender petals
explode from the soil
without any warning, not even
a stem or a single leaf.
A kind of privilege. As if
they earned the right
through the exacting summer.

Look! They say for a moment.

A complicated search, that of an American-born poet stemming from eastern Europe, trying to replant herself in the land of Israel. Those "small clusters of lavender petals" she notices—where do they come from? When T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land* appeared in 1922, richly tapping European sources, William Carlos Williams set about writing *In the American Grain*, and in a new poem he said what you could find close to home, "By the road to the contagious hospital": the "waste of broad, muddy fields/brown with dried weeds, standing and fallen," but also, as spring approaches, "the stiff curl of wildcarrot leaf."

Thanks, in a way, to Williams' wild-carrot leaf, Shirley Kaufman brings news of an autumn crocus exploding without warning from the soil—and that she cannot help but see it that way is also news. Look! she says—but not to forget the exacting summer or evade the steep cold, and not to disregard the women with their bitter crop. □

Short Reviews

The Wandering Jew

Edited by Galit Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes
Indiana University Press, 1986

Galit Hasan Rokem, a lecturer in Jewish folklore at the Hebrew University, and world-famous anthropologist Alan Dundes have put together a collection of essays on the legend of the Wandering Jew. This legend, relatively unknown in Jewish circles but widely circulated in the Christian world, is based upon the supposition that a certain Jew who turned his back on Jesus before the crucifixion was condemned by Jesus to eternally wander and never finally rest till Jesus' expected Second Coming.

The essays assembled here are themselves a testimony to the anti-Semetic legacies of Western civilization. Many of the "scholarly" contributions seek to root this story, which became a widely believed folktale in Europe, in historical or social "reality"—some telling of people who actually met the Wandering Jew, others attempting to relate the story to some aspect of Jewish life (e.g. our fundamental rootlessness). The collection also contains some authors who analyze the psychodynamic and ideological patterns in Christian civilization that generated the need to create this mythology and perpetuate it well into the 20th century.

This is a fascinating and rich portrayal of one aspect of European anti-Semitism, worthy of study by anyone interested in mass culture and the process through which a pattern of prejudice takes on the appearance of common sense. □

—MPL

The Production of Desire

Richard Lichtman
Free Press, 1986

Richard Lichtman's little-noticed 1982 social analysis of psychoanalytic theory has just been re-issued as a paperback. Hailed at the time as certain to be a classic, it retains today its authority as the most sophisticated attempt to place psychoanalysis in social perspective.

In the past twenty years there have been several attempts from within the psychoanalytic community to divorce itself from Freudian metapsychology, so badly battered by decades of analytic philosophers and social critics who have found it to be both hopeless metaphysics (parading as science) and politically reactionary. The attempt by Russell Jacoby in his book *Social Amnesia* to root a radical social view in Freudian instinct theory has generated as little excitement in the psychoanalytic mainstream as Herbert Marcuse's earlier attempts in *Eros and Civilization*—both efforts ignore the needs of the practicing analyst to abandon any metaphysics and root their activity in "science." Instead, many analysts have turned in a different direction: arguing that the clinical work was epistemologically independent of the Freudian metapsychology and could be judged in its own terms. Lichtman painstakingly demolishes this hypothesis—through a careful analysis of what analysts call "the clinical data" supplied by Freud and some post-Freud writers, as well as through a reasoned critique of the works of Freudian theorists like Roy Schafer and George Klein.

Lichtman acknowledges the experiential power of therapeutic change for the individual. "To free one's self from past, personal tyrannies, whether this process is deemed politically emancipatory or not, is to experience a profound transformation and the lifting of a cruel and punishing burden." But he goes on to argue that the conditions of capitalism require other and deeper levels of self-deception that are equally paralyzing. In fact, at the very moment that therapy liberates, it simultaneously enslaves—by reinforcing a series of illusions about the individual's relationship to the larger social order.

Some readers are likely to be distracted by Lichtman's attempts to locate his social critique within the framework of contemporary Marxist debate. But Lichtman's work deserves careful study even by those who do not ultimately share his world view. Lichtman raises questions that any intellectually honest theorist or practitioner of psychoanalytic psychotherapy must address. This book remains a significant challenge to those of us who continue to insist on the liberatory potential of the psychoanalytic tradition. □

—MPL

(continued from page 17)

The importance of a ritual to celebrate menarche points out the need to celebrate other moments of passage. Of course Judaism recognizes the importance of life cycle rituals, but on the whole, these rituals relate to the life cycle of a male Jew. Life cycle rituals occur at moments of crisis when a person is most teachable. Through rituals we organize our understanding of reality and dramatize fundamental conceptions. The fundamental conceptions of a patriarchal tradition center around the experience of men and overlook the experience of women. It is here that Judaism needs "tikkun"—to hear, validate and take seriously women's experience.

There are many other moments that mark the passaage of an individual girl or woman through the life cycle, moments of crisis or anxiety that call out for the reshaping of consciousness that occurs through ritual. Some are related to our bodies—childbirth, weaning, menopause, miscarriage, abortion. Others seem to be more socially constructed—changes in families, work, education. All rites of passage are in some sense socially constructed even if they relate to natural physical events; they involve an interconnection between biology and culture. As Jews know very well, men are not simply born—they are "made" by rituals. The same is true of women.

"Of course Judaism recognizes the importance of life cycle rituals, but on the whole these rituals relate to the life cycle of the male Jew."

But it is not easy to create new rituals. As Barbara Myerhoff wrote in *Number Our Days:*

All rituals are paradoxical and dangerous enterprises, the traditional and the improvised, the sacred and the secular. Paradoxical because rituals are conspicuously artificial and theatrical, yet designed to suggest the inevitability and absolute truth of their messages. Dangerous because when we are not convinced by a ritual we may become aware of ourselves as having made them up, thence on to the paralyzing realization that we have made up all our truths; our ceremonies, our most precious conceptions and convictions—all are mere invention.

How do we create new rituals for Jewish women? Do we model women's ritual after existing male rituals like the Brit Chayim ceremony, a covenant ceremony for daughters printed in the Reform Movement's *Gates of the Home?* Or, and this is my view, do we try to uncover sources of women's spirituality and use them as the basis for new women's ritual. A ritual like *Brit Rechitza,* the Covenant of Washing, created by Rabbi Ruth Sohn and others, which follows this second model, suggests that water is a source of feminine spirituality. To follow the second model required that we wrestle with the tradition in a new way with an eye toward uncovering different images, unraveling the many layers of Jewish sources to find the feminine in God, to discover the hints of women's experience there in the text. It means exploring Judaism's connection with the moon and with nature. It means recovering Rosh Chodesh and Birchat Ha-Levanah, perhaps celebrating the entrance of a daughter into the covenant as part of the lovely Blessing of the Moon after Havdallah. It means discovering that the great feast that Abraham made on the day that Isaac was weaned or the powerful story of Chana at Samuel's weaning contains a remnant of a weaning ritual that we choose to remember and recreate. Here the words of Monique Wittig in *Les Guerilleres* are instructive:

There was a time when you were not a slave, remember that. You walked alone, full of laughter, you bathed bare-bellied. You say you have lost all recollection of it, remember . . . . You say there are no words to describe this time, you say it does not exist. But remember. Make an effort to remember. Or, failing that, invent.

Creating new rituals that celebrate women's experience is only the beginning of the "tikkun" that can overcome women's marginality and unlock spirituality. There are other dimensions of women's experience that point to a feminist theology, a different way of speaking about God that emerges from a different experience of God. Recent psychological literature suggests that women are most comfortable in experiences of connectedness and relatedness as opposed to separation and mastery. Translated into theological terms, women's experience of God may be more an experience of immanence than one of transcendence, the God we experience within and among us as opposed to the God over and against us. There has always been a dialectic tension in Judaism between transcendence and immanence. In Rabbinic Judaism the pendulum swung well over to the side of transcendence; feminist Judaism is pulling the pendulum back. We need to explore these different images of God in our tradition—the image in the midrash of God as a nursing mother with Torah the milk she gives her child Israel, the image of the Schechinah, the God who is the source of *Rachamim,* womb-like compassion, the God Jacob/Israel saw in the face of his brother. But we cannot stop there; we must find ways to translate them into our prayer. Our liturgy was created by men; it emphasizes those images of God and community that reflected the values of the men who framed it. A new liturgy must be accessible to women as well as men, drawing on all of our experiences of God and community.

While this process begins with taking women's experience seriously, it quickly moves to include the experience of men as well. There are moments in men's lives that the tradition does not notice; these moments as well need to be marked and celebrated. Most women cannot ignore the transition to midlife because their bodies announce it. Men also move into midlife; the physical

signs might be less clear but the social, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the passage are no less important. Men also experience God on the dialectic of transcendence and immanence; their religious lives can be enriched by opening up a more complex vision of God and an empowered community.

All this is a part of "tikkun", overcoming fragmentation and dichotomy in order to approach wholeness. It is political in that transforming society is an integral part of spirituality; pushing society in the direction of wholeness is a necessary precondition for spiritual wholeness. It is a messianic task—to collect the sparks of divinity in our own experience in order to overcome marginality, overcome dualities, and reach toward wholeness in our community, ourselves and God. □

NORMAN BIRNBAUM

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Tikkun's editor, in a quite extraordinary display of historical optimism, has requested a statement which might stand examination twenty years hence. Have we twenty years ahead of us? Have we, indeed, twenty months? Humanity's disorderly rush to self extirpation continues. West German television has just brought the (extremely ugly) visage of the government's official spokesman, as he denounced the peace movement for "attempting to frighten the public with fictive grounds for panic." Would that the grounds were fictive, and would that the public were afraid. We are prisoners of a situation in which fear constitutes an entirely rational response—the precondition of purposive action to alter the situation.

Around me, with conspicuous lack of conviction, German Christendom celebrates the resurrection of its Messiah. The Cardinal Archbishop of Cologne has expressed his perplexity: how can those who foolishly worry about nuclear war not give priority to the real threat—loss of human life through abortion? The West German Protestant Church is busy defending itself against the charge of political heresy. It issued a joint statement with the church in the other German state, criticising the militarization of space. The very Christian West German Chancellor is spending the holy weekend on a fat farm, but he can console himself. What he has lost in support from Protestants he has gained from the American Jewish Committee. On a recent visit, its chairman publicly thanked the Chancellor for his assistance in obtaining Scharansky's release. And the AJC is participating in a joint seminar program with Kohl's ruling German Christian Democratic Party — in which the situation of Jews in the Soviet Union has been linked to that of a persecuted German minority there. The AJC's behavior suggests that moral and political cretinism is by no means confined to Gentiles.

The Soviet leaders are not devoid of historical memory. They know that the Christian Democratic Union is the party which reintegrated in postwar German politics tens of thousands of Nazis, big and small. They also know that when in 1941 Germany attacked the Soviet Union, many of its Jews were evacuated eastward by Stalin's government (as repulsive as it was in other respects). They also hold Kohl in contempt—on account of his weak internal position, and his servility to Reagan. The notion that Kohl could have impressed the Soviet regime with an intercession on behalf of Scharansky is preposterous. The idea of a persecuted German minority in the USSR is a political fabrication of the German right (the most anti-Semitic element in German politics.) It is not credited by the Christian Democrats' liberal coalition partner, which holds the Foreign Ministry. Looking ahead, moreover, we can say that if Scharansky persists in his interest in the condition of Arabs in Israel, he is bound sooner rather than later to be denounced in AJC's own monthly commentary (possibly as an agent of the Kremlin).

I see that I have, apparently, digressed from the theme of a general project for the future. Not at all: the very trivia of daily politics remind us of our more fundamental tasks. These are: the development of a new conception of our duties as Jews, the construction of a common politics with other Americans, and a philosophical engagement with the questions that rise from the end (real or supposed) of the conjoined ideas of a universal human community and moral enlightenment.

1. What can we now say (and do) about our Jewishness? This is a matter of moral and political reflection as well as of historical and theological knowl-

edge. What obligations do we have to other Jews, in our country and elsewhere? How should we shape our (increasingly uneasy) relationship to the state and people of Israel? Large parts of the American Jewish community live in a state of pseudo-conviction about these matters.

I term these attitudes pseudo-conviction since so much underlying (if often unacknowledged) confusion accounts for both their stridency and rigidity. Many American Jews cannot decide if the new Israel is the mid-Eastern state of that name—or their own suburban communities around Boston, Los Angeles, or New York. They cannot tell whether they are supremely secure in the United States, or menaced by countless (internal as well as external) enemies. Their attachment to Jewish moral substance has become increasingly ritualized: after all, many would be hard put to say what precisely it is. The official leaders of the Jewish community are brilliant tacticians. They are adept at playing upon the community's fears, and manipulative in their approach to the rest of American society. Their narrow conception of Jewish interests is designed for the short run, and entails dangers for the Jewish community which will become increasingly evident in the next decades.

A century ago, Jews worried about citizenship in the nations in which they lived, and about their own historical identity. Many of our intellectuals were attached to the Enlightenment and the idea of progress, which (they thought) legitimized both our separateness and our integration. Much of Zionism was an expression of adherence to the universalist vocation of Jewish thought. The founders of the movement were quite aware that a small state could not survive in a hostile world: its existence would depend upon a minimum of justice in an international order. Fascists like Jabotinsky came later, in a Jewish caricature of the hatred and irrationality of the anti-Semites. Every one of these questions is open again, rendered more painful, more desperate, by the holocaust and the existence of Israel—and further from resolution.

What is Jewishness for those of us for whom it does not mean literal observance of the Law or explicit belief in Jehovah? What does Jewish tradition mean?

"An articulate and extremely intelligent segment of the Jewish community has bent American imperial purpose to its conception of Jewish interests."

Freud once remarked that his fellow Jews often referred to him as a great Jew, but that his sole service to his people was never to have denied belonging to them. Surely, Freud was aware that there was something irreducibly Jewish in his iconoclasm, in his role as healer, in the amplification of psychoanalysis—from a psychiatric technique to a universal pedagogy. What intellectual and moral specificity can we claim, here and now?

2. The question of our Jewishness, however, is inseparable from the question of our life in the United States. An articulate and extremely intelligent segment of the Jewish community has bent American imperial purpose to its conception of Jewish interests. (I think of serious figures like Max Kampelman or Richard Perle, not of noisesome ideologues like Midge Decter or embarrassing clowns like Ben Wattenberg.) The effort, however, is fraught with contradictions—and dangers. The state of Israel claims to be trustee for the entire Jewish people. As such, it might well one day strike a military and political bargain with the USSR for the sake of Soviet Jewry. What becomes, then, of the militant anti-Sovietism of so many American Jews? The American Jewish community now lives in a state of ideological warfare with those of our fellow citizens who have a very different conception of our world role than the one embodied in the warfare-welfare state—which was an invention of the political party to which most Jews adhere, the Democratic Party. The Jewish community's skepticism about Reaganism comes less from its foreign policy than from its ineradicable substratum of Christian tribalism. (More Jews than one thinks must have heard that Presidential press conference in which Reagan declared that those of us who are not Christians are in the country on Christian sufferance.)

The United States remains a plural society and the interest of other groups in foreign policy is as legitimate as ours, whether they be Afro-Americans or Arab Americans or those millions of citizens who seek relief from the imminent threat of nuclear war. In this capacity as Chair of the Committee on Soviet Jewry, Morris Abram proposed that arms control negotiations with the USSR be suspended until his committee's demands were met by the Soviet government. Quite apart from the fact that many Soviet Jews do not wish to emigrate, Abram's proposal bespeaks arrogance and stupidity in equal measure. It is arrogant to suppose that other Americans will as a matter of course agree to Abrams' scale of values—and stupid to suppose that arms control is a gift to the Soviet Union rather than a process from which the U.S. may benefit at least as much. Moreover, Abrams' memory is very short. The Jackson-Vanik amendment, which linked arms control to Jewish emigration, had as a consequence the termination of both arms control and emigration. It may be that Abrams, like many others, prefers to have his Manichean world view confirmed—at the expense of Soviet Jewry—and is incapable of a realistic appraisal of our political possibilities. Why doesn't Abram indulge his fantasy? Imagine a Soviet government declaring that it would allow a million and a half Jews to leave, if they could all have American immigration visas. (What does Abram suppose the response of Congress and the public would be?)

These problems are derivatives of larger ones. What new common denominator, new sense of social

purpose, can we develop for American society? Advanced capitalism in its American form combines some of the worst aspects of the jungle, of the concentration of power by irresponsible elites, and of sheer parasitism. It is a sign of our general intellectual impoverishment that discussion is conducted in terms of simplifications like "the free market." The manifold problems of the destruction of nature, the quality of life, the mastery of science and technology, the diminished dignity of persons and groups, cannot even be stated (much less solved) in what are now conventional terms. American thought has been systematically degraded by the obdurate refusal of many of our thinkers to consider that the future need not be, and will not be, a linear extrapolation from the past. In our universities, despite the eagerness of many in the so-called policy disciplines to provide apologetics and techniques for the agencies of power, a vast effort of re-evaluation of our history and society continues. The New Deal was prefigured, a generation before it emerged, by the critical academics and intellectuals of the first decades of our century. We would do well to take the example.

"What new common denominator, new sense of social purpose, can we develop for American society?"

Do we have that much time? Reagan's crabbed and vengeful version of Protestantism is a menace to American democracy and to the continuation of human existence. The Reaganites (and many Democrats, let it be said) suppose that we can afford our empire, indeed that we cannot afford to do without it. It is proving, however, materially and morally too expensive —and, in the end, it may kill us, spiritually if not literally. We need then, not only a new common denominator for our fragmented and disoriented society. We require a new global politics, more generous, more peaceful, than the angry and impotent blowhardism which engulfs us.

3. I have written of our disorientation—nowhere more evident than amongst our thinkers. The crisis of the modern project is the larger context in which, alone, these issues can be phrased. Much of the discussion of post-modernity or post-history represents nothing so much as the academicization of defeat, or the systematization of confusion. The idea of progress has been so vulgarized that our ignorant President's speechwriters abuse it to identify well being with material accumulation—or, more precisely, more material accumulation for those who already by any standard have quite enough—but who fear that at any instant, they will lose everything. The original idea of progress, of course, had a moral component: humanity was to become more mature, more reflective, and more just. That the idea was a secularization of the eschatology of the Old Testament says nothing against it, and much for it: perhaps it does express a permanent demand of the human spirit.

When we speak of secularization, however, we come to a problem Jews no doubt share with Gentiles, but which is for us especially acute. Can we live as Jews without some form of messianic hope? Is not the most terrible legacy Hitler left the present condition of so many Jews—embittered and anxious survivors, with no hope in the rest of humanity, and very little in themsleves? The jeering disdain for the legacy of the Enlightenment found in the pages of *Commentary* is inexplicable, otherwise. Too many Jews have turned away from the modern project, from the Enlightenment and the idea of progress, to barricade themselves in an angry tribalism of their own—with or without a veneer of new American nationalism, itself an especially arid product of a deformed Calvinism.

Perhaps humanity is not capable of autonomy, of self-examination, of the creation of a culture in which aesthetic, moral and sensual fulfillment fuse. Perhaps critical examination of tradition has come to an end, and amidst broken idols and fallen gods, we have to admit that the Texas school censors are right: humanity cannot stand too much reality. If the modern project is indeed finished, it is difficult to see why its more literate enemies (think of the entirely willed philistinism of a Hilton Kramer) are still so threatened by it.

Must we leave the definition of tradition to mean-spirited usurpers, themselves so victimized by history that they cannot admit their common humanity, their moral nakedness, and so seek attachment by any means to whatever authorities are in sight? These votaries of tradition are, fundamentally, its enemies—since they think that human creativity has come to an end. They offer us a world of endless repetition, in which exploitation and tyranny, cruelty and humiliation, are accepted as the condition of the many, whilst the privileged few congratulate themselves on their own evident superiority. Above all, they proclaim the end of thought, the domination of spirit by the ordinary and the profane. If, however, our prophetic tradition has any meaning, it is they and not we who have abandoned the God of the Old Testament. Perhaps, in seeking to renew the modern tradition, we are the most authentic Jews of all. □

—Berlin, Easter Sunday, 1986

T. DRORAH SETEL

T. Drorah Setel is currently at work on a study guide to Jewish Feminism.

Because my identity as a Jew and as a feminist is inseparable, my vision of *tikkun olam* is one of Jewish feminist transformation. I think the relationship between Judaism and feminism is a complimentary and complex one which has a significant philosophical component in addition to the more familiar discussion of practical issues concerning the status of women. Here are some of the key elements in my thinking about Jewish feminism:

1. *Judaism is not only about Jews and feminism is not only about women.* I think that this is one of the most misunderstood elements in the discussion of the relationship between Judaism and feminism. Often feminism is perceived as a singular, if not narrow, concern with the situation of women. A more sophisticated framework emerges if feminism, like Judaism, is seen as a comprehensive world view, arising out of the experience of a specific group but addressing all of human experience.

2. *Both Judaism and feminism are diverse, not singular, perspectives and identities.* Just as there is no one definition of a "a Jew" or "Judaism," so there are varying interpretations of what it means to think or act as a feminist. The term "feminism" has its origins in a movement which sought to emphasize the stereotypically feminine qualities of women, such as nurturance, dependency, etc. For some contemporary feminists, it still retains that meaning inasmuch as they also seek to emphasize perceptions and abilities regarded as inherently female. For others it is of the utmost importance to distinguish between "femininity" and "masculinity" as something socially constructed and the biological fact of being female or male. From this perspective there is little if anything that must differ in the actions and understanding of women and men. In addition, varying experiences related to race, class, sexuality, physical ability, etc. have a deep effect on how groups or individuals perceive themselves as feminists.

3. *There is as much congruence between Judaism and feminism as there is conflict.* Once feminism is understood to be a world view, it is possible to see that the status of women is not the only way to evaluate the relationship between Judaism and feminism. That is not to say that the experience of women is irrelevant. On the contrary, it indicates that it is relevant to everything, including ideas and practices that may not seem to have anything to do with women specifically. The positive relationship between Judaism and feminism comes through shared values and visions of compassionate justice, well-being and transformation.

"The positive relationship between Judaism and feminism comes through shared values and visions of compassionate justice, well-being and transformation."

A central belief which has emerged from the development of contemporary feminist thought is the value of understanding and action grounded in a sense of relationship. Twenty years ago, this was expressed as a perception that "the personal is political," emphasizing the connections between personal experience and political structures or, more accurately, that they are not truly separate at all. More recently, feminists have begun to explore relational values as a perspective emerging specifically from female experience in this society. Concurrent with this growing appreciation of relational values has been an analysis and rejection of the dualistic, or separational, ways of thinking characteristic of patriarchy. By separational, I mean perspectives which envision experience as being made up of polarized pairs, e.g., black/white, night/day, spiritual/material, nature/culture, feminine/masculine, etc.

It is on this ground that there is the greatest conflict between Judaism and feminism. In rabbinic ("official") Jewish tradition, it is not relationship but separation that provides a system of holiness, which is to say, meaning for human experience. Dualistic separations, such as those between divinity and humanity, Israel and the nations, meat and milk, kosher and traif, circumcised men and uncircumcised men, *shabbat* and the rest of the week, female and male Jews, and so forth, lie at the heart of rabbinic Jewish practice and belief. In Hebrew, the word for "holy" (*kadosh*) actually means "separate" or "set apart."

It is, therefore, not on these grounds but on those reflected in mystical and popular tradition that Judaism and feminism meet. From these less well-known facets of Judaism emerge concepts and practices which reflect the values found in feminism. In a Jewish framework the concepts of unity (*ichud*) and *tikkun olam* correspond to feminist understandings of the significance of relationship and the belief that "the personal is political." Both world views find meaning in the nature and experience of connection and interrelationship. Both reject the notion that individual transformation can take place in the absence of social justice or that institutional change is sufficient without a change of consciousness. In addressing these processes, both systems provide important models and challenges to the other.

4. *As movements and philosophies, contemporary Judaism and feminism have many of the same "burning issues."* Given their shared values, it is not surprising that they are seeking to address similar topics and problems. Three areas I consider to be of particular interest and urgency can be characterized as those having to do with (1) power and empowerment, (2) unity and diversity, and (3) the task of integrating our values and visions into daily life. Related to these are key questions regarding the nature and sources of authority, leadership, and communal structures, as well as those of family life and sexuality.

The growing interaction between Judaism and feminism taking place in the work and the lives of Jewish feminists is a process that fills me with great excitement and hope. Despite its relative youth, the feminist movement has much to offer progressive Jews concerned with new models of power and leadership. Feminism has also done much to articulate the crucial understanding that unity is not the same as singularity: differences must be taken into account not as a diversion from the process of transformation but as an integral part of that movement. Jewish experiences of community and tradition, in turn, demand a vision that incorporates historical and spiritual perspectives, even in routine, daily activity. In relationship, Judaism and feminism are powerful agents of *tikkun olam*. □

MICHAEL WALZER

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What ought to be done to mend the world? So much (as usual) that it is hard to know where to begin. I will begin close to home, with a question that tears the Jewish world apart: what kind of a state is a Jewish state? It is a question that Israelis have to answer, of course, but the Jews of the diaspora cannot avoid joining the debate. Israel occupies a position in world Jewry even more central than post-revolutionary Russia in the radical world of the 1920s and '30s. Just as everyone then who called himself a radical had to take a stand, just as all leftist positions were worked out with reference to what was going on in "the home of the revolution," so today Jews define themselves and test the quality of their Jewishness with reference to what is going on in "the national home." It's not entirely healthy, this vicarious politics, but every effort to escape has its own pathologies. We are focused on Zion, rather as Ahad Ha-am thought we would be once a "center" was established, though this center is not only a source of inspiration; Zion for us is also a source of puzzlement and anxiety.

"Israel is more like exile: a society marked by bitter division, disagreement, struggle and hope."

What kind of a state should Israel be? The alternatives given in traditional Jewish thought are political/religious in character, and they are not very helpful: exile (statelessness) or redemption (the messianic kingdom). But Israel is not one and not the other. Many Jews think that it is more like redemption—as in that dangerous phrase, inserted in the prayerbook, "the dawn of our redemption." The thought of that dawn breeds a messianic politics that is quickly turned, in the absence of the messiah, into a politics of pretension and brutality. The truth is that, given the traditional alternatives, Israel is more like exile: a society marked by bitter division, disagreement, struggle, and hope. But clearly we need what I can't supply here: some middle terms.

There are no obvious historical parallels that we might study. This ingathering is not like the return from Babylon (except in its radical incompleteness), for then the temple was rebuilt and a unified religious community re-established. This state is not like the Hasmonean kingdom, which dealt with its internal divisions through a policy of forced conversion. Such a policy, today, would have to begin with the bulk of the Jews themselves before it ever reached to Moslems and Christians—and to which version of orthodox Judaism would it convert the Jews? Israel is irredeemably pluralist, which is to say, given the standard view of redemption, irredeemably unredeemed: trapped in a secular history that doesn't repeat itself but also doesn't move toward a definitive conclusion.

That's why Israel looks so much like the diaspora—I mean the whole diaspora, not this or that community but all of them. Short of a miracle, what else could ingathering produce? And if that's right, then it makes sense to look to and learn from the experience of the diaspora. Not only from the litany of persecution, though that is not to be forgotten; but also from our yearning for, our struggles for, co-existence, enlightenment, emancipation, tolerance, and civil liberty. Those last are not (in contrast to justice, say) traditional Jewish values; they are not the values of any religious tradition. But we, we especially, have been bred by experience to appreciate them. And if light is ever to go forth from Zion, it will have to be, in part, the reflected light of that appreciation.

Zionism made a social revolution in the Jewish people, but it did not make a political revolution. It established a

state but did not answer the question, what kind of a state? A democratic state, someone will say; its citizens decide its character. But one of the things that has to be decided is who its citizens are. And whatever that decision turns out to be, the Jews of Israel will find themselves living alongside other nations, in one state, or a federation of states, or two states, or three, and forced into some pattern of accommodation. They can't just make a Jewish state, even if they managed to agree among themselves on what that meant, but must make a state in which Jews live with non-Jews as fellow-citizens or as neighbors. The achievement of sovereignty does make a difference: it gives Israeli Jews the chance to shape the accommodation (and to protect themselves against its failure), but it gives them no chance to avoid it. So the diaspora experience is relevant, for diaspora Jews know in their bones the moral values that make accommodation possible, and we know exactly how bigotry and fanaticism make it impossible.

It is false to say that the Jewish people, from the time of Bar Kochba to the time of Ben Gurion, had no politics. We had an incomplete politics, but not one devoid of ideas. Why shouldn't a magazine like *Tikkun* seek to recover those ideas and test them against contemporary realities? The periphery has something to teach the center, namely how the center might incorporate in principle what it already incorporates in fact, the pluralism of the periphery. And that principled incorporation might help indeed to mend the Jewish world and even, in some small measure, the world itself. □

DANIEL A. LANDES

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The promise of Tikkun implies the premise of a tear and rent within reality. Jewish consciousness, a multilayered consciousness, contains five such traumas. The first is ontological. God commands "Let the earth put forth grass, herb yielding seed, and *fruit-tree* bearing fruit" (Genesis 1:11), but the earth does not (cannot) comply: "And the earth brought forth grass, herb yielding seed after its kind, and *tree* bearing fruit" (1:12). The Midrash explains that the intention of a "fruit tree" was "just as the fruit is eaten, so should the tree be edible" but not only a "tree" emerged meaning that "the fruit could be eaten but not the tree." Rav Kook understood this defeat to represent the experiential and essential disjunction between practical means and idealistic ends—even when the former successfully lead to the latter. The universe of moral action is not integrated and even the tree (means) bearing the most worthy fruit (ends) is dry, hard, and tasteless.

The second rent is the existential trauma of the Golden Calf. More than the Garden of Eden story this is the paradigm of sin and fall from stature. An entire nation, created to embody the monotheistic ethical ideal rejects its purpose through the choice of idolatry. More than sin, it is a (self) denial of essence which in the Judaic consciousness, preceeds being.

The prime national tear is the Destruction of the Temple and resulting *Galut*. The term Diaspora reflecting a scattered existence does not manifest the chief pain of Exile of being cut off from one's roots. The *Galut* by definition is unnatural—no matter how normal a life and how normative a cultural expression can be developed within a host civilization it is experienced as somehow truncated and not fully right.

The Holocaust is the tear in the divine image of the human. As a victory of absolute evil, it demonstrated that in their own unique ways the *tzelem elokim* of victims, persecuters, and bystanders could be perverted and destroyed. We now know that there are no limits to degradation imposed from without, created from within, or accepted in apathetic complicity.

The fifth and final tear has a future directionality. It is the hole which man intends to punch within the very physical fabric of reality through nuclear war. Omnicide is a quantum leap into the abyss which is daily planned for, played at and evidently accepted by all.

Each tear represents a diminuation of humankind. Each is a constant, not only in memory or in anticipation, but in action. Psychically and spiritually we undergo a constant re-enactment of these woundings, which breaks through the healing and even the scarring.

"(Tikkun) is the movement, step by backwards step, away from the brink of complete death."

Tikkun, as a process, is meant to correspond to these tears. It is the movement, step by backwards step, away from the brink of complete death. It is every action that enhances the human and thereby the divine. An act of Tikkun is a return to one's collective roots and nature and an acting in radical faith in utter rejection of all idolatries. In fine, it is inducing the practical means to parallel and embody within themselves, the lofty end to which it aspires.

Tikkun is manifested both on the macro level—the ultimate repair of the tear—and on the micro—the doing of concrete acts that lead to the ultimate repair. Tikkun has two dialectically related models: the Kabbalistic, the origin of the term and theory; and the Halakhic which contains the behavioral substance molded and defined by the Kabbalistic.

Within the Kabbalistic paradigm, performance on the micro level is essentially bypassed by the macro pro-

mise. The significance of doing concrete acts lies in their inherent and derivative transcendence which will ultimately coalesce to overwhelm and heal the whole. When one acts with Kabbalistic intent one already operates and lives within the promised repaired and perfected reality.

The Kabbalistic paradigm has a dangerous side to it. It leads to a leveling wherein all acts have equal weight for they already are within the new reality. Indeed non-rational, asocial and apolitical acts because of their removal from this (temporal) worldliness are held to have the greatest significance. Thus religious anti-Zionism preferred to bring the new reality through the continuity of symbolic actions and political quietism (the latter creating the circumstances for the former) rather than re-emerging into history. The polar opposite of quietism—political Messianic frenzy—is also a legacy of Kabbalistic Tikkun. This consists of an excited waiting and preparation for existence to make that jump into the new reality. All contemporary problematics of this world are seen as trials, not so much to be resolved but transcended (i.e. ignored) and denied real significance. This attitude provides the confidence and the imperative to do foolish acts and create dangerous public policy.

Halakhic Tikkun is the way of living within the fragments of this broken reality. In attempting to improve and knit the fragments together and thus mend the tear—one inevitably does some straddling. It is a precarious existence wherein one's efforts can fall between the cracks and disappear. Nonetheless Halakhic Tikkun is resolutely optimistic within its realistic context. It assumes that: we are commanded and able to act; that this world is a proper locus for activity; that a better reality can be created here now prior to and in anticipation of the new reality (that will come in God's own good time). An accessible model of this is *Shabbat* which allows for personal, familial and community integration within the legal structures of rest, honor and joy.

The power of Halakha lies in a three fold modality of achieving effectiveness. It emphasizes responsibility over rights; restriction over license; the creation of a personality conscious of bearing *Tzelem elokim* (God's image) and seeing this inherent dignity in others as opposed to *nomos* which is interested only in regulation; and employing covenant as the dominant model for binding and defining relations rather than contract or pact.

The strength of these categories can be seen in a brief evocation of a Halakhic social policy for poverty. Halakha sees poverty only as a diminuation of life and dignity. Society and its members therefore have a collective and individual responsibility to end it in a manner which limits potential dependency. The clear duty is to create independence through guaranteed universal employment which is real work. Conversely, the poor have a responsibility to accept employment and to work at it, or face penalties.

"Halakha (Jewish law) sees poverty as a diminution of life and dignity. Society and its members have a collective responsibility to end it in a manner which limits potential dependency."

Work itself is considered to be a covenantal act ("six days shalt thou work") parallel to the Sabbath rest ("and on the seventh day shalt be a Sabbath to the Lord your God, do not perform any manner of work"). Thus, productivity is not only an economic necessity, but a spiritual imperative and goal. Work as covenant means that both employer and employee are bound in a relationship of mutuality. An enlightened understanding of this concept would restrict adversarial relations—such as strikes—in favor of mutual decision making—e.g. union member on the board of directors—and would encourage shared profits. It would finally demand an equality between management and shop in working conditions and in benefits.

The significance of *Tikkun* (the concept and the magazine) lies in the inner connection between the people Israel and the rest of humanity. Mystically this has meant that the people Israel as the suffering separate servant who keeps faith with ultimate goals shall eventually through the performance of symbolic acts bring redemption to the world. While there is much to be said for this legacy of a millenium, it has its share of problems. We know that to be isolated is to be, in the modern era, in radical danger; the world today exists in ever increasing interconnectedness which cannot be escaped; that a self-imposed selfish isolation might actually be a rejection of the People Israel's vocation of standing as "a light unto the nations."

In truth Israelis' chosenness consists in being the bearer of the *tzelem elokim* within the human visage and the expounder of a Torah of life. Within its vocation, Israel remains the beating and vulnerable heart of humanity. All tears and rents of existence have been experienced upon its body and within its soul. And therefore, it must hold itself responsible for the *Tikkun Olam B'nalkhut Sha-dai*—an eternal and universal repair under the reign of the almighty. □

ZALMAN SCHACHTER-SHALOMI

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To insist that we continue to fix, repair, make tikkun on what is not patchable is a category error. One can't fix something that has run out of time. Biblical Judaism ran out of time at the destruction of the first temple. The patch job of the second temple could not repair it. Rabban Yohannan ben Zakkai was aware of the paradigm shift that had occurred and instead of asking Vespasian to allow us to keep it he asked for Yavneh and its wise ones.

After Auschwitz we are again in a similar situation: the time ran out for rabbinic Judaism. A contemporary Raban Yohannan ben Zakkai would ask for the Yavneh II to be convened and to bring about the designing and instituting of the Judaism that will be the vital process for us Jews and produce the vitamins needed for the health of the entire planet.

"The tikkun now called for is not a patch job on the old paradigm."

The tikkun now called for is not a patch job on the old paradigm. It calls for revisioning the parzufim, the interfaces (between the infinite EYN SOF and the finite) which we call the names of G-d, the root metaphor that will give us contemporary roles to play vis-a-vis the current demands of our lives and the eternal Presence. We need to replace the active Father—passive Child, King—Subject, Judge—Defendant with something like mutual and interactive Friend—friend, Lover—lover, Partner—partner.

This is not the task of a single individual, a patriarch or Moses as it was in the time of the biblical paradigm, nor the task of an elite Sanhedrin group as in the time of the rabbinic one. The power base has been broadened since those days.

Today this is the task of the committed aggregate of Israel, including women, including more than one or two generations. It calls for the sharing by people with transparent or at least translucent egos. It calls for sensitivities geared to the new mythic deep structures on which the next paradigm's Aggadah will be based. It calls for a compassionate understanding—and one based on the state of the art of intuiting where we are in the philogenetic growth process, a balance of right and left hemisphere thinking *and* a thorough knowing of the sources of our tradition. Most of all it calls for a vital connection in prayer and meditation communing with the living God in solitide *and* in community.

What follows is a partial list of agenda topics and indications that seem to me a useful direction.

G-d Parzufim

In the past we may not have known in a conscious way that the design of the Divine Parzuf called on us to provide the raw materials from the images of our existence. The rabbis have intuited that the "Torah speaks in the language of humans." It is our task to provide the wraps, names, root-metaphors, attributes, masks, and personalities (which Luria called the Parzufim) for the revelatory process in which the Holy One unfolds to us, so that they might (despite all the changes in details) function as process for us as they did for our ancestors.

In fact we need to work consciously to create new language to serve us instead of being victims to its natural inertia. The computer has shown us that we need to make language serve the functions we wish to run. For example:

- G-d is a verb. We have up to this time used verbs in their active and their passive forms. Our current understanding of process requires that we create an inter-active, not passive or active form of verb. I do not type on this machine, nor is the machine being typed on. The machine and I are intertyping. The flag does not wave in the wind; the wind does not wave the flag. The flag and wind are interwaving.
- The sun does not set or rise. We need to use a more precise form of language if we learned from Copernicus and Newton. Just thinking and saying that this hemisphere is turning to receive the sun makes solar power a natural conclusion. Instead of saying that the sun has gone down we would say that the earth has turned so that the sun now shines on the Russians. Think of how this would change our thinking about the planet.
- We need an androgynous pronoun that is neither feminine nor masculine and is beyond neuter. This would clean our social relations immensely.
- The Siddur, our prayer book, needs to be freed from archaic and feudal forms of relating, from its form as a book, in print, and as the result of legislation. The Siddur needs to open to the new myths that inspire us to become harmonized to the G-dding and to become a tool for assisting us to come to global telepathy. At least it must help us to davven with the significant persons in our basic reference group. It must provide not only the rubrics telling us when to say *ya'aleh weyavo* but also how to attune our consciousness to our recital. The new Siddur must give us an enlarged repertory from which to improvise the accompaniment for the melody line of our lives.
- Peace! Here is a noun that functions against its own purpose. As long as we think of "having peace," we treat peace as a product, a commodity and not as an incremental and mutual process. We have such sophistication in destroying lives and we have so little in interpeacing. Here, more than anywhere else, we need an inter-active verb and an empirical laboratory to show us how to move from adversary manipulation to interacting peaceably.
- Pillug. The polarization between orthodox and heterodox Jews has reached catastrophic proportions. We cannot even hear each other clearly. Our anxiety that someone will

coerce us away from our deepest commitments makes us shy of really hearing even the most irenic propositions. We need to apply the highest state of the art to the therapy of the Jewish family. If we manage to heal our split we may have something to share with a world in need of interpeacing.

So we need to do a Tikkun Hallashon—a healing of our tongues. It has been long in coming, all the way since Babel.

Concerning Torah in the new paradigm, we must give up the notion of legislation and take on the notion of discovering the laws of nature. We need to discover what works for us instead of legislating what *should* work for us. This calls for an empirical study of halakhah, and pilot communities to test, in all self-awareness, the norms we would adopt in our discovery of the Razon Hashem, the will of the ongoing G-dding. (Remember: interverb.)

Kashrut is in need of tikkun. We have not paid enough attention to shmirat hagguf, the protection of the body from harmful substances. We need to expand Kashrut thinking to ask such questions as "Is electricity from a nuclear reactor kosher?" Or, "Is something that is bottled in a one-way bottle more or less kosher than something bottled in a recyclable one?

"We need to work consciously to create new language to serve us instead of being victims to its natural inertia."

One of the most effective ways to interact these days with others in a way that transcends the limits of time and the limits of the space where we find ourselves is the electronic bulletin board. We need a shared and accessible data base for down and up-loading our how-to Jew-ing. The American Talmud is in the making, The *Jewish Catalog* now in three volumes is the beginning of its Mishnah. Such a shared resource may yet help us to heal the schism in our family that looms ahead on the horizon.

Israel. The tikkun needed there is immense. We are for the first time in two millennia in possession of land, our own land and we have become intoxicated by that heady feeling that blinds us to seeing our realities. In the struggle with our cousins, Israelis have not had a chance to learn from the land how she wants to be used. Repeated stints in the army not followed by a cleaning and re-direction to civilian life have given the population an increasingly martial attitude even to such aspects of life that call on other ways of coping. The minds are brittle with frustration and anger and the tone of voice in the streets reminds one of a sergeant's bark. The gentling of Israel's heart and mind is of the highest priority. I am not calling for softness when hardness is needed. I am calling for balance. It will take the aliyyah to Israel by people who think in this way. I am preparing for our family's aliyyah in order to help in this. May the infinite interG-dding assist us. □

MARIE SYRKIN

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The first time I was asked to give my views on major problems facing our society and particularly the Jews was over fifty years ago. In succeeding decades, whether in full-length articles or capsule form, I have periodically had occasion to respond to essentially the same questions. My answers from youth to old age varied little in the goals they proclaimed but they reflected increasing uncertainty as to how these goals were to be attained. This quandary I share not only with my generation but with younger contemporaries. Half a century ago I was sure that the solution for the Jewish problem was a Jewish homeland whose ideals of social justice would be held by a hoped for socialist world. In short, I was a secular socialist Zionist. I still am, though none of the three descriptive terms I have used accurately describe the present. On the contrary: the ideally conceived Jewish state has from its inception suffered not only external aggression but disruption from within; in huge areas of the globe the socialist vision has been distorted into an Orwellian nightmare; and the progress of secular enlightenment has been swamped by a fundamentalist obscurantism from which Judaism has not escaped. Yet I still believe that the revolutionary programs of my youth were not deluded rhetoric but embodied purposes on whose attainment the existence of the Jewish people and of a humane world order depend.

One escape from the recognition of failure and consequent disillusionment has been to change course and embrace contrary dogmas. Enthusiastic Trotskyites have turned into sour neoconservatives, rational secularists have seen the light in fanatical cults, and former pacifists seek salvation in belligerence. Examples of these metamorphoses abound. Liberalism, too, has undergone curious transformations. In the twenties and thirties

liberals in the United States sought equality before the law and in the economy for all citizens. Because we were liberals we fought for a merit system in the schools and in civil service, and opposed discrimination against any minority. We hailed the attainment of civil rights in the South as the climactic victory of a long struggle. Today when I uphold traditional liberal beliefs in regard to quotas or forced busing I am, of course, pigeon-holed as a reactionary. Yet despite embarrassing comparisons with some of President Reagan's pronouncements on these issues I decline to be bullied into a recantation of what I consider to be the essence of liberalism—espousal of equal rights for individuals, not competing religious or ethnic blocs.

As a Zionist, despite the stormy history of Israel, I am still convinced that the establishment of the Jewish state in a "small notch"—to use Lord Balfour's phrase—of the vast territories liberated from the Ottoman Empire was an act of absolute, not relative, historic justice. I regret that the tiny area was further truncated by successive partitions and reduced to its present dimensions by painful compromises. Nevertheless, I appreciate the intensity of Arab hostility, however ill-motivated it may appear to me, and the reality of the Arab presence on the West Bank and in Gaza. For moral and demographic reasons the position of Israel as occupier is untenable; withdrawal to recognized borders in a contest of peace, as offered by the Labor party, is a possible solution. At the same time, while rejecting the pseudo-Messianism of Gush Emunim and the militant fantasies of the extreme right in Israel, I feel just as strongly that liberal Zionists are not called upon to dilute the Zionist content of their allegiance. The assertion of vital national interests within the Jewish state is no violation of the liberal conscience.

Some Jewish liberals urge the repeal of the law of Return because of its emphasis on Jewish immigration; they deplore economic policies to encourage increased Jewish settlement in Galilee—the classic area of Jewish pioneering—as chauvinistic. Anyone acquainted with the demographic realities of Israel and who is concerned for the viability of the Jewish state understands the need for affirmative measures in Israel to protect its Jewish character. The same moral and demographic reasons that dictate withdrawal from the occupied territories impel support for the development of underpopulated Galilee to prevent its becoming a largely Arab enclave, a possibility in view of the high rate of natural increase among Israeli Arabs in comparison with the much lower one of Israeli Jews. The same argument holds good for the retention of the Law of Return. I cite these instances to underscore what I view to be the pitfalls of the mechanical application of the liberal vocabulary—"discrimination", "chauvinism". Liberalism is not a prescription for national suicide. I do not appreciate qualms about straightforward affirmations of Jewish nationalism provided the rights of minorities within the country are respected. The Left has always perversely attacked Zionism while hailing every conceivable national movement. This is an old story whose echoes can now be heard among Zionist circles.

"A genuine, not specious, moral difficulty lies in the emergence of Israel as a valiant embattled state, contrary to the Utopian dreams of its founders."

A genuine, not specious, moral difficulty lies in the emergence of Israel as a valiant embattled state, contrary to the Utopian dreams of its founders. "We wanted to be good farmers, not good soldiers," Golda Meir declared in the midst of the 1967 triumph. She voiced the grief of those who had shared the early anti-militarist, egalitarian beliefs of her generation. Here is an ongoing dilemma whose reasons require no exposition.

Perhaps the most perplexing shift in attitudes has been in regard to religion. Socialist Zionists rejected what they viewed as the outmoded superstitions of orthodoxy while embracing a passionate Jewish nationalism; clericalism was viewed as the foe of enlightened Zionism. Today I am alarmed by the power of the ultra-orthodox sector in Israel. At the same time there is no denying that immigration to Israel, once the pioneer task of secular kibbutzniks, is now largely undertaken by religious Jews who flock to Gush Emunim rather than Galilee. And there is no denying a trend toward religion among Jews as among other people. Formal religion can no longer be dismissed as a medieval relic, as we did in our emancipated youth.

In Israel even the secular kibbutzim have shown a progressive attachment to traditional observance of religious holidays and ceremonies. In the thirties I witnessed a seder in Ein Harod conducted according to a Hagadah composed by the members. Instead of the traditional questions, queries immediately relevant to the present had been substituted. Why were there rich and poor in the world? Why did the Arabs live on the hilltops while the kibbutz members dwelt contentedly in the valley? The pedagogy of the answers offered good socialist doctrine: Ein Harod practiced economic equality; comrades committed to peace and amity with their neighbors could irrigate the soil and farm without worrying about neighbors in the hills. The festival was wonderfully moving, and in retrospect, poignant. Since that time the kibbutzim have continued to create their own texts but their stress on relevance includes the past and more traditional forms. The gross village atheism of the past is out of favor.

In the Soviet Union the dramatic return to religion among many secular Jews periodically makes the headlines. The Moscow synagogue has become the rallying point for Jewish demonstrations and the risky celebration of Jewish holidays as well as the study of Hebrew and sacred texts—both proscribed—are pursued as links with the

Jewish people. Jewish identity is asserted through Judaism. Often formerly secular refuseniks become strictly orthodox upon reaching Israel. Avital Scharansky is the most celebrated example of this transformation. In what measure her husband, Anatoly or rather Natan, will follow her path, is not clear, but whatever the form of religious expression, he has made plain his need to discover the Jewish past and to feed on its spiritual tradition.

More puzzling instances of a spiritual search no longer satisfied by secular ideologies are the many conversions to Christianity by world-famous Jewish intellectuals in the Soviet Union. In 1980 Nadeshda Mandelstam, widow of the great Jewish poet, Osip Mandelstam, and herself an extraordinary writer, was buried in Moscow with the full rites of the Orthodox church. She had converted to Christianity, as had Boris Pasternak and many lesser figures among the Russian Jewish intelligentsia. In atheist Russia conversion is no opportunistic convenience. Why in their rebellion against materialism did these seekers abandon Judaism? One explanation may be their total ignorance of Judaism, its ethical precepts and its prophetic teaching. Mandelstam has testified to the "Judaic chaos" of his Russianized home. Isaac Babel, on the other hand, wrote with tenderness of his Jewish roots; possibly his traditional Jewish education influenced his development. The French Simone Weil, hailed as saint and mystic, rejected Judaism with a fierceness that verged on anti-Semitism. She had been raised in an assimilated family who did not inform her that they were Jews until she was eight. Until then, the precocious child on the basis of her reading thought that "Jew" was a synonym for "usurer." That may be why this acclaimed humanitarian was notably indifferent to Jewish suffering in the Nazi period.

These examples, as well as the attraction that exotic cults hold for many young Jews in the United States, suggest the need for a less perfunctory attitude towards Jewish education. Before they depart, Jews should at least understand what they propose to leave.

In my comments on civil rights, Israel and religion I have noted how the initial expectations of liberals, socialists and avowed secularists have been modified by the emergence of social forces not anticipated by our liberal prospectus. We must now grapple with contradictions that have made pacifists clamor for more deadly arms and secular sceptics urge a deeper study of religious teachings once stigmatized as backward. Yet these acknowledgments are not recantations. I still believe that man's best hope is an economic order based on rational equity rather than on a brute social Darwinism. I still consider the grip of fanatical orthodoxy, whether in Israel, the United States or Iran, a menace to a free society. And I still sorrow that the original Zionist dream of fruitful co-existence with the Arabs has been violated. But I have also painfully learned that not all programs for social justice are automatically just, that states attacked must be able to defend themselves, and that Jews cannot afford their current ignorance in a period when Judaism and Zionism are vilified as a rationale for a murderous anti-Semitism. To cope with the anti-Jewish threats of the present, Jews must know Jewish history and Jewish teaching. The moral conflicts I have outlined are deeply troubling. If Tikkun can provide a forum for the honest confrontation of these and other dilemmas in contemporary Jewish life it will serve a vital function. □

GORDON FELLMAN

Gordon Fellman is Chair of the Department of Sociology at Brandeis University and Co-Chair of the National Mid-East Task Force of New Jewish Agenda.

The world has compelled the Jew to embrace the nation-state and to make of it his pride and hope just at a time when there is little or no hope left in it. You cannot blame the Jews for this; you must blame the world. But Jews should at least be aware of the paradox and realize that their intense enthusiasm for 'national sovereignty' is historically belated. They did not benefit from the advantages of the nation-state in those centuries when it was a medium of mankind's advance and a great revolutionary and unifying factor in history. They have taken possession of it only after it had become a factor of disunity and social disintegration.

I hope, therefore, that, together with other nations, the Jews will ultimately become aware—or regain the awareness—of the inadequacy of the nation-state and that they will find their way back to the moral and political heritage that the genius of the Jews who have gone beyond Jewry has left us—the message of universal human emancipation.

Thus does Isaac Deutscher end his provocative essay, "The Non-Jewish Jew," based on a lecture given during Jewish Book Week to the World Jewish Congress, in February 1958.

Deutscher dwells on the contributions to universalism of people like Spinoza, Heine, Marx, Luxembourg, Trotsky, and Freud, whom he calls "those great revolutionaries of modern thought," who left the Jewish community but not the vision sustained in it, of human action toward a just society. He sees these rebels as emerging from a contradiction identified, at the cost of excommunication from the Jewish community, by Spinoza: "the contradiction between the monotheistic and universal God and the setting

in which that God appears in the Jewish religion—as a God attached to one people only..."

Some people call this contradiction a tension between ideals of social justice and narrower pleasures in nationalism, or more pointedly, a conflict between prophecy and tribalism. Our era is marked by the urgency of addressing these opposing pulls fully. The spectre of nuclear omnicide, Third World challenges to empires, the break-down of modernization—secularization—all contribute to the need to create a world-society that ends nationalist pettiness but that also meets romantic longing for the comfort, familiarity, and emotional richness of peoples' unique histories and ways of expressing themselves.

A small, desert warrior people somehow identified this combination of centripetal and centrifugal forces a long time ago, and have not let go of it since. The Jewish monotheistic insight helped spawn Christianity and Islam, universalist in conception but often grotesquely particularist in practice. It helped inspire socialism, which in varied national pseudo-forms also struggles with the contrast between national traditions, cultures, hatreds, and patriotisms and the ethics of genuine universality.

The hopes of total political emancipation for European Jews, the opportunity to move beyond the Jewish community and into the larger society, ended with the renewal of pogroms in Poland and Russia in the 1880's and with the Dreyfus case. Determined to find their way beyond persecution, some Jews then turned to Zionism, history's newest form of Jewish particularism, while others opted for socialist movements, the era's quintessential expression of prophecy. Still others hoped to realize a Jewish majority society in the Middle East and use it as a base from which to work for world socialism. While some Jews remained in the synagogue and excluded those three new historical possibilities from their consciousness, there were others who found ways to leave the Jewish community and its dilemmas altogether.

The tribal-prophetic tension takes its form today in the struggle between a Jewish nationalism scornful of the rights and feelings of Palestinians, and a prophetic notion of peace and justice encompassing both Jews and those Arabs who live among and near them. Most orthodox Jews in Israel march with a petty bourgeoisie mindless of history and contemporary political complexity, and an angry proletariat, to pursue a militant nationalism that calls only on the chauvinist tribal theme in Biblical narrative. At the same time, a tiny orthodox dove faction joins with members of peace, anti-racist, and left political groups, composed of numbers of educated Ashkenazim and a minority of workers, students, and Sephardim to honor the prophets in calling for mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestinians, the exchange of territory for peace, and opposition to Kahane's neo-fascism.

"The historical challenge today is to extend the poetry beyond the tribe without losing the pleasure of its familiarity."

In the United States, the debate on the issues that split Israelis proceeds limply, but along the same lines as it does in Israel. Most American Jewish leaders opt in public for total support of nationalist Israeli policies. With the exception of New Jewish Agenda, there is no broad-based Jewish membership group in this country, major or minor, daring enough to advocate open debate, mutual recognition, and a political solution to the troubles between Israel and the Palestinians. Socialism and socialists have never been adequately sensitive to issues of culture, historical continuity of ethnic and national groups, and the like. The yearning for the tribal, resurfacing not only among Jews in the world but among Basques, Kurds, and dozens of other peoples, is an implicit recognition that people live not by politics alone but also by the poetry and music of celebrating changes in the life cycle and the seasons, and by metaphors symbolizing creation, meaning, and purpose.

As tribals—and in certain ways Jews have never ceased being tribal—Jews have maintained an extraordinarily rich culture of worship, texts, exegesis, and celebration. The fear of losing that need not take the form of reactionary longing for archaic community. It can, alternatively, embody itself in efforts to combine the beauty of strong symbols charged with security and meaning with efforts to further the undoing of domination and exploitation in the world.

The historical challenge today is to extend the poetry beyond the tribe without losing the pleasure of its familiarity. There is so far no genuine world poetry, world music, world art, that captures peoples' grasp of the essential nature of human community and the pleasures of daily routine and deepest feelings about peoplehood.

Movements inward toward the tribe and outward toward other peoples mirror a fundamental truth in the relationship of self to self and society, as well as of a people to itself and the rest of the human community. We all began as members of the tiniest human tribe, the family, and learned to move out from it. Yet we long sometimes to return to the safety and comfort of our early years. The nationalism-prophecy conflict is a collective representation of tendencies we all experience as members of both families and society. It is among other things a metaphor for the commonest primary human struggle with processes of attachment to the family and separation from it.

As with the self, so with the Jews as a people, the attachment-separation struggle is probably never to be overcome fully, not resolved in any final way. Rather it is to be explored, investigated, anguished over, and lived out, in each place and time in its own uni-

que way. At best, the process yields a general forward movement toward attachment not only to the family and tribe, but to the whole of our species.

Our wanderings have made Jews the most cosmopolitan of peoples, and there should be no surprise if many of us treasure that cosmopolitanism and regret what appears to be dimunition of it in the renewed Jewish nation. It remains to be seen if Israel will come to represent primarily a narrow national identity, a fierce, aggressive attachment only to Jews, as Georges Friedmann predicted long ago in his provocative *The End of the Jewish People?*—or whether it will take up the prophetic challenge. The Palestinian issue offers the opportunity to renew the vigor of prophetic dreams of justice, humility, and peace.

"So far, in their encounter with Palestinians, the majority of Jews are simply replicating the idiocies of nationalism at its worst."

It also remains to be seen if Jews living outside Israel will by and large support whatever goes on there, reflexively, from some confused notion that that is the proper way to live out a Jewish commitment, or whether they too will temper their pleasure in Jewish national renewal with rededication to that other Jewish insistence, justice and peace.

So far, in their encounter with Palestinians, the majority of Jews are simply replicating the idiocies of nationalism at its worst. Beyond the recreation of the Jew as a farmer, soldier, and diplomat, beyond the inventiveness of moshav, kibbutz, and mass absorption of immigrants, lies the greatest challenge of Jewish renewal in the era of the third Jewish commonwealth: breaking through the racism and contempt common to all nationalisms. The Jewish contribution to the turn of the century/millennium can be as great as the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and prophetic contributions to human consciousness. By joining the prophetic tradition with the commitments and genius of secular Jews Deutscher celebrates, the Jews of this era can invent a way beyond nationalism into genuine internationalism. Were they to implement that invention in the Middle East, that tiny crossroads would once again emerge as the location of human struggle and triumph toward a genuine world humanity.

TIKKUN can invite people to clarify and extend this analysis. It can define and encourage the elaboration of both sides of that most sublime, delicate, and problematic tension between tribalism and world community. It can deepen and extend our appreciation of the contrast between the arrogance of divine chosenness, and the humility of embracing the prophetic mission with political, religious, and personal joy. □

MARSHALL T. MEYER

Rabbi Meyer is the spiritual leader of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun of New York City and Special Counsel to the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Previously, he lived for 25 years in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Liberals are naive and understand very little of real geo-political history. Secular or religious humanism is an old sword which has been blunted by the realia of a clearly projected modern Zoroastrian dualism: Ormuzd is represented by the Reagan Foreign Policy and Ahriman is the Russian kingdom of evil which wants to destroy the earth. The "contras" are freedom fighters and the Sandinista armies are about to invade the United States. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison really wanted to build a Christian country and install a state church as well as outlaw atheists and agnostics. We should fight against the Public School system because it is the greatest enemy of our American God-fearing nation. Jesse Helms is a democratic philosemite and is to be considered one of Israel's greatest friends. He clearly identifies himself with Israel's highest ideals. Jerry Falwell should be honorary president of the Zionist Organization of America. Fascism is not really bad because it can always see the light and convert to a genuine pluralistic democracy guaranteeing the civil rights of the minorities. (History is replete with examples to prove this thesis.) Authoritarian states have little in common with totalitarian states. There is really no danger of the nuclear annihilation of the world because nuclear warfare can be contained. The threat of no- survivors is a Communist propaganda ploy. One should never criticize a state or an institution that he/she loves because this is treason, or un-American or un-Christian or anti-Israel or anti-Semitic. This is the best of all possible worlds and if you are not willing to subscribe to this messianic message you are a pessimist and devoid of faith. Might

makes right. The ends justify the means.

Is this statement a fool's nightmare, a gross oversimplification, a farcical and heavy-handed charade of what is being taught today? Unfortunately not. This is revisionism, insanity, a convolution and warping of truth to fit the neurosis of the day. Where can one find the words of sound counsel? What manner of the ghost of McCarthyism is stalking our society today? Who is responsible for this neo-conservative monopoly of truth? Let it be clearly stated: too sharp a turn to the left leads to the Gulags. Veering to the right too sharply leads to Auschwitz.

"Many of us believe that the world is far from redeemed."

It is my hope that TIKKUN will do something to rectify the unbalanced analyses that plague the majority of our journals and newspapers today. The auto-censorship of our mass media must be challenged. All of us are not triumphalists. Not all of us are gullible fools or anti-social malcontents if we take the core ideas of Liberation Theology seriously. Many of us still believe that the world is far from redeemed. Many Christians still believe in the *parousia.* Many of us have difficulty believing the myth of the great American prosperity what with 35 million people living beneath the poverty line. Many Americans are genuinely concerned about a national debt that may take decades to pay off. Many believe that the time is ripe, indeed long overdue for some serious and authentic tikkun—repair work—in this confused, complicated, dark and cold world.

O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason.

This writer certainly has no monopoly on the truth. He believes that there does not exist one human truth, but rather truths, and at best, they are discernible in very few moments.

But we are equipped with intelligence which must be sufficiently honed to enter into creative and attentive dialogue.

If TIKKUN can serve as a vehicle of this type of communication and dialogue, then it will more than have fulfilled its role in this most delicate time and age when humankind's very survival is at stake. The enormous resources that modern minds have at their disposal should make it possible to find some new answers and more urgently to formulate in a novel way old questions and add some of the new ones to our common agenda. No one need surrender his/her particularity, his/her individualism. It seems patently clear that we shall either learn to co-exist in creative tension, or we or our children shall witness the destruction of our planet.

We must rediscover the relevant messages of our historical sources. Not everything in the past history of Judaism is either relevant or holy. Judaism was never a monolithic faith. Were many of today's Jewish fundamentalists alive at the time of the Saducean-Pharisaic controversy, they would probably have been Saducees. If it had depended upon them, the Talmud would never have been edited. Nonetheless, we must exhaust the wealth of treasures in the traditional sources, the rich variegated religious traditions, the scientific traditions, the heritage of the social sciences, of aesthetics and thus pave the way on which we must travel in our spiritual quest for meaning and relevance today.

"Not everything in the past history of Judaism is either relevant or holy."

We must be aware that unless we articulate a clear, ringing, vital message for today's world, then fewer and fewer Jews will be interested in remaining Jews. Either we have something of ultimate value to transmit to the world or we are nothing but Prof. Toynbee's fossil, a curio of atavistic religious behaviorism which merits antiquarian interest. Do we honestly believe that it is enough to survive? Why should we survive? *Letakken olam bemalchuth shaddai,* to repair a broken and bleeding world so that it can reflect a little more of God's glory and harmony.

How does one go about this task? This must be the stuff of TIKKUN. □

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Submissions should be received by Aug. 8, 1986. Send inquiries and submissions to: Harry Brod, Program for the Study of Women and Men in Society, Taper Hall 331M, Univ. of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089-4352.

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We are also interested in another kind of letter: one that you write to us not for the purpose of being printed in the magazine, but rather to tell us of your reactions to the magazine in a more general way, or to share with us some of your personal experiences. For example, we are very interested in hearing your personal experiences with the rise of the Right and neo-conservative ideology in the past six years, and how that has impacted on your personal life, your experiences in politics or the intellectual world, etc. We want to know who our readers are and what they are thinking.

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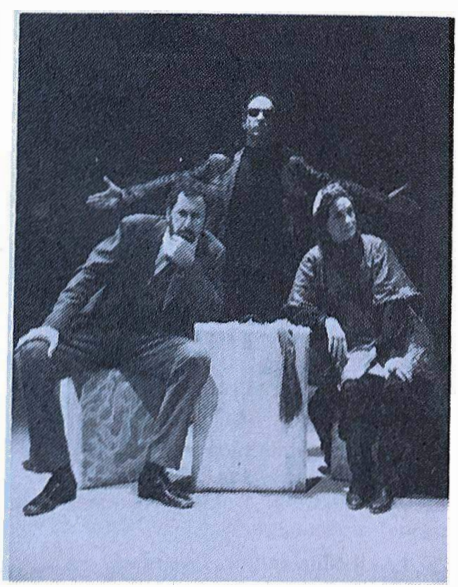
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