

(te•küin) To mend, repair and transform the world.

# TIKKUN

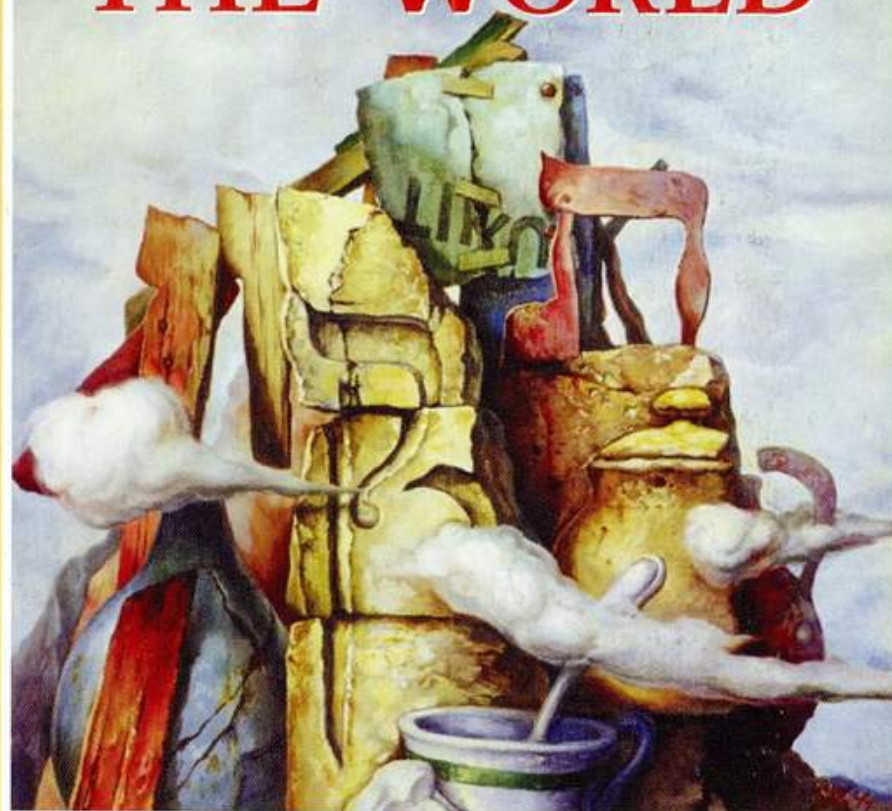
**34TH YEAR  
OF OCCUPATION**

DAVID NEWMAN,  
MICHAEL GROSS, URI AVNERY

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2001 \$5.95

**HIGH HOLIDAY  
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SUPPLEMENT**

## HEALING THE WORLD



## TIKKUN'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY

MICHAEL LERNER  
DAVID BIALE  
MARCIE HERSHMAN  
THANE ROSENBAUM  
MARGE PIERCY  
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HARVEY COX  
PEARL ABRAHAM  
ALAN SHAPIRO  
MICHAEL BADER  
JONATHAN SCHORSCH  
ZALMAN  
SCHACHTER SHALOMI

## GLOBALIZATION: THE INTRINSIC DANGER

by Jerry Mander

**PLUS:** Estelle Frankel on Atonement

Paul Wapner on the Environment

Joel Primack & Nancy Abrams on Cosmology

Danya Ruttenberg on Gay Sex



# Predawn Psalm

*ruach, ruach*, the language to say it  
*ruach, ruach*, wind, spirit, breath  
spirit of god on the deep's face  
spirit of god moved on the face  
of the deep, spirit  
moved

spirit was moving, spirit was moving  
*ruach elohim*  
the face of the deep waters moved  
first it was dark darkness was on it  
the face of the deep darkness was upon it  
then the spirit came the wind came  
the breath came and it moved

it moved, the breath came  
and it moved  
*ruach* it  
moved

\*\*\*\*\*

what did the stars do  
the stars sang for joy  
what did the hills do  
they leaped like young rams

what does the day do  
it tells the next day  
what does the night do  
whisper to the next night

what shall I do

—Alicia Ostriker

Free **HIGH HOLIDAY SUPPLEMENT** between pages 64 and 65!

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### FEATURES:

#### 9 TIKKUN's 15th

Progressive—yet also spiritual, Jewish—yet also open to criticism of Israeli policies, intellectual—yet also in touch with the psychology of everyday life: few thought TIKKUN would see its fifteenth year. Yet here we are, going strong, advocating a politics of meaning and an emancipatory spirituality in our quest for *tikkun olam*, the healing and repair of the world. To celebrate, we present TIKKUN founder and editor **Michael Lerner's** insider's view of the past fifteen years, followed by longtime Jewish book editor and current contributing editor **David Biale's** tale of how his own identity has been shaped by events in Israel (20).

#### 12 15th Anniversary Offerings

In this issue and our next, we asked TIKKUN poets for their poems, and TIKKUN authors for short pieces, each in some way connected to our project of *tikkun olam*. Please enjoy these offerings from our literary editor, **Thane Rosenbaum** (12); from authors **Floyd Skloot** (12), **Harvey Cox** (12), **Marcie Hershman** (14), **Pearl Abraham** (16), and **Rodger Kamenetz** (18); and from poets **Alan Shapiro** (49), **Carolyn Forché** and **Munir Akash** translating **Mahmoud Darwish** (70), **Marge Piercy** (76), and **Alicia Ostriker**, opposite.

#### 23 Israel

TIKKUN has become the only publication in America that gives progressive Jews space to critique the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. See why we have become the subject of controversy (and the recipient of death threats) in these pieces by **David Newman** (23), **Uri Avnery** (27), **Michael L. Gross** (31), and **Leila Abu-Saba** (42).

#### 33 GLOBALIZATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT: The Intrinsic Danger

Activists have long protested globalization and the destruction of our environment, but up until now have not had a clear way to link them. **Jerry Mander** provides the link, showing that environmental damage is intrinsic to the economic globalization model (33). **Paul Wapner** follows with a suggestion to save the environment by instituting a Sabbath of place (41).

#### 51 Judaism and Spirit

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Front Cover:  
*Tikkun*, 1999 oil painting by Samuel Bak.  
Courtesy of Pucker Gallery.



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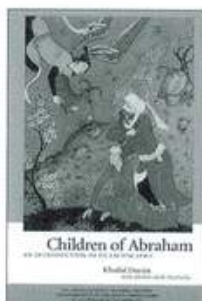


# Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

## Children of Abraham

Khalid Durán with Abdelwahab Hechiche  
KTAV, 2001

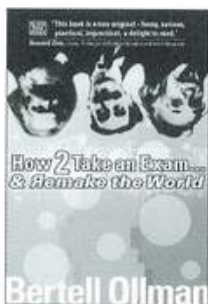
The editor of *TransIslam*, a quarterly on Islamic cultural and sociopolitical developments, has written a book meant to be an introduction to Islam for Jews, with a *hechsher* (mark of approval) from Rabbi David Hartman and Rev. Krister Stendahl. Durán's book is very balanced, and could be a powerful antidote to those who have come to equate Islam with anti-Semitism or terrorism. If we want reconciliation with the peoples of the Middle East, reading this book provides an important starting place.



## How To Take an Exam ... And Remake the World

Bertell Ollman  
Black Rose Books, 2001

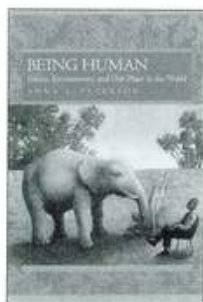
A playful, at times hilarious, use of humor to teach important ideas about the way that capitalist ideology is embedded in our entire educational structure. Along the way, Ollman describes the destructive impact of globalization in its corporate-driven form, and provides us with a non-threatening way to understand political economy. Try this as a sampler: "Conservatives like to say that a person who is not a socialist at twenty has no heart, while someone who is still a socialist at forty has no head. ... With both heart and head calling for a socialist revolution, the only anatomical reason left for opposing socialism—it would appear—is cold feet."



## Being Human Ethics, Environment, and Our Place in the World

Anna L. Peterson  
U. of California Press, 2001

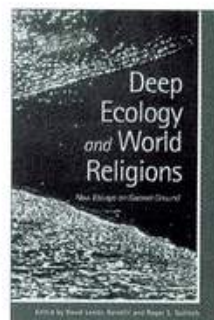
This is a brilliant and important contribution to environmental theory. We humans face a range of limits on our knowledge of the world and our ability to shape it, as well as limits on the carrying capacity of the ecosystem. Peterson emphasizes that recognizing these constraints is central and advocates an approach to nature infused with humility.



## Deep Ecology and World Religions New Essays on Sacred Ground

Edited by David Landis Barnhill and Roger S. Gottlieb  
SUNY Press, 2001

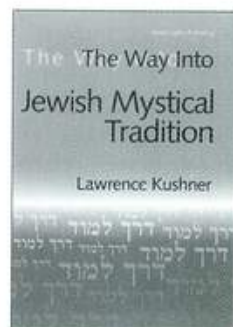
The ethical and religious attitude of valuing nature for its own sake and seeing nature as divine or spiritually vital is what this collection intends by "deep ecology." Through articles that explore Confucian, Jewish, Catholic, Buddhist, and Protestant approaches to nature, in Rosemary Ruether's article on ecofeminism and Michael Zimmerman's assessment of Ken Wilber's critique of ecological spirituality, TIKKUN's columnist Roger Gottlieb and his colleague David Barnhill put together a garden of earthly delights for those of us who wish to save the planet.



## The Way Into Jewish Mystical Tradition

Lawrence Kushner  
Jewish Lights 2001

Lawrence Kushner is one of the great contemporary teachers of Jewish mysticism. This book provides a perfect foundation for the novice who wishes to understand the traditional language and categories that have shaped Jewish thought in the past. At the same time, Kushner argues that those who would dismiss mysticism deprive themselves of two essential ingredients in religion: poetry and mystery. Our actions can have cosmic significance; there's more to reality than meets the eye.



# TIKKUN

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# Letters to the Editor

## Mideast Peace?

*[Editor's Note: Next time someone asks you, where are the peace voices in the Palestinian camp, show them this letter!]*

To the Editor:

Leading Israeli and Palestinian intellectuals and political activists met on July 25, 2001, to present a joint declaration addressing the core issues of the conflict.

## JOINT ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN DECLARATION

No to bloodshed, no to occupation.

Yes to negotiations, yes to peace.

We, the undersigned Israelis and Palestinians, are meeting in the most difficult of circumstances for both our peoples. We come together to call for an end to bloodshed, an end to Occupation, an urgent return to negotiations, and the realization of peace between our peoples. We refuse to comply with the ongoing deterioration in our situation, with the growing list of victims, the suffering, and the real possibility that we may all be drowned in a sea of mutual hostility.

We hereby raise our voices and implore all people of goodwill to return

to sanity, to rediscover compassion, humanity, and critical judgment, and to reject the unbearable ease of the descent into fear, hatred, and calls for revenge.

In spite of everything we still believe in the humanity of the other side, that we have a partner for peace and that a negotiated solution to the conflict between our peoples is possible. Mistakes have been made on all sides. The trading of accusations and pointing of fingers is not a policy and is no substitute for serious engagement.

The impression that exists in both communities that "time is on our side" is illusory. The passage of time benefits only those who do not believe in peace. The longer we wait, the more innocent blood will be spilt, the greater will be the suffering, and hope will be further eroded. We must move urgently to rebuild our partnership, to end the dehumanization of the other, and to revive the option of a just peace that holds out promise for our respective futures.

The way forward lies in international legitimacy and the implementation of

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UNSCR 242 and 338, leading to a two-State solution based on the 1967 borders, Israel and Palestine living side by side, with their respective capitals in Jerusalem. Solutions can be found to all outstanding issues that should be fair and just to both sides and should not undermine the sovereignty of the Palestinian and Israeli states as determined by their respective citizens, and embodying the aspirations to statehood of both peoples, Jewish and Palestinian. This solution should build on the progress made between November 1999 and January 2001.

The immediate need is for the full and accurate implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee, including: the cessation of violence, a total freeze on settlement activity, the implementation of outstanding agreements, and a return to negotiations. This process needs to be monitored by an objective third party.

We see it as our duty to work together, each of us in our own communities, to put a halt to the deterioration in our relations, to rebuild trust, belief and the hope for peace.

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# JEW VS. JEW

"It is hard to imagine a more exciting introduction to the state of the contemporary Jewish soul than Jew vs. Jew."  
—David Brooks, The Washington Post Book World

## THE STRUGGLE FOR THE SOUL OF AMERICAN JEWRY

WINNER OF THE NATIONAL JEWISH BOOK AWARD

**Samuel G. Freedman**



Author of *The Inheritance*

**"IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE A MORE EXCITING INTRODUCTION TO THE STATE OF THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH SOUL THAN JEW VS. JEW."**

**—David Brooks, The Washington Post Book World**

Columbia professor Samuel G. Freedman presents an eye-opening, provocative look at the escalating conflicts between religious orthodoxy and secular integration in the American Jewish community.

**"Freedman is a masterly storyteller.... The tensions that inform his dramas are universal."**

**—David Van Biema, Time**



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## LETTERS

To the Editor:

TIKKUN is right to call on Palestinians to follow a nonviolent path. Even if Palestinians could win their freedom through violent means—which is a doubtful proposition—the toll such extreme violence would take on their society would be horrific. The violence of anti-colonial struggles is generally so great that it permanently distorts and psychologically damages a society, usually leading to internal civil wars within a couple of generations. If Palestinians want to know what a successfully violent birth of a nation does to it, they have only to look across the Green Line at Israel, a culture that is soaked in violence and aggression.

Nonviolence is much more difficult. It also demands that those of us not under Occupation who are asking Palestinians to forsake violence to join their struggle and to put our reputations and bodies on the line. Otherwise we can't expect to have much credibility.

MARK LEVINE  
Irvine, CA

### Death Threats, continued

To the Editor:

I write just to say how much I appreciate TIKKUN's voice, especially as the magazine tries to hold Israel to the bare minimum of human rights standards—particularly Uri Avnery's manifesto for the peace camp in this past issue (July/August 2001) with its clear explanation of what led us to this point, and how we might chart a path back to sanity.

I am sorry that extreme, vocal members of the Jewish community consider the voice of TIKKUN treasonous. If it's any comfort, I believe that the silent majority of American Jews is coming around to the point of view that we must speak up against the Occupation and its effects or lose our heart and soul. Please keep up the fine work. The Anti-Defamation League, which refuses to protect Michael Lerner or even to speak out against threats against his life, needs to read TIKKUN.

WENDY R. LEIBOWITZ  
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

To say that you are disgusting is nothing. You are the lowest form of scum. You're [sic] crazy self-hating articles give Jewish enemies more credibility. I sin-

cerely wish you the very worst. Something like to wake up in the middle of Ramallah being lynched like those two boys. Or maybe to be blown away in one of your queer neighborhoods. Regards, hope you burn in hell for eternity.

ANONYMOUS  
Chicago, IL

*The Editor responds:*

*Many blessings to you—and may you some day come to see that others love Israel too even though they disagree with you about how to best bring Israel peace and security.*

To the Editor:

Please do not doubt that your courage in insisting on the momentarily harder but infinitely more useful truth of [Israeli] co-authorship of this mess [in the Middle East] is of inestimable value to the Jewish people and (what amounts to the same thing) to the cause of peace and justice—despite the hardship and calumny you have had to suffer and the great personal risk you run in exercising that courage. I for one have taken great pride as a Jew—a pride otherwise difficult to sustain these days—in the fierce truthfulness of your witness. And I have received from it the gift of a little more courage of my own to stand up and speak out in my own world.

When you call on Palestinians to adopt a strategy of nonviolent civil disobedience as the only strategy that has a chance of "break[ing] through to Israeli consciousness and pav[ing] the way for Israelis to respond to Palestinian needs," might you not also call for a Jewish campaign of nonviolent civil disobedience to the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, to ongoing Israeli settlement of these territories, and to the military, political, and economic repression of the Palestinian people?

TIKKUN could serve as a rallying point for at least the conceptualization of a movement of Jews committed to the active but nonviolent rehumanization of present Israeli policy. I know that the rudiments of such a movement already exist in Israel, and (from TIKKUN) that some brave and extraordinary Israeli Jews are getting arrested while formally or informally demonstrating their disagreement with government policy and

actions. But the stakes are too high for American Jews who know better to sit this one out. We need to change a lot of seemingly irreparably made-up minds, both here and in Israel—and in what, one day, will be Palestine. To do that will take a morally and politically persuasive movement of people ready to put their bodies on the line.

TIKKUN could help launch and coordinate such a movement—you are already one of its *de facto* leaders. Were such a movement to call on us tomorrow to join the struggle against the brutal and short-sighted way Israel has chosen to deal with its hardest dilemma, Jews proud of what is best in our tradition and conscious of our history and what it has taught us will come forward.

GREGG MANOFF  
Santa Fe, NM

*The Editor responds:*

*We are creating a movement capable of rising to the moral needs of this moment: the TIKKUN Community. See our website [www.tikkun.org](http://www.tikkun.org) or page 19 of this issue for details.*

### Settlers, Pro and Con

To the Editor:

There is a theory that if Israel were to abandon the "settlements" then the rights of Palestinians would be restored and a historical injustice would be ended. Additionally, many believe that such an action would be an impetus for peace.

The problem with this theory is two-fold. One, much of the Arab world considers all of Israel to be a settlement. Secondly, much of the Arab world disagrees with what Israel considers occupied territory and Israel proper. For instance, Israel has abandoned its security zone in Lebanon and is in full compliance with the UN, but Hezbollah believes the withdrawal to be incomplete and continues violent military operations on the northern border. Therefore, if the settlements were dismantled, I believe it is reasonable to assume that this action would create much larger long-term territorial conflict.

The settlements are magnets which draw a large percentage of the fighting away from Israel proper. The real issue is which settlements should be dismantled



and under what conditions should this occur. I do not think that we will see an appropriate time for many decades.

MICHAEL MELL  
New York, NY

To the Editor:

Some of your readers astound me. I am not talking about your right-wing critics. They are predictable. For them, Israel is right because Israel is ours. Simple, reflexive chauvinism. They are not sympathetic to the Palestinians just as they are never sympathetic to the powerless. I admire their consistency.

The *TIKKUN* correspondents who appall me are the liberals. These are the folks who were against the Vietnam war, marched for "no nukes," favor cutting Pentagon spending, are pro-affirmative action, etc. They are reflexive supporters of the underdog just as the Right reflexively supports the powerful. There is, however, one international conflict where they ignore the suffering of the powerless: the Mideast. In this one instance, they sympathize with torture, preventive detention, the blowing up of houses, and all the other accoutrements of a thirty-four year illegal occupation.

That is, of course, their right. They chose, in this case, to abandon their values and go with the tug of ethnicity. Like the French and German socialists who abandoned their internationalism and joined their respective armies in 1914, they will march for Israel, regardless of rights and wrongs. Fine. My point, however, is that the rest of us should call them on their hypocrisy.

Those who defend the Occupation, and the crimes committed in its name, are not liberals and not humanitarians. They are simply people for whom ethnic identity comes above all other considerations.

It is time to stop pandering to these types. If they cannot be open-minded and fair in their own backyard, they should be ignored in other areas as well. How dare one who defends the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza tell a Serb to be accepting the rights of Bosnians or Kosovars? How dare a Sharon defender lecture a defender of Latin American juntas or of repressive regimes anywhere? How dare one who tolerates this occupation talk about human rights violations anywhere?

ADAM HAAM  
from the Internet

## Why NJA Disbanded

To the Editor:

At a time when we're seeing a resurgence of progressive Jewish organizing, it's helpful to understand why previous efforts waned. The ones with which we're most familiar took place in the 1980s within the context of New Jewish Agenda (NJA). While Cherie Brown identifies in-fighting and lack of support for leadership as the causes of NJA's demise ("Lessons Learned in Organizing American Jews," *TIKKUN* July/August 2001), as former national cochair and executive director, we can attest that the reasons were far more complex.

First, it's important to recount NJA's successes. Begun in 1980 as a multi-issue progressive organization, NJA raised consciousness about nuclear disarmament, racism and anti-Semitism, lesbian and gay liberation, U.S. policy in Central America, and Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation. NJA introduced many American Jews to the Israeli peace movement and to Palestinians for the first time. It educated local Jewish communities about a two-state solution and

the need to negotiate with the PLO, during a time when uttering those words was considered heretical in some circles.

While no one has offered a definitive explanation as to why NJA closed its doors in 1992, one would have to include these factors:

1. Dual focus: NJA was created to be a Jewish voice among progressives and a progressive voice among Jews. This had strengths and weaknesses. At best, it led to strategies that were flexible and creative; at worst it led to chronic disagreements about who we intended to organize and how—perhaps the in-fighting to which Brown refers. Although some of these vigorous debates may have been unnecessary, others were about valid political differences that still exist among progressive Jews.

2. Organizational culture: While other national progressive organizations turned their attention away from the grassroots and toward the Beltway, NJA remained committed to grassroots organizing and a vision of participatory democracy. Again, this had both strengths and weaknesses. It engaged many activists who had

## Meet the Editor

\*Best way:

Spend High Holidays with Rabbi Lerner

Beyt Tikkun Synagogue, San Francisco  
(details at [www.beyttikkun.org](http://www.beyttikkun.org))

or Come Hear Him Speak:

San Francisco CA, Sept. 12

7:00 pm Lone Mountain Campus of  
University of San Francisco

San Rafael CA, Sept. 13

7:30 pm Osher Marin JCC,  
200 North San Pedro Road

Walnut Creek, CA Oct. 3

7:30 pm Unity Church, 1871 Geary Road

Corte Madera, CA Oct. 14

2:00 PM Book Passage,  
51 Tamal Vista Boulevard

San Rafael, CA Oct. 21

Bioneers Conference at the Marin Center  
([www.bioneers.org](http://www.bioneers.org))

Oxford, England Oct. 26-28

Conference on Jewish American Writing

Stamford, CT Nov. 7

7:15 pm Stamford Jewish Community  
Center, 1035 Newfield Avenue

Fairfax, VA Nov. 11

10:00 am Jewish Community Center,  
8900 Little River Turnpike

Rochester, NY Nov. 12

TBA

Boulder, CO Nov. 14

7:30 pm, Boulder Book Store,  
1107 Pearl Street

Miami, FL Nov. 15

7:30 pm Beth David Congregation,  
2625 SW 3rd Avenue

Florida Keys, FL Nov. 16-18

Prophets' Conference

Berkeley, CA Nov. 27

7:00 pm Cody's Books,  
2454 Telegraph Avenue

## LETTERS

previously been excluded from Jewish communal politics, including women, lesbians and gay men, working class Jews, and others, giving us a Jewish and political home. At the same time, NJA's organizational culture demanded a lot of members, decision making was slow, and potential supporters were alienated. NJA's organizational culture resulted in chronic underfunding, and ultimately the organization exhausted its resources.

3. Sister organizations: NJA's existence supported the development of a number of single-issue progressive organizations during the 1980s. These included American Friends of Peace Now, New Israel Fund, Jewish Fund for Justice, The Shalom Center, The Shefa Fund, *Bridges* magazine, and others. NJA's radical edge paved the way for other groups to organize a more mainstream constituency. In addition, NJA served as an informal training ground for many who became staff and leaders of these organizations. There came a point in the late 1980s when it appeared that single-issue groups were gaining steam and NJA was not needed as much. If creating a sense of possibility and an infrastructure for progressive Jewish politics is any measure, NJA was surely a victim of its own success.

Would we want to build a new organization in the likeness of New Jewish Agenda? No way! We live in a new era, one in which the challenges and opportunities facing the Jewish community, the Left, and the world are vastly different than those of the 1980s. But understanding where NJA succeeded and where it failed will help put the next wave of organizing on more solid ground.

CHRISTIE BALKA  
Philadelphia, PA  
REENA BERNARDS  
Chevy Chase, MD

### Reciprocity

To the Editor:

Thank you very much for David Abrams' piece on reciprocity and the human relationship to the natural world (TIKKUN May/June 2001). It helped deepen my understanding of why so many of our leaders appear to be not only indifferent to, but genuinely

alarmed by, proposals to allow even small bits of the world to remain wild. The new lords of Washington have put, it seemed to me, disproportionate energy into attacking Clinton's new National Monuments. Conservative columnist Thomas Sowell went so far as to compare Park Service proposals to substitute busses for cars in Yosemite Valley to fascism and communism. I don't think this can be entirely explained by the

interests of campaign contributors; the very intensity of the right-wing attack on the wild had a definite whiff of fear.

Clearly it's not the historical, existential fear of danger from wilderness—even on foot Yosemite is hardly a threatening place. What Abrams suggests, however, is that it is a deeper fear. As long as the wild exists, it retains the power, as Abrams' says the salmon may yet demonstrate, to force upon us a realization that we really aren't nearly as much in control as we think. If the wild has the power to compel us to reevaluate our relationship with the world, then all of our absolute certainties can be called into question. That is frightening, particularly for an ideology that is as committed to the hierarchies of authority as the American right.

CARL POPE

*Executive Director, The Sierra Club*

### Circumcision

To the Editor:

For a magazine whose mission includes healing the inner wounds of the Jewish people, nothing could be more relevant than the topic of circumcision in the May/June 2001 issue.

For too long we have watched in silence as mohelim cause babies pain in the living rooms of our friends and relatives. Michael Kimmel has broken our conspiracy of silence and awakened us to a new era of human rights that respects the non-negotiable right another human being has to keep all of their body intact.

David Zaslow's revisionist response to Kimmel lacks any theological basis. The fundamental question I would ask him is how could his son at age six agree to form a covenant with anyone, let alone the Divine?

On the top of our to-do list to heal the world, let's plan on speaking out to end this immoral ritual mutilation inflicted on children. Given the triumph of modern thought over ancient religious dogma, it is quite likely that the grandsons of both of these men will grow up with their bodies intact.

NORMAN L. COHEN

*Birmingham, MI*

To the Editor:

I wish I had read articles on circumcision like the ones in your May/June 2001 issue before my son was born. As a mother, over time I have come to regret that my son was circumcised at his brit milah by a mohel nearly six years ago. At the time I didn't think I could even question the ritual and I was less inclined to do so because I also believed it to be a relatively simple operation.

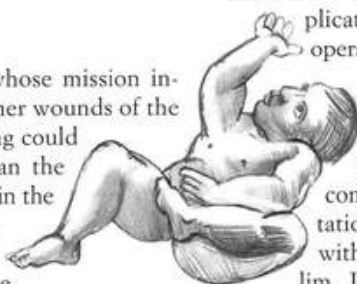
When I witnessed the ritual and the healing process first hand, I realized that the operation wasn't quite as routine as I had anticipated. My son experienced severe pain (twenty-four hours of crying), prolonged healing, and then, six months later, developed circumcision adhesions which were manually separated in the doctor's office. Although my son's pediatrician said these complications were minor, I couldn't believe I was still dealing with the circumcision six months after it had taken place. I began to ask other mothers about their experiences and discovered, to my surprise, that complications from this "simple" operation are very common.

This prompted me to do a little research into the procedure itself. I found out about really horrible complications, such as amputation, which have occurred with doctors as well as mohelim. I began to wonder how I would feel about Judaism if it were my perfectly healthy son who was severely maimed at his brit. That turned the corner for me. It is not a risk I would be willing to take again.

KAYLA HANOCCA  
*Norwalk, CT*

### CORRECTIONS

In our July/August 2001 issue, the name of our cover artist was misspelled. It is Juan Kelly. We apologize for the error.



# Israel's War Against the Palestinians

Michael Lerner

**T**he level of violence in Israel/Palestine has increased so dramatically that it is now nothing less than a war. One side has one of the most powerful armies in the Middle East; the other has a few thousand rifles, a few hundred mortars, and a population so filled with outrage that they are likely to continue to struggle no matter how uneven the odds.

In late July the mainstream media finally joined us in exposing the mythology which Israel is using to support its actions, particularly the myth that Barak made a marvelously generous offer last summer and that the Palestinians turned it down because they really wanted nothing less than the dismemberment of Israel. In a July 26 front-page report from Israel, "Quest for Mideast Peace: How and Why It Failed," and in a July 8 op-ed by Robert Malley, a former Clinton White House aide who was at Camp David, the *New York Times* exposed what really happened at Camp David—a story our sources forbade us to tell but which can now come out.

Now it is public that Barak refused to meet directly with Arafat at Camp David, and that the one time they sat together at a meal Barak spent the evening faced away talking to everyone else. This information clearly demonstrates what we have been saying all along: that Barak's offers were done in a way that made an agreement virtually impossible. Barak's arrogant "take it or leave it" stance, his insistence that Arafat accept his offer as "the final agreement, renouncing any further claims" was a guarantee of failure: how could a Palestinian leader expect to survive (much less represent the actual views of the Palestinian people) by signing an agreement that provided virtually nothing for the 3 million Palestinians still living as refugees, many in conditions worse than those faced by Jews living in DP camps after the Second World War?

Senator Charles E. Schumer (D, NY) objected to the *Times*' reporting in a letter on August 1, where he repeated the claim that Barak offered the Palestinians a state in 97 percent of the West Bank. This claim is false—not only in the percentages (Israel planned to annex 9 percent of the West Bank and offered Palestinians in exchange 3 percent of desert land in the Negev) but more importantly in the substance. What was offered was not a contiguous state,

but a set of cantons divided by Israeli settlements and roads crisscrossing Palestinian land and guarded by the Israeli army (IDF).

To understand the picture, imagine that someone takes over your house, lives there for thirty-four years running your life, and then offers to give you back 90 percent of it. Sounds generous? But then you find that the 10 percent this person wants to still control are the hallways—which means that you can't go from one room to the other without get-

ting their permission. Does this feel like a generous offer? And how about if they asked you to sign an agreement saying that you'd never raise any other issues after this—would you sign that final agreement?

No national liberation struggle would have accepted it, and the Palestinians would not either.

But that doesn't mean the Palestinians have no alternative to the current Intifada.

We have repeatedly called on the Palestinian leadership to learn from the wisdom of Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela. Palestinians should follow the path of nonviolence, doing whatever is necessary to assure people in the camp of the occupiers that they see Israelis as human beings too, that Israeli needs must also be taken seriously, and that all attacks on civilians are deplorable. This may be the only hope for Palestinians to unfreeze the hearts of the Israelis.

Instead, not only have Palestinian leaders allowed a discourse of demeaning, but they have supported attacks on Israeli civilians that only unite the entire Israeli population. And if that is not bad enough, so-called friends of the Palestinians have reraised the old "Zionism is racism" doctrine and tried to derail the UN Conference on Racism with this focus. This can only backfire: nothing unites the Israeli population more than attacks on the Jewish national liberation struggle.

Certainly, elements of Israeli policy are racist, and need to be fought—but no more so than dozens of other countries whose racist policies are at least as bad and often worse. We have seen other nationalisms oppress their minorities in systematic ways. To single out Israel is to confirm the worst Jewish paranoia: that the nations of the world will always use a double standard toward Jews because of their incessant hatred of Jews. And these attacks let Israel off the hook

*It is not anti-Semitic  
to criticize Israel's  
assault against the  
Palestinian people.*

## EDITORIAL

when instead it should be confronted on its immoral policies toward the Palestinians—and confronted in ways that would mobilize all ethically sensitive people, both Jews and non-Jews, to struggle against Israeli policies.

And struggle is what is needed. Here is what needs to happen for those of us who support peace and eventual reconciliation:

1. Demand immediate military intervention from the United Nations to separate the two sides. We must protect the Palestinian people from further assault and the Israeli people from terrorist attacks. Do not settle for “international observers” who will have no power and will merely allow the slaughter to continue as they did in Bosnia for many years.

2. Make all aid to Israel conditional on its ending the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

3. Insist that Israel develop a plan for reparations for Palestinian refugees, including some level of “return” that would be large enough to make a difference, but small enough to allow Israel to continue as a Jewish state.

4. Insist that Palestinians come forward with a detailed plan for the conditions under which they would settle the conflict—not vague pronouncements about UN resolutions.

5. Boycott the United Jewish Appeal/ Federations and other Jewish institutions that are sending aid (allegedly “humanitarian”) to West Bank settlements.

6. Use the High Holidays to insist that the Jewish people acknowledge our collective responsibility for Israel’s behavior (see Michael Gross’s essay in this issue for details on Israel’s illegal use of torture and assassination). Both sides are responsible for this mess—but Jews need to take responsibility for our crimes and acknowledge them publicly and atone for them. Make these demands in your local synagogues and Jewish institutions! Use the TIKKUN High Holiday supplement, as a guide. No matter what, do not allow yourself to be silenced even if you are the only one willing to stand up

during services and demand that these issues be addressed. Take the risk—this is no moment for silence.

7. Join the TIKKUN Community to help us organize this kind of activity internationally. Send us a tax-deductible contribution from your tax-rebate (make checks payable to TIKKUN Community, 2107 Van Ness Ave., Suite 302, San Francisco, CA 94109).

8. Come to volunteer at TIKKUN in San Francisco—or help us organize chapters in your area.

9. Please send us your email address so we can send you daily updates on Israeli actions and peace-oriented responses to them. Email your address to [magazine@tikkun.org](mailto:magazine@tikkun.org) with “subscribe me to the tikkun email list” in the subject header.

10. Reject the notion that Israel’s actions are only “a Jewish issue,” or that non-Jews (or even Jews) are legitimately suspect of anti-Semitism if they get involved in working on these issues publicly. Yes, we need to fight anti-Semitism, such as that expressed in the “Zionism is racism” equivalence. But no, you are not automatically anti-Semitic if you fight for social justice for Palestinians. Despite the death-threats we still receive from right-wing Jews, we also hear from Jews who are relieved to hear our voice and who welcome non-Jews to join the struggle. This is a struggle not just for Palestinians, but for the survival of Israel and the Jewish people.

As we read the words of Isaiah in the Yom Kippur haftorah, let us all remember the spirit of generosity that God communicated to Isaiah elsewhere: “My House shall be a House for *all* peoples.” Unless it is for all peoples, it is not God’s house.

May it happen speedily and in our days. May you and all your family and loved ones be Inscribed in the Book of Life for a Year of Health and Happiness in a world increasingly filled with love, ecological sensitivity, spiritual depth, social justice, and peace. □

The prophet Isaiah’s words were picked to read on Yom Kippur by the Rabbis two thousand years ago because they understood how easy it was for people to miss the whole point of the holiday and transform Judaism into the opposite of what God intended. This year, please use our High Holiday insert—and ask your community to dedicate part of its fasting to atonement for the Israeli treatment of Palestinians.

This is the fast that I desire: To unlock fetters of wickedness, and untie the cords of the yoke. To let the oppressed go free, to break off every yoke. It is to share your bread with the hungry, and to take the wretched poor into your home; when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to ignore the needs of your fellow human being. Then shall your light burst through like the dawn and your healing spring up quickly. —Isaiah, chapter 58

# TIKKUN's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Michael Lerner

TIKKUN has created a rather unique reality: a magazine that also functions as the spearhead of a political/spiritual/intellectual/cultural movement composed of Jews and their non-Jewish allies and committed to the healing and transformation of the world (the literal meaning of the Hebrew word "tikkun," which was popularized by the Kabbalists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries). I want to talk to you about some of the challenges we have faced, the decisions we made, our mistakes, our successes, and our current direction.

We started in 1986 and retain today a two-fold agenda:

First, the development of a liberal and progressive voice that is an alternative to those parts of the Jewish world mired in political conservatism, blind support for Israeli policies (without regard to the morality of those policies), spiritual deadness, and a mindless fascination with "making it" in the world of American economic and political power.

Second, the creation of a "politics of meaning" which would challenge liberal and progressive social change

movements to rethink their almost knee-jerk rejection or ridiculing of people's spiritual needs.

We came to these two goals through our own personal experience.

We are a new generation of Jews, mostly born after the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel, and in conditions in which Jews no longer face rampant anti-Semitism, poverty, or political powerlessness. Yet the institutions of the Jewish world remain stuck in a worldview, a set of assumptions, and a way of operating which fits better the conditions of the 1940s than the realities of the present.

Conservatism and spiritual deadness in the Jewish world have caused a huge defection from the Jewish world. I have been part of efforts to create a Jewish renewal movement—inspired in part by my teacher at the Jewish

Theological Seminary, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and by my Hassidic rebbe, Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. Our Editorial Board, composed of leaders of the Reform,



Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox world (as well as many secular Jewish leaders) included many who were happy to see a national magazine that would encourage young people to open to Jewish spirituality. Rather than simply be "cheerleaders for spirituality," we began to publish manuals in the magazine that gave specific instructions on how to turn the High Holidays into a deep spiritual experience and how to make Seder and Chanukah nights more of a spiritual experience.

But we also had a spiritual vision for the larger society. Our understanding of the limits of liberal politics came from our own work as social change activists in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. We had created the Institute for Labor and Mental Health in the 1970s as a way of doing research and providing education about the intersection between psychological and economic realities. We were particularly interested in why so many middle-income working people were moving to the Right. And what we discovered, through ten years of research and work with over ten thousand people, was a startling reality for us: that people were not only concerned about money but about meaning, that they felt their lives to be wasted because they could not connect what they did all day to any higher purpose or values in which they could believe, and that they felt that the labor movement in particular and the liberal and progressive forces in general had nothing but contempt for anything beyond money and political rights and no willingness to hear or understand their own interest in something that they best described as "spiritual."

We had attempted to discuss these issues with the labor leadership and with the leadership of social change movements, but generally we found them unresponsive, hostile, or suspicious that we ourselves must either be fuzzy thinkers or closeted right-wingers to be talking about spiritual needs. So we started *TIKKUN* in part to begin a dialogue in the liberal and progressive world about what we eventually called "a politics of meaning." We sought to challenge the common sense wisdom in the Left and in the Democratic Party and other political parties that "it's the economy, stupid."

But we were all aware of the dangers of introducing any specific religion into the political sphere. We advocated cer-

tain religious and spiritual values that are common to all spiritual traditions while supporting First Amendment concerns about institutionalizing any particular religious trip. We recognized that existing religious and spiritual communities had themselves been distorted by a long history of sexism, racism, homophobia, and assimilation into the agenda of ruling elites—so we called for a progressive and spiritual renewal of Judaism and of every other religious and spiritual community.

Although *TIKKUN* was proudly Jewish, we made it clear that our agenda

was open to non-Jews as well. Over the years we've published hundreds of non-Jewish authors, and many non-Jews have played an important role in shaping the emerging *TIKKUN* community. Nan Fink, our founding publisher, had not yet converted to Judaism at the time we began, and we've been proud to publish people like (to name a few of our writers) Daniel Berrigan, Robert Bellah, Harvey Cox, Mary Gordon, and of course, our poetry editor Carolyn Forché

and our former contributing editor Christopher Lasch. But we've also been proud of asserting our Jewish heritage, and we've been engaged in the discussion of how to best heal and transform the spiritual life of American Jews. Our magazine has printed some of the most influential articles in this respect (e.g. Arthur Green's "The Secularization of The University," Judith

Plaskow's "Standing at Sinai," Paul Mendes Flohr's "The Spiritual Legacy of Franz Rosenzweig," Arthur Waskow's "Down to Earth Judaism: Food, Sex and Money," Ari Elon's "Alma Di," Lawrence Kushner's "Facing the Unity of God," Anne Brener's "The Mourner's Path," Rachel Adler's "In Your Blood, Live: Re-visions of a Theology of Purity and Mikvah," Ellen Frankel on "Women's Torah," Mordechai Gafni on "Eros and Judaism," and David Abram's "Learning Humility from Nature" to name a few).

*TIKKUN* was the first nationally distributed Jewish magazine to use a Hebrew word as its name, and in the process, we helped to popularize a central concept of Judaism which had not been much known before we began (we even changed the spelling—you won't find it spelled with two "k"s anywhere before we began, and now almost everyone has adopted our spelling). The idea of healing and transformation (*tikkun*) is entering the American vocabulary and will, we believe, eventually become part of



the American dictionary, as frequently used as words like *turris* and *chutzpah*.

We were primarily North American Jews. We were unlike previous generations in one important respect: we experienced America not as host but as home. We felt perfectly comfortable as participants in the civil rights and anti-war demonstrations of the 1960s and 1970s, just as we've felt comfortable challenging globalization and ecological destructiveness. When other Jews warned us "not to be too public about our Jewishness" we gave little heed—because our experience of non-Jews is not that of people who are insensitive or ready to pounce at the first opportunity to "blame the Jews," but rather as people who had been chastened by the Holocaust and who were ready to be our allies. In fact, many of us found that some non-Jews in the progressive Catholic and Protestant social change organizations, in the labor movement, and in the ecological movement, had more in common with what we took to be our "Jewish values" of social justice, peace, ecological sanity and building a world of trust and sharing and generosity and respect for difference than many of the Jews who were running the Federations, synagogues, and major organizations of Jewish life.

Yet we've also stood up against anti-Semitism, from our first public demonstration protesting the Pope's ill-advised meeting with former Nazi soldier and then-Austrian Prime Minister Waldheim, to our picket of the NAACP national meeting which invited an unrepentant anti-Semitic Louis Farrakhan, to our more recent protest when the Pope remained silent at the side of the newest Syrian dictator while Assad poured out words of hate toward Jews and sought to link his anti-Israel tirade with traditional anti-Semitic tropes about the Jews killing Jesus.

Yet we were careful to distinguish anti-Semitism from legitimate critiques of Israeli policy toward Palestinians (we even published a book called *The Socialism of Fools: Anti-Semitism on the Left* which remains to this day a very relevant account of the difference between legitimate and anti-Semitic criticisms of Israel and how to tell which is which).

We opposed Yitzhak Rabin when he announced a policy of "breaking their bones" as instructions to Israeli soldiers responding to the first Palestinian Intifada in 1988. It was-

n't long before we were losing subscribers and donors who felt fine about TIKKUN making criticisms of Ronald Reagan and George Bush, but who felt we were going beyond the pale to dare to publish an editorial highlighted in March 1988 entitled, "The Occupation: Immoral and Stupid," in which we argued that Israel's long-term best interests would be served by getting out of the West Bank and

Gaza and dismantling the settlements. Many liberal labeled us "radical" for positions that they later embraced when they themselves endorsed the Oslo process and called for a Palestinian state. But that has consistently been our fate: to pioneer positions, take the flack, and later have many others join our perspective without ever acknowledging that we helped them think their way into new positions.

Perhaps we would have had an easier task had we become openly aligned with some political organization of the peace camp in Israel. But unfortunately our understanding of the world made us critical of Peace Now for its failure to address the social justice issues facing non-Western Jews (those from Arab countries, sometimes called Sephardim or Mizrahim), and for its failure to pose its critique of Israeli policy within the framework of the language of Jewish tradition and history. In that latter respect, we became closely

aligned with Netivot Shalom, the Israeli religious peace organization, and for several years TIKKUN cosponsored with them a *Beyt Midrash le Shalom*—a religious peace-oriented yeshiva at which we taught courses each summer in Jerusalem from 1986 to 1991 showing that Judaism itself has a strong foundation for those oriented toward peace.

On some questions it has been far easier. We were proud to openly champion Jewish feminism and pioneer discussions among some of the most creative Jewish feminist theologians. We were the first general-interest Jewish magazine to proudly support Jewish gays and lesbians and to critique the homophobic doctrines which prevailed in many Jewish circles in the early years of TIKKUN. Judith Plaskow became a regular columnist, powerfully exposing homophobic discourse in the Jewish world. We published a then-closeted Orthodox gay rabbi, who under the pseudonym of Ya'akov Levado described the personal agony of being gay while seeking to retain his commitment to Halachah (Jewish law) in every other respect.



# 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY Offerings

We asked some TIKKUN authors to write short pieces for us in honor of our 15th Anniversary—to write anything that, in their minds, felt connected to the healing and transformation that we address. Some of these pieces are interspersed with other pieces in this issue, some will appear in the our next issue, also celebrating this 15th! —The Editors

## Thane Rosenbaum

*Thane Rosenbaum is TIKKUN's literary editor and the author of the forthcoming novel, The Golems of Gotham.*

Long before it was culturally hip to be speaking about spiritual meaning and personal transformation, before so many spiritually alienated Americans decided to rediscover their religion or adopt new ones, before people began to rethink the values of a society that was trapped in a poisonous paradigm of cynicism and self-interest, before citizens began to recognize that the bar measuring societal values is set unacceptably low when its highest point never rises above the bottom-line, there was TIKKUN.

It is not unfair to say that fifteen years ago, TIKKUN helped start a revolution—a romantic and gracefully poetic one, even if it is still largely unfulfilled. TIKKUN helped lead the moral charge for the transformation of our society into one built upon caring and mutual connection, where progressive values were no longer surrendered to the nostalgia of 1960s idealism, where the moral consequences of professional conduct could no longer be separated from private conscience, where politics had to have meaning in personal lives, and yes, where the spirit and soul mattered, as well. Over the years, TIKKUN has provided the literary home for the Jewish renewal movement, embracing the revival in Jewish art and culture, celebrating the return to Jewish identity and particularity after so many years of cultural escapism, shame, and avoidance.

But perhaps most important of all, TIKKUN has offered us a new imperative, and perspective, on healing. We have all become more sensitized to pain, aware that it is morally necessary to look deeper than the mere superficial flesh wound. Pain lies everywhere, but nowhere is it more merciless than in a damaged soul—the curse of lying underneath in a world that has an eye only for the first impression. No society can move forward, or celebrate its riches, when the external body is the only organ deemed vital enough to monitor. The interior world is indeed more mysterious, and at times forbidding, but it tells us more about what ails society, and TIKKUN has made us all more willing to listen.

## Floyd Skloot

*Floyd Skloot is the author of The Fiddler's Trance.*

As my mother swirls through the widening labyrinth of her dementia, a miraculous transformation is taking place. Her rage, her hauteur and cruel manipulations, and all the bitter layers are leaving her. My mother at ninety is sweet, open to love, trusting. She says things I have never heard her say before: "I'm so happy." "You're such a good son." "I want to live twenty years more." Who is this woman? Is she someone who was always there, hidden away like her cache of candies, lost in the tumult like her diamond ring that reappeared beneath the sands of her Long Island beach club many years after going missing? At the end of her days, and almost overnight, my mother seems repaired, set right, in the most direct and unexpected way possible—the dark buffers gone, the core exposed, its light amazing to behold, like the essence of hope made visible.

## Harvey Cox

*Harvey Cox is professor of theology at Harvard University.*

There is just no other publication remotely resembling TIKKUN. I wish there were. We need not just one such voice, but many, voices that speak clearly from within a particular tradition but welcome comments from outsiders and courageously address issues vital to the whole community, and the whole world.

"Dayenu!" If TIKKUN only served as a creative and critical voice for the Jewish community, saying things few others will say aloud (though many think them), that would be enough.

"Dayenu!" If TIKKUN only tried to integrate spiritual, political, social, psychological and cultural categories (and even succeeded in doing so now and then) which no other publication I know of even tries to do, that would be enough.

"Dayenu!" If TIKKUN only provided the most promising Jewish presence that encourages interfaith reciprocity without sacrificing distinctiveness in an increasingly religiously pluralistic America and world, that would be enough.

"Dayenu!" If TIKKUN only provided colorful, slightly racy and always lively covers for its regular feast, that would be enough. Well maybe not quite.

"Dayenu!" If TIKKUN only supplied the most reliable, fair, and comprehensive treatment of the agonizing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, one that enables those of us who love and support Israel to express criticisms when we think her policies are mistaken and self-destructive, that would be enough.

Day, day enu. Day, day enu, day day enu. Dayenu dayenu. Mazel Tov.

Today, even sections of the Orthodox world are willing to discuss issues around feminism and homophobia—and we are proud to have been part of creating the foundation for that change in the Jewish world. We have been willing to bring every sacred cow up for scrutiny. While adamantly opposed to the Holocaust revisionists and to those who minimize the uniqueness of our experience as victims of intentional genocide, as early as 1987 we were talking about the way the Holocaust was being misused to justify Israeli immorality and American Jewish insensitivity to the oppression of others. We published Israeli philosopher Adi Ophir's groundbreaking predictions that the Jewish people were creating a new religion whose first command was "Thou shalt have no other holocaust before the Holocaust of the Jews of Europe" and who will insist: "Remember the day of the Holocaust to keep it holy." More recently, Zygmunt Bauman, in his "Holocaust Ghosts and Hereditary Victimhood" (July/August, 1998), showed how the settlers and their supporters were addicted to a discourse of suffering and isolation and determined to recreate it, thus re-experiencing Jewish paranoia even in one of the strongest military centers of the world.

In conferences that TIKKUN held in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco thousands of young Jews, many of them alienated from the Jewish establishment, came together to affirm the new kind of Jewishness that was evolving in the pages of TIKKUN: a Jewishness that took our sacred texts and spiritual practices seriously. They were determined to hear those texts and practices in ways that would illuminate their lives and enhance (rather than stand in contradiction to) their highest moral vision of a world redeemed from cruelty and domination.

This was not only a matter of creating a new politics, but a new cultural milieu. We never had the advantage that earlier generations of Jews had in creating a culture: we were not living in the ghettos of Eastern Europe or in the piping hot Jewish culture of 1940s and 1950s New York City. Our writers are spread all around the country, and our tens of thousands of readers are as likely to be in Minneapolis or Burlington or Seattle as they are in New York or Philadelphia or Chicago. Yet, slowly and surely we have man-

aged to attract to our pages and to our conferences some of the most significant creative voices, including some powerful voices from Israel as well as from the United States, Canada, and England. The names tell the story: Yehuda Amichai (z"l), Amos Oz, A.B. Yehoshua, David Grossman, Robert Pinsky, Allen Ginsberg, Marge Piercy (for many years our poetry editor), Kathryn Hellerstein,

Jyl Lynn Felman, John Hollander,

Anne Roiphe (for many years our fiction editor),

Joshua Weiner (our poetry editor), Letty Cot-

tin Pogrebin, Josh Hen-

kin, Frederick Busch, Julia

Vinograd, Seth Wolitz,

Michael Kazin (for many years our book editor),

Annie Dillard, Ruth Rosen,

Jackson Lears, Marshall Ber-

man, Carol Gilligan, Geoffrey

Hartman, Grace Paley, Alfred

Kazin, Alicia Ostriker, Richard

Zimler, Rodger Kamenetz, Judy

Chicago, Irena Klepfisz, Chana

Bloch, Francine Prose, Stephen Mitchell,

Adrienne Rich, Norman O. Brown,

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, Abbie Hoffman,

Martin Jay, Sidra Ezrahi, Arnold Eisen,

Rachel Adler, Jo Ellen Green Kaiser (who

also has served as managing editor for many years), Barbara Ehrenreich, Art Spiegelman,

Christine Stansell, Roger Friedland, Linda

Zisquit, Elliot Neaman, Leslie Epstein, David

Biale, Elliot Dorff, Enid Dame, Sharon

Salzberg, Rebecca Goldstein, Phyllis Chesler,

Tamar Frankel, and Thane Rosenbaum (our current literary

editor) to name only a few.

And we have built our community with some of the most powerful intellectuals in America and Israel: Peter Gabel (one of the founders of critical legal studies and now associate editor), David Biale (for many years our Jewish book editor), Zalman Schachter Shalomi, Ken Wilber, Arthur Green, David Korten, Michael Sandel, Jay Rosen (who for many years was our media editor), Michael Bader (a psychoanalyst who became a regular columnist), Jonathan Kozol, Riane Eisler, Paula Hyman, Elizabeth Fox Genovese, Arthur Waskow, David Saperstein (a member of our editorial board), Marla Stone, Jean Bethke Elshtain, James Hillman, Eric Yoffie, Orthodox rabbi and teacher Tsvi Blanchard, Jonathan Schorsch (our current Jewish book editor), Cherie Brown, Mark LeVine, Steven Aschheim, Susannah Heschel, Mordechai Gafni, Charles Derber, Bradley Shavit Artson, Roger Gottlieb (our spiritual books reviewer), Omer Bartov, Svi Shapiro, John



# 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY Offerings

Marcie Hershman

*Marcie Hershman is the author of Speak to Me: Grief, Love and What Endures.*

My partner and I are about to celebrate an anniversary. Fifteen years—together. In that time, we've shared such wonderful events, and we have also struggled with the grief that comes from mourning the loss of people we've loved. To honor the past and because we are hopeful about whatever comes next, we now find ourselves standing amid rubble. Yet, we planned this destruction; we sought it and courted it. In midlife, we are in the middle of a renovation of the house where we have opened our eyes, and closed them, each day and night for so long.

Two months ago, the first barriers came down. Where walls once stood, blocks of dust shimmer. We walk right through them as if they are nothing; we can breathe our walls now. The ceiling beneath which friends and family gathered with blessings is stripped to the beams. Each corner we turn toward seems strange. Shadowless. The stairs leading upward, the hallways directing us to the left or the right—all of them gone. We are stunned and exhilarated at the changes. This was the structure that sheltered us, but not much is familiar. Everything once solid has been opened. For the first time, we see the interior of the interior. What is left are the honest first poundings: the old nails, the hand-sawn boards—small details of strength, uncovered only by careful, willful destruction. These hold the secret: in them is a home.

Felstiner, Tikva Frymer-Kensky, David Gordis, Daniel Matt, Ilana Pardes, Aviezer Ravitsky, Hannan Hever, Gerald Serotta, Uri Simon, Steve Wasserman, Idith Zertal, David Newman, Uri Avnery, Rashid Khalidi, Jeremy Rifkin, Morris Dickstein, Galia Golan, Naomi Wolf, Jackson Lears, and Paul Buhle.

While much of the attention we received at first came from our critique of Israeli politics, we were simultaneously publishing a steady flow of critiques of the Left—not only of the Democratic Party but also of the many movement activists who have never understood the spiritual dimension of human needs. It was this focus that attracted some of the most powerful thinkers and activists in America, among them Bill Clinton, who wrote to me to endorse our perspective in 1988 and then drew from it throughout his campaign.

When Hillary Clinton gave her first major health care speech in Austin in 1993 she said that "what this country needs is the Politics of Meaning," and shortly thereafter she

and I were huddled in her office in the White House strategizing about how to make that real.

Though Hillary assured me that Bill was as much involved as she in enthusiasm for our ideas, she quickly backed away from the ferociously cynical assault that we both faced from the mainstream media. When the media proclaimed me "the guru of the White House" (the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal*) or "This Year's Prophet" (a five-page story about me in the *New York Times Magazine* written by someone who used the fact that we sang "Heeney Mah Tov U'Mah Na'cem"—an old Jewish folksong proclaiming how good it is for brothers and sisters to dwell in unity—as proof that we were creating a new cult), they trivialized and mocked our spiritual focus. And the media's explicit claim that I had taken over Hillary's mind (ludicrous for anyone who actually knows this smart and independent, if opportunistic, politician) was used by those in the White House who wished to pull Hillary away from the visionary politics to which she was drawn and toward a politics of compromise whose disastrous flower was her subsequent ill-conceived health care plan. Gradually, Hillary and Bill distanced, and later, for a while, pretended that there was no real connection at all.

In later years we were forced to critique the Clinton Administration. The reality is that the Clintons had never even tried the politics of meaning, but only hijacked its powerful rhetorical appeal for other purposes. The Clintons raised high hopes among many, but then actually failed to campaign for a coherent liberal/progressive vision. Republican victories followed the surge of cynicism that the Clintons themselves generated when their positive words were followed by policies that were more interested in serving the interests of the powerful than in projecting "a new bottom line of love and caring." I personally saw the Clintons as fundamentally decent people, but people who did not have the courage to fight against the overwhelming corporate power and media cynicism that they faced—and though we at TIKKUN tried to show them steps they could have taken to reverse the situation they were facing, their perception was that they were alone powerless and could count on little from a demobilized and largely passive liberal community who wanted them to do what the rest of us no longer had time to do (fight for our ideals). The upshot was a deepening despair and cynicism in the public as a whole.

That cynicism and passivity contributed to a decline in interest in politics generally, and in particular in magazines interested in healing and transforming the social/political/economic structures of American society. And as the Oslo peace accords created the impression that the Middle East was no longer a problem, and as many of the views that we pioneered in the late 1980s and early 1990s began to be accepted in many Jewish institutions, some of our readers began to think that having a specifically Jewish

progressive voice was no longer so important. Some of our writers had always disagreed with the part of our agenda that was spiritually oriented. For example, Todd Gitlin and Paul Berman—to name two of the many male intellectuals on our editorial board who always shuddered when we dared to talk about a new bottom line of love and caring and when we took inner life and spiritual needs to be as important as economic well-being—simply quit the magazine and privately critiqued what they understood to be its “soft” (dare we say, “feminine”?) character. For those more attracted to the *American Prospect* or *Dissent* the issues were not just political: they had to do with how much one took feelings, psychology, and spirituality as serious enterprises that impact on and often shape our public lives.

Other, more serious concerns were raised as well. People rightly object to any moves that would sanctify a particular religion in the public sphere, and are correct in being concerned that the religious right has used a similar spiritual and value orientation to justify their own politics. But what they neglected to notice was that the liberal insistence on keeping values and Spirit out of the public sphere had not kept them out of the public sphere—they had only succeeded in keeping their own values and their own understanding of Spirit out of the public sphere. The Right had no fear of introducing their own values, and with them they captured control of the Congress and then, in 2000, the White House. We made clear that a politics of meaning was not an open door to mushy or flaky New Age thinking nor was it a legitimation for breaking down the wall of separation rightly established in the First Amendment. As we predicted, when these issues were ignored by the progressives and liberals they became the property of more conservative voices, like that of Senator Joseph Lieberman, whose stance in favor of a greater role for religious consciousness in public discourse came close to our advocacy for spiritual values, but was then associated with pro-military and pro-corporate policies which we see as sharply at variance with the essence of the spiritual message of Judaism.

In 1996 we convened a National Summit on Ethics and Meaning. Among the presenters were John Sweeney, President of the AFL-CIO, Cornel West, Congressman Jesse

Jackson Jr., Henry Louis Gates Jr., Sister Joan Chittister, Daniel Ellsberg, Jim Hightower, Rev. James Forbes, Mordechai Liebling, Eric Yoffie, Jim Wallis, Paul Hawken, Pete Seeger, Arthur Waskow, Marianne Williamson, Sharon Welch, C.K. Williams, Alan Shapiro, Naomi Wolf, Ben Cohen, Rev. Tony Campolo, Larry Dossey, Torie Osborn, and many others. Over 1800 people attended, and the powerful

energies from it soon spilled over to a series of regional summits in Seattle, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Ann Arbor, Portland, and Los Angeles. The conferences demonstrated a strong hunger for a spiritual politics in America.

Yet what we lacked was an organizational framework to take that energy anywhere. The labor movement liked our slogans but demurred when we talked about trying to create a more humane and spiritually sensitive environment within union

locals. The major church denominations liked our talk about social justice, but (and this remains the point made against them by the fundamentalist wing of their religious world) they felt uncomfortable when we started to take spiritual issues seriously (for some of them, Spirit meant their Sunday worship, not a transformation of the other six days of the week and a serious challenge to materialism and selfishness). So we found ourselves with a grassroots excitement but no way

to fund organizers; the burden fell excessively on TIKKUN itself to remake itself as an explicitly political movement.

It didn't happen then for another reason: I got sick and after three weeks in the hospital close to death, I came to the conclusion that TIKKUN had to be my primary focus, and that building a local synagogue in San Francisco was next. I had received rabbinic ordination in 1995, and in 1996 we opened Beyt Tikkun as a house of love and prayer with a neo-Hassidic spirit, progressive politics, and an explicit commitment to TIKKUN magazine and to TIKKUN's politics of meaning. If you are ever looking for a spiritually exciting High Holy Days, Pesach, or Shabbat, come be with us in San Francisco (details at [www.beyttikkun.org](http://www.beyttikkun.org)).

Although we did not follow through by creating an organization, we did continue to advocate for our ideas—and slowly they began to have an impact on our readers and many others.

Our central idea has been that the ethos of selfishness and materialism needs to be replaced by an ethos of love and



# 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY Offerings

*Pearl Abraham*

*Pearl Abraham is the author of The Romance Reader.*

I've been thinking about the legacy of Nachman of Breslav, whose lifelong ambition to repair the world and make way for the Messiah was frustrated. After the death of his only son, in whom he'd placed all his messianic hopes, Nachman felt defeated. All his efforts had come to nothing. He'd alienated his own uncle, thereby forfeiting his inheritance, the court of his grandfather, the Baal Shem Tov. What he was left with was a minuscule following in the Hassidic world and many terrible enemies. And he and his wife were dying too, also of tuberculosis.

With no hope left, Nachman produced his thirteen tales. And he didn't do it in the privacy of his chamber, with paper and ink. He composed the tales spontaneously in front of an audience gathered to hear him speak. Disciples describe these prolonged public events, the long silences when Nachman's tremendous physical exertion became apparent, his sweating and swaying and pounding and crying, until he came to the end. After, he would see no one for several weeks.

The thirteen tales are indeed great, and as with all stories attributed to Nachman, the despair that brought them forth is a large part of the legacy. It wasn't until he relinquished all ambition that he became a writer.

caring, awe and wonder. To be specific, we have called for "A New Bottom Line" for America, to be manifested in a new way of thinking of productivity, efficiency, and rationality. At present, institutions and social practices are seen as rational, productive, or efficient when someone can point to the ways they maximize money, power, control, or ego gratification for someone. We propose that the definitions be extended so that institutions would also be judged efficient, productive, or rational to the extent that they tend to foster human beings who are loving and caring, capable of sustaining long-term committed loving relationships, able to approach their experiences with well honed ethical/spiritual/ecological consciousness, and capable of transcending a narrow utilitarianism so that they can respond to other human beings and to the universe as a whole with awe, wonder, and radical amazement at the grandeur of all that is.

To turn all this into a political agenda, we have proposed a Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which would require corporations with profits of over \$20 million a year to get a new corporate charter once every twenty years. That charter would only be granted to those which could prove a "history of social

responsibility as measured by an Ethical Impact Report." As an interim measure we have called for local communities to adopt a Social Responsibility Initiative which would require that when corporations apply for government monies they have to file such an Ethical Impact Report which would become one of the factors in awarding that money to one corporation rather than another.

Along with this, we began to call for a whole new way of being a professional—one that introduced categories of social responsibility and spiritual sensitivity into the center of our work worlds. So, in a powerful critique of Alan Dershowitz's role in helping to free O.J. Simpson, Peter Gabel argued that lawyers should have a responsibility not only to their client but to the society as a whole, so that if they are freeing someone they themselves have grounds to believe participated in a crime of violence they must take some steps to assure that their client not repeat the behavior. "Lawyers must reject their current public identity as technical rule-manipulators to their clients' ends and free of moral responsibility for their clients' conduct." Instead, the legal profession should become a calling, "a spiritual and activist pursuit aimed at healing the social alienation and ingrained distortions in human interaction that disable us from repairing our communal fabric." Gabel went on to argue for "the abolition of the adversary system as it exists today, a revamping of the evidentiary rules to include the incorporation of meaning into the public resolution of conflict rather than just rules and facts, and the rejection of the belief that money is the primary proper remedy for civil wrongs in favor of the recognition of the importance of apology and forgiveness." (These ideas are further elaborated in Gabel's book *The Bank Teller and Other Essays on the Politics of Meaning*, most of which originally appeared in TIKKUN).

The notion of a whole new approach to our professions has become one of the central spokes of the spiritual politics that we articulate. In my books *The Politics of Meaning* and more recently in *Spirit Matters: Global Healing and the Wisdom of the Soul*, I've presented a concrete set of steps for people to take, including a vision of how medicine, law, and education could be restructured, thus providing people with a way of thinking about other professions and workplaces and how they too might be based on A New Bottom Line. Yet it became clear as well that any serious social change movement in the United States would have to give as much attention to our inner lives as to our social policy and our workplaces. We've always rejected the notion that we can "first work on our inner lives and then later get to politics." For us, these have always worked hand-in-hand.

This belief has led us to once again think of constituting a national organization. In the late 1980s and early 1990s we didn't do so, because we didn't want to compete with New Jewish Agenda (which subsequently collapsed) or with

The American Jewish Congress (which subsequently moved to the right) or with People for the American Way (which briefly flirted with incorporating a spiritual focus but which could not overcome the deeply ingrained liberal cynicism about spirituality). Later we were reluctant to be seen as competing with Aleph, the Jewish renewal organization (though to date Aleph has decidedly avoided political activism or *tikkun olam* activity, and has marginalized prophetic figures like Arthur Waskow whose work in shaping the founding principles of Aleph has largely been ignored in favor of a laissez-faire spirituality more directed at the heart).

What finally made us decide to go ahead and create the TIKKUN Community as a real organization was Intifada II and the sudden forgetting by Jewish liberals of so much of what they previously had understood about the need for a genuine reconciliation with the Palestinian people, coupled with the inability of liberal political forces to even address the issue without feeling that they would be labeled anti-Semitic.

Of course, we know the dangers. I've personally received many death threats, and when a hate-oriented website also listed my home address and urged people to "drop in" on me (and they gave detailed instructions on how to drive to my house) I turned to the police for help. Eventually the website stopped publishing my address even as it escalated its hateful distortions about me and TIKKUN. The death threats keep coming.

But this is no moment to let the voices of hate and violence silence those of us who believe that reconciliation and justice are still possible in the Middle East—both for Israel and for the Palestinian people. TIKKUN has been the most prominent voice explaining why it is that the deal Barak offered—and that was rejected by the Palestinians—at Camp David in 2000 was not a great deal, and, as presented (as the nonnegotiable final offer), wasn't even a reasonable one. It is not true that the Palestinians somehow "proved" that they really wanted nothing less than to drive the Jewish people into the sea. Just go to our website at [www.tikkun.org](http://www.tikkun.org) to find some of the articles we've published which show the terrible distortions that have become matters of faith among many former peace-oriented liberals.

One thing we aim to do in the TIKKUN Community, is to provide educational materials so that our members will be

better equipped to provide rational arguments for why we need to return to a path of peace and reconciliation, and why the U.S. government must be mobilized to use its influence to get Israel to end the Occupation. But we've also decided that our organization is not just going to address Israel or Jewish issues or be only for Jews. The TIKKUN community is for Jewish progressives and for our non-Jewish allies, and its aim is to promote a whole different way of thinking about the world and about how to heal and transform it.

Part of that way is described in *Spirit Matters* and gets elaborated

in TIKKUN and in the works of many other TIKKUN writers. And part of the way is yet to be developed by those who join this attempt at conscious community. We don't see the TIKKUN community as a mass organization for everyone, but as a small group of people who share the same vision and ideals. You can find the latest draft of our founding statement on our web site at [www.tikkun.org](http://www.tikkun.org); a final version

will be published in our November issue. Our point is to have some small group of people who really agree on some fundamentals—and who then see their goal as trying to bring that TIKKUNish perspective into whatever they are doing in the world. We want to work alongside groups challenging globalization, fighting for ecological sanity, and working for queer rights; alongside Jewish

action groups like the Religious Action Center of the Reform movement, Junity, the Jewish Justice Network, Coeijl, B'Tselem, Bat Shalom, CLAL, Peace Now, New Israel Fund; and alongside the social action offices of the Catholic and Protestant world and the most progressive voices in the labor, human rights, and peace movements. What the TIKKUN community has to offer is a unique perspective—we want to create an organization of activists who want to take that perspective, which can be found in the pages of this magazine, out into the world. Of course, you can also join the TIKKUN community simply as another way to support TIKKUN magazine—a way of saying "I not only read it, I identify with it." And we hope soon to announce a national conference of the TIKKUN community, and hope you can attend.

Still the major focus of our activity at TIKKUN is in publishing the most provocative, exciting, creative, intellectually deep, ethically, and spiritually serious, and fun-to-read magazine we can.



# 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY Offerings

Rodger Kamenetz

*Rodger Kamenetz is poetry editor of the Forward.*

"If you believe you can damage, believe you can repair." This is something Rebbe Nachman says, and when I read these words in the complicated mess of my study at home, I want to believe it; there, damage means stacks of papers piled in the wrong place, books shelved on the wrong shelf, or worse, thrown face down in a pile on the couch, a shoe thrust so far under the desk I will have to get on my hands and knees to fetch it. Certainly damage here is evident, but repair is also relatively close at hand. If only I weren't so lazy, I could get down right now on my hands and knees and just barely reach that shoe, drag it out, and put it in its rightful place. How we live informs the metaphors we read, and in the trivial comforts of home, all metaphor lacks, perhaps, a certain depth.

The chaos we make is a track record of our damages, not only in our sloppy rooms but in our sloppy lives. The people we have loved, hated, taught, learned from, considered, and failed to consider all record the marks and striations of our damages, as we record theirs—together we are a record in stereo, in duplicate, triplicate, multiplicative—and if a needle could scratch music out of the damages, what kind of sound would it make in the great loudspeaker of the world? Nothing more than white noise if we are lucky and if the volume of our kindness cancels the volume of our evil intentions.

I like what Rebbe Nachman says because it gives me hope. And when things are a mess as they are and have been at every moment for the past fifteen years, hope pinches us awake. However annoying hope might be and the voices of hope might be—this belief that if you can damage you

can repair—hearing such voices is far more precious than shutting them out. The heart that shuts them out is a jail.

I am right now in Prague, land of the golem. The Jewish Quarter of Prague is a cemetery, no more Jewish than the French quarter. Any Jew who visits here and leaves undisturbed has already gone over to the other side of damage and has stone for a heart. Or else is so completely, madly, in the belief of repair that she can overlook wall after wall lined with names of the dead in blood letters or the stacks of gravestones piled ten deep in the ancient cemetery. Even here, though, there are little signs of repair. One of them is a small group of mostly younger people, Beyt Praha, who study together and do Kabbalat Shabbat—and who are a new life of Jews in old Prague. The other is the museum here, where I saw case after case full of the Jewish artifacts the Nazis collected: silver tools of circumcision, Shabbas candlesticks, Torah scrolls, Hebrew calendars, and all the priceless reminders of a life lived for centuries and snuffed out in months. The Nazis intended the collection for a museum of an exterminated race. It remains not quite that, but not quite the celebration of any future either. It is both damage and repair and neither. Except for one day, when I saw an Israeli family, mother, father, and son, gathered around one glass case in particular, in the silence of the museum filled with German and Austrian tourists. I came closer behind them and saw the case contained the text of Kol Nidre, the Yom Kippur prayer. And then, softly, they begin singing the words out loud, with a tune I had not heard before, and the museum, which had once been a synagogue, was filled for a moment with their singing, and glowed again and was a house of prayer once more.

That was a moment of repair.

There are many people who look at the past fifteen years and see that, though the magazine has been exciting and wonderful, the world is still screwed up. They point to the need to challenge the globalization of capital with all its powerful impact in legitimating a worldwide ethos of selfishness and materialism. They point to the growth of insensitivity and moral blindness in the Jewish world with regard to the Palestinian people. They point to the decline of political progressive voices in mainstream politics. And they despair.

Not us. First of all, we've seen many of our ideas become influential in the mainstream of American culture and even in popular discourse. Our politics of meaning has been absorbed by many thinkers and community leaders, and no longer seems so visionary and utopian as it did in 1993. Our

views on Judaism that were once radical are now accepted in many corners of the Jewish world, and our spiritual insights are often quoted not only in synagogues but in churches as well. The fact is that TIKKUN has established itself as a definitive voice in the American cultural landscape. Over the years we have received thousands of letters from people telling us essentially this: "I was estranged from my Judaism until I encountered the kind of Judaism you present in TIKKUN—and now I'm into it, actively involved in a synagogue or havurah or Jewish social action, and proud of my Jewishness in a way I couldn't be before TIKKUN." And wherever I go to speak on college campuses around the United States I meet people who tell me "TIKKUN is my Jewish lifeline—thanks for the incredible magazine you create."

We continue to be one of the most successful vehicles of Jewish outreach precisely because we allow the voices that get excluded from so much of the Jewish world and from so much of the liberal/progressive world to have a voice. To help us pay the bills to do this work, we count on our readers to subscribe and to make tax-deductible contributions. It's important to understand that subscribing to Tikkun is itself an act of solidarity. Many of our readers don't have time to read everything in the magazine, and still others buy it or read it on the newsstand. By subscribing, and by making an annual tax-deductible contribution to our very non-profit enterprise, you make a statement that says: "Yes, I want to be part of this venture, keep it flourishing, make it happen." Every year, often right around now, we can see and touch your support. That gives us hope. And there's a deeper reason why we remain hopeful.

We are part of the Jewish tradition of 3,200 years of struggle for *tikkun*. We have had far more impact than any of us dreamt possible when we started fifteen years ago. And we believe that we will continue to play an important role, perhaps an even more significant one, in the intellectual, cultural, spiritual, and political life of this world. But we also know that the road is long, the day is short, and that we may pass from this earth without seeing the full impact of our efforts.

Yet we also know that we are part of the Unity of All Being, and that governing all being is the Force of Healing and Transformation, YHVH, the Force that makes possible the transformation from that which is to that which ought to be. We will do our best to substitute love and caring for anger and hatred. We will do our best to stop the long chain of cruelty that gets passed from generation to generation. We will do our best to overcome our own ego fascination and obsession so that we get a better picture of the totality. And as we expand our selves and our vision of the whole, we understand that we are one little part of the total evolution of goodness and consciousness through history, and that it would be self-deceptive foolishness to think that our contribution by itself will be decisive. Yet it would be equally foolish to underplay the importance of the specific historical tasks that face us. The planet is faced with ecological destruction on a level that will rival the most cataclysmic fears of atomic warfare. Our actions will make an important difference in whether we can stop this craziness and replace the globalization of selfishness with the globalization of love and caring.

The larger task of healing and transforming our world will require changes that go far beyond what can be accomplished in a single generation. The task of Tikkun is to bear witness to that possibility, and to be a home for all of us who have not given up and who still dare to hope. □

On the occasion of our fifteenth anniversary, you are invited to become a Founding Member of

## The TIKKUN Community

We've finally decided to face it—TIKKUN is more than a magazine. We are a movement of people (both Jews and non-Jews) with a very distinctive and original perspective on how to bring healing and transformation to the world.

So why not recognize that fact, and have a mechanism for those who more actively support and promote the Tikkun perspective to work together?

As members of the Tikkun community we will dedicate ourselves to promoting a core set of ideas that we've presented here and in works by Tikkun authors like Michael Lerner (*Spirit Matters: Global Healing and the Wisdom of the Soul* and *The Politics of Meaning*), Peter Gabel (*The Bank Teller and Other Essays on the Politics of Meaning*), and many others. Advisory board members include Rabbi Douglas Sagal, Carolyn Forché, Thom Hartmann, Elizabeth Lesser, Susannah Heschel, Ken Wilber, and Cherie Brown.

We also invite people to join who are not activists. Keeping the magazine alive is itself an important contribution—an act of solidarity that we appreciate.

Some people say that they don't want to subscribe to a magazine but they agree with our principles. Here is a beautiful way to back up your ideals with your commitment. Join the Tikkun Community and support this voice!

### I want part of my membership to be applied to:

- ☐ My new subscription to Tikkun
- ☐ My subscription renewal
- ☐ I want the whole of my contribution to go to the Tikkun Community.

### Sign Me Up!

- ☐ Students and incomes under \$40k: \$40
- ☐ Incomes \$40k-\$80k: \$80
- ☐ Incomes above \$80k: \$120
- ☐ Tikkun Associate: Bill me \$25/month for one year
- ☐ Founding Member: \$500
- ☐ World Transformer: \$1,000 or more

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I want to receive daily email updates from Tikkun! ☐ yes ☐ no

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Send this coupon and your check to Tikkun Community,  
2107 Van Ness Ave, Suite 302, San Francisco, CA, 94109.

# Bound to Israel

David Biale

One of the singular virtues of TIKKUN magazine over the last fifteen years is the way it has combined an engagement with American politics, culture, and spirituality with an equal engagement with the same issues in the Jewish world. Equally unique has been its effort to engage an American readership in Israeli politics, culture, and religion. The interaction of these three spheres in the pages of the magazine reflects a particular generation of American Jews whose Jewish commitments are to be found at once in America and in Israel. Perhaps the first generation of American Jews to feel completely at home in America, many writers and readers of TIKKUN feel inextricably bound to what is happening in Israel as well. Indeed, for many of us, experiences in Israel were foundational for our Jewish identities, even as we chose to create Jewish lives in America. Israel is not a distant country, but a very part of our being.

Yet, those of us who count ourselves as part of this cohort face an extraordinary crisis—not only of politics, but even of identity—as a result of the breakdown of the Oslo peace process and the prospect of endless tribal warfare between Jews and Palestinians. The last fifteen years since TIKKUN was established have witnessed the first Intifada, Oslo, and Oslo's collapse. For seven years we were voices in the wilderness, vilified by the American Jewish establishment and the Israeli government for our desire to create a genuine dialogue with the Palestinians and for our advocacy of a Palestinian state. Then suddenly in 1993, it seemed as if “the rock scorned by the builders had been turned into the cornerstone”—our lonely point of view became the will of history. And now it is as if the wheel has turned all the way back to where we first began fifteen years ago.

I want to wrestle here with this crisis, not so much to offer some kind of ideological cure, but rather to pose a large historical question from my own subjective point of view: how should we evaluate, in light of the present situation, the two great, simultaneous Jewish migrations out of Europe of the last century—to America and to Palestine? I write as someone whose very Jewish identity is not only unimaginable without Zionism and Israel, but, in a sense, whose very life is dependent on them. Had my own father

not joined the Zionist youth movement in Poland, he would probably not have escaped the Holocaust. My wife Rachel, born and raised in Israel, owes her life to the same ideology: her parents, members of a Zionist movement in Czechoslovakia, saved their own lives by fleeing for Palestine after the outbreak of World War II.

My own childhood encounter with Israel—for a year at age ten—laid the groundwork for my Jewish identity, especially my desire to learn modern Hebrew and immerse myself in Israeli culture, perhaps Zionism's two most enduring and least controversial accomplishments. When I lived in Israel as a child, it was 1958 and the country was minuscule, spartan, and socialist, or so it seemed. As the popular saying had it: “*klein aber mein*” (“small but mine”). The Lod airport was a squat, tiny building, much like one sees today in the Third World. When we landed, people were gathered on the roof, waving and cheering. Young as I was, I felt as if I had come home. It was the best year of my childhood.

I returned eleven years later, two years after the Six Day War. Like most American Jews, I had felt the incredible surge of pride in that victory. Now a college student intent on speaking Hebrew to everyone I saw, I found a country in a euphoria that swept me up as well. I took part in the annual Jerusalem March—three days of hiking through the West Bank under the aegis of the Israeli Army, culminating in a triumphant entry into Jerusalem. We passed through numerous Palestinian villages whose residents watched us impassively and we imagined in our naiveté that they welcomed us. Such was the arrogance of the early years of the Occupation—the illusion that it *wasn't* an occupation.

As I spent nearly three-quarters of a year on two visits during that period, I began to see matters through different eyes. I took part in one of the first demonstrations against the Occupation, in the spring of 1970, organized by a now-forgotten precursor to Peace Now, the “Israeli New Left” (Siah). Already something of a veteran of Berkeley demonstrations (including People's Park), I was shocked by the violence with which the right-wingers of Betar attacked our puny numbers. On my return to Berkeley, I joined the Radical Jewish Union, a group committed to defending Zionism as the “national liberation movement of the Jewish people” (those were still the years of the Vietnam War) against the anti-Zionist New Left, but equally opposed to the Occupation. Our newspaper, *The Jewish Radical*,

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already called for a Palestinian state in 1970! At the same time, we rejected the sterility of what passed for American Jewish culture in those days and searched for our own forms of Jewish cultural and spiritual renewal.

I recount this personal history in part because of what became of this group: perhaps half ended up living in Israel and half in America, but both halves remain deeply committed thirty years later to the same ideals. On one level, then, this essay is about the need to think beyond the America-Israel dichotomy. On another, though, it is an inescapable fact that the life choices we have made have led to very different realities: as the sons and daughters of our old-time friends and comrades in Israel are preparing for or serving in the army, my son has finished his first year of college. Different rites of passage. Yet, we and our children belong to the same global and Jewish culture and, had Oslo succeeded, our separate paths would have increasingly converged.

Perhaps less than a year of Intifada II is too short a time to be overwhelmed by pessimism, but it is hard not to think apocalyptically. The Israeli and Palestinian narratives are so far apart that few indeed are the voices trying to reconcile them. As in Northern Ireland—another place where a seemingly endless conflict reached a resolution only to relapse once again—the cycle of violence and retaliation in Israel/Palestine seems doomed to repeat for at least another generation. Today's bitter reality is rich with ironies. This summer, the Conservative Movement in America, which sponsors youth seminars in Israel, offered an alternative trip to Poland and the Czech Republic. That Jews might feel safer in Poland (!) than in the Jewish state raises an ineluctable challenge to the promise of Zionism. Where else in the world are Jews more hated and more in danger as Jews than in their own state? The cafés of Tel Aviv may still be full, but only a few miles away the Israeli Army is engaged in a full-scale siege of a civilian population in revolt against its rule. Where is life less "normal"—the byword of political Zionism—for Jews than in Israel?

I point out all these obvious facts not in smug satisfaction as someone who has chosen America over Israel, but in despair. We all wanted to believe that a rapprochement between Arab and Jew might be possible and that a kind of equality might be achieved once the Palestinians had their own state. But regardless of who was and is to blame for the failure of peace (and I am deliberately avoiding this complex subject here), a larger historical possibility looms: perhaps the very attempt to found a modern state of Jewish immigrants, led by European Jews, had no chance of achieving acceptance by the "native" population in the



Third World (quite apart from the religious question of Jews seizing sovereignty in the "sphere of Islam"). I know all the arguments that Zionism was not a classic colonial movement, but these arguments have worn thin: all one has to do is look at the settlements in the territories and contrast them with the neighboring Palestinian villages to see colonialism in action. At the same time, the "post-Zionist" position looks equally implausible. Does anyone genuinely believe that a binational or pluralistic state with real equality between Jews and Palestinians is anything but utopian? Perhaps in a century, but hardly at the present moment.

Zionism arose one hundred years ago in Europe when liberal nationalism still seemed a possibility—a nationalism, that is, that might be based on a particular ethnic group but that need not exclude others. The history of the intervening century has not been propitious for such an ideology. It took two world wars to purge tribal nationalism from Central Europe, but its demons continue to haunt the Balkans and other regions of the former Communist world. Israel's Declaration of Independence, which proclaims a Jewish state while at the same time guaranteeing full rights to all its citizens, was an attempt to formulate a doctrine of liberal Jewish nationalism. But the Middle East provides, if anything, even less promising soil than Europe for such a doctrine. The contradictions in that Declaration remain apparent in terms of Israel's Arab citizens, but even more fatal to liberal Zionism have been thirty-four years of Occupation.

Let me hasten to emphasize that the failure of liberal Zionism is not a failure for which it is entirely to blame. Nor does its failure negate the historical necessity and legitimacy of a Jewish state: one would have to be deaf to the history of the Jews in the twentieth century to deny the Jewish right to self-determination and sovereign power. But at this moment, it is hard to see how Israel can shake off its own form of tribal nationalism and realize the promise of pluralism and equality for Jews as well as Palestinians within its borders. Whatever progressive voices that may be left in

Israel notwithstanding, the future of Israeli liberalism looks bleak indeed. And that opens a deeply troubling question, already raised by many of our friends in Israel: where is the red line beyond which we can no longer support Israel under its present regime? Are the wholesale violations of international law in the territories, including collective punishments, ghettoization of villages, and destruction of homes and orchards, already across that line?

Those Jews who chose America over Palestine in the great migration a century ago opted, consciously or not, for a more pluralistic nationalism. They were perhaps not as ideologically driven as the Zionists (although it is important to emphasize that many who found refuge in Israel were also not ideological). Yet, America possessed a definite, if different, ideological allure for the Jews—the *goldene medina*, whose streets were not only paved with financial gold, but also with a kind of political, cultural, and religious freedom Jews had rarely found elsewhere. Unlike France, whose Republican ideals also functioned as an ideological magnet, America possessed the capacity to absorb immigrants without forcing them to abandon their identities. This capacity was not necessarily part of the original American compact. Forces of homogenization, assimilation, and even anti-Semitism have been strong throughout American history and have certainly not disappeared today.

But Jews themselves played a central role during the twentieth century in changing America's self-identity into one of ethnic pluralism in which a minority like the Jews might feel itself at once distinctive but also part of a multicultural majority. The fruits of that transformation have become increasingly ripe over the last several decades as Jewish life in America has undergone a cultural and spiritual renaissance. This renaissance has occurred precisely at a time when one might have expected the opposite, since it is not the result of exclusion from the larger society, but of unprecedented inclusion. Never have Jews been so mainstream in America (and perhaps in any other country of Diaspora) as today. Never have levels of anti-Semitism been so low, sporadic hate crimes notwithstanding. But as opposed to the post-World War II period of integration, when most Jews believed that acceptance required self-effacement, today—when it is entirely imaginable that an Orthodox Jew could become president—there does not appear to be such a thing as “too Jewish.”

It is perhaps a measure of the persistent Jewish ideological commitment to American pluralism that American Jews remain, for the most part and against all expectations, so politically progressive. Social justice remains at the heart of how the majority of American Jews define their Judaism, whether or not that ideal is grounded in the historical Jewish tradition. And it is because of that ideal that so many Jews find such a contradiction between who they are in America and the Israel that they are called upon to defend: liberal pluralism versus increasing tribal nationalism.

I do not intend, however, to romanticize either America or Jewish culture in America, just as I have no wish to be understood as ideologically anti-Zionist. America itself is still far from realizing fully its ideals of egalitarianism and pluralism. Not all Jews are committed to Jewish pluralism and a progressive vision of America: tribal nationalism flourishes here too. The American ethos of individual self-fulfillment through materialism threatens the effort to retain a sense of Jewish community based on spiritual and ethical values (just look at how the established community chooses its titular leaders!). Assimilation—the inevitable price of living in an open society—is rampant, and the level of Jewish knowledge among even committed Jews is scandalously low. For secular Jews like myself committed to a cultural Jewishness, the challenges in America are greater than in Israel, where a secular Hebrew culture clearly flourishes and where the nascent interest in Jewish sources among some secular Israelis has the advantage of direct linguistic access. On the other hand, the very lack of a state-sponsored Orthodox Judaism may be a better guarantee of a pluralistic Jewish renaissance—from the spirituality of the Jewish Renewal Movement, to experimental Orthodoxy, to Conservative and Reform, as well as non-religious, cultural forms of Jewishness.

How then to answer the historical question I posed earlier? There is no simple answer. On the contrary, the old debates between triumphalist Jewish nationalism and cosmopolitan diasporism need to be entirely reframed. Both of these ideologies have betrayed their promises. At one time, I believed that one could only make Jewish history in a Jewish state. Later, I came to understand that Jewish history is made wherever there are Jews, although a part of me still felt that those friends and relatives who had chosen Israel were closest to the center of Jewish creativity. But I now wonder whether those of us who chose America have not intuited that a multicultural nation is the better place to create a healthy and pluralistic Jewish life. Perhaps Israel will also become such a nation in the future, but that future looks distant indeed.

And so, a bittersweet fifteenth anniversary for TIKKUN magazine and the vision that it has created for its community of readers. But we should not, I think, succumb to pessimism. We need to renew our efforts to create a vibrant Jewish life in this country, whether based on social activism, spiritual practice, textual study—or, better, a combination of all of these. We need to better integrate our Jewish consciousness into an active engagement with the pressing issues of American society. At the same time—and as opposed to those who celebrate only Diaspora—we cannot turn our backs on Israel. We need to continue our vigorous support for our brothers and sisters in Israel who, against enormous odds, are fighting against the Occupation and for a truly Jewish state based on principles of justice, equality, and human rights. □



ISRAEL

# Needed Urgently: A New Peace Movement

David Newman

It's even more painful than ever to go to the synagogue in Israel these days. If, in the past, the right-wing community would look at you with some sort of mistaken sympathy because of your left-wing pro-peace sentiments, today you can feel the hatred in their eyes. You, they seem to be saying, are guilty for the latest terrorist outrage, for the baby of ten months killed by a sniper bullet, for the death of a father of six young children. You, they tell you in their politically laden and emotive sermons, are responsible for the killing and violence which has erupted with even greater force and ferocity than ever in the past and which seems to have sent us light years back, to a pre-Oslo era, an era in which we feel threatened on our streets, in which we no longer feel in control of anything, an era in which we are no longer even sure of our independence and our ability to last the conflict out. You, they tell me, are the reason for our present weakness. You, they shout at me, are the reason that we have failed to fulfill our true goal in life—the extension of exclusive Jewish rule over the whole of the Land of Israel, where “others” amongst us take on their role

as hewers of wood and drawers of water or, even better still, mysteriously disappear overnight to the neighboring countries of their sisters and brethren.

The first Intifada in the late 1980s brought most Israelis to the realization that a solution to our endless conflict would never be achieved through violence and occupation. It brought us down the road to Madrid and Oslo and, as public surveys consistently showed, the majority of Israeli Jewish citizens eventually came to an acceptance, even if it was a begrudging acceptance for many, that territorial concessions would be made and settlements evacuated in return for which we would finally experience some security and safety on our streets. Independence and a state for the Palestinians in return for safety and security for the Jews.

Let's not kid ourselves that most of us were motivated by some altruistic belief that the Palestinians deserved a state just as we, the Jews, had achieved our own sovereignty, or that the continuation of the occupation of another people was immoral and an antithesis to Jewish teachings. Most Israelis were prepared to support Oslo because of pragmatic, not altruistic, reasons. They wanted security on their streets, they wanted an end to warfare and bloodshed, they wanted their sons and daughters to come home safely from

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the army—in short, we were—are—tired. Israeli support of Oslo came with the realization that the conquests and occupation of 1967 had not made us strong, as everybody believed at the time. They had made us weak, weak morally, weak in our resolve to be a “light unto the nations,” weak in our resolve to create a society which would be different, which would not be based on force, on the occupation of another, which would value the spirit and the book, not the gun and the tank.

For a short period following the Oslo Agreements of 1993 and 1995 most Israelis believed that we had hit the home run. True, the agreement was only transitional on the way to a final agreement. There were many difficult issues still to be negotiated—Jerusalem, the refugees, the evacuation of settlements—but we would get there. Some give and take here, a compromise over territory in exchange for a compromise over refugees—everything became technical and quantitative—but who cared. If both sides ended up with 80 percent of what they set out to achieve and neither side was left with the belief that they had been forced to compromise more than the other side, that was sufficient. Forget about such lofty concepts of normalization and reconciliation, of actually dialoguing with the other in the street, in the school, and in the supermarket. Forget about recognizing that we were all victimizers as much as we were victims, that we all had guilt to bear, that we did not have any exclusive historical truth. Just let's reach a solution, draw the boundary, keep out of each other's back yard—let's just get on with living our lives and turning our respective countries into high-tech and globalized paradises, where we could improve our quality of life, make more money, partake in the global village without having to worry about a terrorist bomb in the bus station or a settler uprooting us from our ancestral land.

The second, and present, Intifada, has had the opposite effect. As much as the first Intifada finally poured cold water on the euphoria of control and strength that had remained with us since 1967, so the second Intifada has resulted in many—if not most—Israelis believing that there is no end to the conflict. Most now believe that violence, which is now more intense than has been the case for nigh on thirty years, is destined to be the rule of the day, and that only our military might will ensure our continued existence in this part of the world. For the first time since the first Oslo Agreement in 1993, public opinion surveys show a significant swing of Israeli public opinion from the moderate left to the center, from the center to the right, and from the right into the hands of the extremists, the settlers, and all those who are not—have never been—prepared to recognize the basic rights of the Palestinian “Other,” who believe that the Land is exclusively theirs and theirs only, and who are

prepared to sacrifice the lives and limbs of their children, their brothers and sisters, their fathers and mothers, for the renewed moloch of an extreme nationalism which has no comparison in the annals of Jewish history.

The current political debate in Israel is no longer about the Right and the Left, no longer about reconstituting the Labor Party as a first step back from the abyss. How can a party which no longer exists, in anything but name, be reconstituted? The current debate is about who will be stronger—Sharon or Netanyahu. Israelis are not sure whether they should support the man whose irresponsible visit to the Temple Mount last September lit the fuse which was just waiting to explode, or the man who, in 1996, also brought about renewed violence and killings after the opening of an ancient tunnel in the old City of Jerusalem. Both of them, given a media-less world, given the withdrawal of the restraining hand of the United States, would equally be prepared to

send in the tanks and the planes and show their military might. Both of them would like to put the final nail in the coffin of Oslo, to bury once and for all—or at least for another thirty years—the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinians for an independent state and sovereignty—to be the modern incarnation of a ruthless King David, rather than a wise King Solomon.

Sharon in particular has, to the amazement of many of us, played his cards in a sophisticated fashion. He has managed to put together a government in which most are included, and only a few are excluded. The hard center of the Labor Party, including such Oslo stalwarts as Shimon Peres, have been prepared to sell any pretense at promoting peace and dialogue for the short term benefits of ministerial seats and cars. It is at times of crises, when breakdown is imminent, when things seem to be most bleak, that it takes leadership to stand up and fight for your corner. Instead, the Labor party has surrendered. They have afforded the Sharon government with a legitimacy to continue to prevaricate, to give up the cause of peace in the face of changing public opinion, to provide the fig leaf for the extremists to take control of the situation—under the mistaken guise of a false “national unity”—and to slowly turn the clock back to where it was, to play into the hands of both Palestinian and Israeli extremists who have been committed to derailing the peace process, to ensuring that we will continue to fight and kill until one of us is no longer, until one of us will have finally vanquished the other. And only then, the Gush Emunim settlers and the Hamas terrorists will tell you, only then will the work of God—Allah have been fulfilled.

Religious voices of moderation, you may ask? Religion? Moderation? Most observers of the Israeli-Palestinian scene

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*We were right not to leave. To leave is to cop out. But to remain and to be silent is to give up the struggle.*

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today would see the juxtaposition of these two words as a sort of sick joke. The only effect that religion has had on the conflict between Jews and Muslims has been to deny the rights of the other. Peace as a religious value? Give me a break! So what if the word Shalom—Salaam is one of the most frequently used words in both the Bible and the Koran? The rabbis in their pulpits and the kadis in their mosques have erased the word “peace” from their lexicon. They have—together—created a new religion, one which is filled with hate for the other, with legitimation for violence, with the promise of holy martyrdom and messiahs—all of which can only be achieved when the other has finally been vanquished and obliterated.

The hero Sharon who received such overwhelming support in February's election, the man responsible for hard line policies in Gaza in the past, the man held responsible for having allowed the massacre of Palestinian refugees by the Phalangists to go ahead in Lebanon—the man who was barred from ever holding the post of Defense Minister again—has managed, this time, to turn an extreme national conflict into a religious one. His visit to the Temple Mount succeeded in enraging Muslims throughout the world, over and beyond their political support for the Palestinian cause. What was a political struggle with strong religious undertones has finally been transformed into a religious struggle with political fallout.

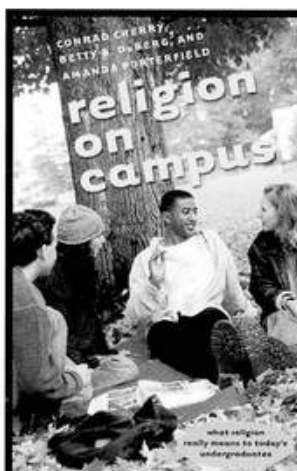
No reader of history needs reminding that the bloodiest and most violent conflicts are those in which religion and the name of God are called upon to justify the cause. And the man who has helped strengthen the religious dimension of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, transforming it into a conflict between Judaism and Islam, has been awarded by the Israeli public with the post of Prime Minister. It is all the more ironic given his own personal disdain for anything religious or spiritual—but he has successfully latched on to the gut hatred felt by each side for the other and, together with his extremist counterparts in the Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, and the Hezbollah, has left us with little hope that our dreams of just a year or two ago will ever come to fruition. These dreams seem, for the moment, to have been smashed into fragments which cannot be glued together again. And because the dream seems to be slipping away, it is now the supporters of peace, not the settlers, who are being labelled the “false messianists” by the right wingers who are in control and determining the agenda.

For many of us it is still hard to believe that Sharon is now prime minister. We, who demonstrated against the man, who decried his immorality and who promised that this man would not be given the opportunity to return to any position of power, we have failed to prevent him from taking over the reins of power. Had we all, as so many of us jestfully promised, left the country when Sharon became prime minister, then he would have been left with a country

of right-wing settlers and Palestinian citizens. We were right not to leave. To leave is to cop out—it is the solution many of the right wing would wish upon us. But equally to remain and to be silent, to shrug our shoulders and to point to renewed Palestinian terrorism as the reason for Sharon's victory, is to give up the struggle at its most critical point.

It is precisely now, when our cause seems to be ebbing away, that we have to find renewed inner resources and spirit—like that discovered by the right-wing religious fanatics whenever their cause of a Greater Israel seems to be slipping away from them. If there is one thing we can learn from the settlers, it is the blind commitment to a cause—never giving up because of their belief in what they are doing. It is that inherent belief that seems to be lacking from the pro-peace forces in Israel and which has to be rediscovered if we are to swing the pendulum back in our favor before it is too late.

It is, as always, relatively easy to be self critical. The Palestinians too must accept their own share of the blame. We cannot condone the recent behavior of the Palestinian leadership and, in particular, Yasser Arafat. He, too, appears to have lost the plot. Maybe he is really unable to make the peace of the brave which he is so fond of talking about. Maybe he fears for his life. Maybe he believes that he does not have the following of the Palestinian street or the Muslim world. Maybe, maybe, maybe. But he too has fallen



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into the trap laid for him by the extremists on his own side. He too, as Barak and Netanyahu in Israel, has failed to demonstrate the qualities of leadership when they are most needed. He is not a leader who will bring peace and independence to his people. He has failed at the most critical juncture and will go down in the annals of history as a terrorist and/or freedom fighter, as the leader of a people under occupation, as a person who—like his Israeli counterparts—fell in the face of public opinion, and was too afraid to make that one additional step forward which, perhaps, could have resulted in a very different Israel/Palestine today. Peres was too afraid to remove the settlements when he had the opportunity in the wake of the Rabin assassination, and Arafat was too afraid to grasp what was offered him at Camp David—two mistakes from two Nobel peace prize winners which will go down as the turning points from which there has been, as yet, no return.

When things become too complicated, we sometimes have to remind ourselves about the simple things. About what each side wants to gain from a renewed peace process. Forget about the myriad technical details just for a minute. Remember what it is we want to achieve. Here in Israel we want security and safety; we don't want wars or bombs or suicide terrorists. There in Palestine they want independence, national pride, and a total end to the Occupation. If we really can't live together, at least not while the memories of violence and atrocities are fresh in our minds, then we can live as correct neighbors and, slowly, build up a level of trust through years of hard work, of proving to each other that neither of us poses a threat to the other, that each of us can live our lives in freedom—physical and spiritual—and that we can devote our energies and attentions to improving the quality of humankind rather than destroying it. Perhaps Peace "Now" may not be on the cards, but peace in stages, through the cessation of violence and attempts at reconciliation, must become once again part of the public agenda.

And when we have the "simple" things clearly in our minds, we then need to set about selling the message to a cynical public, to try and make them understand just what is good about peace and bad about war. They experience the latter on an almost daily basis right now, but they have completely forgotten—if they ever knew—the former. It is our responsibility as intellectuals, as writers and commentators, as believers in the supreme value of peace over and beyond almost everything else, to attempt to convince and change public opinion so that, for the first time in fifty long years of conflict, they, the public, will also rise up—Israelis and Palestinians—and shout and cry and demonstrate for peace, in the same way that today they demonstrate for blood and reprisals.

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*Forget about the  
myriad technical details  
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Remember what it is  
we want to achieve.*

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But in practical terms it is by no means certain that a new, encompassing rather than fragmented mass grassroots peace movement is a realistic objective. Until now, Israeli peace movements have concentrated on the pragmatics, rather than the morals, of peace. They have focused on the means to prevent further violence rather than disseminating the message of equality and morality. This is perhaps not surprising given the fact that most peace activists are themselves army reservists and have experienced, no less than the right wing, acts of terrorism and violence which have affected their own families, friends, and neighbors. Even at the height of the peace process, when things were moving ahead in a slow, but positive, way, the focus was on the pragmatics and the technicalities, not the essential morality of ending the Occupation, or of the need to relate to the national "Other" as an equal.

The religious peace movement, Netivot Shalom, used spiritual terminology as a means of disseminating its own message. The importance of the word "shalom" in Jewish scripture and teachings as an alternative to the exclusive emphasis on war and conflict was central to their message. But their impact, like that of the moderate religious political party Meimad, was insignificant. First, their arrival on the scene was too late. Most of the country's religious (Orthodox) population had already fallen into the trap laid by their clerical gurus into believing that the "miraculous liberation" of the ancient homeland was the ultimate fulfillment of the biblical narratives and, as such, they elevated the notion of "*adamah*" (land) to a higher pedestal than that of "*adam*" (the human being).

Second, they failed because they didn't appeal to the religious population who saw them as tainted with academic and universal influences (not "authentic Judaism" [*sic*]) nor did they appeal to the secular population who saw them as belonging to the "religious" label and therefore as irrelevant to their own message of secular universalism and the brotherhood and sisterhood of all human beings.

(What a sad thing it has been for someone whose *aliyah* to Israel was influenced by a basic religious urge to be part of the Jewish people in their homeland to have to admit that anything which is perceived as being for the benefit of humankind as a whole is perceived by the secular majority as having nothing to do with religion. Could there be a better example of how "religious" education in Israel has failed to educate Israelis in anything other than the observance of ritual, while completely ignoring the prophetic and universal message of our scriptures and history?)

Third, like the main peace organizations the religious peace movements also focused on the pragmatic rather than the spiritual, attempting to halt the continued move

(continued on page 44)

**NEEDED URGENTLY: A NEW PEACE MOVEMENT** (from p. 26)

rightwards of the religious population and their political parties in a weak attempt to prevent the almost blanket association of religion with irredentism and exclusiveness. The one exception to this rule is the brave group of Rabbis for Human Rights, consisting of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis who have made an attempt to reach out to their Muslim counterparts, and have taken an active part in the campaign to prevent the demolition of Palestinian houses. But they too are seen, by the Israeli public at large, as being irrelevant, largely consisting of people who have immigrated from the Western world—hardly any Israeli-born clergy amongst them—and even their links with Palestinian leaders have come to a virtual cessation since the outbreak of the latest round of violence.

One of the major reasons that the present peace process has (temporarily?) collapsed is that when the violence restarted and the agreements failed to be implemented, there was no grassroots constituency that inherently believed in the ultimate value and importance of peace as a basic construct over and beyond the pragmatic cessation of violence. So, if violence restarted, if settlements continued to expand on Palestinian land, this—for both sides—was a sign that “peace” as interpreted by them had failed. They failed to distinguish between the stages of a peace process which, by definition, has its ups and downs, starts and stops, and the idea of peace as a value and a message which must continually be sold and resold, disseminated and redisseminated to as many different people as possible.

At the same time, it would be naïve to think that a new peace movement can only focus on the moral. In her doctoral thesis written at the end of the 1980s, Dr. Tamar Hermann, now the director of the Steinmetz Peace Institute at Tel Aviv University, showed how the initial spiritual and moralistic message of the earliest peace movements was eventually replaced with pragmatic messages as a strategy to increase the numbers of pro-peace activists and demonstrators. Israeli society was not then, nor is it now, a “spiritual” society and it would be a grave mistake to try to create a new peace movement which would focus entirely on the moral message of peace.

For a new peace movement to arise, it must find the right combination of pragmatic and spiritual/ideological, since experience to date has shown that neither approach can be successful on its own. Equally, a new message must attempt to appeal to both secular and religious populations—it must somehow cross those seemingly impassable boundaries within Israeli society, so that the concept and the practicalities of peace are not claimed as the exclusive property of any one faction. A new peace movement must be one which focuses on the sanctity of human life and the immorality of controlling another nation while at the same time one which can gain mass support for a renewal of the peace process and its implementation on the ground. It

must be a movement which expends its energy and resources on education, on reaching children and young adults, on influencing them to believe that peace is not simply a pragmatic objective to be achieved—which it is—but that it is essentially moral and right.

The most important age group to be reached must be young adults and teenagers. Israel has become increasingly materialistic during the past decade. Start ups and hi-tech are all the rage here. Potential students at the country's universities are interested in computer engineering and business management, not in philosophy, ethics, or the humanities in general. This age cohort is not interested in the continuation of age-old ethnic and tribal conflicts, but at the same time they fail to realize that to put an end to these conflicts they must take action—they cannot simply rely on failed politicians to put it right for them. Nor can they rely on the peace activists of yesterday to continue the cause on their behalf.

Existing peace movements such as the Movement Against House Demolitions, the Four Mothers, and Rabbis for Human Rights are all organized by people the better side of fifty. For a mass peace movement to arise, it requires the country's future adults to become actively involved, as many of their parents were in the 1970s and 1980s when the threat facing Israel was far greater than it is today and it was much more difficult and socially unacceptable to challenge the normative views of a besieged and threatened society sold by the political leadership of the time. But the sad truth is that this new generation of young adults are not involved—they somehow think that the conflict will simply disappear overnight or, at the most, that it will not disturb them in their coffee houses and high-tech offices in north Tel Aviv.

For such a peace movement to arise out of the ashes of Oslo, it cannot be exclusively an Israeli or Jewish peace movement. It must, finally, encompass a popular and public yearning for peace amongst the Palestinians. Until now, whenever this criticism has been raised, the Palestinian response has been to infer that a country (Israel) which has a state and sovereignty can afford such a luxury, while a people still fighting for their liberation cannot yet do so. This is an unacceptable response. It is important for Palestinians to believe that peace is essentially a good thing, over and beyond the ability to have a state and independence. They too must believe in the rights of the “Other” to live in safety and security next to them. They too must show the increasingly skeptical Israeli population that they also yearn for peace rather than violence, and that human life is valuable regardless of whether it be that of an Israeli or a Palestinian.

Without a renewal of grassroots support, we will be left with the settlers and the Hamas, with Sharon and Arafat, with the lions and the wolves, but no lambs or deer. And the Land will know only conflict and funerals; we will have lost the plot and will have forgotten what the very spiritual essence of having a state of our own, a Jewish State, was all about in the first place. □

# Oh, What a Wonderful Unity!

Uri Avnery

Overnight, Israel has become a nation of parrots.

Whoever is talking—the seller of falafel or a professor of history, a taxi driver or Our Political Correspondent, an army officer or a member of the Knesset—all of them repeat endlessly some seven or eight slogans, in exactly the same words:

“Barak has turned every stone on the way to peace.”

“Barak offered Arafat (almost) everything he asked for. And what did we get in return? War.”

“Arafat (the villainous, cheating, lying, corrupt), instead of accepting the generous offer with both hands, started a campaign of violence and terror.”

“This proves that the Palestinians never wanted peace. They want to annihilate the State of Israel and throw us into the sea.”

“The right of return is a plot to destroy Israel.”

“We have no partner for peace.”

“The struggle is not about the settlements, but about Jaffa and Haifa.”

“The conflict just doesn’t have a solution.”

Each of these slogans is wrong and can be easily disproved by the facts (see previous articles in *TIKKUN* and on the *TIKKUN* website at [www.tikkun.org](http://www.tikkun.org)). What matters at this moment, however, is how Israeli public discourse has become so uniform. What has led the voters for Barak and Sharon, the members of the Labor and Likud, the far-right *Moledet* and the left-wing *Meretz* parties to speak in one voice? How does a free media—the dozens of newspapers and networks, with their hundreds of commentators and correspondents—turn itself into an organ for a uniform, primitive propaganda? How does such a system of brain-washing come into being without a cruel, omnipotent dictator?

Uri Avnery is founder of *Gush Shalom*, an Israeli non-partisan grassroots peace movement composed of Jews and Arabs. Check out their website at [www.gush-shalom.org](http://www.gush-shalom.org).



This voluntary brain-washing is especially odd because its main message is not cheerful and optimistic, but as pessimistic as can be. It says that there is no chance for peace, and never was. That the war is eternal. That “they” will always want to kill us, and that there is nothing we can do about it. And, that anyone who thinks otherwise (if such a person exists) lives on the moon. Stranger still, this message may cause some depression, but its main effect is to create a vast sense of relief.

A foreigner will not understand this. We do.

The Oslo agreement, which descended on the public without any prior preparation, created a shock. I remember the day it was signed. I was in Jerusalem. In the Eastern part, there was euphoria. The Palestinians, together with some Israeli peace activists, drank champagne in the American Colony hotel, rejoiced together on the steps of Orient House. In the streets, bands of Palestinian youngsters were roaming, waving the (forbidden) Palestinian flag and nearly kissing the Israeli border policemen. When I crossed into West Jerusalem, I found there a strange, hesitant, thoughtful mood, cautiously optimistic. I was invited to a TV broadcast and found the same mood in the studio.

For the next eight years, Israel was in the grips of a painful syndrome called “cognitive dissonance.” This is a situation where incoming new information crashes into old, deeply rooted attitudes.

Every person (and, it seems, an entire people, too) has a worldview, a fixed pattern of perceptions, a kind of mental

map that directs their thoughts and reactions. Without such a map, people feel lost in a world of chaos. The map gives them security; they know where they are and where they are going. When they are hit by new information that contradicts the existing pattern, they find themselves in a frightening situation of uncertainty, insecurity, and anxiety. Whoever is responsible for this situation becomes the object of hatred and fury.

For hundreds of years, the Jews have been persecuted in many countries. Everywhere we encountered anti-Semitism, suffered from discrimination, became victims of pogroms, were murdered in the Holocaust. Even in enlightened countries, almost every Jewish child absorbs with his mother's milk the belief that the "Goyim" hate the Jews, always did, and always will. Every year, on the eve of Passover, in the warm family circle, millions of Jews repeat the words: "In each generation they try to destroy us, but God saves us from them."

Zionism was supposed to create a New Jew, but in practice it only transferred the existing mental pattern to the new country. Arab opposition to the Zionist state looked to the Jews as a natural continuation of the old story of persecution and pogroms. The existing Jewish pattern was not shattered, but became even stronger. It created a feeling of unity, permanency, and order. A cheerful song, beginning with the words "The whole world is against us / but we do not care" became a folk dance.

And then Oslo came. Perplexing new perceptions hit us. The Arabs want peace. Arafat, who only yesterday was the Arab Hitler, became a partner. The Arabs are reconciled with our existence. In the New Middle East, peace, conciliation, and mutual respect are just around the corner.

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This picture did not cause happiness. On the contrary. It caused deep anxiety. It was clear that something was wrong. The pattern was shaken, and no new one replaced it. The old map, which described a familiar landscape, did not show the way anymore. It was necessary to draw a new map, contradicting all that was known and felt until then.

No wonder that a powerful reaction soon set in. Ehud Barak, the man of peace, the great leftist, killed Oslo and exposed the Arab plot. He proved that there was no partner. The Arabs want to destroy us. Thank God, everything returned to what it was before. What a relief!

A wonderful national unity was reborn. All the Jewish parties, from left and right, can unite. Shimon Peres can sit in the same government with men like Ze'evi, Lieberman, and Landau, who could give lessons to Haider and Le-Pen. The media and academia, almost without exception, can join the feast. Pseudo-leftists of yesterday confess their sins as if they were in a Soviet meeting of self-criticism. Oh, what a wonderful unity!

The most repelling exhibition in this orgy is the treason of the intellectuals. They, who should have drawn the new map that would lead the people towards the reality of peace, are betraying their trust. The few, the very few, who stay true to their mission, are despised and hated.

But on the shoulders of these few the fate of the country now rests. There is no future for Israel if it goes on behaving like an armed ghetto. A state is no ghetto, as the ghetto was no state. In order to exist, the state needs a new perception of itself and its surroundings, one that suits the new situation.

And that is, first and foremost, the task of the intellectuals. □

## AN INTERVIEW WITH Uri Avnery

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TIKKUN proposed a series of questions to Uri Avnery that are often posed to us.

**TIKKUN:** *Why is there so much hatred of Palestinians when the facts on the ground are the Occupation and Israel's overwhelming military superiority?*

**AVNERY:** For generations the Jews were persecuted in many countries and developed the consciousness of victims. It could almost be said that most of the Jewish culture created during the last two or three centuries has revolved around this axis. The Holocaust, of course, strengthened

this central motif even further.

The Zionist enterprise in Israel should have changed this pattern. After all, the Zionist penetration drove the Palestinians from their lands and turned most of them into refugees. In this historic struggle, the Palestinians lost: lands, villages, great parts of the country. This process is still going on daily.

Now the Palestinians have come and demanded for themselves the victim's crown of thorns. Nothing offends the Israelis more. It seems to us the height ofchutzpah, an

attack on the core of our national consciousness. Therefore we react with fury. We describe the Intifada as a malicious attack on our existence. We have brought back from the junkyard the slogans of past generations: the Arabs want to throw us into the sea, they want to take Haifa and Jaffa from us. Forgotten is the fact that we have the mightiest army in the region, that Israel within the Green Line possesses 78 percent of the country, that we now control the rest of the country (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) too, that we enjoy a vast superiority in almost all fields. Forgotten is the fact that the Palestinians demand for themselves a mere 22 percent of the country and that the Intifada is an uprising against an occupation that has been going on with increasing brutality for thirty-four years already.

**TIKKUN:** *Didn't Peres join the Sharon government in order to save the peace accord?*

**AVNERY:** When a Nobel Peace Prize laureate appears as Sharon's messenger, he creates the illusion that Sharon really wants peace, while Sharon himself says and does the opposite. Peres serves Sharon as a bulletproof vest, protecting him from the bullets of criticism, while Sharon continues with his policy of assassinations ("liquidations" in the Mafia-style slang of the occupation officers), destroys neighborhoods, and enlarges settlements, in the course of his war against the Palestinian people. In the tradition of the oldest profession, Peres offers his services for a price. It could be called Perestitution.

Let's take, for example, the "Egyptian-Jordanian initiative." It offers a simple deal: an end to the Palestinian uprising in return for an end to the settlement activity. Afterward the political negotiations will be resumed to bring about a final settlement within a year. Reasonable? Well, yes.

Sharon, a very unsophisticated man, rejected the proposal "out of hand". (Rejecting "out of hand" is the hallmark of Israeli-style masculinity.) Peres convinced him to adopt a more sophisticated method: to accept the proposal and to reject its contents. Of course Israel will stop the settlement activity, says Peres. The government has already declared in its "basic guidelines" that it will not build new settlements. But one must provide for "natural growth." Sounds reasonable, doesn't it? Well, first, the "basic guidelines" are not worth the paper they are written on. They have no legal standing whatsoever.

Second, the talk about not setting up new settlements is manifestly mendacious. On the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip dozens of new settlements have been set up in the guise of new neighborhoods of old settlements.

Third, "natural growth" is an especially sophisticated lie. The government does not say "natural increase," which

would mean houses for the children of the old settlers. "Natural growth" is something else altogether. It has no limits.

But the pinnacle of sophistication was achieved by Peres in his proposal that the Palestinians should end the "terror," and then, several months later, negotiations would start again. Meaning: the Palestinians should lay down their arms in return for nothing.

The basis of all these lies is, of course, the use of the word "terror," which denies the fact that this is an uprising of the whole Palestinian people, including all sectors and organizations. The denial of this simple fact leads to the ridiculous debate in Israel about whether Arafat "wants" or "can" put an end to the "violence." The answer is: Yes and yes, if Israel makes an offer that the majority of the Palestinian people are ready to accept. If not, the answer is: No and no. There is no difference between Arafat and his people in this respect, and any effort to create such a difference is futile.

**TIKKUN:** *You really seem to be saying that everyone in Israel is wrong except you and about five hundred others like you. But even if that were true, wouldn't that be a way of saying that nothing can be done? Aren't you just leading smart people to despair and thus to inaction?*

**AVNERY:** I am not a very humble person, but I do not think that my friends and I are vastly more intelligent or sane than anybody else in Israel.

What distinguishes us from so many others is our readiness to open our ears and hearts to the other side and to compare their myths with ours, their traumas to ours, their hopes and aspirations to ours. By listening to both sides at the same time, and doing this for many years, one acquires a different understanding of the problem.

Old Archimedes used to say "give me a place to stand on and I will move the earth." As long as you are a prisoner of your own myths, traumas, and propaganda, you can neither understand nor solve the problem. Neither can you help by moving to the other side and adopting their myths, traumas, and propaganda, as some are tempted to do out of compassion for the weak and oppressed. To understand the problem, you must open your heart to both sides. This is what we are trying to do.

I do not want you to despair. I want to tell you that we can change our own awareness, and if enough of us change, we can change Israel's national policy. IT CAN BE DONE!

We have already won on a broad front. We were a mere handful of people, much less than 500, when we said, fifty years ago, that there is a Palestinian people, and that there is no way to make peace without them. At the time, that was sheer heresy. Who denies it today?

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We were a handful when we said that we must negotiate with the PLO. That was high treason. The PLO was a bunch of murderers. In 1982, when I was the first Israeli to meet Yasser Arafat, the government officially instructed the Attorney General to open proceedings against me. Now the government itself negotiates with the PLO.

We were a handful when we said that there can be no peace without a State of Palestine. According to the polls, the vast majority of Israelis accepts this now.

We were a handful when we said that there can be no peace with settlements. The latest polls show that 54 percent of Israelis are ready to evacuate settlements for a "unilateral separation," and an astonishing 40 percent are ready, even at this time of uniform Arab-hating nationalism, to evacuate *all* settlements for a final peace agreement.

There's no need for despair, then, even if the way is difficult and from time to time we are thrown back.

**TIKKUN:** *You seem to think that the reaction of Israelis to the current Intifada has nothing to do with the stupidity with which Arafat has articulated his positions, or the brutality of acts like the blowing up the nightclub in Tel Aviv, or the failure of any in the Palestinian leadership to articulate in detail what they would settle for as enough.*

**AVNERY:** Arafat is very far from being stupid. In forty years, against incredible odds, he has led his people from the abyss of national extinction to the threshold of statehood. Quite an achievement, I would say.

In the course of years, I have learned to wean myself from the patronizing Israeli habit of giving advice to the Palestinians. They have a right to make their own mistakes. No Israeli—or Jew, for that matter—can possibly have the overall view of the manifold considerations that a Palestinian leader has to take into account in making his decisions. His main concern is, of course, the public opinion in Palestine, not in Israel.

As a former anti-British "terrorist," I am very much aware of the fact that "terrorism" depends on the public mood. "Terrorists" (or "freedom fighters," depending on which side you are on) need public support. After Oslo, terrorism nearly disappeared, because the great majority of Palestinians believed that their national aspirations were about to be realized. When this did not happen, many Palestinians became convinced that the Israelis "understand only the language of force." This is the background of the suicide bombers.

It would be nice to be able to present a mutually agreed upon draft peace agreement, and my friends and I are working on it. But it is extremely difficult. Why should the Palestinians present their most moderate positions, when the Israeli government announces the most extreme

demands as their maximum "compromise"? Why risk a fatal split in the Palestinian ranks while the fight goes on and no peace is in sight?

**TIKKUN:** *So what do you say to those who believe that eliminating Arafat will be a positive step toward peace?*

**AVNERY:** The crazy assumption that lies at the base of our special paranoia is the denial of the Occupation. If there is no Occupation, there is no war of liberation of the occupied. If there is no war of liberation, there is no national uprising. And if there is no national uprising, then it must be terror. Clearly somebody must be directing this terror. Who can that be? Arafat, of course. Look at the history of liberation struggles in the past hundred years and you'll see that all the means used against them were useless, and that many of them were counter-productive.

If Israel murders Arafat, directly or through agents, he will become a romantic legend, rather like Che Guevara. The Palestinians will react, of course, by electing a more extreme fighter. In the name of the murdered leader, who will become a symbol for generations to come, they will do things compared to which everything that has been done until now will pale.

In today's Israel, hating Arafat has become a fad, common to both right and left. It's easier to hate Arafat than to come to grips with the basic facts of the conflict. Everything is dragged down to the personal level. If so, let's have a look at the man.

Arafat decided at the end of 1973 that the Palestinian national interest demanded a peace agreement with Israel. I know this, because at the time I maintained, together with others, the first contacts with the PLO leadership. At that time, Shimon Peres was still busy with establishing settlements in the middle of the West Bank (Kedumim), and Yitzhak Rabin in deepening the Occupation. Arafat prepared his people, step by step, cautiously and resolutely, for the change that led to Oslo. He was several steps in advance of his people, and was always compelled (like Ben Gurion with us) to take the courageous decisions alone. But he never wished (or could) impose them on his people. His way of doing it was by the old Arab method of Idjmah—the discussion goes on until the last person in the tent is convinced.

Of course, he used all the means in the arsenal of a weak and oppressed people: diplomacy, violence, ruses, propaganda, plots. Much like us. That was his duty, as a leader of a people on the way to liberation.

One can respect or hate Arafat—it does not change the fact that he is the only person—now and in the foreseeable future—capable of both making a decision and convincing his people to accept it. For that, one has to be a leader with moral and political authority in the eyes of his people. Arafat has it, and nobody else has. □

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# Just and Jewish Warfare

Michael L. Gross

Purity of arms—the unflinching commitment to humanitarian warfare—is dogma in Israel. Jewish soldiers shield innocent civilians, do not mistreat prisoners, fight honorably and with restraint, and raise their arms only in self defense. These are the rules every young conscript, fortified by images of the Holocaust, learns to uphold. Why then are such rules so blatantly disregarded as Israel wages its war with the Palestinians by torture, assassination, and blackmail?

## Torture

In September 1999, the Israeli Supreme Court convened to hear the case of Palestinian detainees who petitioned the court to prohibit torture. This was not the first time that torture had seized public attention. Following earlier complaints raised by the press, the courts, and human rights organizations, the Landau Commission (a state commission of inquiry), had reviewed the use of torture by the General Security Service (GSS) in 1987. The very establishment of a public body to study torture is probably unprecedented, and throughout its deliberations the committee showed extraordinary sensitivity to the complexity of its mission. While acknowledging that torture might be necessary to elicit information in extreme situations, commission members were keenly aware that a democratic state, not to mention a Jewish democratic state, has a *prima facie* obligation to stand fast against the use of torture in any form.

The Landau Commission struggled with this question by formulating three options, each of which rested on the unexamined assumption that torture was necessary to meet the existential threat that terrorism posed. This assumption would be examined later but stood as given at the time.

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First, the commission raised, and then rejected, the hypocrisy of some democratic nations, like France, who practiced torture but simply pretended that they didn't. Similarly, the commission rejected any effort to carve out a special niche for the General Security Service by placing it beyond the law; doing so they thought characteristic only of less enlightened states. Instead, the commission formulated a new "Jewish-democratic" approach; in defiance of all international norms, they suggested that Israel could set standards and establish a regulatory mechanism to oversee the use of "moderate physical pressure."

Unfortunately, the details of the Commission's report were kept secret, so it was not until the Supreme Court ruled on torture in 1999 that the public came to understand what had been done. It was not pretty. Taking its cue from the British and their long running troubles with the Irish, the Landau Commission took heart from an international court ruling in 1976 that saw the British government unsuccessfully defend the use of torture to interrogate suspected IRA terrorists.

At that 1976 hearing, sufficient evidence was presented for the European Court of Human Rights to conclude that the combined use of five techniques constituted inhuman treatment and torture. The five techniques included the seemingly innocuous practices of hooding (covering a suspect's head with a filthy, opaque sack), wall standing (forcing a suspect to stand spread eagle against a wall for an extended time), noise (excessively loud music played throughout the day and night), as well as sleep deprivation

(continued on page 45)

# Fifteen Year\$ Ago...

*Lawrence Bush and Jeffrey Dekro*

**F**ifteen years ago, the movement for socially responsible investment was hitting its stride. Colleges, corporations, foundations, and whole cities were approached, and often convinced, to divest their portfolios of apartheid-linked stocks. The effort peaked in October 1986, when Congress, overriding President Reagan's veto, finally passed a bill implementing mandatory sanctions that prohibited all new investment in South Africa.

The American Jewish community floundered throughout the anti-apartheid campaign, unable to develop a unified position on divestment. Israel's military collaboration with apartheid South Africa had fuzzied American Jewish thinking, which was being polluted generally by neoconservatism and by Likud domination of Israeli politics (and American Jewish lobbying on behalf of Israel).

What could a Jewish anti-apartheid divestment campaign have amounted to, in dollars? According to Dr. Jack Wertheimer (*American Jewish Year Book*, 1997), the annual fundraising campaign of the United Jewish Appeal-Jewish Federations topped \$738 million in 1986. This was money that passed quickly through the coffers, however, to fund Jewish agencies and services worldwide. *Investable* monies that year included an additional \$432 million raised from foundations, endowments, and other sources, which brought the total of investable Federation monies to approximately \$2 billion. In addition, the religious sector—synagogues, religious schools, day schools, summer camps—was commanding annual revenues of nearly \$2 billion, a small chunk of which was also investable, and Jewish family foundations were beginning to mushroom in numbers and assets. In total, at least a billion Jewish institutional dollars could easily have been added to the nearly \$600 billion of American investments “screened” against apartheid.

In subsequent years, investable funds have come to constitute as much as 50 percent, or even more, of the \$1.5 billion now raised annually by the Federation system. In fact, the “umbrella” style of federated giving, while still prodigious, today accounts for less than 15 percent of *tzedakah* given to Jewish causes. More than 7,500 Jewish

family foundations now exist under Federation supervision, according to Wertheimer, and thousands more have been established independently. By conservative estimate, Jewish institutions now control well over \$25 billion in investable assets—yet the community remains largely absent from the socially responsible investing movement.

One might view this matter as peripheral to the many problems challenging the American Jewish community today: injustice and insecurity in Israel, the slow pace of women's empowerment in Jewish organizational life, the low rate of synagogue affiliation, the ongoing crisis of liberalism, and so on. In fact, Jewish fundraising itself is beset with enough uncertainty to make socially responsible investing seem, at first glance, a luxury: Jews are giving an ever-decreasing proportion of their charity to Jewish causes and demanding an ever-increasing amount of personal attention; “venture philanthropy” is challenging the decision-making of Jewish institutions; the lack of a coherent and vision-driven communal agenda is creating slack or uninspired giving; and Israel no longer plays the same powerhouse role in driving Jewish philanthropy that it did until the early 1990s.

The fact nevertheless remains that “All the parts of the body depend upon the heart, and the heart depends on the pocket” (Y. Terumot 8:4) in Jewish life today. How resources are spent and invested by Jewish institutions says a lot more than their press releases about values and priorities. With investable dollars at an all-time high in Jewish institutional life, the Jewish community should now pick up the ball of socially responsible investing that it dropped 15 years ago.

Doing so involves a three-fold strategy of 1) participation in organized campaigns of screened investment (against tobacco, against sweatshop labor, against investment in Myanmar or other countries brutalized by dictatorships); 2) participation in shareholder resolution campaigns organized by such groups as the Interfaith Coalition on Corporate Responsibility; and 3) investment in community development financial institutions that make credit available to low-income neighborhoods. For all three of these socially responsible investing modes, there is ample Jewish historical precedent, ample Jewish religious teaching, and ample investable money, for our community to step in and make a real difference. □

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# Economic Globalization and the Environment

Jerry Mander



Among many preposterous claims, advocates of economic globalization argue that it increases long-term environmental protection. The theory goes that as countries globalize, often by exploiting resources like forests, minerals, oil, coal, fish, wildlife, and water, their increased wealth will enable them to save more patches of nature from their ravages and they will be able to introduce technical devices to mitigate the negative environmental impacts of their own increased production. There is ample evidence, however, that when countries increase their apparent receipts in a global economy, most of the benefit goes to global corporations who have little incentive to put their profits back into environmental protection. Instead, they plow them back into further exploitation, or they just take the money and run, right out of the country. This is normal corporate behavior in a global economy.

Here, in the wealthiest country on earth, our president outspokenly promotes the idea of globalization as helping nature, while at the same time he advocates more oil drilling, more forest cutting, more poisons in rivers, and voices his fierce opposition to any measures that help control climate change—the ultimate expression of globalization.

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The idea of globalization as some kind of environmental strategy is ridiculous on its face. But the matter is even more serious than it first seems. In fact, economic globalization itself—the very ideologies and structures that drive it—is intrinsically opposed to the survival of nature. No environmental side agreements or pollution controls or technofixes can mitigate the inherent environmental harms of a globalized economy with its export-oriented production models; the problems are built into the design. If we are going to proceed with this global experiment, we are going to have some predictable outcomes, and they are unavoidable. They are intrinsic to the form.

We will have to change the form.

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## *Inevitable Force of Nature?*

Advocates of globalization love to describe it as a done deal, the result of economic and technological forces that have simply evolved over centuries to their present form. They describe it as if it was an uncontrollable, undirected force of nature. Of course, if we accepted this description of the inevitability of globalization, as most media, governments, and universities tend to do, then obviously no resistance would be possible. Our only option would be to lie there, watch TV, and submit, or else try somehow to take advantage of the process for our own purposes. It should already be obvious that such passivity is not acceptable to a whole lot of

people, judging by the evidence of the recent protests in Genoa, the 50,000 protesters in Seattle, the demonstrations by more than a million farmers in India, and the various uprisings in Japan, Brazil, Mexico, England, the Philippines, and even New Zealand. Lots of people are upset at this process.

Of course it's true enough that global trade activity and concepts like "free trade" have indeed existed for centuries in various forms. But earlier versions were entirely different from the modern version in scale, speed, form, impact, and, most importantly, intent. The modern version of economic globalization definitely did not simply evolve, as in nature, like some kind of naturally dominant plant or animal species, an economic kudzu vine. Modern globalization is no accident of evolution. It was created by human beings, on purpose, and with a specific goal: to give primacy to corporate values above all other values, and to aggressively install and codify those values globally.

In fact, the modern globalization era has a birth date and birthplace: the fateful meetings at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in July 1944. That was when the world's leading corporate figures, economists, politicians, and bankers got together to figure out how to mitigate the devastation of World War II. They decided that a new centralized global economic system was required to promote global economic development. This would lead away from wars, they thought, and would help the poor and the rebuilding process.

Out of the Bretton Woods meetings came the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (with other names at that time), and then the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which later gave birth to the World Trade Organization. Later clones of the model included NAFTA, the Maastricht Agreement in Europe, the upcoming Free Trade Area of the Americas Agreement, and quite a few others.

Together these instruments of economic globalization have been fulfilling their mandate, which is arguably to bring the most fundamental redesign of the planet's social, economic, and political arrangements at least since the Industrial Revolution. They are engineering a power shift of stunning proportions, moving real economic and political power away from national, state, and local governments and communities toward a new centralized model that gives great power to global corporations, banks, and the global bureaucracies they helped create, albeit with grave consequences for national sovereignty, community control, democracy, indigenous cultures, and more to the point today, the natural world.

The crucial point to remind ourselves about is that this process—these institutions and the rules they operate by—have been created on purpose by human beings and

corporations and economists and bankers, and have specific forms designed for specific outcomes. It is no accident. It was not inevitable. And it can be reversed or revised, if with difficulty. What, then, can we say about the form?

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### *Global Monoculture*

The first tenet of economic globalization, as now designed, is to integrate and merge all economic activity of all countries on the planet within a single, homogenized model of development; a single centralized super system. Countries with cultures, economies, and traditions as varied as those of India, Sweden, Thailand, Kenya, Bhutan, Bolivia, Canada, Russia, and a hundred more are all meant to adopt the same tastes, values, and lifestyles, and to be served by the same fast food restaurants, hotel chains, clothing chains; to wear the same kind of jeans and shoes; to drive similar cars; receive the same films, music, television; to live in the same

kind of urban landscape and engage in the same kind of agriculture and development schemes, and to carry the same personal, cultural, and spiritual values. Global Monoculture!

If you have traveled a bit lately, you have surely noted the trend, entirely visible before your eyes. Every place is becoming more and more like every place else. Cultural diversity is going the way of biodiversity. Soon, there will be little reason to go anywhere at all. Such a homogenized model directly serves the efficiency needs of the largest corporations, acting on a global plain, allowing them to duplicate their production and marketing efforts on an ever-expanding terrain, and to achieve the many efficiencies of scale that go with borderlessness. It's like the standard gauge railway of another century. Or, in today's terms, "computer compatibility." It's among the primary purposes of the great trade agreements and bureaucracies to make rules that assure that there are no blockages in the flow, that global corporations can move freely in all countries, and that economic homogenization and integration is accelerated.

A second tenet of the globalization design is that primary importance is given to the achievement of ever more rapid, and never ending economic growth—let's call it "hypergrowth"—fueled by the constant search for access to new resources, new and cheaper labor sources, and new markets. That is why there is such excitement about China joining the experiment, and such concern over the recent spyplane incident. To help achieve this *hypergrowth*, emphasis is put upon the ideological heart of the globalization model, *free trade*, accompanied by *deregulation* of corporate activity, and *privatization* and *commodification* of as many nooks and crannies of existence as possible. These

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even include formerly pristine elements of the global commons, elements that until now have always been far outside the trading system, areas that most of us have always assumed would remain the inalienable right of all human beings to retain in a noncommodified form.

For example, the genetic structures of our bodies, and of all life, are now very definitely being enclosed as part of the commodity trading system through biotechnology, hugely assisted by the WTO rules on intellectual property rights. Or consider indigenous seeds, for millennia developed and freely shared by agricultural communities, now subject to long-term monopolization by global corporations through patenting. Recent protests against the WTO's TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) agreement by farmers in India, and by AIDS victims in Africa and other parts of the Third World have begun to focus a new harsh light on some appalling aspects of this issue. Now we face similar pressure on fresh water—rivers, lakes, streams—probably the most basic element of sustenance, always considered to be part of the commons, available to all life, but soon to be converted into part of the global trade system. At least that will be so if the parties to FTAA and NAFTA and the WTO proceed with their plans. All of these formerly free and public aspects of human life itself are being rapidly privatized, enclosed, and commodified as part of the globalization project, to bring even more raw material, more territory (geographic and biological) into play for corporate access, investment, development, and trade.

At the same time, the commodification process is now taking place in the realm of public services. This is a big part of both the new FTAA agreement and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) within the WTO. Those latter negotiations concern many areas still reserved for government—services like public broadcasting, public education, public health (particularly important in Canada), water delivery and treatment, sewage and sanitation services, hospitals, welfare systems, police, fire, social security, railroads, prisons, and so forth. These may all soon be commodified for the first time, privatized, and opened to foreign investment and domination. We could wind up with Mitsubishi running Social Security, Bundesbank running our jails (and maybe our parks), the British Broadcasting System run by Disney, the Canadian health care system run by Merck.

And then there's the commodification of money itself. Right now, the overwhelming majority of global transactions, under the free trade system, do not apply to goods and services, but to capital. Money itself is a commodity for speculation, as are financial instruments, of course. Modern

information technology has made it possible to shift unimaginably large sums of money instantaneously across borders, anywhere in the world, without anyone ever observing or controlling it, by the strike of a computer key. This has already had destabilizing effects on many coun-

tries, and was surely one of the precipitating causes of the 1997–1998 financial crisis focused in Asia.

(Ironically, this free trade in money, and even free movement by corporations across borders, defies traditional free trade ideology as espoused by Adam Smith and David Ricardo, the high priests of free trade utopianism. Neither Smith or Ricardo ever believed that corporations should be mobile, or that capital should be uprooted from its own community. They are surely now turning over in their graves.)

So it's the job of the Bretton Woods instruments to assist this commodification, privatization, deregulation, and free trade by creating rules that require nations not only to conform to these principles, but also to actively try to eliminate *impediments* within individual nations that might restrict corporate access to markets, labor, and resources.

In practice, most of these so-called impediments to the system are laws that are legally created by governments: environmental laws, public health laws, food safety laws, laws that pertain to protecting worker rights and opportunities, laws that allow nations to control who can invest on their soil, who can buy their currencies, and at what speed and under what conditions. And, let's not forget, laws that try to retain controls over national culture. All of these laws, even if created by democratic governments through democratic processes acting on behalf of the popular views of citizens, are viewed by free traders as "non-tariff barriers to trade" and as obstacles subject to WTO challenges.

Though it is only six years old, the WTO already has an impressive record of challenging democratically created laws and standards. It's been particularly potent in the environmental realm. The WTO's very first ruling was against the U.S. Clean Air Act, which set high standards against polluting gasoline. The Act was found to be noncompliant with WTO trade rules and had to be softened. The very popular Marine Mammal Protection Act—particularly the provision that protects dolphins otherwise killed by industrial tuna fishing—was found noncompliant under a GATT rule, now within the WTO. And sea turtle protections under the Endangered Species Act were also found illegal. The United States is going back to the drawing board on these. We can expect similar challenges against U.S. or state pesticide control laws, caffeine standards, raw log export bans, ecolabeling of products, various "certification" schemes, *et. al.*

The WTO doesn't rule only against U.S. environmental



laws. It also ruled against Japan for refusing imports of fruit products carrying dangerous invasive species. It ruled against the European Union for forbidding imports of U.S. beef injected with biotech growth hormone, even though the European public is totally against biotech. In agriculture areas, the WTO has consistently ruled in favor of large machine- and chemical-intensive global industrial ag corporations over small-scale family farming and indigenous farmers—most appallingly in the famous Chiquita banana case. That case held that the European Union could not favor small indigenous, often organic farmers within former European colonies over the industrial bananas from Chiquita.

The way these challenges work is really interesting. We are led to understand that it is countries that are suing other countries in the WTO, when actually the countries issuing challenges to other countries' trade rules are usually doing so on behalf of global corporations. So the United States sues to protect Chiquita bananas, Venezuela sues to protect its oil industry, and Mexico sues to protect its tuna industry. The net effect is that the whole process produces a mutual ratcheting downward of environmental or labor or health standards in all countries. It's a kind of "cross deregulation." It's a way that corporations can get their own governments to destroy laws in other countries, just as they pressure for deregulation domestically. The net result is that all laws and standards race downward to a low common denominator, just as is happening with global wage standards.

There is also a secondary "chilling effect" from this process. For example, not long ago, the government of Guatemala *cancelled* a public health law that forbade baby food/infant formula companies, notably Gerber baby food, from advertising their products as being healthier than breast milk. And Canada *cancelled* its national ban on the gasoline additive "MMT," a well-known carcinogen. In both cases the reasons were threats of suit under trade regimes. In the Gerber case the United States threatened suit in the WTO. Even more remarkably, in the Canadian case, the Ethyl corporation threatened to sue Canada under an outrageous NAFTA provision, the "Investor-state" provision—soon to also be in the FTAA agreement—that for the first time allows corporations to sue sovereign governments, not in domestic courts but in international tribunals ... for example, in the International Chamber of Commerce. The threat alleges an illegal "expropriation" by Canada, because Canada's environmental safety law prevented Ethyl from earning future profits that it might have enjoyed if there had not been a ban. A similar case has been brought against the state of California on a similar dangerous additive. California is now trying to settle out of court.

There are hundreds of similar cases and examples. These trade bodies exist for the purpose of providing global corporations an easy way to circumvent the laws that attempt to regulate them. They love to call it "free trade," but what they really mean by "free trade" is freedom for global

corporations; these same rules in fact suppress the freedoms for communities or nations to regulate or otherwise maintain their primary values, from environmental sustainability to local approaches to health, culture, jobs, and national sovereignty—even to democracy itself.

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## Export-Oriented Production

Arguably the most important principle of free trade is its emphasis on global conversion to *export-oriented production* as some kind of economic and social nirvana. This is the theory that all countries should specialize their production within commodity areas where they have a so-called "comparative advantage" over other countries. Their advantage could be in coffee production or sugarcane or forest products or high tech due to unusually low wages. Each country should focus on these few specialized areas and then try to satisfy its other needs through imports, using foreign exchange earned by exports to pay for imports. This is a crucial component of globalization theory: the idea that it is necessary to replace diverse local or regional economic systems, systems that may emphasize highly diversified, small scale, industrial, artisanal, and agriculture systems, featuring many small producers using mostly local or regional resources and local labor, and consumed locally or regionally. The goal is to replace these diverse systems with large monocultural export systems.

Going back to the mid 1900s, many countries of the world had been actively trying to do the opposite—to diversify their industrial and agriculture systems precisely in order to recover from a colonial period where huge monocultural systems had been imposed on them: pineapple plantations, coffee plantations, bananas ... or, recently, industrial assembly work. Once out from under colonialism, countries saw that specialization made them extremely vulnerable to political decisions abroad, or to the shocks and whims of the market and commodity pricing systems. This often left them unable to purchase basics like food, energy, health products, or basic industrial needs. Naturally enough they sought self-sufficiency in these basic items. The system was sometimes called "import substitution" or simply national self-reliance. It was designed to achieve some degree of control over the overall shape of the domestic economy.

But after Bretton Woods, tremendous pressures were applied to these countries by the World Bank and the IMF to abandon this self-reliance. It came to be synonymous with "isolationism" and "protectionism." The Bank pressured these countries to open their borders to private investments by global corporations in a position to produce commodities on the large scale appropriate for export. Threats of boycott and exclusion from the global trading system were very explicitly made by the Bretton Woods institutions against countries that did not comply. It became impossible to get

any financial aid from these institutions without submitting to their structural adjustment schemes. Eventually the pressure worked. This effectively opened such countries to a second round of colonialism: neo-colonialism.

Why were the banks pushing so hard? Here's the crux of the matter. Systems that emphasize local or regional self-reliance are extremely subversive to free trade, economic globalization, and hyper corporate growth, which all depend upon maximizing economic processes. Local and regional production for regional consumption is the archenemy of globalization since it operates on an inherently smaller scale.

If local populations or countries can satisfy their needs internally or regionally, there are far fewer opportunities for global corporations than if economic activity is designed to move back and forth across oceans, exporting, importing, or reworking commodities, then exporting them again, with thousands of ships passing each other in the night. The export-oriented model builds global economic growth fastest and provides opportunities for global corporate operations. But, alas, it's also what destroys the environment fastest. Environmental destruction, like the loss of cultural diversity, is an intrinsic element of the globalization model.

The central feature of an export-oriented model is obviously that it increases transport and shipping activity. In the half century since Bretton Woods, there has been about a twenty-five-fold increase in global transport activity. My friend and colleague, Minneapolis economist David Morris, loves to use the example of a toothpick, which comes wrapped in plastic and is marked, "Made in Japan." Japan is skilled in industrial production—that's one of its "comparative advantages"—but it has very few trees and no oil. But in a global economy, it is somehow thought efficient to ship wood from some country that grows it—Chile, Canada, the United States—and also to ship some barrels of oil to Japan, then wrap the one in the other, package them in serviceable commodity units, and ship them back across oceans to consumers. That toothpick, by the time it is finally used, might have traveled 50,000 miles.

The Wuppertal Institute of Germany has made a famous study of miles that food travels from source to plate. It reports, for example, that the average components of a 150 gram strawberry yogurt consumed in Europe travel about 2,000 kilometers before being combined together and then shipped onward to consumers: the strawberries come from Poland; corn and wheat flour from Holland; jam, sugar beets, and the yogurt itself from Germany; and the plastic and paper containers and wrappings from various other places. Ingredients in the average plate of food on American dinner tables these days are estimated to travel, on the average, about 1,500 miles from source to plate. Every mile of

such increased transport activity in the global economy has tremendous costs to the environment, costs which remain externalized by our current measures of efficiency, that is, costs which eventually are subsidized by taxpayers.

For example, as global transport increases, it requires a massive increase in global infrastructure development. This is good for large corporations like Bechtel, who get to do the construction work, but it's bad news for the environments where such infrastructures are needed: new airports, new seaports, new oilfields, new pipelines for the oil, new rail lines, new high speed highways. Many of these things are built in wilderness or forested areas with relatively intact biodiversity. The impacts are especially strong now in South and Central America where there have been tremendous investments in infrastructure developments in wilderness regions, often against major resistance from native communities (the Uwe in Columbia, the Kuna in Panama, and many different groups in Ecuador have been particularly active). But the problems are also obvious in the developed world. In England, for example, a few years ago, there was a mass series of protests by 200,000 people from the English countryside against the rapid development of huge new highways jammed through rural landscapes so that truck drivers could better service the global trading system. The indigenous people in Latin America and the rural English are both protesting the same thing: local environment destruction from globalization.

Even more important is the increase in fossil fuel use. Ocean shipping carries nearly 80 percent of the world's international trade in goods. The fuel that's commonly used is a mixture of diesel and low quality oil known as "Bunker C" which is particularly polluting and very high in carbon and sulfur. If not consumed by ships, it would otherwise be considered a waste product. The shipping industry is anticipating major growth over the next few years; the port of Los Angeles alone projects a 50 percent increase over the next decade.

Increased air transport is even worse than shipping. Each ton of freight moved by plane uses forty-nine times as much energy per kilometer than when it's moved by ship. One physicist at Boeing likened the pollution from the take-off of a single 747 to "setting the local gas station on fire and flying it over your neighborhood." A two-minute take-off of a 747 is equal to 2.4 million lawnmowers running for twenty minutes.

It is now estimated by many that the increase of global transport is one of the largest contributors to the growing crisis of climate change. If we only had a government that actually believed climate change was real, the first thing it might do, aside from trying to meet the Kyoto standards, would be to advocate for less trade, not more. Mr. Bush is not likely to opt for that.



Increased global transport has brought other dreadful byproducts, including the epidemic increase of bioinvasions, a major cause of species extinction. With the growth of global transport, billions of creatures are on the move. They are hiding in cargo or in ballast. They are in suitcases or on our shoes or clinging to the sides of ships. Viruses, bacteria, mosquitoes, nematodes, exotic seeds, gypsy moths, zebra mussels, *et al.*, are getting free transport in the global economy, and many are thriving in their new homes, often outcompeting native species, and bringing pollution or health crises. On the East Coast, for example, the emergence of the West Nile virus where it never existed before is surely due to transport activity. So is the spread of malaria and dengue fever to other parts of North America. Even hoof-and-mouth disease is due largely to globalization.

If you are going to ship perishables across oceans, you also need an increase in refrigeration, with its significant contribution to ozone depletion and climate change, and an increase in packaging and the use of wood pallets for cargo loading; these are little noted but significant factors in the increased pressure on global forests.

The central point is this: there is no way around the problem of environmental damage caused by a globalized economy! If you are going to design a system built on the premise that dramatically increased global trade is good, you are going to increase transport activity and you are guaranteed to bring on the kinds of problems I have just described. They are intrinsic to the model.

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## When We Lose Small Farms

In the end, the most traumatic social and environmental consequences of economic globalization occur at the regional and local levels, especially because of the shift from economies based on small-scale, diverse models of agricultural production, to the industrial export model. The results are grim.

We must remember that nearly half of the world population still lives directly on the land, growing food for their families and communities. They emphasize staples and other mixed crops and they replant with indigenous seed varieties, using crop rotation and community sharing of resources like water, seeds, labor, and so forth. Such systems have kept them going for a millennia. But, as I said earlier, local systems are anathema to global corporations. So companies like Monsanto, Cargill, and Archer Daniels Midland are leading a chorus of corporate, government, and bureaucratic statements—often expressed in millions of dollars worth of ads—that small farmers are not “productive” or “efficient” enough to feed a hungry world. Only global corporations can do it. We hear that, disgustingly, every night on the Lehrer News Hour, on so-called “public broadcasting.” Archer Daniels Midland advertises that the only thing that is preventing it from feeding a hungry world is “politics” that

refuses to lower barriers for it to go in and feed everybody.

Unfortunately, such companies have plenty of entry. Too much. Nearly all the investment rules of the WTO and the big banks—and many more now proposed—strongly favor global corporations and monocultures over local diverse farming for self-sufficiency. So, on lands where tens of thousands of small farmers once grew food to eat, giant corporations and global development schemes are converting the land to single-crop luxury monocultures run by absentee landlords.

These companies absolutely do not grow food for local people to eat. Global corporations specialize in high-priced, high-margin luxury items—flowers, potted plants, beef, shrimp, cotton, coffee—grown for export to the already overfed countries. As for the people who used to live on the lands, growing their own foods, they are rapidly being removed from their lands. And they are not getting jobs, either. Since these corporate systems feature highly intensive, machine- and pesticide-driven production, there are very few jobs. So the people who used to feed themselves become landless, cashless, homeless, dependent, and hungry! Communities that were once self-sustaining disappear, and still intact cultures are decimated. This is so even in this country, where there are now very few family farmers left.

Eventually, the farmers and their families flee to crowded urban slums. There, without community, without cultural supports, they try to compete for the rare poorly paid urban job. Families that once fed themselves become society’s burden, while huge corporate farmers get rich from exports.

Some of these newly landless peoples also start fleeing across borders. We have certainly seen that in the context of U.S.-Mexico trade, since NAFTA. For Mexico’s indigenous Mayan corn farmers—who supported themselves via the *ejido* coop farming system in Mexico for nearly a century (ever since the Zapatista revolution in the early 1900s) NAFTA has been a death sentence. In order to qualify for NAFTA, Mexico had to kill off the *ejido* system, opening up the Mayan farmlands to entry by outside investors, driving the Mayans off their lands. Landless, homeless, cashless, these people have often fled across the U.S. border looking for seasonal work as grape or strawberry pickers, only to be met with xenophobia and violence.

There is another unseen environmental problem intrinsic to this shift to the export mode: monocultural production, which raises enormous environmental problems. By definition, monocultures reduce biodiversity, not only by killing the microscopic life within the soils through heavy chemical use, but also by reducing production of commodities to one or two export varieties. Where indigenous Filipinos, for example, once grew thousands of varieties of rice, now just two varieties account for 98 percent of production, and the other varieties are disappearing. Mexico has lost more than 75 percent of its indigenous maize varieties. Among potato farmers on Chiloe Island in Chile, (as well as in other parts of the Pacific slope of the Andes where thousands of

varieties of potatoes were once grown), production has been reduced to four or five varieties suitable to large-scale intensive production. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN, the world has already lost up to 75 percent of its crop diversity because of the globalization of industrialized agriculture.

And then there's the external costs of industrial agriculture. Hailed as more efficient than small-scale farming, this is a kind of efficiency that ignores the costs of air, water, and soil pollution; the increased use of fossil fuels, pesticides, and herbicides; the loss of topsoil due to machine-intensive production; and the public health problems arising from food-borne diseases directly rooted in factory farming systems: *salmonella*, *e coli*, *listeria*, *et al.* Not to mention mad cow disease, hoof-and-mouth disease and others.

Finally there is the social cost of somehow taking care of all the farmers who have lost their livelihoods through this system as numerous small farms employing entire families are transformed into industrial farms managed by a handful of full-time workers. Taking all these external costs into account, is it not preposterous to call this system efficient? Maybe you can get a tomato from Mexico at a few cents less at the store, but we all will pay more in higher taxes in future years to clean up the messes this system causes. And the environment pays the most.

Millions of farmers around the world are exquisitely aware of the global corporate ag system, and they hate it. We have seen mass protests by rice farmers in Japan, Thailand, and the Philippines ... we have seen gigantic protests against Cargill, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Monsanto in India, with millions of people on the street. Two years ago, we saw a French farmer named Jose Bové drive his tractor into a McDonalds in France. Bové was protesting "bad food," he said, as well as the entire industrial ag system, the corporate takeover of small farmers and the destruction of traditional farming in France, the cultural and ecological destruction that goes with undermining products like artisanal small-scale cheese in France, and the harsh rules of the WTO's food standards agency, *codex alimentarius*. Among other rules, *codex* recently stated that cheese could no longer be sold in outdoor markets in France, unless it was shrink-wrapped, just like Kraft.

Once again, it's the economic model itself that's the problem. The whole idea of converting diverse local economies into gung-ho export trade systems can only benefit global corporations while making individuals, communities, and nations dependent and vulnerable. We would be far better off if international institutions and agreements put maximum emphasis on aiding local and national self-sufficiency, rather than maximizing exports.

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## Who Benefits?

One could grant the benefit of the doubt to the architects of this global experiment. Let's say they meant well. Maybe they really believed that this system would produce a kind of rapid exponential growth that would be truly beneficial. We have certainly heard them repeat the main homily over and over: "A rising tide will lift all boats." This is the claim that globalization's benefits will trickle down to all segments of society; that, indeed, its real purpose is to help lift the poor. But is that true?

First of all, how can hyperexpansion be sustained? How long can it go on before we have to directly face the limits of a finite planet? Where will the resources—the minerals, the wood, the water, the power—come from to feed an exponential expansion, without killing the planet? How many cars and refrigerators can be built and bought? How many roads can cover the landscape? How many fish can be industrially vacuumed from the sea before the ecosystem fails, and the species disappear? How much pollution can we live with? or global warming? or ozone depletion before the social and environmental costs become too great?

And who, finally, benefits? It's not the farmers driven from their lands and made into homeless refugees. It's not urban dwellers, dealing with influxes of displaced peoples, jamming in to look for jobs. It's not workers caught in downward wage spirals. It's surely not nature.

Well .... Here in the United States we know that top corporate executives of the largest global companies are making salaries and options in the millions of dollars, often in the hundreds of millions, while real wages of ordinary workers have been declining. The Institute for Policy Studies reports that American CEOs are now paid, on average, 450 times more than production workers, with that rate increasing yearly. The Economic Policy Institute's 1999 report says that median hourly wages are actually down by 10 percent in real wages over the last twenty-five years. The *New York Times* recently reported that even as the economy has begun to slide, executive salaries of large corporations, mostly global corporations, are steadily increasing, into the upper hundreds of millions. And in the industry that led our recent boom, the computer industry, where some people have famously made fortunes, 80 percent of assembly and production workers are temporary workers at \$8 an hour, no benefits, no unions. Are we lifting all boats yet?

The U.N. Development Program 1999 report indicated that the gap between the wealthy and the poor within and among countries of the world is getting steadily larger, and it blamed inherent inequities in the global trade system.

And such is the degree of wealth concentration from all this, that the world's 475 billionaires are now worth the combined incomes of the bottom 50 percent of humanity.



## GLOBALIZATION

Of the largest 100 economies in the world, 52 are now corporations. Mitsubishi is the twenty-second largest economy in the world. GM is twenty-sixth. Ford is thirty-first. All are larger than Denmark, Thailand, Turkey, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Norway, Finland, Malaysia, Chile, New Zealand.

And if you still cling to the nostalgic idea that big corporations are helping employ the global workforces—that size begets jobs—here's one final stat: the 200 largest corporations in the world now account for about 30 percent of global economic activity, but employ less than half of one percent of the global work force. As these companies continue to get larger and more globalized, they continue to replace workers with machines, or buy up competitors and eliminate duplicate jobs. Such economies of scale are intrinsic to the free trade globalization design, just as environmental pollution is intrinsic to export-oriented trade. Large scale mergers and consolidations produces fewer jobs, not more jobs.

So much for the rising tide that lifts all boats. Clearly it lifts only yachts.

That's the bad news! The good news is that it doesn't need to be this way. There is nothing inevitable about it. Globalization's just a set of rules and institutions that can be changed if we want to change them. If we have a democracy—do we?—then we can engage it. A whole lot of people understand all this, and are mobilizing to change it, as we have seen in Seattle, in Prague, in Genoa, and as you will continue to see. This movement is not slowing down, though it is being met with increased fear and repression. As for the WTO, it is so worried about anyone wanting to monitor its next meeting this October that it has moved it to Qatar! Protest there will get you more than pepper-sprayed: it may get you killed. The WTO has clearly not learned much yet about openness, transparency, democracy. Qatar is a great place to hide.

Nonetheless, tens of thousands—hundreds of thousands—of opponents of globalization are moving forward. Most are in general agreement that the Bretton Woods model is hopelessly flawed, as it responds only to one set of values, that what's good for corporate growth is good for all of us and for the environment too. It's already clear that does not hold up.

There is now also major grumbling inside the WTO. Great schisms have developed on such issues as biotechnology, agriculture, services, and culture. Some countries are feeling great heat from their citizens about the destruction of traditional livelihoods or the health risks of the agriculture trade system or the pressures that the United States applies for massive conversion to industrial corporate ag models.

In Seattle, we saw for the first time that Third World countries have understood that the present system is not designed to help them, despite the phony WTO rhetoric;

that it's designed to exclude them, or to keep them as resource and labor colonies for global corporations.

A great illustration of this happened during the protest in Washington D.C. last April against the IMF and the World Bank. The banks were giving daily briefings to the press blaming the protestors for harming the world's poor. It was the same kind of stuff that Michael Moore, president of the WTO, had been saying in Seattle, claiming that the WTO was the one working for the poor and we were harming them. The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* and all the networks dutifully carried surely one of the most cynical set of statements in history: this story, blaming us for harming the poor. But then one day I picked up a copy of the *International Herald Tribune*. It had a front page story giving the IMF charges that we were harming the poor, but right next to it, with equal space, the *Herald Tribune* carried a story about the G77 meeting in Havana going on simultaneously. There, the world's poorest Third World and less developed countries had voted unanimously, 77-0, to praise the protestors and sharply criticize the IMF and World Bank.

That story was not carried in the *Post* or the *Times*, though it did appear in Europe and Asia. We have quite a bit of work to do with the media—including getting them to carry some stories about *why* so many hundreds of thousands of people are protesting.

But the best news, I think, is that most of the opposition no longer feels we should let the people who created this problem also provide the solution.

Last spring, some 25,000 anti-globalization activists—from all parts of the world—gathered in Puerto Alegre, Brazil, to begin a process of globally organizing toward a replacement for the Bretton Woods model. The hope is to define a new set of international agreements that operate from an entirely different non-corporate hierarchy of values. Of course you didn't read about this meeting much in the media either, because the media was all in Davos, where the captains of industry and globalization were meeting, at the same time, at the so-called World Economic Forum.

Sometimes, those of us in the anti-globalization movement are called utopianists. After all, we want to stop the so-called inevitable "progress" of corporate capitalism. But on this charge of utopianism, our critics have got things backwards. If utopianism is the problem today, then it's corporate utopianism. To keep arguing that a system that homogenizes global economic activity and culture just to benefit corporations, that removes power from communities and puts it into global bureaucracies, that marginalizes and makes homeless millions of farmers and workers, and that devastates nature in entirely unprecedented ways—to keep arguing that such a system can survive for long is corporate utopianism. I really don't think it's going to work. □

# A Sabbath of Place

## Preserving the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Paul Wapner

We are used to thinking of the Sabbath as a time. It is a moment in the week when we stop doing all the things we do and just be. The Torah tells us to do no work on the Sabbath and to keep it holy. We pause from all our efforts to create and change the world, and simply appreciate the way things are. The Sabbath, as such, is a type of withdrawal. It is a moment, a hiatus, in the otherwise endless stream of acting in the world. It is a time to refrain from laboring and, to use Heidegger's awkward phrase, to let "Being be."

What if the Sabbath could be not only a *time* but also a *place*? What if the Sabbath could be not simply a pause in our day-to-day lives but also a space on the planet devoid of our presence and even our crossings?

What if there could be places on earth un-etched with human design, un-marked by the human footprint, untouched by our efforts to create and change the world? What if there could be a Sabbath of place, where we withhold our labors and let the other-than-humans just be?

The idea is not so farfetched. The practice of *shemittah*, where farmers let their fields rest every seven years, aims to bring the concept of Sabbath to the earth. *Shemittah* means to drop; it refers to the practice of letting fruit, vegetables, and stalks fall to the ground, unpicked and unutilized by people. Crops go uncultivated for a year; the soil finds rejuvenation; the land becomes a place from which humans withdraw. *Shemittah* is a time when humans let the land rest and take a break from its productivity. It represents one form of a Sabbath of place.

We can imagine another kind. Instead of giving the earth a year off, we can choose to withhold our labor from the land permanently and create special places to harbor the gift of the Sabbath. We can decide to cordon off part of the land to let the extra-human world express and experience

itself free from constant human presence and intervention. This idea is also not so farfetched. In many ways, officially designated wilderness areas and wildlife refuges are "land-Sabbaths." According to the 1964 Wilderness Act, wilderness areas are places where, "the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor and does not remain." Refuges are similarly protected areas designated specifically for protecting wildlife and

habitat in perpetuity. In both cases, the idea is to demarcate places where the nonhuman world is supposed to reign supreme, places where other beings live out their lives free from extensive human interference.

It makes some sense to think about a Sabbath of place in the current controversy over the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). ANWR is

the crown jewel of the National Wildlife Refuge System. It protects 19 million acres of land from development and permanent human presence. According to the Department of Interior's official website, ANWR is "among the most complete, pristine and undisturbed ecosystems on earth." It is often referred to as America's Serengeti. The Refuge is home to numerous plants and animals, including polar bears, whales, snow geese, and wolves, who have lived in the region for eons. The spring migration of 129,000 porcupine caribou across the Refuge to birthing places in the northern coastal plain is supposed to be one of the grandest displays on earth of nature's dynamic patterns. It has been taking place, uninterrupted, since at least the last ice age.

The Bush Administration wants to drill for oil in the northern coastal plain of ANWR. An estimated 3.2 billion gallons of commercially recoverable oil are locked under ANWR's majestic landscape and we are told that the United States needs that oil to keep the economy going. We should be critical of such proposals. First, oil from ANWR would do little to meet our current and future energy needs. The administration points to California's current energy crisis to justify the search for more oil, claiming that California presages what is in store for the rest of the country. Yet the truth is that California uses oil for only a minuscule amount

(continued on page 65)

Paul Wapner is associate professor and director of the environmental policy program at American University. His most recent publication is *Principled World Politics: The Challenge of Normative International Relations* (Roman and Littlefield, 2000).

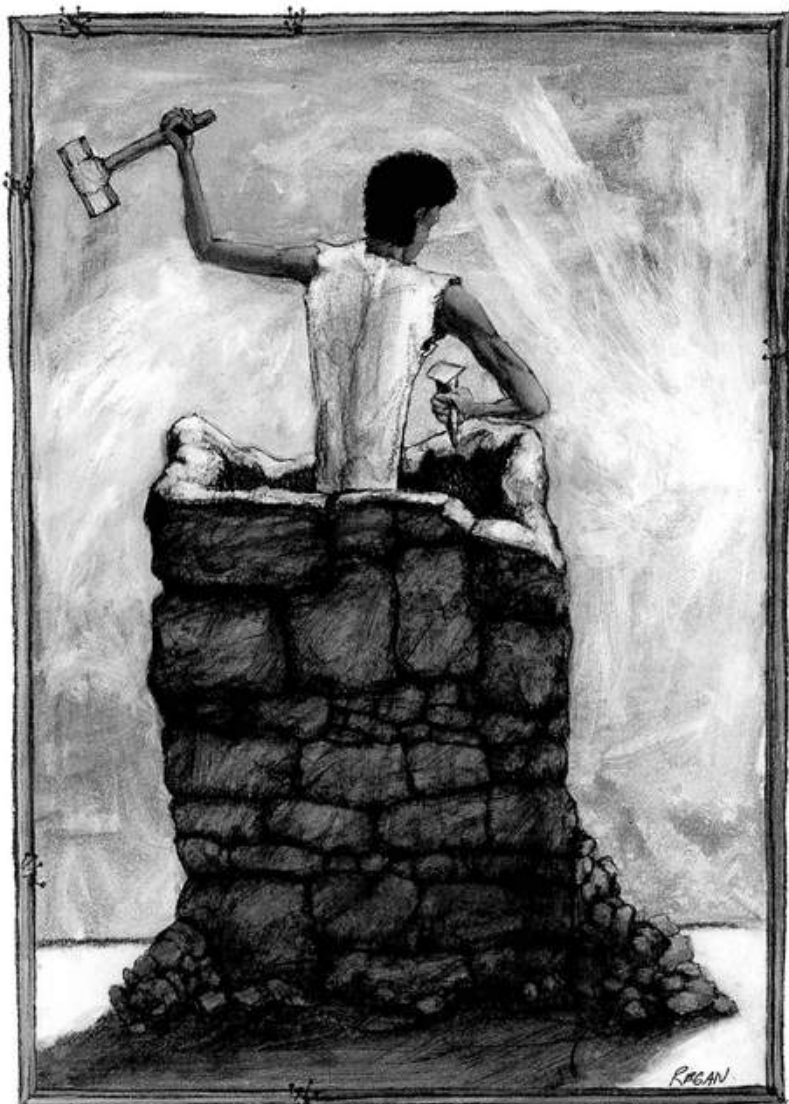
# A Message From a Lebanese American

Leila Abu-Saba

Sixteen years ago this spring, in my father's native village in Southern Lebanon, my eighty-three-year-old grandmother was killed in her bed by our neighbors. Palestinians from the Ain-el-Helweh refugee camp just down the hill sacked our Christian village, killing anyone in their way. Moslem Lebanese friends later found her body in bed, burned from the waist down. For the next six years our town, Mieh-Mieh, stood empty, houses stripped of doors and windows, the church filled with trucks and ammunition belonging to an armed faction of the PLO. As I watch recent events in Israel, I am reminded of those horrible times, and the emotional work I had to do to come to terms with my grandmother's violent death.

Just as many Israelis on the left are asking themselves—how could they do this to us?—I too asked this question. My father and his brothers had been notorious among our right-leaning villagers for their sympathy to the Palestinians. As a child my uncles took me into the Ain-el-Helweh camp to see how the refugees lived and to visit Palestinian friends. The Christmas I was sixteen, a Palestinian schoolteacher from the camp hosted a luxurious lunch for my parents and me. I have not forgotten the grilled lamb chops flavored with cinnamon he served us, and the gentle conversation we had with his son and daughters. Back in the States, in towns like Peoria, Illinois, and Greensboro, North Carolina, my father was always willing to debate at local forums in favor of the Palestinian cause. His efforts got him listed in the Anti-Defamation League's database of "terrorists" as a PLO member—a distinction he says he did not deserve, since only Palestinians may belong to the PLO. With such cordial relations, how could "they," those Palestinians down the hill from us, kill my grandmother?

*Leila Abu-Saba was born and raised in the United States to a Lebanese father and American mother. A writer and computer software instructor, she lives in Oakland, California with her husband and two sons.*



Ain-el-Helweh is one of the most crowded and desperate Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Sanitation is rudimentary, schools are primitive, and job opportunities are nearly nil. In 1985, when my grandmother was killed, the second generation of Palestinians born in that camp were coming of age with little hope of ever leaving. Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 added fuel to the volatile conditions. *The New York Times* reported that 2,000 people died in the bombing of Ain-El-Helweh that first week of June. What I never forgot was that the body count was only an estimate—actual numbers were impossible to obtain, because the rubble was so deep. Relief workers ended by covering the area with lime, entombing the dead in the remains of their homes. That nightmare, however, was just the most intense of many Israeli bombing raids over the years.

In June of 1974, when I was twelve, I witnessed a much smaller raid that killed "only" twenty Palestinians. As planes dove over the camp, sending up mini-mushroom clouds, my relatives tried to calm me. The Israelis wouldn't hit us, my cousins said. They have good aim. I was not afraid for my life, but I was outraged to know that people were dying a mile away from me and nobody could prevent it. I knew even then that this raid was in retaliation for the

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID REGAN

Maalot massacres; my Jewish school friends in Illinois had wept about those killings just a month before. Still, whatever justifications anyone made for Israel's bombing could not alleviate the terror, helplessness, and hatred that overwhelmed me. I remember fantasizing what I would do if I got my hands on an Israeli fighter pilot. For years I suffered panic attacks at the approach of low-flying military jets.

As the American-born daughter of peace activists, I had access to the best psychological help to work through my trauma. Many years of therapy in the safety of the United States helped me realize that revenge is not a viable solution. I was able to befriend Israeli Americans my age, people who had served in Lebanon in the 1980s. Today I am married to an American Jew, and go to Passover every year with my husband's family. I squirm a little at the lines about those evil Egyptians, but for the most part am grateful to participate in the spiritual tradition of my husband's people.

None of the children in the refugee camps had any of my advantages. All of them suffered much worse trauma than I ever did. No matter how much Israel "punished" them for terrorism, the violence never stopped. The cluster bombs, carpet bombs, mass imprisonment, and decades-long occupation of Lebanon did not stop Palestinian violence; instead, it introduced a new phenomenon, Hezbollah, into the equation. Ariel Sharon's methods didn't create peace in Lebanon in 1982. Why should they work in Israel today?

Meanwhile, throughout the Lebanese civil war, most of my relatives expressed little concern for the fate of the Palestinians in the camps next door. Many Lebanese were too disgusted with the behavior of armed Palestinian militants to care about the suffering of the refugees. My mother, a psychologist, claims this is denial, a way people cope with intolerable reality. I despaired over Lebanese indifference, feeling that it was morally wrong.

In 1985, just before my grandmother's death and the sack of our village, right-wing Christian Lebanese militiamen used Christian Mieh-Mieh as a staging point for their artillery. They shelled Ain-el-Helweh camp for a week or so, killing several Palestinians. When the Israeli army pulled out of the area, Palestinians retaliated by attacking and eventually sacking our village. Everyone except my grandmother fled. She fought my uncle with her walking stick, insisting that she would not leave her home. In a judgment that haunts him still, he decided to leave her, hoping that her reputation and her age would protect her. He was wrong.

When I ask myself how a mob of angry youths could kill an old woman, I only have to think about what I saw in Ain-El-Helweh camp as a child and imagine how I might have felt had I grown up there. The men who killed my grandmother are responsible for her death, and if they are ever found, I would want them prosecuted. But the reality of the world is that when your neighbors suffer so much, you are not safe. You may not like them. You may not think their problems are your problem. But their suffering

will affect you. For your own good, do something to help.

In 1991, all the parties to the Lebanese civil war signed a peace agreement at Taif, Saudi Arabia that led to the return of family and friends to our village. Since then I have returned twice to Mieh-Mieh to sleep in the house where my father was born. The bullet holes in the plaster are now patched over, the scorched tiles in my grandmother's apartment replaced. Palestinians may not enter the village after sundown, and must state their business to the Lebanese Army sentry posted at the edge of town. Christians are back, living, working, and raising children in their spacious, battle-scarred houses surrounded by orange and olive groves. Just down the hill the Palestinians go on eking out their lives as best they can. When I sit on the balcony of my grandparents' home, looking out at the teeming camps below us and the blue Mediterranean beyond, I wonder how long this round of peace can last.

I cannot condone any of the acts of violence I have seen in the latest Palestinian uprising. But I feel I understand them in a way that bewildered Israelis do not. I want to grab everybody involved by the collar, Israelis and Arabs, and shout into their fear-twisted faces: Look at what happened to Lebanon. Your neighbors are not going to go away. You can't kill all of them. You can't expel them. One day you will have to make peace. You can do it before you tear your country apart, or you can do it after. You choose. □

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## JUST AND JEWISH WARFARE (continued from page 31)

and starvation. The Landau Commission took special note of the term "combined use," concluding that individually employed techniques of lesser or equal savagery might constitute degradation but not torture. With this caveat, they gave the green light to the GSS. That is how the situation stood until 1999.

In the intervening years, mounting evidence indicated that the GSS was not content with the five techniques. B'Tselem, Amnesty International, and the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel published numerous reports of Palestinian detainees who were killed, beaten, crippled, and driven nearly insane by the combined use of an improved Jewish version of the techniques made famous by the British. In its 1999 ruling the Supreme Court vividly describes the interrogation techniques then in practice. These included "physical means" (beating and slapping), "shaking" ("forceful shaking of the upper torso, back and forth, in a manner that causes the neck and head to dangle and vacillate rapidly"), excessive tightening of handcuffs, the "Frog Crouch" ("consecutive, periodical crouches on the tips of one's toes, each lasting for five minute intervals"), and, finally, interrogation in the "Shabach" position (seating a suspect on a "small, low chair, whose seat is tilted forward, towards the ground. One hand is tied behind the suspects back, and placed between the chair's seat and back support, the second hand is tied behind the chair, against the back support"). Hooding and "powerfully loud music" were also used in conjunction with most of these techniques.

The Supreme Court was no longer impressed with the existential argument against terrorism: while they acknowledged that a democracy had to fight "with one hand tied behind its back," they pointed out that terrorism alone would not bring down the State of Israel. Nor was the Court moved by the "ticking bomb" argument, the demand to torture a recalcitrant suspect who would not otherwise reveal information about an impending terror attack. The "ticking bomb" argument only holds if we know, with certainty, that others beside the suspect will not intervene to move the bomb to another time or place, or to change the detonating mechanism. This is rarely, if ever, the case in Israel. There are no lone, Timothy McVeigh-like terrorists among the Palestinians, whose networks are sufficiently organized to keep on ticking with or without one captured member or another. The "ticking bomb" argument could not underwrite a sweeping policy of torture, the court ruled, and so moderate physical pressure was prohibited, absent more definitive legislation.

The Supreme Court decision vindicated years of anti-torture activism in Israel. But the ruling left the door ajar

for the legislature to approve torture provided that a law infringing upon a suspect's liberty would be "befitting the values of the state of Israel, enacted for a proper purpose, and to an extent no greater than is required." A daunting task, to say the least. Nevertheless, this did not dissuade some legislators from trying to enact a torture law.

In the waning days of the Barak administration, forty-three opposition members, including the current prime minister, Ariel Sharon, and most members of his cabinet, drafted a law allowing the GSS to torture suspects. The law

is couched in secrecy. No techniques are described, only "special measures" and "physical pressure." These may be employed with written permission from the director of the GSS for a period limited to forty-eight hours but renewable. If the director is unavailable and the situation urgent, an investigator may use "special measures" for a period of not more than two hours! While the GSS and the prime minister must periodically

review the guidelines and report to the Knesset every six months, no publicly published accounting is required.

This law is probably unique in the annals of democratic legislation and, should it pass, there is every reason to believe that torture will quickly regain its status as the interrogative method of choice. It takes no imagination whatsoever to see what danger this kind of law poses to a democratically fragile nation like Israel. At this writing, the law remains suspended in committee, but the GSS approached the Justice Ministry as recently as February 2001, complaining that while it was abiding by the Supreme Court's ban, its work is hindered by lack of interrogation tools. This is not entirely correct. While there is no renewed indication of widespread torture, complaints of abuse are again increasing, particularly as the current conflict intensifies. Recent events also have occasioned a more menacing form of deviant warfare: assassination.

## Assassination

Trying to quell the current round of violence that began following the collapse of Clinton's peace initiative in October 2000, Israel has been publicly "liquidating" Palestinian militia leaders. Palestinians have been assassinated before (most famously those who perpetrated the attack on Israeli athletes in Munich in 1972), but the sheer number of recent assassinations—more than twenty in ten months—is unprecedented. In response, international human rights organizations have strongly condemned Israel's policy of "extra-legal" executions. Israel has replied in the language of a just war: the Palestinians are participants in an armed conflict. Assassination, therefore, is not a result of wayward law enforcement but the legitimate, pre-emptive actions of a nation at war.

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*While there is no renewed indication of widespread torture, complaints of abuse are again increasing.*

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It cannot be denied that assassination has a great deal of intuitive appeal. It satisfies the need to strike back and to exact just punishment, long overdue and unattainable in any other way. Assassination is a source of pride, demonstrating Jewish military prowess as targets are picked off by the most imaginative means possible: booby trapped cell phones, rigged automobiles, and rocket and tank attacks executed with almost pinpoint accuracy. Many claim that assassination prevents imminent terror attacks and serves as a powerful deterrent, giving potential terrorists pause while convincing Palestinian locals to distance themselves from terrorists. Finally, it is said, assassination accomplishes all this with minimal civilian casualties.

Assassination sounds like the perfect military tactic—and it would be, but for the fact that all these assumptions are naive, wrong, and entirely misguided. Assassination instead erodes the basis for any future peace negotiations, deters no one, and precipitates a violent, vicious, and almost insane desire for revenge.

When terrorist bombings are viewed through the prism of ordinary criminal activity, it is—or should be—obvious that terrorists cannot be punished without the due process afforded by the criminal justice system. No one advocates summarily executing even the most heinous common criminals. The potential damage to the rule of law is simply too profound should law enforcement officers become judge, jury, and executioner. Recently, Israel was stung by fierce international condemnation as Amnesty International, B'Tselem, and the U.S. State Department denounced assassination as an act of extra-legal execution entirely proscribed by international law and common morality.

In an effort to deflect this international criticism, the Israeli government took the unusual step in February 2001 of unilaterally redefining the conflict with the Palestinians from one of "belligerent occupation" to one of "armed conflict." By redefining Palestinians as combatants, Israel abandoned the pretext that assassinations were a form of punishment or law enforcement and claimed instead that they were legitimate, preemptive strikes. In the context of armed conflict enemy soldiers are fair game. This seemed to offer military planners a way out, reopening the door not to punish Palestinians but to assassinate them in order to preempt planned attacks and to deter others from similar designs.

Israelis are proud of their ability to preempt armed attacks. Used successfully to justify the Six Day War, the argument is often resurrected to explain all kinds of incursions. In this case, however, assassination in the guise of preemption can be dismissed if three points are kept in mind.

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*Who is going to be deterred in the face of torture, assassination, and blackmail? Who is being punished when death can be glorified so easily?*

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First, a preemptive strike is an act of war and must conform to the law of war. No one questions the right of any nation to repel an actual or imminent attack, but when armed attacks devolve to threats the situation becomes much more complex. Despite the horror of terrorist attacks, they do not pose a threat to national existence and this severely limits Israel's right to strike prior to acts of open aggression.

Second, a preemptive attack must be proportionate to the death and damage one seeks to avoid. Excessive civilian casualties make an act disproportionate. The ratio of civilian casualties to assassinated (suspected) Palestinian terrorists is now about 1:2. Is this disproportionate? Probably so. More to the point, however, is the question whether these deaths have brought any military benefit whatsoever. It seems to many people that terror attacks only increase after an assassination. At the very least the burden of proof must be on the authorities. Have attacks been foiled? No one knows. No evidence has ever been offered either to the public or to an independent commission to support assassinations. An act without visible benefit defies the test of proportionality.

Finally, nations cannot fight by illegal means. Another anachronism perhaps, but one which binds us. The laws of war are meant to limit suffering and protect civilians and it is no accident that recruiting collaborators, for instance, is banned absolutely. But assassination won't work without local informers. This, in and of itself, should be sufficient to understand the ban on assassination.

### *Collaboration*

Assassination is banned for many reasons. Most obviously, it invites retaliation unless, of course, the other side is conveniently unable to respond in kind. More importantly, assassination is condemned because it is "treacherous" and "perfidious." These are archaic concepts, gleaned from old and obscure sources, but speak directly to the ethics of Jewish warfare.

Treachery and perfidy are violations of trust and, while there is precious little trust during wartime, some is needed if conflicts are ever to end. When soldiers hoist a white flag, they invite trust. Neither prisoners or captors are expected to shoot one another. To do so abuses the unsteady, temporary peace and undermines the entire practice of surrender. Next time there will be no prisoners. Peace negotiations work the same way. In olden days, military leaders were sometimes lured to their deaths by false promises of safe passage ostensibly offered to negotiate peace. In fact, this recently happened in Israel when soldiers attacked Mohammed Dahlan, chief of Palestinian security. After

returning from a negotiating session in April 2001, Dahlan's car was fired upon by Israeli troops. Israel immediately apologized, but a cartoon the next day summed up perceptions on both sides. Dahlan is depicted next to his bullet-riddled car complaining loudly to Israeli defense minister Ben Eliezar that he almost got killed. Ben Eliezar replies, "I'll check to see why the operation failed."

These are deliberate acts of treachery and are roundly condemned. But the assassinations of Palestinians are not usually treacherous in this obvious way. They are treacherous simply because they depend on traitors and cannot be accomplished without collaborators.

By all accounts, Ibrahim Bani Odeh, a Palestinian bomb maker, was decapitated when the headrest of the car he borrowed from his cousin, a known collaborator, exploded. Fatah leader Hussein Abayyat was assassinated after being fingered by four informers, and Yahiya Ayyash, the famous "engineer" assassinated in Gaza in 1996 when his cell phone blew up, was set up by a colleague's relative turned collaborator. One can easily see how the assassination of such contemptible individuals meets with little outrage. But there is a price to pay. It comes immediately in the form of vicious retaliatory raids and in the long term through the pernicious effects of collaboration on Palestinian society.

Collaboration is the mainstay of Israeli intelligence in the territories. While seemingly innocuous compared to torture and assassination, any attempt to compel "protected persons" (an occupied people is supposed to be protected) to serve in the armed forces of an occupying power is a "grave" breach of the Geneva Conventions and tantamount to a war crime. Presumably one would have little to say if Palestinians were to enlist of their own free will in the GSS, but all the evidence compiled by B'Tselem points to heavy-handed extortion and blackmail. In return for collaboration, Palestinians are offered cash, goods, and/or reduced prison sentences, while those who refuse to cooperate are threatened with loss of work permits and blocked access to medical care. No long term sociological study is required to imagine the effects that collaborators, spies, and informers must have on any close knit, traditional society. When even close friends and relatives are suspect, normal social intercourse must be impossible. Just as the trust, friendship, and loyalty that is so necessary for any normal society to function is severely undermined, so are law and order constantly subverted as Palestinian vigilantes execute collaborators along with their own political enemies and the socially undesirable.

Once used, collaboration and assassination provoke blind fury, radicalize moderates, and strengthen collective solidarity. Who is going to be deterred in the face of torture, assassination, and blackmail? Who is being punished when death can be glorified so easily? The answer, simply, is no one. It's an old lesson; we just haven't learned it yet.

## Learning Our Lesson

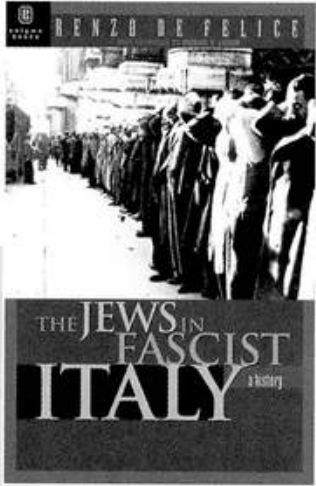
One would think that Israel might have learned a thing or two from the British, French, and Americans about attempts to quell national liberation movements through torture, assassination, collaboration, and assorted mayhem. Assassination and collective punishment are not new tactics and generated intense criticism when adopted by the United States in Vietnam. They did not win the war nor deny the insurgents sanctuary. They only destroyed the infrastructure of rural Vietnam.

The French experience in Algeria is equally instructive. "The Mediterranean runs through France as the Seine runs through Paris" was a popular saying in France in the 1950s. When war broke out the French settlers were convinced it would be short-lived if only everyone would back off and "let the army win." The war was not short-lived and the army quickly turned from conventional warfare to torture and assassination to fight mounting terrorism. Ultimately, the French, like the Americans, decided it was best to declare victory and leave. In 1963, leading French intellectual Pierre Vidal-Naquet decried torture as the "cancer of democracy" and the French continue to pick at their scabs until this very day.

In Israel, torture and assassination—both used with disastrous results to fight guerillas just a few years ago in Lebanon—now join a litany of similar policies including

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siege, collective punishment, and the limited destruction of infrastructure designed, in the words of senior officials, to “unbalance” the Palestinians, “weaken their morale,” and “drive a wedge between civilians and the Palestinian Authority.” One stares with disbelief when Raanan Gissin, the spokesman for Prime Minister Sharon, readily admits to reporters, as he did in February, that Israeli tactics are “out of the past” and then hastens to add, “but we think they can work here.” The tactics are out of the past, and they can’t work here any more than they have worked anywhere else.

### *Why Do We Do It?*

Torture, assassination, blackmail, extortion, and collective punishment. Why do we do it? Has Israel lost its moral balance? Or, is there just something about our war with the Palestinians that somehow justifies extreme measures?

The second argument is the easiest to make. The war on terror is a war of national survival and supreme emergency. “Necessity knows no law.” But this has always been a dangerous argument and remains so. The fact is that we continue to fight by the blackest means imaginable to a democratic nation because we forget our strengths. We forget, or have not yet noticed, that the existential fight for the Jewish State is won and over. But the images that sustained that fight, most frighteningly the Holocaust, the War of Independence, the Six Day War, and the Yom Kippur War, continue to haunt many who feel compelled to inculcate their children with the same angst and trepidation. While these recurrent images were essential to forge a national identity and instill a fighting spirit, they are laced with fear and loathing.

Today, Jews fear the Arabs in the same way many white Americans feared the blacks during the race riots of the 1960s. Many recall how suburban whites, and not a few Jews, nervously brandished pistols to fend off the blacks should they make their way from the inner city ghettos to the suburbs. But the pistols didn’t help, for the blacks came the very next day, ready to clean our houses and collect our garbage as they usually did. There is the pervasive feeling that the Palestinians are equally intent on slaughtering Jews when, in fact, many would probably be very grateful just to clean our houses and collect our garbage. If Israelis can no longer lay claim to underdog status, they have not ceased to think they can. This myopia, fueled by a constant preoccupation with survival and an incessant fear of another pogrom, makes it impossible to come to grips with Palestinian national aspirations.

Unlike blacks, Palestinians have done a lot to feed these fears. The abominable acts of terror against civilians tar their entire cause and it’s outrageous that more Palestinian intellectuals have not repudiated them. Not every Palestinian under arms is a terrorist, not every attack is a terrorist attack, but instead of seizing on this distinction

and condemning attacks on civilians, Palestinians too often have followed the Israeli lead of trying to justify abhorrent practices by redefining the terms. Just as assassination is for an Israeli “preemption” and torture is “moderate physical pressure”, so terror is for a Palestinian “national liberation,” and Jewish civilians are but “potential combatants.” But the argument does not wash and very few people buy it.

These two factors, Jewish fear of extermination and Palestinian terror, make it easy to ignore the humanitarian rules of war. But if this recognition makes it easy to turn around and seize the moral high ground, we must avoid getting trapped up there, unable to confront reality. Israelis are experiencing a level of personal insecurity unmatched since the founding of the state. Israeli officials, by the same token, are almost helpless. This helplessness breeds the final resort to pariah warfare and the subsequent spiral of reprisal

and violence. And, it leaves us in a quandary:

“Suppose a bomb explodes in Tel Aviv,” asked one Israeli official earlier this year, “and I knew who was planning it. I could not arrest him because he is in the PA [Palestinian Authority] and cannot eliminate him because it’s not ‘nice.’ What shall I say to the families of the people who are ripped to pieces by that bomb?”

Following the suicide attack that killed more than twenty youngsters at a Tel Aviv night club in June 2001, opposition leader Yossi Sarid declared that we should gauge our response by a very simple criteria that might be called “Jewish utilitarianism”: any action that saves more Israeli lives than it takes is good; any action that costs more Israeli lives than it saves is bad. In this sense, responding to terror with torture, assassination, blackmail, and collective punishment is bad. But it is important to understand why. More Jewish lives are lost because the means used to preserve them are morally odious from our perspective, from the Palestinian perspective and, indeed, from any perspective. Ultimately, we are fighting a war in order to make peace, and the peace we make must be able to survive the way we practice war. Without just war, there will be no just peace.

Periodically we hear that the rules of just war are but a relic of European history, wholly inapplicable to local conflicts rooted in fierce ethnic enmities. But, if true, what remains of any humanitarian law between nations? Is humanitarian law only an issue when the West is involved? If not, then those locked in regional rivalries face an abiding challenge to police themselves. Israel has an opportunity to show how a Jewish war might be just—how humanitarian law might apply in the kind of wars now in vogue, not international armed conflict but local hostilities confounded by an asymmetry of arms, terrorism, incongruent cultures, and the general indifference of most of the world. The tragedies of Jewish history were instrumental in bringing humanitarian law to the fore; it would be ironic if the Jews were the agents of its demise. □

*Without just war,  
there will be no  
just peace.*

## Joy

What never comes when called.  
What hides when held.  
Guest  
most at home where least  
expected. Vagrant  
balm of Gilead.  
What, soon as here,  
becomes  
the body's native ground and,  
soon as not,  
its banishment.  
Coming and going,  
indifferent,  
magisterial.  
My lovely daughter—  
walking me to the car  
to say goodbye  
the day I left  
to keep watch at my brother's  
bedside—  
all of a sudden  
singing, "I  
feel pretty, oh so  
pretty"  
as she raised  
her arms up in a loose oval  
over her head  
and pirouetted all along the walk.  
Savage  
and magisterial—  
the joy of it,  
the animal candor of  
each arabesque,  
each leaping turn and counter-turn,  
her voice  
now wobbly  
with laughter  
"And I pity

(continues on next page)

any girl  
                     who isn't me  
                                     tonight."  
 Savagely beautiful,  
                                     not so much like  
 the lion that the camera  
                                     freezes  
                                             in mid-  
 pounce, claws  
                                     outstretched for the stumbling  
                                                             antelope,  
 as like the herd  
                                     escaping  
                                             that the camera  
 pans to zigg-  
                                     zagging,  
                                             swerving as one,  
 their leaping strides now  
                                     leaping higher,  
                                                             faster,  
 even after,  
                                     it seems,  
                                             the fear subsides—  
 after the fear and  
                                     the relief  
                                             they keep  
 on running  
                                     for nothing but  
                                             the joy of running,  
 though  
                                     it could be  
                                             any one of them  
 is running  
                                     from its fallen  
                                             mother or father,  
 sister or brother  
                                     across the wide  
                                                             savanna,  
 under a bright sun  
                                     into fresher grass.

—Alan Shapiro

# Renewing God

Zalman M. Schachter Shalomi

## Paradigm Shift In Consciousness

**R**ight now we find ourselves in the midst of a paradigm shift which is shattering our reality maps. We all have grids of meaning which we express through language. When we say something is "self-evident," we refer to a common reality map, that collusion in which we all play by the same rules of evidence to converse and meet in the same universe of discourse.

When the patch jobs on old reality maps no longer work, (like the Ptolomean view of the Earth as center of the universe ceased to explain our world), we have a paradigm shift. Today, a mind-move of such proportions has taken place that it represents not a mere adjustment of the old paradigm, correcting a detail here and another there, but rather a radically changed *Weltanschauung*.

Such a change has a giant impact on religion. A religious tradition contains faith-treasures that are independent of the reality maps with which they have become combined. However, many religionists confuse the reality maps that arise from their empirical roadmaps with the "magisterium" of their lineage. In this way, even though a reality map no longer works, many religionists hold on with desperate tenacity to what has become obsolete. For many "true believers," a major shift of their reality-view threatens to unbalance the scaffolding of their value structure.

In the midst of such a paradigm shift—and with high anxiety about losing their moral moorings—religionists tend to go into denial about the inadequacies of their reality maps and declare the new outlook as "heresy." Their high anxiety would be allayed if they trusted enough that once we delaminate our faith-treasures from the earlier maps, we can connect these valued treasures of tradition to the new maps. In my book *Paradigm Shift*, I have offered the journey of my own recontextualization of Judaism as helped by Jewish mysticism. Having seen the process of regeneration in history, I have seen part of the application of this transformation to the



current Jewish renewal. What I am about to offer is meant as a witnessing to the process of updating religious traditions. All of us who cherish a sacred lineage and are imbedded in it are experiencing serious upheavals. In describing the way I deal with my own tradition, I hope, be of help to others in other traditions dealing with similar problems.

## Shift Happens!

**T**his is not the first time Judaism has dealt with such paradigm shifts. Judaism's reality map changed from the time of Abraham and the Patriarchs to the time of Moses and the First Temple, then again after the destruction of the First Temple, and most radically after the destruction of the Second Temple. During the time when there was a Holy Temple in Jerusalem, which was the only venue where we were permitted to make offerings on the altar, we offered animal sacrifices as our way of serving God. But because the Temple, its altars, and its priesthood who slaughtered and offered the animals were destroyed, we can no longer make offerings of life that must be killed for the sacred service. The cause behind this change in practice, however, was deeper than the destruction of a building: sacrifice was no longer the right sacred technology for serving God. Another sacred technology, utilizing words, had to come to

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take its place. That technology has lasted nearly to the present day.

Paradigms shift at crisis points: One-third of Jewry was destroyed at Auschwitz, and something fundamental and old in the world was destroyed with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. So we recognize that being Jewish after these events can no longer be a matter of simply following the past. Being aware that we are going through the birth pangs of a paradigm shift which most traditions have not found a way to traverse, I am concerned with the future of the spirituality inherent in those lineages. Treasures in those lineages need to be safeguarded against the breakdown of the old cosmologies with which they were yoked.

Jewish renewal differs from restoration, which seeks to hold on to the old paradigm. People in Jewish renewal do not want to abandon sacred and cherished traditions or to toss them out along with outworn cosmologies. Yet, we are now privy to information which floods us with wonder at the view of a wider and ever more complex cosmos, and we don't want to put our minds in pawn as the price of our staying wedded to our tradition. Instead, we look to fill our spiritual needs as experienced in the present with a maximum of tradition. To make this happen we have to retrofit our spiritual technology to the demands of our era.

Traditionalists often challenge renewalists: "What right have you got to modify a long standing and Divinely revealed tradition?" My response is that revelation continues in the present. We are as much at the service of Divine revelation as earlier generations were. We have at this time an additional task, and furthermore, we are aware that we have a task. While some may be better equipped for this task than we, they don't perceive this as a need, so it devolves upon us.

In feeling this challenge I did not experience one seismic and pivotal moment with its special theophany. The process was gradual. I experienced a long series of these epiphanies, often unrelated to one another. The effect was cumulative. Making sense of these "Aha" moments takes, first of all, an introspective attitude as well as some meditative and contemplative training. In this way I kept revising and readjusting my credo. I grew through adolescence during the Holocaust years. In the midst of hopelessness I saw glimpses of the Presence to which I pledged my life. This created a dynamic tension, causing me to hold fast to both doubt and faith. The process was amplified by other experiences: by meeting great souls, by deep prayer, and by the struggle we call Godwrestling. I received much help from Jewish mysticism, the Kabbalah, despite having to face Kabbalah's many critics. Whether rationalistic-scientistic or fundamentalist, those critics believed that a preoccupation with Kabbalah was dangerous. Still smarting from the excesses of the followers of pseudo-messiahs, they felt the need to defend themselves from an unstable, reality-denying mysticism.

Today our situation is different. As one encounters souls in process, one marvels at the amount of inner knowledge and sensitivity they possess. In my own adolescent searches I was blessed to find those who listened seriously to my questions and encouraged me to reach for answers that matched my inner learning, my intuition. I find that those who honor this direct knowing will not place obstacles in the path of the seeker. Because I have a foot in the past and a foot in the future, I, too, was able to listen. I was uniquely placed to comprehend and bridge many worlds, both by historical events and by personal disposition. I held fast to both, often at great personal cost. This put me in a position to understand the complex struggles of the next generation and to teach them from an extraordinary vantage point.

The people I teach are often of much greater soul sophistication than those who have heaps of traditional book learning. The established institutions of Jewish education did not know how to cope with the issues that agitated many of the young of the post-Holocaust generation. They went to look elsewhere for their spiritual nourishment and found it in a variety of places, from Zen to Vedanta to psychedelics. Hungry to relate the reality of their experiences to their ancestral tradition, they found very few who could honor their questions and answer them. Most members of the established leadership had not had these experiences and could not relate to them. The exoteric-ideological stance of the establishment repelled the seekers. Even esoteric teachers within the Jewish tradition demanded that the seekers relinquish and deny their sacred encounters outside of the tradition and begin with basic observances, first acquiring Hebrew and studying the basic text; only after they were sure of the seekers' loyalty to traditional Torah Hashkafah—ideology—would they offer them a smidgen of our treasures.

### From Past to Future

We have and need help on our journey through the paradigm shift. There are aids, icons, or images that can allow us to render our maps accessible. The kabbalists called these *partzufim*. In every age and place people have dreamed the *partzufim*, these mythic icons, and from these emerged the legends, stories, meanings, motivations, and covenants of the age. The dominant icon of the nineteenth century was the machine, a complex which includes notions of linear causality, of motivation, of causes creating effects. Its message was that whatever one did, somebody or something was always at one's back, pushing. People call this paradigm "scientism," a way of looking at the universe as mechanical.

Today, a new reality map is emerging which is based on an organismic model. It says that Earth is alive; she is Gaia, the living planetary organism. Earth is alive and every part, every species, every part of the chain of life, the *tz'ror bachayyim*, is integral and needed. For example, were it not for the mitochondria in the cells inside my body, I couldn't

live. In the chain of life there is an organismic relationship among things. This is the new *partzuf*: not the machine, but the organism. Naturally, there is a relationship between the dominant reality map and the shape of society.

We can observe that the mythological scaffolding of the various traditions has collapsed, and new scaffoldings have not arisen. The absence of a vital mythology for a whole and healthy Earth, one shared by all peoples and species, is a cause of great concern. Earth is in a dire crisis for survival, and we have as yet no means to re-dream our hoped-for story. We have faced an historic turning point: the millennium. There is a need for visioning the future of human spirituality in harmony with our Gaian understanding.

Here, too, most religions are failing us. Established lineages and religions seem to see as their task conserving the treasures of the past, rather than planning the innovations needed in the new era. Most of the theologians drive by looking at the rearview mirror. Many are still in the thrall of a triumphalist hope that their religion will be ultimately vindicated as the Only True One and thus triumph over all the others. Such people will not be able to help their traditions through the paradigm shift. Advocating a cramped hold on traditions that no longer have transformative power, they cannot understand why they are losing adherents. The skillful means—*upaya*—of the devotional life need to be updated. However, the task of updating the skillful means of all the various traditions and lineages that assist in awakening can only be entrusted to people who come to terms with this paradigm shift.

### *The Torah of the Future*

Torah has many dimensions of meaning for Judaism. When we talk about what the past can teach us, we also confront what the past cannot teach us. Some of the things that the past cannot teach us, we are being taught from the future. I make a simple blessing with the usual formula: "Blessed are you, God." Then I say the next two words, *melekh ba-olam*, literally, "King of the Universe." By that I don't mean an autocratic king with power over us; I mean the governing organismic being, of *ba-olam*, of Earth. The Gaia principle gives this blessing a new, deeper meaning for me.

As Hoyle the astronomer has stated, once we see a picture of our Earth from outer space we have experienced an immense shift of perspective, an even greater mind mutation than any theoretical jump due to intellectual inquiry. No religious icon has such compelling force as Earth seen from outer space. No realism can retain a triumphalist attitude once we have encountered the planet as a living entity. In such an organismic view, all traditions are like vital organs of humanity. When I see a picture of Earth from

outer space, I see no national boundaries, but rather an organic wholeness, a completeness. This is part of the Torah of the future. As Earth learns to understand and be aware of herself, she has her *mattan torah*, her gift of Torah. The Earth is waking up to consciousness. In the view of this totality, you and I and all of our little egos melt into a higher state of being conscious cells of that *melekh ba-olam*, that vast life-being that there is.

### *The Resurrection of the Dead*

Let me give another example of how a tradition such as Judaism spirals in light of a new paradigm. Each day I recite several times the traditional Jewish formula, "Blessed are You who revives the dead." In what way can one affirm this ancient principle of the faith? I do not believe that the crypts will open up in cemeteries and that slimy corpses will crawl out of them. Should I believe that at some time at the end of days the individual cells of my remains will be reconstituted? How many bodies have I already

worn out in only one lifetime? We keep on changing. I cannot claim that this body will rise at the time of the resurrection. Which one of my various bodies would it be, from which incarnation, from which time in history? How then can I believe in the resurrection of the dead and mean it?

I believe that resurrection occurs when dead matter becomes a conscious living being. This resurrection seems to be happening to the totality of this planet at this very moment. A characteristic of the old machine paradigm is that we thought of matter as dead and unconscious. Today, in this age of nuclear technology, genetic engineering, and supercomputers, matter is coming alive to us! We speak of atoms, molecules, and cells as strings of information. Biologists have discovered that genetic consciousness is encoded in DNA and RNA. With the advent of the computer we now think of the memory as resident in silicon—a stone chip—in aluminum, and now in copper. So what Descartes thought of as a mere machine also contains and holds the information of life. Our thinking about matter and the physical world has undergone a shift from death to life.

It is clear what the core of the Universe is saying to us: "As the chief head, this is how I want you to be—harmonious—for this is my purpose. You are integral, you are not an 'oops.' It wasn't a mistake that brought you into the world. You have a right to be here. You are a child of the Universe." I can't imagine anyone saying "No" to that. That integral feeling is the new *mattan torah*, the new revelation. You can't help but say, in Torah's words, *na'aseh v'nishma*, "We will do and we will conform, listen," in response to that revelation. I invite our dreaming, mything, midrashing, myth-rush-ing, experiencing, and thinking to help shape that next phase of our evolution. This is the blessing that we

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*No religious icon has  
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Jews are given: to serve as the organ of Jewry in the organism of the planet, as an instrument for healing and wholeness and as an agent for holiness. This, too, applies to other people who are "Israel" Godwrestlers, as it applies to all who have experienced an initiation into Gaian membership.

### Gaian Initiation

It is a deep work to reshape the *partzufim*, literally the faces, masks, the inner templates that govern manifestation on this plane, and it requires our immense concentration and patience. The time for either/or choices in religion is over. We can no longer consider the other world religions to be idolatry. If an Elijah at Carmel were to appear today demanding us to choose between YHVH, the rider of the clouds, and, let's say, Ba'al, the rider of the clouds, a distinction of name and not function, many of us would tell him to go back to the ultra-orthodox world and not bother us.

My commitment to the life of the planet is stronger than my commitment to any philosophy or creed. Many of us have the same commitment. If you have felt commanded by the Divine Imperative to protect Earth from planetary destruction, then you have undergone the first stage of a Gaian initiation.

Such an experience also requires that we, all of us, undergo an identity shift from ethnic to global so that we can begin to live that initiation. In more traditional Jewish language, my theological approach is based on the realization of the pervasiveness of *hashgahah*, Divine Providence, the unfolding of Earthmind. That is, we are deployed from beyond ourselves. Let us have *emunah*, loyal faith, and *bittahon*, trust, that the universe is unfolding as it should. Accept that you will be led by Wisdom, Hokhmah, Sophia, as She arises from the planetary mind. Open up to the possibility of accessing on the inner-net, the inner internet, what the *melekh ha-olam* requires of us. The Torah that is now coming down vertically will harmonize with what has come down through history longitudinally.

### Cleaning Up the Word "God"

As long as people have been on this planet, whenever they needed to get to the hot line, whenever they needed to get to the center of the universe and send a message from the depth, they have been saying, "Give me God." So, on the one hand, the word "God" has become tainted. On the other hand, it is the only word that is quick enough to transcend all the garbage when we are in such a place that, as Mary Baker Eddy liked to say, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." We get to that place where we can't help ourselves any more. Then we send out a distress signal, an SOS, and that call usually goes out addressed to the name "God." It's a very strong call, and it has a whole toolchest of prayer, with sounds and gestures. Should we throw it away? Has the word "God" gotten so bad that we have to throw away all the sacred technology?

I want to take the word "God" and clean it up a little. What happens most of the time when people are faced with a set liturgy in a prayer book? They see words that their head can't take in. This confusion and frustration withdraws energy from the process of prayer. But the words do not belong to the head: they belong to the heart. Taken on the level of the heart, we are not interested in them as information. It is as if my wife says to me, "I love you," and I say, "You told me that yesterday." It's a silly answer because she was not trying to inform me of something I didn't know. It's a feeling she wants to transmit. It's heart to heart.

With God, I'm not talking head stuff, I am talking heart stuff. The Siddur, the prayer book, is "heart stuff." There is dualistic language which my head cannot really digest about God, that God is an Other, a way, way far off "Other." I can't deal with that; I don't see the Santa Claus in the sky. So what am I talking about? I am talking about that Being who is the center of the universe, the volition, the mind center of the universe, the heart and love center of the universe. That's what I want to communicate with. That's the part of me that says, "Every moment I energize in your being, and every moment I am prepared to receive your glorification." Now, that nourishes something very deep in the soul that has gotten very hungry among us.

What is it that we have to do in this world? An intuition, an "in-teaching," comes in and says the most risky thing: you have to Love. You have to proceed in the world as if all the chaos and pain, the shadow, were not around. You cannot fight the darkness with the means of darkness; you have to bring in light, and the light has to take risks. Something has to give. Something has to change. The status quo can't be maintained because it has become too expensive for the individual and for the planet.

### From Religion to Spirituality

The blessing in all this is our new understanding of what impermanence is about. The future brings with it a process that undermines the status quo. The old cosmology and its institutions are failing. The pain from the meltdown of the accepted scaffolding is great. It becomes bearable and brings hope when we put our trust in the Source of our lives. There is a providential guidance moving toward more consciousness, greater cohesion and harmony amidst the burgeoning complexity. Chaos theory has come to open us to the future. The dissipation of known structures points to a higher integration. Growth will likely continue on a higher point of the spiral or, if you like, on the next, more containing, level of the fractals, the higher holon. After all, we are Theomorphic beings: We can't help but grow toward God. We need to have a grasp of the empirical-experiential mode of research that involves subjective-intransitive, introspective reporting. This would allow for the replication of a process and experience in the spiritual work of more than one lineage's spiritual discipline.

There are signs of positive breakthroughs. Meditation is embraced by many people who have no religious commitment. It has now gone beyond the mere "relaxation response" to greater spiritual growth and awareness. While it seems that religion is "out" for many, spirituality is "in." People want to learn how to experience the sacred, not just talk about it. There is real interest in how adepts do what they do. There is a great comparing of notes, of insight and understanding, to be shared by those who revere the name of God and love Him.

Such dialogue concerns souls, their journey to God, the difficulties they encounter on the path. Dialogue of this sort is between the soul and her God. A person who is too busy to live in a state of vulnerability vis-à-vis God has no way to enter into this dialogue. Such a person can say, "I believe this" or "I believe that" and still be spiritually inactive. Religion to such persons is only what they give verbal assent to, not what they experience, not the way they face God. They are registered as Jews or Protestants or Catholics as they register as Republicans or Democrats, and having registered, have done their duty. But the function of a creed is to give people a program for life, not just a list of things to be asserted.

Today, some of the creeds need to be updated so that they can become effective as catalytic affirmations. Here is an example of such an update that takes Maimonides' mediaeval Thirteen Principles of the Jewish Faith and brings them into our current world view.

Each one who aligns him or herself every day with these principles of the faith and lives according to them can be assured that s/he soon will have a role in the World to Come for us and for all the peoples of the entire world:

1. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith in the God who is infinite and the blessed light that issues from that Infinite Source; the God who is beyond time and space, yet who longs to have a dwelling place among those in the worlds here below; and who, out of loving beneficence to Her creatures, contracted Her light and Her radiant glory, in order to emanate, to create, to form, and to effectuate all that exists in the universe.

2. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith in the Oneness of God and of all creation, a oneness of the kind of One that has no second; and that all which exists in the universe exists solely according to the will of that God, who constantly calls everything into being and causes all existence at every moment.

3. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith that the Creator has an intent and a purpose in creation, and that one of the aspects of that purpose is so that He shall become known to us by and through it; and that we creatures have a task to broaden and enlarge that knowledge/awareness until the world will be as filled

with the knowledge of God as the waters that cover the sea.

4. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith that the hoped-for goal is that all of us will come to constitute one united, interconnected, and organic whole and that every living being will know that You are the One who constantly causes its existence.

5. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith that all the pathways through which the Holy Spirit is manifest and revealed are of one piece with the Torah that was given at Sinai.

6. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith in the mission of Judaism, which is one of the vital organs of [the collective being that comprises] all existence, and that through God's compassion on all creatures it is revealed to them how indispensable and integral they are to the health of all the species of the planet.

7. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith that the universe is not ownerless and abandoned, and that everyone who does good with his/her life takes part in the fixing of the world and vice versa [that every one who uses his/her life for evil participates in the destruction of the world;] and that every action has an impact on the rest of existence.

8. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith that the amount of good in the world is greater than the amount of evil, and that the entire order of movement through the chain of evolution is designed to bring about the fulfillment of the Divine intention.

9. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith that the deeds of the fathers and mothers accrue to the benefit of the children, and that the tradition [that is passed on] contains within it the seeds of the light of redemption.

10. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith that our prayers are heard and answered.

11. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith that the Holy Shechinah dwells within our midst and that all who show kindness to living creatures show kindness too to the Shechinah, and vice versa.

12. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith that physical death does not terminate the existence of the soul; rather, that there are innumerable worlds within which the soul returns to live again.

13. May it be the [Divine] will that I believe with perfect faith in the fixing of the world [*tikkun olam*, the concept that the world can be fixed] and its becoming alive; and that besides coming to life, the world will come to possess a consciousness and feeling, and as such will become a fitting vessel for the revelation of the [Divine] will.

This is my restatement of the reconstructed and renewed. Each tradition and lineage needs to make such a restatement and share it with other theologians. Theology is the afterthought of believers and must match their sacred



experiences. Approaching the recasting of creeds with this attitude has prepared the way for a greater dialogue: the dialogue of the devout that we have been talking about, the kind of sharing that can take place between people who are religious and spiritual on both sides.

### *What's Needed*

**B**ecause Earth is in dire crisis for survival, we need a task force to do the research and development for the healing of the planet. This includes the futuring of the classical contemplative and transformative spirituality in parallel with the yet unexplored territories of the brain and the mind. The theoretical and practical advances of transpersonal psychology and of spiritual emergences, in concert with our understanding of brainwaves and attunements to states of "altered" consciousness afforded by biofeedback and brain-mind technologies, could spell a quantum leap in human awareness. We may need to do what the late Yitzhak Ben Tov called "hothousing" the development of our nervous systems to be able to deal with the emerging complexities.

The often quoted statement that we do not utilize even fifteen percent of our brain's capacity makes me wish to learn to expand that.

Recently I underwent surgery for bladder cancer. In preparation, I did transformational imagery, alternative healing and strengthening of my life force, dietary and herbal regimens as well as hypnotherapy. I asked my hypnotherapist to prepare for me a tape in which the deep region of my body would be contacted and programmed to see in the surgeon's incursion not a traumatic hurtful invasion to resist, but a helpful healing intervention, an ally to my body's own healing work. It helped immensely in recovery. We have relegated hypnosis to the sidelines, but there is much yet to explore.

I have heard from homeopathic practitioners of highly reduced remedies that can bring about "altered states." So, too, have I heard from acupuncturists that needles placed at certain meridians can induce high consciousness states. I am convinced that in these realms there lie more ways to effect the shifts we need to make as we work toward healing ourselves and our planet.

### *Socialized Meditation*

**T**here is the need to socialize the Upaya, the skillful means we need to be made to work inter-personally, not merely intra-personally. Meditation is usually a solitary task. At times one feels that it may only be a solipsistic pre-occupation. Much growth happens when meditation is socialized. In spiritual intimacy radical life changes can occur. In Mondo-Zen, in the Yehidut-Hassidism, in Sohbet-Sufism, in the Darshan between guru and disciple, in the "conferences" at spiritual retreats, people have experienced quantum leaps.

When Buber taught us of the I-and-Thou relationship,

he spoke of healing through meeting. Working with friends and colleagues in dyadic meditation, one comes to a deeper and more affect-oriented process. From my experiences in "socialized meditation," I am convinced that we need to move beyond transpersonal psychology to transpersonal sociology. As Ken Wilber has pointed out, higher holons have more complex ways of integrating what on lower levels seem like contradictions.

I believe that it is important to consolidate all these efforts, and I would like to work together with others on these soul and mind tools. There is a need for visioning the future of human spirituality in harmony with our Gaian understanding.

### *We Need Sensitives With "Wild Talents"*

**M**uch has been written on past-life residues that need clearing up. Here we have another frontier to explore with shamans, channels, mediums, and sundry sensitives. Not only medical but also psychological intuitives have vital processes to offer.

We need to assemble inventories of available skillful means: Yoga, Tai Chi, Ignatian Meditation, Kabbalah, Sufism—both the vacuum methods which work toward emptying the mind as well as the pressure methods—those methods that work toward filling the mind. We need to revisit Avatar, Ridhwan, Hoffman Process, Scientology, Silva Mind Control and the many *et ceteras*. This we need to do to be able to reproduce empirically, and also to see if we can experience, the states described in the traditional contemplative literature. It would be important to investigate the range of application of classical methods and the reinforcement of certain phases to look for new ways and settings in which these could be applied and elaborated and adapted to our current needs. I am confident that in this research we will invent and encounter totally new forms of spiritual work, *e.g.*, the emerging practice of an asceticism of simple pleasures in the sacred life.

We might find out that not everything works. Much of the classical material needs a matrix of beliefs that we cannot adhere to because they are incompatible with our reality maps. Thus we will be learning from failures by reporting negative results.

### *Beyond Triumphalism*

**A**lthough a new theology is emerging from a Gaian understanding, there are still Jews in ultra-orthodox communities in Israel and in Brooklyn who hold on to a triumphalist notion, just as do the people in the Vatican, and in Mecca and Medina. Their thinking goes like this: "When the end of days will come, when the Second Coming is here, when the Mashiah, the Messiah comes, when the Mahdi, the final Imam, appears, when Maitreya, the last Buddha, reveals himself, it will be shown that all along we alone were right and all the others were wrong."

That's the basic attitude of triumphalism: "In the end it will be shown that they were in error and we were free of error all along; that we were the true carriers of the divine transmission, and that all the others had failed."

But when we understand Gaia, we begin to see that just as every species is important, so is every religion. If all the pesticides killed all the insects, we would have a silent spring, because there would be no birds. The whole chain of life depends on everything being there. Analogously, my sense is that Judaism needs to have Christianity to challenge it, and in the same way each religion is a necessary, integral part of the planet. So we are beyond triumphalism. But to say, therefore, that we need to give up our special way of being misses the mark; the world needs us.

### Reaching New Levels

"The sin that is the hardest to atone for is habit." That is the biggest obstacle to reaching new levels, as one rabbi put it. The more we're in a habitual state, the more unlikely it is that we'll go beyond. We won't be in the moment; we won't be in the here and now. We will hear the routine rather than the challenge that comes at this moment.

I believe that all people will reach what they have to reach. I'm a universalist in that sense. That they will reach the same state is not likely. It is enough for a toe to be the toe of a realized person. If I could be the toe, as it were, of realized humanity, that's fine. Not everybody is going to be the brain cell that fires off a great realization. Still, we'll all be organically connected with that, just as an organism has a connection with its toe.

In any case, it's not likely that there is going to be a final enlightenment. I don't like the word "final" because enlightenment continues to the next level and the next level, and it's infinite in God. We no longer have the temple in Jerusalem, but when it existed, the holiest person on the holiest day at the holiest time in the holiest place would pronounce the holiest word. There would be a kind of implosion of all the Onenesses. That name is a connection, and each year on Yom Kippur, the old connection goes away and the new connection starts coming in. Sins interfere, spoil, and ruin the old connection.

Sooner or later everyone will become integrated into a harmonious, greater whole. When we are on the human level, we're already talking about all the lower levels, the molecular, cellular, organic, organismic and social levels. It may just be that my connection with you, the reader, and your connection with other people is all we need to do to participate in the process of that enlightenment. And having done that, it's enough. That's our contribution to "it." It's very hard to say that everybody's going to graduate with ease. We graduate if we have done the task that was ours to

do. Then, when all of us graduate, that is like saying, "When the whole of me graduates, my toe will graduate, also."

### Questions

There are some things we won't know until we get there. There is the Divine potential of the Infinite. The more it gets realized, actualized in all the realms—not only the material realms, but the spiritual, astral, intuitive, and divine realms—the more the Universe becomes the Divine.

The Universe, which begins with the potential for being divine, becomes in actuality the Divine. That Infinite is like an hourglass. One can't really speak about this in finite terms, but in finite terms it's as if all the stuff from one side has poured itself into the other side, and then it turns around again.

We are now in a phase of making the whole globe, the whole planet, conscious. This is what some people have called the Divinization of the planet.

Choice is available even on earlier levels than the human. That's what, to some extent, the Heisenberg Principle of Uncertainty is about. We can predict the statistics, but we can't predict the specificity of it—which electron is going to jump off and when—and that is like an element of choice. On the other hand, I reject the whole notion of either-or-ness in terms of choice and determinism, because I think that's sort of a mental trap. We are not 100 percent free, and we are not 100 percent determined. It goes between 99 percent on one side to 99 percent on the other side, and the pendulum swings. There are times when there are such moments of high confluence between choice and determinism that we call it synchronicity. What I'm doing and intending is so together with that flow of things, it doesn't feel as if we're fighting at all.

### What Are The Cycles?

Now one of the purposes of life, of the world, according to Judaic mystical tradition, goes like this: prior to this cycle of world creation, there were other cycles of world creation. Holy sparks from those other cycles of world creation, when they were broken, lodged here. Our task is to find those sparks, gather them, bring them together and restore the balance in the cosmos—to enthrone God again. The Divine Crown, as it were, has gems missing, and in each physical act we pick up a spark here, a spark there, and we bring them together. When all the sparks have been gathered, our tradition speaks about the coming of the Messiah. To me, this means something like global oneness—peace and harmony on the globe when we reach the next level of integration.

When we become more conscious of the physical and at the same time aware of the highest spirituality, we'll have what I would call the Resurrection of the Dead. This resurrection happens together on a physical and spiritual level. The physical plane is our plane of observation, though



everything that happens on a physical plane is not open to our observing. What's happening between atoms we don't quite see with our eyes, but if we were on the atomic level we would say, "Ah, this oxygen atom got married to two hydrogen atoms, and they made a water molecule!" But we don't operate on that level of awareness.

Now in our personal drama, on another level of observation, higher things are happening. Ultimately it takes a meditative leap into other dimensions to be able to see. There is a Latin phrase "*sub specie aeternitatis*—under the aspect of eternity." It means to look down, to see what is happening in the temporal realm. Then we begin to see what Earth is about, what the planet is about and what history is about from a much higher level. I believe we are just learning the beginnings of the holy psychotechnology, a spiritual psychotechnology that will allow us to get to such places as observing small moments—or larger ones. Some people have had the larger experiences. Geniuses have had profound mountaintop experiences before. I would say, "If they can see the Infinite, they can see the infinitesimal also, because awareness is up and down the scale." By and large, people haven't bothered to look at the infinitesimal. Now, with nanotechnologies becoming important, people are beginning to concentrate on those things.

### What About Death?

I do believe that death is only part of the connection between the physical and the inner. It's like pulling the plug. Most people know enough to get their inner out of the way. Let's say you drive in your car and it's rattling; it's in bad shape. Finally, it's all over. You drive it to the junkyard. You get out of the car, and then a crusher comes and crushes it down. You'd be a fool to sit in it after the car is dead. I have the same attitude toward the body. Bodies wear out, and it's a wonderful thing that they wear out. They get recycled, which gives the passenger a chance to get out and pick another car, another vehicle ... or to decide not to walk the earth for a while.

Our tradition teaches that a whole series of things happens after death. A soul has to go through purification because of the contamination of being on this level and the habits that are acquired on this level. After purification (which is what Purgatory means: one gets purged), come other things that are delightful, ecstatic, and marvelous. Some of them have to do with the realm of feeling. That is one Heaven. Others have to do with the realm of knowing. That's another Heaven. Then there is the Heaven in which we know intuitively and are known by God; we are identical with That. There's a higher level still. Sometimes one just stays there, because it's wonderful. Sometimes one is needed back down here and gets called.

In Judaism after people die we say the Kaddish, the

memorial prayer, and we do acts of charity for the souls of the deceased. This allows us to help people advance their process now and to help in their purification if they haven't been able to do it in their lifetime.

### Why Is There Suffering in the World?

That's a question that gets us into trouble! Every time I've figured it out, I have to learn another level of the same thing. One could say the greatest education we get is through suffering. Consciousness is being raised through deprivation. I will never know what it means to give people food when they're hungry unless I have experienced hunger myself. I will not know how to help somebody who is in pain unless I have experienced pain myself. One could say suffering is the school for empathy. It creates that, but that's only one element of suffering. Sometimes suffering exists to bring us to

our senses. Sometimes suffering exists to show us that there are tragedies we can't overcome with our childish omnipotence in the world. We begin to see that every choice we make has its consequences.

Suffering is the way in which we learn, after the fact, the consequences of our moves. Then there are some people who suffer and can't identify this reason or that reason. It's just one of those things. "Why do bad things happen to good people?" is the question behind all that, and I haven't yet found a convincing answer. Sometimes no matter what we do, we get clobbered! On a lower level of preparation and understanding we would say, "If we do only the good and the true all the time, we're going to be okay." On a higher level being good doesn't help. The biggest ethical questions are based on just that point.

### Blessing

One of the greatest needs this planet has for healing is blessing. It is underblessed. Underblessed reality is like empty calories. It takes elders to offer blessings. What a blessing achieves is the enlargement of the possibilities for good. Like an enzyme for growth, like a catalyst in a chemical process, the blessings serve to offer the dynamic help that makes a process clear the barriers. We need people who have learned to offer blessing. I want to ask the readers who have followed me to this point to join with me in blessing the planet, the next generation, all species, all good intentions in people's hearts, all those who face burn-out in their service to others, to the scientists and physicians who work on finding cures for cancer and AIDS, for prisoners in our penal systems who want to start a new and better life, for the prisoners of conscience to be freed, for warring nations to find the way to peace and cooperation, for those whose time has come to leave their body to be able to do so serenely and with awareness, and for the children about to be born to become agents of blessing. □

*Underblessed  
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# Gravity, the Ultimate Capitalist Principle

Joel R. Primack and Nancy Ellen Abrams

**G**ravity is the ultimate capitalist principle. In astronomy, a “rich” region of the universe is one that has more matter, a “poor” region less matter, than average. Gravity magnifies differences that already exist. Denser regions expand more slowly, and less dense regions more rapidly, than average. The inevitable result is that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

This economic analogy may be illuminating for understanding not only cosmology but also the challenges currently confronting humanity. It can serve as a powerful metaphor for thinking about human-scale problems. This is a perhaps surprising claim, since, for most educated people, “the universe” is an intriguing but ultimately formless concept—interesting only as the source of newsworthy discoveries or as a fantasy outlet, but irrelevant to everyday life. One reason for such indifference is that science has refuted all traditional pictures of the universe—pictures in which humans played a role—yet until recently science could not itself present a picture with any reasonable claim to validity. But, at the beginning of the new millennium, scientific cosmology is experiencing a golden age of discovery. With breakthroughs based on data from extraordinary new telescopes in space and on the ground, cosmologists are now piecing together humanity’s first picture of the universe as a whole that might actually be true.

According to the emerging story, a process called Cosmic Inflation initiated the Big Bang by causing space to expand extremely rapidly. During this process, slight differences in the amount of matter and energy were created in different places throughout the universe by minuscule quantum fluctuations, which were subsequently vastly expanded in size. After a tiny fraction of a second, the universe stopped inflating and began expanding much more slowly, and gravity began the process that led to the formation of galaxies—including our own galaxy, the Milky Way.

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Our modern concept of gravity is not just the simple mutual attraction first proposed by Isaac Newton. Newton’s theory was a good description of gravity on the scale of the solar system, but when he tried to extrapolate his thinking to the universe, he could never explain why everything did not simply fall together. He hypothesized that the universe must be infinite and without a center—although this created a paradox since, if the universe were infinite and filled with stars, the night sky would be white. For two centuries, this paradox went unresolved. Cosmology—the science that attempts to describe the origin, evolution, and structure of the entire universe—was not taken seriously, since the ratio of theory to data was nearly infinite.

Two achievements early in the twentieth century began the development of scientific cosmology. One was Albert Einstein’s creation of the modern theory of gravity, called general relativity, and his application of it to cosmology in 1916. This provided the essential intellectual framework. The other was Edwin Hubble’s discovery in 1929 that distant galaxies are traveling away from us with a speed proportional to their distance. In other words, the universe is expanding. Billions of years ago it must have been much smaller and hotter than it is today. Einstein’s equations of general relativity predicted that the universe had to be either expanding or contracting, but Einstein’s instincts told him that this was not the sort of solution nature would choose. So he altered his equations by inserting a new term called the “cosmological constant” to try to keep the universe static.

Expansion, though, was predicted by two cosmologists, Alexander Friedmann in 1922, and, in a more general way, by the Belgian priest George Lemaitre in 1927, who were bolder with Einstein’s theory than Einstein himself. However, a mistake in the way astronomers had been estimating distances to galaxies led Hubble to calculate the age of the expanding universe to be only about 2 billion years—a big problem for the Big Bang, since the earth was already known to be older than that. So it was still unclear whether the Big Bang theory was right and the universe had cooled off and in other ways evolved since its birth a few billion years ago, or alternatively whether the universe had been essentially unchanged and

was probably eternal, as the rival Steady State theory asserted. The crucial evidence favoring the Big Bang was the discovery by Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson in 1965 that “cosmic background radiation” is coming toward us from all directions. This radiation was immediately interpreted as the heat radiation of the Big Bang. Since then, telescopes on the ground and in space have confirmed this and also provided many other forms of evidence that favor the Big Bang.

Big Bang theory paints the early universe as expanding uniformly. But we see galaxies in some regions and not others, so there must have been small differences in the density of matter from place to place right from the beginning, and gravity simply magnified them. In 1982 random differences in density were theorized to be caused by quantum fluctuations during the process of Cosmic Inflation. The theory of “cold dark matter” (developed in part by one of the authors of this article) showed how these fluctuations could produce the sort of cosmic structures we actually observe—if they were the right magnitude. In 1992, the COBE satellite discovered differences of just the right magnitude. COBE was the first instrument with adequate sensitivity to detect such extremely small differences (only about one part in 100,000) in the temperature of the cosmic background radiation coming from different directions in the sky. When you look at a star that is ten light years away, you are seeing light that left that star ten years ago, and thus you see the star as it was then. Similarly, the cosmic background radiation shows us what the universe was like some 14 billion years ago. The small temperature differences that we detect correspond to the slightly different densities that existed when the universe first became transparent, about 300,000 years after the Big Bang.

Most of the matter in the universe appears to be some sort of “dark” (that is, invisible) matter that is unlike the ordinary matter of which planets, stars, gas, and dust are made. Dark matter is not made of atoms, nor even of the building blocks that atoms are made of—protons, neutrons, and electrons. Dark matter engulfs every visible galaxy in an invisible halo extending outward maybe ten times the radius of the visible galaxy, and its gravity holds the visible galaxy together. We do not yet know what the dark matter is, although many experiments are now in progress to try to detect it directly or indirectly.

One way to think of gravity is as a warping of space that tells matter how to move while matter simultaneously tells space how to warp. Gravity never sleeps. For 14 billion years it has been amplifying the minuscule original variations in density. When any region reaches about twice the density of typical regions its size, gravity wins out over expansion. The region reaches a maximum radius, stops expanding, and starts falling together. Through a process wryly called “violent relaxation” by its discoverer, English astrophysicist Donald Lynden-Bell, the collapsing dark matter quickly reaches a stable configuration that is about half the maxi-

mum radius reached during the expansion phase, but denser in the center and less dense farther away. It is apparently this process that creates the galaxies and clusters of galaxies that we observe. According to the cold dark matter theory, this falling together happens earlier for smaller regions—i.e., smaller masses—because (traveling at the speed of light) gravity crosses smaller regions earlier. Thus small galaxies form first, and then grow by merging with other small galaxies. Clusters of galaxies, and larger-scale structures including superclusters, form later. The observational evidence favors this picture, but it is still being tested.

It might appear that gravity is inexorable and can never be stopped. But for everything in the universe except black holes, at a certain point gravity gets counterbalanced. Here is how it happens as galaxies form. While dark matter is collapsing on the galactic scale, on smaller scales gravitational forces between small clumps of dark matter generate velocities, and the resulting movement of the dark matter particles in all directions prevents them from falling all the way into the center.

Dark matter particles that collide can go right through each other. Ordinary matter is different. When ordinary matter (mostly gaseous hydrogen and helium) collides, it radiates away energy by emitting photons, so it does fall toward the center. If the infall of the ordinary matter were not stopped, there would be no visible galaxies, only black holes surrounded by dark matter. What stops ordinary matter from falling all the way to the center? The answer is conservation of angular momentum, the same phenomenon that causes an ice skater to spin faster when she brings her arms closer to her body, and which keeps the earth and other heavenly bodies spinning. As ordinary matter falls toward the center it likewise rotates faster about the center until its angular momentum shapes it into a disk and prevents it from falling further. Gravity is now counterbalanced by circular motion, and further collisions are infrequent. Stars form in the disk, and the result is a spiral galaxy. Collisions between these disk galaxies very likely result in the formation of both elliptical galaxies and the bulges in the centers of spiral galaxies.

There is evidence that many galaxies may have had the sort of violent youth and turbulent adolescence just described, and one of the major goals of current research in cosmology is to clarify these processes. Much of this activity must have occurred many billions of years ago, since most of the large galaxies like our own Milky Way appear to have assumed something close to their present forms when the universe was less than half its present age. By the time our own sun and solar system formed, about 4.6 billion years ago, the Milky Way was already a mature galaxy. Once the balance was achieved between gravity and motion, our galaxy could remain stable for billions of years.

A key lesson: stability for long term development—stars, planets, life, and ultimately us—occurs when gravity is

counterbalanced by motion. Such motion includes the random motion of dark matter particles in galaxies and clusters, the circular motion of stars and gas in spiral galaxies, and the random motion of stars in elliptical galaxies and galaxy bulges. And on a much smaller size scale, stars and planets are saved from collapsing to black holes because gravity is opposed by random motions (pressure) of the atoms that make up stars and large gaseous planets like Jupiter, and by chemical forces between atoms in smaller planets like our earth.

What is the relevance of all this to human affairs? "Problems cannot be solved," Einstein famously said, "at the same level of awareness that created them." Wealth appears to work like gravity: the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Perhaps the process of structure formation in the universe can provide a metaphor to help us humans see our problems in a new light.

Humanity is confronted today by unprecedented challenges. How we respond will determine the long-term future of our planet. Human population has grown by about a factor of four during the past century, but our consumption of energy per person has grown by a factor of nearly twenty-five worldwide during the same period. Multiplying those two trends together produces an increase in global energy consumption by nearly a factor of 100 just in the past century! There is disagreement about how many people the earth can support, but no one contends that our population or our resource use can continue to expand at the rate of the past century. We will need to slow down, and do so quickly. However, as the debate over global warming demonstrates, both national self-restraint and international cooperation will certainly be needed—and neither will be easy to achieve. Equity issues arise at all levels, and they are exacerbated by growing inequalities of wealth and power.

Within the United States, the wealthiest 10 percent own more than 75 percent of all stock and the top one percent own 42 percent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Income disparities have increased as salaries of top executives skyrocketed during the past decade, while the average inflation-adjusted hourly wage was about the same in 1998 as in 1973. Most of the past decade's economic growth has gone to the upper 5 percent of families. From 1989—the peak of the last economic recovery—to 1998, the inflation-adjusted average after-tax income of the top one percent of Americans increased by 40 percent, while the average income of the lowest 90 percent increased by only 5 percent. Although the United States has the highest average income of any industrial country, it also has the worst income inequality, the largest fraction of its population in poverty, and the largest fraction incarcerated.

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*Something must keep  
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Worldwide, the inequalities are stark and increasing. The incomes of the richest 20 percent grew three times faster than those of the poorest 20 percent from 1960 to 1990. The fifth of the population living in the richest countries account for 86 percent of consumption, the poorest fifth a mere 1.3 percent, according to the UN Human Development Report 1999. Although income levels are rising in some developing countries, especially in East Asia, in seventy countries with nearly a billion people consumption per person is lower today than it was twenty years ago.

According to the World Bank, 2.8 billion people currently live on less than \$2 per day (in 1993 purchasing parity terms), compared to 2.5 billion people in 1987. Meanwhile, the world's richest 200 people doubled their net worth from 1994 to 1998, to more than a trillion dollars.

If income and wealth inequality continue to increase either domestically or internationally, it is difficult to see how it will be possible to persuade

most people to cooperate in solving the problems of population, resource use, and pollution in order to achieve a sustainable relationship with our fragile planet.

What could play the role with regard to wealth that random and organized motion have played in balancing the attraction of gravity? This is not an easy question to answer; as Einstein said, "Politics is harder than physics." The ideal of democratic societies is to give rights and some material security to all, and this requires mechanisms for redistribution. One is the estate tax, which currently affects fewer than 2 percent of Americans. That such a tiny fraction of the population has power far out of proportion to their numbers is demonstrated by the recent decision by Congress to phase out the estate tax. Other forms of progressive taxation, such as a tax on wealth, are common in other rich nations. The only form of wealth tax in America today is property taxes to support local education, but this actually promotes inequality of educational opportunity by unfairly benefiting communities where the rich live.

One of the chief functions of nation states is the implementation of policies that promote the common good. This is much more difficult at the international level. The best solution found so far is the creation of new international regimes which reward behavior that protects the global commons of atmosphere and oceans. The negotiations that will be required to achieve this will clearly have a greater chance of success if, at least on average, the rich stop growing richer and the poor poorer. Something must play the role of motion opposing gravity to keep wealth and power from accumulating without limit and dragging us all into an economic and political black hole. The fact that the cosmos accomplished this may be an inspiration for us all. □

# Spiritual Dimensions to the High Holidays

Estelle Frankel

*"Great are the righteous for they transform judgment into mercy." (Genesis Raba 33:3)*

Each Rosh Hashanah, as the mournful sounds of the shofar usher in the new year, I am reminded of a woman in labor crying out for release so that she can give birth to the new life within her. The shofar—which is actually shaped like a birth canal, narrow at one end and broad at the other—is a perfect symbol for the birthing of the new year. One of the passages from Psalms that we read prior to blowing the shofar expresses this longing to be released from constriction: "From the narrows I call out to you, answer me in the expansiveness of the divine."

What is the expansiveness we seek on the New Year? In the mystical tradition, the shofar is understood to effect a shift in the divine countenance, enabling God to move from a throne of judgment to a throne of mercy. This movement in the divine realm is, somehow, mediated by our own spiritual attitude adjustment as we move from the constricted state of *din* or judgment to the expansive, loving, and compassionate state of *rachamim*.

The notion that we have the power to influence the heavens through our actions and our consciousness is one that is echoed in the mystical literature. According to Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, a sixteenth-century Safed Kabbalist, when we deal lovingly and compassionately with others we open up the flow of divine compassion in the universe. We, in effect, have the power to tip the divine scales from judgment to mercy: "Just as you conduct yourself below, so are you worthy of opening the corresponding sublime quality above. Exactly as you behave, so it emanates from above. You cause that quality to shine in the world" (Tomer Devorah). Cordovero's radical notion that our actions here on earth influence the heavens reverses the usual "as above, so below" into "as below, so above!" It seems that God needs our mercy in order to fully manifest divine mercy.

In addition to being an important aspect of the spiritual work of the High Holidays, opening up the channels of divine compassion is a central theme in Hassidic spiritual healing practices. Many of the great Hassidic masters

accessed their spiritual healing powers by becoming channels for divine mercy.

Among the Hassidic masters, Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchov stands out as one who truly perfected these practices. Known for his extreme love for the people, Levi Yitzchak truly possessed the proverbial "good eye" (*ayin tova*), for he had trained himself to see only the good in others, even sinners.

Once, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, Levi Yitzchak was heading to synagogue for the Selichot services when a sudden downpour forced him and his personal assistant to seek shelter under the awning of a tavern. The assistant peered through the window and saw a group of Jews feasting, drinking, and reveling. Growing impatient, he urged Levi Yitzchak to see for himself how the Jews inside were misbehaving when they should have been in synagogue praying to God for forgiveness. Instead of looking, Levi Yitzchak rebuked his assistant for finding fault with the children of Israel. Surely, he asserted, they must be reciting blessings over their food and drink; instead of passing judgment on them, Levi Yitzchak proceeded to bless them. The assistant then peered into the tavern once more and overheard two Jews talking to one another about thefts they had committed. He told this to the Rebbe, yet once more Levi Yitzchak refused to judge them and instead concluded that, indeed, they must be holy Jews since they were confessing their sins to one another before Rosh Hashanah!

The practice of focusing on the good in others and in ourselves became one of the cornerstones of Hassidic spiritual healing. Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, another advocate of this practice, taught that we must always tip the scales of judgment towards the side of mercy and judge every person meritoriously. Beyond giving people the benefit of the doubt, he taught that by selectively focusing on the little bits of good that exist in each person, we actually enable those bits of good to expand and slowly overcome the bad. By choosing to focus on what is right and pure in people instead of what is wrong, we have the power to lift them up. According to Rebbe Nachman this goes for ourselves as well as others:

And you should know that one must judge every person in such a way as to tip the scale of judgment to merit; even someone who is evil. One must search and find

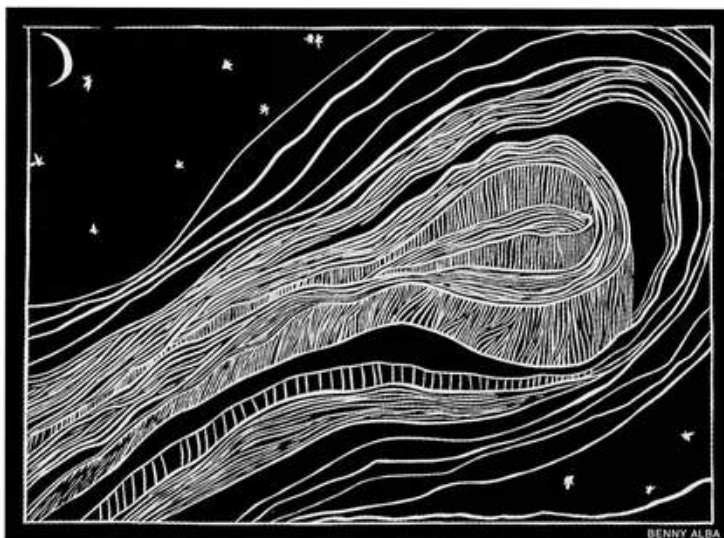
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some small aspect of goodness in him and judge him favorably (*lekaf zechut*). Through this you tip his scale towards the good and enable him to do *teshuvah*.... Even if you see he is evil you must search to find some goodness—some area where he is not evil.... And one must also find this in oneself....

Rebbe Nachman's teaching is actually a powerful therapy technique, one which I try to use in my own life and in my work as a healer. I know that the way I see my clients influences their unfolding. By seeing their goodness and wholeness, even when they are unable to see it in themselves, I open up the space for them to become who they are truly meant to be. Rebbe Nachman applied this practice as a treatment for depression as well. He understood, perhaps from his own mood swings, that depression distorts perception. When we are depressed we tend to focus only on what's wrong with ourselves and our lives, and we forget all our good points. By forcing ourselves to acknowledge the little bits of good that exist, we effectively challenge our use of the defense mechanism known as "splitting," whereby things are characterized as either "all-good" or "all-bad." Acknowledging the good, however small it might be, helps us regain a sense of balance and perspective.

Throughout each day of our lives we have many opportunities to view things either from the perspective of judgment or mercy. When we view reality from the perspective of *din* our vision may be objectively correct, but we are often missing the point of it all—which is that all of life needs healing and fixing and we are part of the process. When we see life through eyes filled with love and compassion, we become healers and we have the ability to shape reality in a positive way. Our love, ultimately, has the power to heal. Unfortunately, many of us spend a great deal more time and energy focused on what's wrong with ourselves and others than on what's right. We obsess about our own imperfections and are all too ready to criticize our friends, family, and associates whenever they fall short of our expectations. When we get stuck in our "judging minds," life begins to seem like an endless series of disappointments. And when we relentlessly judge and find fault with ourselves and others, we often end up adding to the problems we think we are trying to remedy.

Retraining ourselves to be loving and compassionate with ourselves and others rather than judgmental and critical is not always so easy when we have grown up in home environments that were characterized by excess criticism and blame. Many of us were taught from a very young age to be absolutely merciless with ourselves, so, by extension, we are harsh with others. Unfortunately, this is all too prevalent in many Jewish families. We don't seem to know when to give ourselves a break and say *dayenu*—it's enough! Yet with practice and mindfulness we can learn to catch ourselves when we get stuck in judgement and lovingly redirect ourselves to focus on the good.



## Spiritual Attitude Adjustments

In Jewish spiritual lore, we find that many of the great masters had to work on themselves to overcome overly judgmental and critical tendencies. Even Reb Zusia of Hanipol, famed for his ability to spiritually heal people by seeing the good in them, didn't start out that way. As the following tale describes, he gained this ability only after seeing how his judgmental tendencies had a destructive effect on another person. One day Zusia happened to walk into the House of study of the Maggid of Mezerich and saw a man trying to convince the Maggid of some business venture. Being clairvoyant, Zusia saw that this man was dishonest and had been involved in numerous business scams. Without hesitating, Zusia blurted out his perception to the Maggid, causing the man to leave in total embarrassment. Zusia, immediately realized and regretted what he had done, for by shaming the man and pointing out his faults, he had failed to open doors of healing and repentance for him. The Maggid, realizing that Zusia's gift of seeing the truth was getting in the way of his work as a healer, blessed him that he only be able to see the good in others, even if they did something bad right in front of his eyes. And from that day on, Reb Zusia became so loving that even if someone sinned right in front of his eyes, he saw only the good in that person and in his actions, and anything bad he saw in others, he experienced as though it was his own wrongdoing.

Zusia's practice of taking upon himself the misdeeds of others may seem a bit extreme, but for the righteous one, the *tzaddik*, everything that is brought to his awareness is there for the purpose of healing and fixing. In order to heal others, the *tzaddik* must first join with them by identifying with their flaws. Then, by fixing the subtle aspects of those very flaws within himself, the *tzaddik* opens up the gates of repentance and healing for both himself and the person in need of healing.

There is a saying in Pirkey Avot that you should not judge another person unless you have stood in their exact same place. The Ba'al Shem Tov understood this to mean that if you find yourself judging others, you probably are standing in their exact same place. In other words, if you find a fault

in others you are probably also guilty in some way of that exact same fault—otherwise you would not have noticed or recognized it in them. The *tzaddikim* knew that if a sin or character flaw was brought to their awareness through the actions of another, this occurred in order to awaken them to fix themselves—not to judge the other person.

### *Shifts in the Divine Countenance*

In the rabbinic imagination even God is portrayed as struggling to allow divine mercy overcome divine judgment and anger: “What does God pray? R. Zutra b. Tobi said in the name of Rav: May it be My will that My mercy should suppress My anger, and that My attribute of mercy should dominate all My other attributes, so that I may conduct Myself with My children with mercy, and that I should deal with them, not according to the strict letter of the law” (Berachot 7a). According to Jewish legend, God’s struggle to overcome his own attribute of judgment goes all the way back to the story of Creation, where the unfolding of Creation is described as a dynamic dance between the divine qualities of judgment and mercy. The opening passage of Torah begins: “In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.” Elohim is the name for God typically associated with *din*—the quality of judgment and limits. Creation begins with the Infinite One withdrawing and limiting itself, as it were, in order to make room for a finite world to exist. In scriptures, Elohim is the name used to represent that aspect of divinity that operates according to the natural laws which limit and define the boundaries between all separate things. Elohim, which itself is a plural noun, is synonymous with the Hebrew word for earthly judges, as it says in scriptures, “and his master shall take him (the slave) to the elohim” (Exodus 21:6), implying the court of law. Elohim is, in effect, the arbiter of karmic justice. When we go against the laws and limits of nature, it is Elohim who brings judgment.

When we look further into the text of Genesis, another name or aspect of the divine is revealed at the conclusion of Creation: “On the day that YHVH-Elohim created earth and heaven.” (Gen. 2:4) Commenting on God’s name change from the beginning to the end of the account of Creation, the midrash says: “At first God thought to create the world through the quality of *din* [truth/judgment], but realizing that the world could not endure at this level, God added on the quality of compassion” (Genesis Raba).

This midrash can be a bit confusing if taken too literally. It’s not that God somehow changed her mind about Creation, but rather, that the process of Creation involved a blend of the energies of YHVH and Elohim—of love and limits. Though the ultimate aim of Creation is to reveal God’s love and essential unity, this process begins with an act of Elohim—that aspect of the divine that reveals itself through limits, differentiation, and separation. Elohim creates the multitudinous finite forms or vessels that will ultimately reveal the light and unity of the Infinite One. These

two names actually coexist and balance one another as complementary, yin-yang aspects of reality that are essentially interconnected and inseparable.

Now here’s the part that relates to healing. Whereas Elohim operates according to the linear and deterministic forces of nature, YHVH exists at a level of reality where linear and causal laws no longer operate. YHVH represents pure infinite consciousness, free from the constraints that exist in the time-space continuum. YHVH is connected to the divine chaos of subatomic particles which obey no steadfast rules.

The Rabbis taught that at any given moment we have the power to shift the figure-ground relationship between these two aspects of the divine. When we open ourselves to an awareness of YHVH’s infinite love and essential unity, Elohim steps aside, as it were, making room for the divine force of love to prevail. All healing, according to Jewish mysticism, involves this shift or transformation of judgment into mercy—so that the ultimate reality of YHVH can be revealed. When YHVH is revealed, unpredictable and even miraculous things can occur, for the limits embedded in Creation by Elohim exist only as a gateway through which the transcendent love and unity of the Creator can be revealed. The responsibility for lifting the veil of finite reality and revealing the infinite love of the Creator seems to rest on us.

According to the Kabbalah, we have the power to lift this veil by “sweetening the judgments.” When we visit or take care of someone who is ill, for instance, we bring *rachamim*, YHVH’s loving presence, to an experience which would otherwise be harsh and unbearable. When we find the good in a person whose actions are aggressive, we “sweeten the judgments” that their actions might otherwise bring down. There is a story about the Rebbe of Talno who was once passing through a town of a rival rebbe, when a hassid of that rebbe threw a stone at him to let him know he was unwelcome in their town. Instead of becoming angry at his assaulter, the Rebbe of Talno reached out and caught the stone, keeping it as a cherished reminder of the loving devotion of a hassid for his rebbe. Instead of focusing on the hostile aspects of the stone thrower’s behavior, the rebbe chose to focus on the spark of love from which the act originated. By doing this he sweetened any judgments that may have come down from heaven by the hassid’s aggressive act.

Clearly, doing this kind of spiritual healing work demands a high level of self-transcendence as well as a knack for not taking life too personally! Most of us are far too identified with our egos to receive the slings and arrows aimed at us with the kind of dispassion that the Rebbe of Talno exhibited. And there are clearly times when it is important to defend ourselves or set limits against the aggressive behavior of others. But if we are able to find the sparks of goodness in others, we are more likely to succeed at transforming negative situations into positive outcomes.

*(continued on page 65)*

## *The High Holidays as a Healing Paradigm*

Every year during the High Holidays, we re-enact the cycle of divine unfolding through creation. The following passage, which is chanted prior to blowing the shofar, invokes the revelation of divine mercy: "Elohim ascends through the cry (of the shofar) YHVH (is revealed) through the voice of the shofar." By consciously imposing judgment upon ourselves on Rosh Hashanah, we effect an opposite movement in the divine; God, in effect, is freed up to manifest mercy.

On Yom Kippur, at the climax of the ten days of repentance, we open ourselves to the divine face of love and forgiveness. Throughout this holy day as we chant the thirteen attributes of divine mercy, we envision God as the embodiment of compassion:

YHVH (Infinite One) YHVH (Infinite One), A God who is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in love and truth. Keeping mercy to the thousandth generation, lifting sin and rebellion and error and forgiving. (Exodus 34:6)

The thirteen attributes of mercy, which form the refrain of the Yom Kippur liturgy, were revealed to Moses following

the sin of the golden calf. After losing his temper and breaking the tablets of the law, Moses feels lost. He doesn't know how he will find the patience to lead such a rebellious people, so he beseeches God: "Show me your ways." At the same time that he seeks divine guidance, one senses that Moses is also trying to help God remember God's own merciful nature. Through his own deep longing to understand and embody the divine qualities of mercy and patience, Moses succeeds in bringing about the needed shift in the divine countenance, for as God reveals the thirteen divine attributes of mercy to Moses, God also pardons the Israelites for the sin of the golden calf.

As Yom Kippur draws to a climax in the final Neilah service, we conclude our prayers by uttering the phrase "YHVH is the Elohim" (Kings I 18:39) ten times. Translated into English, this phrase seems a bit redundant—the Lord is God. But in Hebrew we know that the unification of these different names reflects the unification of the divine polarities of *din* and *rachamim*. The spiritual work of Yom Kippur is complete when we can affirm that even those aspects of reality that are limiting and, at times, even harsh, ultimately are a part of a greater wholeness and unity whose single purpose is love. □

## **A SABBATH OF PLACE** (from page 41)

of its electricity needs (less than .1 percent); moreover, the current "crisis" stems more from botched deregulation schemes and possible price gouging than from a lack of supply. Second, the most credible estimates claim that ANWR will provide only six months' worth of oil for the United States—hardly a dent in our long-term energy needs and certainly questionable in terms of ecological costs. Finally, and most importantly, while the administration claims that it can drill for oil without disturbing this fragile ecosystem, the record of extracting and transporting oil in the arctic provides indisputable evidence that oil drilling irreparably damages the delicate tundra and wildlife. In short, Bush's proposal threatens to spoil a national and, indeed, global treasure in exchange for oil industry profits. The plan should be stopped dead in its tracks for these reasons alone.

But there is another, deeper reason to oppose the plan. The issue is not simply how carefully we can remove the oil or how many days the ANWR supply will last. We also must consider the meaning of our intrusion. The Bush proposal asks us to relinquish the value we place on setting aside land for other beings. It asks us to give up on the notion that there is more to human life than endless enterprise, industry, and activity.

It was precisely to protect these values that the authors of the Wilderness Act sought to establish places free from human doings. Although they did not use the language, they sought to create Sabbaths of place, areas of rest, spaces free from human activity. To the degree that the Sabbath

protects our lives from being consumed by the daily work of our hands and the enslavement of our minds by our day-to-day work exertions, the plan to drill for oil in ANWR or any wildlife refuge is a desecration of its principles.

Exodus (20:8) tells us that the Sabbath honors creation itself. ANWR, as a Sabbath of place, celebrates the created world. By preserving the magnificence of nature untouched by human hands, it stands as a reminder of the world's creation, of all that is beyond ourselves and our powers. By preserving it as a Sabbath-place, we keep it holy.

ANWR also preserves the Sabbath by standing as a place of liberation. Deuteronomy (5:15) explains that the Sabbath also honors Israel's redemption from Egypt and the feeling of freedom that redemption brought. As we have worked to gain freedom for ourselves, however, we have folded an ever-increasing amount of the earth into our domain. Each day, in our quest for deeper experience and as a consequence of our numbers, affluence, and technological capability, we increasingly master the natural world and bind it to our needs and desires. The other-than-human world of ANWR is, fortunately, still free from human mastery. Keeping it that way is a form of honoring the Sabbath and preserving its holiness.

As the Bush Administration tries to pillage one of the last pristine places on earth, we should remember the commandment to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. Protecting ANWR, as a Sabbath of place, represents an opportunity to withhold our power and let the world do *its* thing. Ironically, working to protect ANWR may be one of the best and most basic ways of doing *our* thing. □

# Women Read Torah

Sheila E. Jelen

- *Torah of the Mothers: Contemporary Jewish Women Read Classical Jewish Texts*, edited by Ora Wiskind Elper and Susan Handelman. Urim Publications, 2000.

At the age of seventeen I arrived in Israel to study for a year in a women's yeshiva. I was asked, my first Shabbat there, to give a talk on the weekly Torah portion to all the women in my program as well as to the rabbi of the local community. My destiny as a teacher became vividly apparent to me that night. But even as I had been given the opportunity by the school to come to that realization, my teachers became inscrutable when I asked difficult questions about why as a group my classmates and I could not form a women's minyan every morning, why we were not taught to read for ourselves from the Torah and the Megillot, why we were expected to step out of the room so men could pray when there was no natural partition behind which to position ourselves. It struck me that I would have to find a way to be everything I was destined to be despite the people who would not answer my questions, would not understand my need to be an equal in religious intellectual community.

I begin this review with an autobiographical account of my own experience at a women's yeshiva in Israel because I am back in Israel again this year, thirteen years later. In the interim I did not stay in the centers of Jewish

learning—and certainly not Jewish women's learning. I chose instead to make my life in Ann Arbor, in Berkeley, and in Washington, D.C., studying and teaching Jewish literature from a secular perspective. For that reason, I read, with great curiosity and pleasure, *Torah of the Mothers*, a collection of scholarly essays by Jerusalem-based women on biblical and talmudic texts.

In their introduction, the collection's editors, Susan Handelman and Ora Wiskind Elper, seem intent on separating out the phenomenon of Orthodox women's Torah scholarship from its content. Yet, much of the book, despite its editors' articulated intentions, is focused on the miracle of Orthodox women's scholarship itself—the miracle of its having grown out of a culture where, according to a minority rabbinic opinion which came to dominate the world of Jewish scholarship until the end of the nineteenth century, “the words of the Torah should be burnt rather than taught to women.” (Jerusalem Talmud, Sota 3:4)

*Torah of the Mothers* is divided into four sections: the first is comprised of essays written by contributors about their relationships, both intellectual and emotional, with their teachers. The second group of essays is on biblical texts. Some focus on figures of women in the Bible while others investigate various aspects of the patriarchs. The third section of the book, (and the least effective) is dedicated to analyses of rabbinic texts; the final section explores the theme of “Exile and Redemption” through biblical, rabbinic, and more personal lenses.

Contributors to *Torah of the Mothers* include academics in fields

such as literary studies, linguistics, biblical, and Jewish studies; teachers in religious seminaries; and independent scholars. Because of the variety of intellectual orientations in the book, the essays are somewhat uneven. For example, Jane Falk, in a beautifully written essay, employs a tight linguistic methodology, analyzing what she considers to be the “rhetorical” complaining of the Children of Israel in the desert. In contrast, in an essay on Genesis, author Simi Peter poses what she calls a methodological query when what she really is asking is a theological question. Further, like some of the collection's other authors, Peters takes for granted that readers share her theology, yet takes the time to painstakingly define such terms as Torah, Midrash, and Talmud. Such essays leave one to question the volume's intellectual vigor as well as its intended audience.

Throughout, the connection between *who* is studying—the phenomenon of Orthodox women's study itself—and *what* is being studied remains unresolved. An exception is the essay by Sarah Idit (Susan) Schneider, where Schneider uses her discussion of the daughters of Tzelofhad's persistent yet respectful appeal to Moses for inheritance rights, and his empathic and ultimately favorable response, as the basis for suggesting a similar mutually beneficial relationship for contemporary Orthodox women scholars and the rabbis to whom they must still appeal for legal decisions. Schneider says,

If women felt that rabbis had this kind of empathy with their yearning for more formal study or fuller participation in community life, any decision (even a bitter one) would

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still also be sweet. When instead, they are admonished for their urge to express themselves in ways that are deeply rooted in Torah but not in keeping with the traditional female role, an adversary relationship develops.

Elsewhere in the volume, however, essays such as Leah Rosenthal's talmudic analysis of the concept of self-affliction on Yom Kippur have absolutely no bearing on issues that pertain specifically to women's scholarship. In the Schneider essay, *Torah of the Mothers* provides a forum not only for displaying, but discussing women's scholarship. In the Rosenthal piece, *Torah of the Mothers* provides a forum for the rigorous presentation of Talmudic research performed, coincidentally, by a woman.

As I read through the twenty-three essays included in the volume, I found myself trying to excavate the essays for their attitude towards the "Torah of the Mothers" they are, according to the title of the collection, supposed to be espousing. Are these essays, I asked myself, being presented as inherently "motherly" because they are written by women? The preface to *Torah of the Mothers* concludes with the following blessing: "May this book give birth to many 'children,' to students blessed with the strength to build and to spread peace in the world." While as both a teacher and a mother I can appreciate the sentiment expressed in the metaphor of teaching as mothering, I would venture to say that not all readers of this volume, and possibly not all contributors to it, are comfortable with being forced into the domestic space of child and mother.

The title of *Torah of the Mothers*, as pointed out by several of the contributors, is derived from Proverbs 1:8 (and appears in somewhat modified form in Proverbs 6:20): "Listen, my son, to the admonishments of your father, and do not forsake the teachings of your mother." What are the teachings of the mother, the editors ask in their preface. They propose, on the basis of the

writings of Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin (the Netziv), that the teachings of the mother are the "oral law" in contrast to the "written law." (Davar ha-Emek on Proverbs 1:8) This would imply, intriguingly, that the whole body of commentary on the Torah, including the Talmud, Midrash, and all of halachic literature, is in some way associated with the feminine.

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*Much of the book ... is focused on the miracle of Orthodox women's scholarship itself.*

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Yet the orality implied in women's culture has not, traditionally, been the scholarly orality of Talmud and Mishnah, but a folk orality, an orality, in many cases predicated on illiteracy. Even while demonstrating that women can master the intellectual field of traditional Jewish scholarship, just in naming this anthology *Torah of the Mothers* the editors draw attention to the identity of its contributors as "mothers" of a sort, skewing the overall perspective of the book in the direction of traditional women's folk orality. Perhaps this grows out of the book's overwhelmingly Orthodox orientation, in which contributors time and again seem to get caught up in complicated apologetics and rationalizations for the very scholarship they demonstrate. Or perhaps, this grows out of the book's somewhat ambivalent attitude towards its identity as strictly a demonstration of women's scholarship, while in truth, it reflects on itself, time and again, as a product of the complex interaction between women's community and their scholarly output.

The final essay in the book, for example, entitled "Torah of the Mothers: Beyond the Study Hall," begins with a discussion that goes beyond the strictly textual. "Torah of

the Mothers," according to Esther Sha'anani, is "the Torah of *hesed* (loving kindness) and the highest possible standards of personal ethics." She continues to say that:

the world of *hesed* and caring is embodied, certainly not exclusively, but significantly, by Jewish women. And I would venture to guess that if most of us search back for memories or family tales of mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers, the *Torah imkha* (torah of your mother) we recall is that of *hesed* with no questions asked.

Such a claim rankles for me as someone academically trained in the need to de-essentialize categories of masculinity and femininity, who has personally experienced the deep danger which inheres in claiming morality for woman and intellectualism for men, who rigorously shies away from the religious and cultural apologetics which grow naturally out of such gender polarization. Yet, at the same time, what follows in Sha'anani's essay is a moving depiction of the Orthodox community's failure to support, no less acknowledge, the deeply lonely experience of a divorced mother raising four children alone while trying to build a career for herself and, more importantly, maintain ties to Orthodoxy. She describes the experience of a mother leaving synagogue early with her children in order to avoid the hubbub of husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, for whom a single woman remains largely invisible during post-service socializing. She tells the story of a woman who threatened to dress as a man so she could sit with her son on the men's side of the partition in synagogue and help him find his way through the high holiday prayerbook when no man would volunteer to do so independently. Sha'anani's essay, the last one in the volume, is a powerful testament to the necessity for any community that calls itself learned, any community that dedicates itself to study, to put into practice the ethical tenets which ground its existence. □

# Web Watch

## Alternative Web News on the Middle East

Jonathan Schorsch

**G**iven the narrow reportage of the mainstream media and the increasing accessibility, simplicity, and range of online information sources, there is no reason for people who want to keep up on news from Israel and Palestine to remain in corporate-sponsored darkness. Following is a brief survey of some of the best alternative Middle East media websites.

While many interesting and worthwhile organizations sponsor sites, I have only listed those which provide news or analysis of current events and about which TIKKUN readers are less likely to know. Obviously, I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the content of these sites, some of which present harshly anti-Israel opinions.

Updates can also be found at TIKKUN's website ([www.tikkun.org](http://www.tikkun.org)). Get your bookmarks ready.

### Alternative Information Center

[www.alternativenews.org](http://www.alternativenews.org)

The website of this joint Israeli-Palestinian organization provides a distinctly ground-level view of current realities in the Middle East, especially peace actions. Usually, new stories by Israeli and Palestinian authors appear daily, taken from other electronic publications. The site's layout is pleasing and simple.

### Arabnet

[www.arab.net](http://www.arab.net)

This handsome-looking and easy-to-navigate site provides new stories daily from a variety of international media outlets. It is sponsored by a Saudi Arabian media conglomerate. The more mainstream coverage presented here treats many issues, but obviously events in Israel-Palestine

play no small role. The site is not ideologically anti-Israel, nor does it always present the "Arab" perspective, as stories often derive from sources such as MicrosoftNBC, the BBC and other Western venues. Hence some of the site's interest: in addition to becoming informed on events from a Saudi vantage point, readers will discover that the Muslim camp is hardly a unified monolith.

### Challenge

[www.odaction.org/challenge](http://www.odaction.org/challenge)

The Challenge for Peace and Progress is a non-profit organization registered with Israel's Ministry of the Interior. Its membership is open to Israeli and Palestinian peace activists. Since 1990 it has published *Challenge*, a bimonthly independent journal from Jerusalem. The web version offers some of the important stories from

*Challenge* (all too few, unfortunately) along with an editorial policy conveying a strong anti-globalization theme and an unusual willingness to critique the Palestinian Authority and trends in Arab society. Unfortunately, there is no search engine, so you have to go to the most current issue and then scan the table of contents. The stories do come with crisp formatting and useful subtitles, though the fonts for the main body of text should be bigger.

### The Electronic Intifada

[www.electronicintifada.net/new.html](http://www.electronicintifada.net/new.html)

A project of Nigel Parry, this site, which focuses on media coverage, features fairly up-to-date original information and direct links to stories in other web publications. On the home page's right are options such as current Palestinian "death & injury stats," and a "Martyrs factsheet." Excellent design, very user-friendly.

### Independent Media Center Israel

[www.indymedia.org.il](http://www.indymedia.org.il)

This site, part of an international network of local sites, provides the most up-to-date alternative news and analysis, with stories appearing almost daily. An attractive layout includes easy to discern headlines, readable text fonts, and occasional photos. The contributing authors consist of internationally known figures as well as local activists and experts, making for an outstanding bundle of information from the front. The site features items in both English and Hebrew. (Readers without Hebrew

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font capability will see only gibberish for the latter; free Hebrew fonts can be downloaded from the website of *Haaretz*; [www3.haaretz.co.il](http://www3.haaretz.co.il).) Though offered as an option, I could not call up the site's Arabic version (I suppose one needs Arabic fonts). The site is interactive, meaning that readers are invited to write in their own responses. While this feature allows a more democratic format, many of the comments embroil readers in the kind of diatribes found on many e-mail discussion groups, where ideology and vitriol usually win out over coherence and sound reasoning. The site's generally excellent design enables readers who do not wish to view these conversations to skip over them. The content, on the other hand, is noteworthy for concentrating mostly on *tachlis*, on the necessary nuts and bolts, rather than on political posturing and name-calling. The view through these news stories makes this an essential source for on-the-ground news.

### LAW

[www.lawsociety.org](http://www.lawsociety.org)

Almost daily news bulletins can be found on this site, whose content is apparent only from its subtitle, The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment. It provides timely reporting of ongoing military and political events from the Palestinian perspective. Stories are often extensive and focus on news rather than analysis. Clicking on the small graphic windows tiled on the right side of the home page leads readers to a variety of photo galleries as well as linked sites.

### Mideast Watch

[www.lbbs.org/meastwatch/meastwat.htm](http://www.lbbs.org/meastwatch/meastwat.htm)

NET, a website sponsored by the people who put out *Z Magazine*, offers another lefty alternative. This site's appearance is more stripped-down. The straightforward layout makes it generally easy to use, though form and function could be improved.

Mideast Watch gives readers a plethora of analytical pieces from figures like Noam Chomsky, Edward Said, Tanya Reinhart, Robert Fisk, and others. The offerings are not always that current, though the goal here is as much political commentary as news; pieces listed in the "Newest" section came from the past few months (unfortunately, some of the stories bear no date). The long list of articles on the main page of the Mideast Watch site is also somewhat off-putting (some of the stories also receive multiple listings under different categories), but hidden within are real gems: direct links to stories in other sources, such as *The Village Voice* or Cairo's *al-Akhram*, and a few excellent, detailed maps. On the left of the main page links can be found to a large number of other relevant alternative sites, such as B'Tselem, Bir Zeit University, Gush Shalom, the Israeli Anti-Apartheid Movement, the *Palestine Times* (a monthly), the *Palestine Chronicle* (handsome site, updated weekly), the Iraq Action Coalition, official sites of the Israeli and Palestinian governments, and even Arutz Sheva, described as "Extreme Right-Wing Israeli settler media ... caution."

### Middle East Research and Information Project

[www.merip.org](http://www.merip.org)

This site is produced by the Washington D.C.-based NGO which publishes *Middle East Report*. In terms of news, it features Press Information Notes, which appear every few days, each written by a different journalist, academic, activist, or official, but not always concerning the Israeli-Arab conflict. The tone is eminently professional and many of the voices are Arab or Palestinian. Readers can also view recent issues of the *Middle East Report*, such as the Winter 2000 issue "Beyond Oslo: the New Uprising," with many of the stories available in full text. The site's simple (and small) layout is a pleasure to navigate. □

## BEN'S STORY

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*Edited by Kees W. Bolle*

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*Foreword by Susan Zucotti*

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Mythical women applaud us. A sea for us, a sea against us.  
When water and wheat are not at hand, eat our love and drink our tears...  
There are mourning scarves for the poets. A row of marble statues will raise our voice.  
A stone washbasin will keep the dust of time from our souls. Roses for us and against us.  
You have your glory, we have ours. We see of our home only the unseen: our mystery.  
We have glory. A throne carried on feet torn by roads that led to every home but ours!  
The soul must recognize itself in its very soul or there it must die.

—Mahmoud Darwish  
Translated by Munir Akash and Carolyn Forché

## On The Slope, Higher Than the Sea, They Slept

On the slope, higher than the sea higher than the cypresses, they slept.  
The iron sky erased their memories. And the dove flew away  
To where their fingers gestured, east of their torn bodies.  
Weren't they entitled to throw the basil of their names on the water-moon?  
To plant a bitter orange tree in the ditches so as to dispel the darkness?  
  
They sleep beyond the limits of space, at a slope where words turn to stone.  
They sleep on the stone shaped into the bones of their phoenix...  
Our heart can join their feast in next to no time.  
Our heart can steal a place for doves to return to the bedrock of earth.  
O kin sleeping within me, at the ends of the earth, peace be unto you. Peace.

—Mahmoud Darwish  
Translated by Munir Akash and Carolyn Forché

# Can't We All Just Get Along?

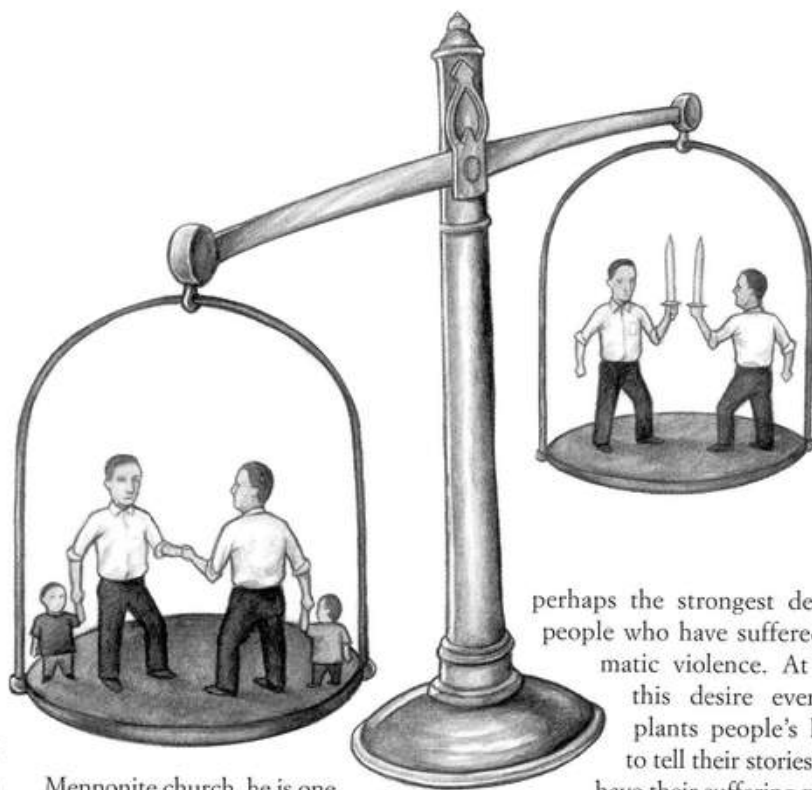
Roger S. Gottlieb

■ *The Journey Toward Reconciliation*, by John Paul Lederach. Herald Press, 2000.

From Intifada II (or is it III now?) to Rwanda, Northern Ireland, Mozambique, Uganda, Colombia, Algeria, Kosovo, and Sri Lanka it seems the world suffers as much from the sort of conflict where it is impossible to identify one "right side" as it does from outright injustice, as much from bloody struggles between sworn "enemies" as from imperialism or exploitation.

While most situations of collective violence involve some elements of both sheer malice and violent injustice, the distinction remains crucial. Facing injustice, we seek to eliminate the oppressor's social position. There is no peacemaking with slaveholders, fascist death squads, or CEOs who smilingly lie about the carcinogens their plants are discharging into the water supply. However, when conflict is national, religious, racial, or ethnic, what we oppose cannot be eliminated without genocide. Enemies must kill each other or learn to reconcile.

This process of reconciliation—bringing together two (or more) conflicting groups, each with its history of suffering and legitimate concerns—is the theme of John Paul Lederach's wonderful book. A member of the



Mennonite church, he is one of the several hundreds of professional peacemakers the Mennonites have trained (and paid) to pursue a benign but militant peacemaking that emphasizes listening, care, and gentle patterns of interaction in the face of hatred and danger. Lederach has practiced this difficult and dangerous art in Israel, Nicaragua, Haiti, Somalia, Northern Ireland, and the Philippines.

The Mennonites believe that if reconciliation is possible, it is because we can recognize that we all desire happiness and are vulnerable to loss; we all experience grief, fear, anger, and joy; we all love our families and hope for a better world for our children. In pursuing their belief in humankind's common bonds, the Mennonites have had signal success. For instance, following ravaging violence in Nicaragua and Cambodia, former enemies—people who had lost friends and family to the other side or been guilty of murders themselves—learned to cooperate. As some Cambodian villagers put it: "We work together for the sake of the children, so that civil war will not ruin their lives as it has ours." The wish to prevent a recurrence, Lederach says, is

perhaps the strongest desire of people who have suffered traumatic violence. At times, this desire even supplants people's hunger to tell their stories and to have their suffering publicly acknowledged.

Thus reconciliation involves an uneasy balance of truth and mercy, peace and justice. In any given setting—whether it be forming truth commissions in South Africa after the fall of apartheid, managing the return of refugees in Kosovo, or measuring Palestinian self-determination against Israeli security—the value of our present lives must, somehow, outweigh our past pain. Sometimes to tip the scale toward the present, the perpetrators must publicly admit their past crimes. At other times, we might have to work with former killers so that our children have a chance at peace. To achieve this balance, we must stop seeing the Other as the Enemy.

Lederach illustrates how easily the Other becomes the Enemy with a marvelous story about how he personally created an enemy while working to end the civil war in Nicaragua. Waiting at an airport on the Honduran border with Nicaragua, he saw a Honduran helicopter pilot dressed in fatigues and wraparound sunglasses, clothed in military authority, engaged in contact with an obvious CIA operative. The "colonel," as Lederach imagined him, was a symbol of the corrupt and violent American and Honduran regimes, collaborating to devastate the peaceful

Roger S. Gottlieb teaches philosophy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Two of his recent books are *A Spirituality of Resistance: Finding a Peaceful Heart and Protecting the Earth* and *Deep Ecology and World Religions: New Essays on Common Ground*.

## READING SPIRIT

Nicaraguans. He was the very antithesis of Lederach—the devoted-Christian-peacemaker. As the “colonel” rose to meet an arriving plane, Lederach visualized the kind of evil contact he was about to make. To his surprise, Lederach saw that the arriving passenger was a handicapped ten-year-old girl, limping along on crutches, assisted by the awkward, but clearly loving, “colonel.” In amazement and moral chagrin, Lederach thought: “The colonel is a father, just like me!” The lesson, he tells us, is that the creation of an Enemy is in part a mental process. We see others as threatening and different, and come to believe that our side is wholly good while theirs is wholly evil. In the end, they deserve any fate we visit upon them. (Despite its simplicity, does this formula not capture some of the tragedy of Palestinian-Israeli violence?)

Learning the lessons of reconciliation could seriously alter the history of progressive political movements, a

history that—sadly—overflows with destructive internal strife. We find extreme antagonism between reformist and radical members of the Green Party, between Gore supporters and Nader supporters, between black womanists and white feminists. Any issue of *The Nation* shows that antagonistic contempt for other progressives is a normal part of leftist discourse. Of course dissolving political differences in a warm bath of spiritual mush won't help, but neither does the hard-hearted pursuit of differences. Recognizing the humanity of those we oppose would produce more cooperation, fewer destructive splits, more fluid alliances, and a much more humanly nourishing political culture.

Lederach's book is a marvel of insight, personal honesty, and spiritual wisdom. Anyone who cares about peace, human happiness, or the place of spiritual values in the real world of blood and sorrow should read it. However, as Lederach is well aware,

he leaves us with some difficult questions, questions which darken the prospects of even the most loving and intelligent of peacemakers.

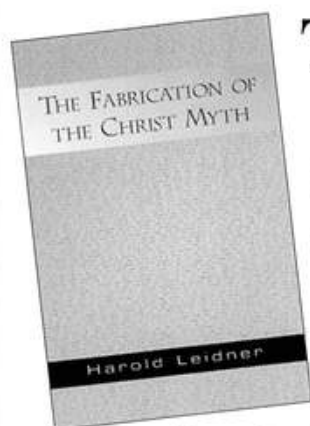
- The story about the colonel is moving, but what about the SS officers who would direct mass shootings of Jews during the day and come back to the barracks to read Shakespeare and listen to Beethoven? On leave they brought flowers to their wives and played with their children. To their families, they were fathers. To the Jews, they were Nazis. What difference does it make that we have something in common with them?

- Does reconciliation sometime stand a better chance when it is motivated by a calculating pursuit of self-interest rather than recognition and empathy? It was Richard Nixon who “recognized” Communist China and tried to reconcile with nature through creating the EPA and the Endangered Species Act. In both cases the motivation was temporary political gain rather than ethical values.

- In a context of hatred, fear, and loss, can mass death sometimes be a necessary condition for reconciliation? Would Sadat ever have made peace if Egypt hadn't lost tens of thousands of soldiers in its wars against Israel? Would France and Germany have learned to share open borders without the traumas of three terrible wars in seventy years? Can human beings learn love (or at least acceptance) only after they have endured the fruits of hate?

- Is there much hope for reconciliation in the face of a world market, global capitalism, and tyrannical states that necessarily pit races, religions, nationalities, and ethnic groups against each other? Could it be that before a lasting culture of peace is created we need to wage—and win—a war to eradicate corporate power and repressive governments?

- And, finally, with all that we know of reconciliation, of the secret places of the heart that nurture hatred and hope alike, is there any hope for Israelis and Palestinians? □



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# Queer Kashrut

Danya Ruttenberg

■ *Kosher Meat*, edited by Lawrence Schimel. Sherman Asher Publishing, 2000.

I'm trying to imagine what an anthology of stories by and about men who have sex with menstruating women would look like. Perhaps one piece would address the fear and thrill of a married couple's "first time," while another would feature a character who lurked in the alley behind the mikvah, trying to seduce women before they took their purifying dunks. Another, a romance perhaps, would feature a pair of star-crossed lovers who only had one night to consummate their ardor before being separated forever—and dang! It's that time of the month! But true love decides not to wait.

Sounds silly—and crass—I realize, but I think it's an important analogy to make. That is, all of the *sturm und drang* about homosexuality in Jewish life and law is, to take a fairly conservative reading, not all that different from coitus with a menstruant (also prohibited in the Holiness Code) or the *to'evah* (abomination) of a woman remarrying her first husband after having been married to a second. Yet, I somehow suspect that few observant families would sever ties with a daughter who decided to get back together with her first husband after all.

The above line of thought doesn't

Danya Ruttenberg is editor of *Yentl's Revenge: Women and the New Jewish Future* (Seal Press, 2001).



even take into account the scholarly theories positing that the Leviticus prohibitions against "lying with a man as with a woman" referred to a specific Canaanite cultic practice—and are therefore actually prohibitions against idolatry, not gay sex, and certainly not "homosexuality" as most people today conceive it; same-sex love as primary relationship is a mere nineteenth-century invention. But the Leviticus prohibition is still often used to validate homophobia, acts of violence, and the marginalization of gays and lesbians from mainstream Jewish life, so it's not hard to see how sex itself might become the fulcrum of dissonance and reconciliation of Jewish and gay identities.

Enter Lawrence Schimel's anthology of writing on the gay Jewish experience.

There's a lot of sex in *Kosher Meat*, as the title might imply. There's also a lot of love, desire, friendship, and more,

but a certain thread seems to weave through the book: the reader jumps from anonymous flings on Fire Island to a porn star's dialogue with a couple of Hasidic teenagers, from a rendezvous begun in the Holocaust Museum to an orgy in New York. The beginning of "A Fine Point" practically itemizes the narrator's sexual escapades: one count yields twenty-three partners in just a few short pages.

Many of the authors seek to make kosher what is too-oft considered *treif* by Judaizing, or even sanctifying, the sexual, teasing out seeming contradictions in order to harmonize them. In Schimel's "The Minyan" we find: "Simon watched the back of Joshua's head bobbing up and down before Stanley's crotch, as if Josh were davening, and perhaps this was like a prayer for Joshua...." The narrator of "Mein Yiddishe Tate" tells us that Yiddish, "the Mama Loshn, felt like a forbidden tongue, the language of our most

perverse desires." David Jaffe's excellent story—one of the volume's finest—of an adolescent's painful sexual awakening takes place during Yom Kippur services, as the narrator finds himself inexorably aroused by the sight and smell of a *schul* full of unwashed men; the *mechiza*, ironically, fails to keep him from being distracted by impure thoughts.

Many readers (gay, straight, or otherwise) might find the references startling or shocking or surprising—not so much because gay sex is the topic in question, but because sex itself here is the subject of Jewish inquiry. Other recent Jewish sex anthologies—*Friday the Rabbi Wore Lace*, *The Oy of Sex*, and Melvin Bukiet's stellar *Neurotica*—have attempted or achieved the same, but all too often I think these sorts of books have settled for deceptively easy answers. All three of the above titles seem enamored of the fact that Judaism has traditionally had a more open attitude about sex than, say, Catholicism—incorrectly implying that Jews are magically free of the sexual hangups plaguing ... well, most of contemporary American culture.

Schimmel argues the opposite position, that the condition of *galut* Jewry makes personal sexual liberation that much harder. He writes in the Introduction, "So many Jews seem to... live as if two aspects of their lives, their sexuality and their Jewishness, were separate personalities.... Part of the confusion stems from the difficulty of figuring out what it means to be Jewish in a secular setting. Because to be a Jew can imply so many different things—a culture, a tradition—apart from the act of praying to a single God in a Jewish (as opposed to other) fashion." Though the apparent impossibility of being both a sexual creature and a Jew has especially affected gay men, reconciling this paradox is important work for all of us.

Yet, with the exception of Jaffe's "The Day I Was Caught," the strongest pieces in the anthology aren't really about sexual identity; the particularity

of the gay character is simply a vehicle to explore more universal questions. Andrew Ramer's "From His Own Hands," is a beautifully written tale set in ancient Sfat, featuring Yonatan—a lonely carver who, in search of a companion, makes himself a golem. The lessons he learns ultimately have nothing to do with sex or even romance, but with generosity and the breadth of

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*There's a lot of sex in  
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title might imply.  
There's also a lot of  
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and more.*

---

spirit which lives through another's joy. Brian Stein's "The Good Son" tells of an estranged son's return home for his father's funeral, Catholic boyfriend in tow. Certainly, the plot focuses on the family's difficulty accepting Noah's gayness, but the heart of the story, as told from his partner Patrick's point of view, is about grief, family dysfunction, and the delicate dance of interfaith relationships.

Panic about getting involved with a German in Jonathan Wald's "My Nazi Summer" reveals lingering fears about history and the persistence of memory: Wald's nameless narrator speaks with horror about his lover's "smooth Aryan skin," as though his desire were itself a sort of betrayal. Although he "always thought that [his] revulsion toward skinny men was a sign of sympathy for [his] people," after his encounter with the man he dubs "the Nazi" he wonders if his "revulsion may be much worse, a sign of my own self-hatred: I'd rather sleep with a living Nazi than a dying Jew."

It's a bitter, poignant moment—but Wald's decision to stretch the analogy to an absurd extreme reveals a common Jewish neurosis—the bias against

Germans—for its true nature. The narrator arrives for dinner at the German's apartment and is so shocked to discover that his date has a Jewish roommate that he tells us, "I half expected the Holocaust to be reenacted before my eyes." Wald deftly works his narrator into a plot twist that ultimately, subtly, reminds us that ethics in the here-and-now matter a whole lot more than historic grudges and lingering fears.

Wald is strong; many of the other contributors less so. My biggest regret about *Kosher Meat* is that more of the pieces aren't of a higher literary quality. Though it's a pleasant read, the book falls into a trap common to anthologies of the "identity politics" variety—characters are too often one-dimensional, relationships too often scripted, resolution found a bit too easily. One leaves stories about "a guy, uncomfortable with his sexuality, who attends a sex party with Jewish men and suddenly realizes being gay is OK!" or "a guy who, after many gentile flings, becomes involved with somebody from his synagogue and—Ha! Ha!—it turns out the Jewish beau isn't circumcised!" feeling a bit empty and cheated—like, perhaps, unfulfilling sex.

This has nothing to do with the subject matter—relatively little has been published about the many complex facets of gay Jewish experience. There's plenty of material available to mine, and I couldn't help wishing that more of it was present in this volume. Perhaps it's just that *Kosher Meat* seems content to be a collection of stories—some with a semi-erotic tone and many with sharp one-liners ("the Orthodox gay man ... told me that by having sex with a man standing up rather than lying down, he circumvented and therefore kept God's law")—when it hints at becoming so much more.

In any case, it's not a bad start. *Kosher Meat* articulates some important questions about identity, sexuality, and Jewishness, and occasionally, what it means to be a human in this strange post-postmodern era. Perhaps, *dayenu*—that's enough. □

# What's Love Got to Do With It?...Everything.

Michael Bader

■ *A General Theory of Love* by Thomas Lewis, M.D., Richard Lannon, M.D., and Fari Amini, M.D. Vintage Books, 2001.

Social change activists and psychodynamic psychotherapists often believe that knowledge is power. Freud proclaimed "Where Id was, there shall Ego be," confident that rational insight would tame the irrational powers of our unconscious minds. Activists work to "get their message out," believing that if people correctly understood the social inequities in the world, they would change them. Both the therapist and the activist tend to think that those who see love as the key to change are "flaky," full of "New Age mush." Imagine their surprise when they learn that neurobiological science is now discovering that the primary problem in both mental illness and social alienation lies precisely in our damaged ability to love, and that the cure to both lies in enhancing that ability. Will those believers in scientific rationality, whether they be liberal politicians and union activists or psychotherapists, embrace these cutting-edge scientific findings?

Perhaps they could start by reading *A General Theory of Love* by psychiatrists Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon. It is now apparent that love resides in our brains and not just our hearts, that it is as necessary to



our biological survival as it is to our emotional survival. Love should no longer be the sole province of the poet, nor should a politics that makes love its central tenet be considered flaky romanticism. As Lewis, Lannon, and Amini persuasively argue, the human brain is exquisitely prewired to experience love and attachment, and requires such experiences every bit as much as food and oxygen for its healthy development. Furthermore, they argue, love is not only a human passion but a profound way of understanding and learning about the world. *A General Theory of Love* provides a scientific foundation for the centrality of human connectedness in both health and disease.

Drawing from the latest research in neuroscience, Lewis *et al.* demonstrate that our basic social intelligence—our ability to discern what other people are thinking and feeling, to read their cues, and to connect emotionally with them—is mediated not through the cortex of our brains, the seat of rationality, but through subcortical structures, particularly that which is known as the "limbic system." The cortex learns

about the world of things and ideas and thinks in terms of cause and effect, but the limbic system learns about people and is grounded in intuition. From the moment of birth, our limbic system is preadapted to connect with our caretakers, just as the limbic systems of our caretakers are exquisitely designed to connect with us. Our subcortical brains are wired to read each other's emotional states and to resonate with them. This "limbic resonance," so say the authors, is another way of describing the biological dimension of intersubjectivity, the fundamental way that we're connected to other people.

We learn about who we are and what we should expect in relationships through our attachments to others—first and foremost our parents—and this learning is not usually conscious. The knowledge is subcortical, limbic, and intuitive. If we're loved for who we really are, we develop the capacity to love and be loved by others in relationships of true mutuality.

If we're not understood, if we're inordinately rejected or overpowered, we grow up with a sense of ourselves as embattled and disconnected. These self-images and expectations seem quite normal to us, patterned as they are after the traumatic attachment

Michael Bader is a psychoanalyst in private practice and is a member of TIKKUN's editorial board. His book, *Arousal: The Secret Logic of Sexual Fantasies*, will be published by St. Martin's Press in January 2002.

## BOOK REVIEW

patterns of childhood. These patterns, it now seems, are anchored deep within our brains in the form of neural networks that become reinforced over time. In this sense, when an early attachment is insecure or otherwise problematic, neural pathways are laid down that become the pathological templates for later relationships. Psychologists have always known that problems in attachment to one's caretakers cause depression and other emotional disorders. What Lewis *et al.* do is to anchor this observation squarely in cutting-edge neuroscience.

The authors of *A General Theory of*

*Love* use their psychobiological model first to explain how people change in psychotherapy and why they so often have such a difficult time doing so. The authors argue that most people don't change when a therapist explains to them the reasons for their psychological problems because explanations are a form of cortical knowledge, while the problems they're intended to address are encoded in subcortical structures. If we learn to become "ill" via nonconscious and intuitive pathways, we can't unlearn our neuroses through rational interpretations. When psychotherapy does help people change, the authors argue, it works by providing them with new experiences. These new experiences are transmitted and received on a limbic level in the context of the therapy relationship, offering new attachment patterns from which patients can intuit new ways of seeing themselves and the world. The resistance to change in psychotherapy derives from the fact that when people are offered a new model of attachment, it contradicts the familiar models associated with the earliest and most important relationships of their lives. To change means to risk momentarily feeling alone, bereft of familiar modes of connection.

The extent to which these familiar modes of connection are problematic is next explored by Lewis, Lannon, and Amini, who critique various aspects of modern social life as frustrating or damaging to the limbic resonance necessary for healthy development. Like many social conservatives, the authors underscore the ways in which drug addiction and many forms of violent behavior are more likely to be found in people deprived of

stable social bonds. Yet Lewis *et al.* also damn managed health care because it increasingly deprives people of the human relatedness so necessary to optimal health. Their work is radical in that they oppose a work world in which profits are put above people because a profit-driven environment creates people who are limbically damaged, invited to connect with institutions that cannot reciprocate. The paradigmatic example that they cite of this kind of pathological attachment is the long-term and loyal employee who is summarily fired because of corporate downsizing. A corporation is incapable of limbic resonance.

The celebration and scientific grounding of love and intuition in *A General Theory of Love* is a much needed corrective to lingering biases within psychology that privilege the therapeutic power of rational knowledge. While Lewis *et al.* can be faulted for not adequately acknowledging the sea change within their own field away from such an idealization of rationality and toward an emphasis on the healing power of relationships, their point is nonetheless still well taken. Too many therapists and too many of their patients still believe that insight should necessarily lead to change. However, theoretical correctives always run the risk of appearing to create a new paradigm which may be biased in its own way, and I think that *A General Theory of Love* tends in this direction.

For example, how we love others, what we expect of them, and how we see ourselves are nonconscious principles and may well be subcortically anchored. In my own work as a psychotherapist, I am a firm believer that it is only by offering people real connective experiences over a long period of time that these principles have a chance of changing. I don't think that my patients can be cured just because I tell them what's wrong with them. However, I have also repeatedly witnessed the powerful transformative effects of explanations and rational insight. Helping a patient see the ori-

### Shadows on darkness

A yahrzeit candle\*  
in its glass shell  
stands in the bathtub  
the flame shivering  
beating like a heart.

The shimmering  
spiral of fire  
throws latticed shadows  
—design of the glass—  
on the longest night.

Your death accompanies  
me to bed,  
your face flickering.  
In the dead of winter  
your life guttered out.

My life is more than  
half past. Midnight  
is only a halfway  
house on the solstice  
dark. Love for

the dead is a candle  
in a mirror,  
the flame agile  
but cold, and darkness  
gathering like a storm.

—Marge Piercy

\*Memorial candle lit annually, burns for 24 hours.

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gins and irrational basis of his or her maladaptive beliefs and relational patterns can be tremendously liberating to someone caught in their grip. It can help facilitate the patient's own efforts to master their difficulties, strengthening their own motivation to change their maladaptive limbic patterns.

Lewis and his co-authors tend to unnecessarily bifurcate explicit rational insight (so-called cortical knowledge) and experiential learning (so-called subcortical knowledge). For example, the nonconscious patterns of relating that they privilege as the source of mental suffering can also be seen as taking the form of a nonconscious "belief" that can often be precisely described. Beliefs may be quite primitive, and sometimes even encoded non-verbally, but they nonetheless usually have a structure that can be very usefully described rationally. And such rational descriptions can have a transformative effect.

Patients have a powerful motive to change "limbic" beliefs, and to use their higher cortical capacities to do so in therapy. For example, someone may have nonconsciously learned in the context of his or her earliest attachments that if he or she is selfish, mother will feel hurt. This becomes a "principle" that may well be primarily encoded in the limbic system and, as these authors suggest, will become resistant to change unless a therapist patiently and repeatedly demonstrates an alternative principle in the therapy relationship. However, in my experience, repeatedly pointing out this belief—"You feel irrationally guilty about being selfish because when you were a child you developed the false notion that you could easily hurt your mother with your self-assertion"—can, in some cases, dramatically lift the curtain of mystery surrounding the patient's inhibitions. The patient sometimes feels immediately relieved and is able to use this insight to understand other, similar situations. To use the authors' language, it is a "cortical" insight resulting in subcortical change.

Arid, intellectualized insight is useless in psychotherapy and, as Lewis *et al.* correctly argue, can easily be absorbed by the neo-cortex while never touching the underlying feeling-structures of the limbic system. However, interpretations that communicate real understanding, ones that a patient feels help facilitate the kind of mastery and growth that he or she has already come into therapy desperately seeking, can resonate up and down from subcortical structures to cortical ones—and back again. I have seen this process occur countless times in my own work, work which has long since abandoned traditional Freudian idealizations about rationality.

In a similar vein, by emphasizing the role that social institutions play in both enhancing and damaging limbic resonance, *A General Theory of Love* corrects for a bias within political circles in which objective suffering is privileged over psychic pain and rational consciousness-raising over creating loving alternative communities. As the authors remind us, intellectual understanding doesn't necessarily lead to change. The structures of powerlessness and hopelessness are too deep, too limbically entrenched, to change in response to rational argument. People need to have alternative experiences, to feel themselves to be in communities in which they are affirmed, empowered, and connected, in order to really risk giving up their political cynicism and apathy. Thus, there are many people working for social change who feel that their job ought to be building alternative communities, whether such communities be concrete living arrangements, or more spiritual in nature. According to this line of thinking, people need to feel loved and valued in order to change.

My own view—and that of others—is that both are needed. Just as rational insight can be powerfully transforma-

tive in therapy, so too can correct political ideas help mobilize people in the public arena. But these ideas can't be abstractly intellectual. They have to be ideas that empathically address what people are really feeling and must attempt to put these feelings into a broader context. It's not enough (although it is a huge step in the right direction) to build an alternative community.

Psychologically, our society functions in a closed loop; it values bottom-line and egoistic thinking, yet such thinking permeates society only because it emanates from the normal functioning of the market place. To exit this loop we need good theory, correct ideas, and a deep social analysis.

Lewis and his colleagues help us understand the tremendous value of empathy. When a mother "reads" her child's cues correctly, that child is affirmed and emboldened, limbically energized and cortically more coherent. When people feel that their real needs are "read" correctly by a political movement, then they feel similarly. The task is to provide people with ideas that simultaneously touch them at a deep level.

I think that Lewis, Lannon, and Amini would agree that psychotherapists ought to be able to better blend cortical with subcortical interventions, that the bias has been altogether too much on the side of rationality and too little on the side of implicit, intuitive, limbic relatedness. While they and I might disagree as to the proper blend, surely the ability to move back and forth between levels is crucial for psychological healers. So, too, is this ability necessary for social change agents—to recognize that the people we are trying to organize need real experiences of loving connectedness at the same time that they work to heighten their rational awareness of the irrationality around them. □



# Why We Deny

Kathy Laster

- *States of Denial* by Stan Cohen. Polity Press, 2001.

On Yom Kippur, religious Jews recite the ritual prayer of confession. They enumerate the sins of the collective “we”—“We have acted treasonably, aggressively, and slanderously ... perniciously, disdainfully, and erratically.” For secular Jews, though, it is probably more meaningful to directly acknowledge political sins of omission and commission. “We have witnessed children starving and dying and done nothing; we have seen murderers, torturers and rapists, if not in action, then at least boasting and defending themselves; we have pretended not to see homeless beggars; we have thrown letters from worthy causes in the recycle bin.” In *States of Denial* Stan Cohen speaks directly to this secular “conscience constituency.” His imagined audience is

a nice thirty something couple sitting, with their breakfast coffee and croissants, in New York, London, Paris or Toronto. They pick up the morning newspaper: “Another Thousand Tutsis Massacred in Rwanda.” In the mail plop two circular letters, one for Oxfam: “While you are eating your breakfast, ten more children starve to death in Somalia,” and one from Amnesty: “While you are eating your lunch, eight streetchildren are killed in Brazil.” What does this “news” do to them, and what do

they do to the news? What goes through their minds? What do they say to each other?

Cohen’s exploration of the individual, social, and cultural dimensions of denial is directed at “mostly the ethnocentric, culturally imperialist ‘we’—educated and comfortable people living in stable societies” ... people like the readers of *TIKKUN*. Denial is a highly developed skill, deeply embedded in culture and language. We are accustomed to “turning a blind eye” and to accepting “conspiracies of silence”; we allow ourselves to “look the other way” and to live in “wilful ignorance.” Denial should be easy to counter. Not only can we recognize it in others, we even have a lexicon to describe the denial mechanisms of governments and officialdom. We know propaganda, whitewash, spin, misinformation, coverup and, of course, Orwell’s “double-think” when we see them. Yet, as Stan Cohen makes clear, “denial is a presence that evaporates, the nearer you get to defining it.” It is full of paradox.

Our everyday response to denial is sometimes outrage, frequently guilt, and more often helpless indifference—the problems are too entrenched and “what can we do, anyway?” Cohen’s insight is to see precisely these responses as part of the very problem of denial itself. On the one hand, pop psychology tells us that denial is bad, to be gotten rid of as fast as possible (ideally on “Oprah” in the presence of millions). On the other hand, we know

that denial is integral to social functioning. Stan Cohen masterfully exposes the intricate matrix of forms of denial. Partial or full denial is practised by individuals, collectives, and states, who can be victims, perpetrators, or bystanders, about matters historical and contemporary. Cohen’s sociological analysis explores the diverse scientific literature, including philosophy, cognitive psychology, and psychoanalysis. His most poignant examples draw on the rich research on the Holocaust. In each area, Cohen demonstrates how denial facilitates the “maintenance of social worlds in which an undesirable situation (event, condition, phenomenon) is unrecognized, ignored or made to seem normal.”

“Think of the means, conscious and unconscious,” Cohen writes, “that is used by residents of Jerusalem, Belfast, Beirut, Bogata and Algiers to keep violence out of daily awareness. You cannot allow your knowledge of the risk to govern your routine; nor can you act without this knowledge.” Denial protects and can even cure: cancer patients “in denial” do better because they shield themselves from unbearable stress and self-fulfilling fatalism. But there is a fine line: denial may have helped Jews in the Warsaw ghetto to face their daily ordeal, but the same capacity tragically made them oblivious to the reality of the threat until after it was too late.

The pull of denial came as a painful revelation to Stan Cohen himself, who made *aliyah* to Israel in 1980, but now lives in London. His detailed documentation of the torture of Palestinians by Israeli authorities in a highly publicized coauthored report thrust

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him into the maelstrom of the politics of denial. He writes:

The official and mainstream response was venomous: outright denial (it doesn't happen); discrediting (the organization was biased, manipulated or gullible); renaming (yes, something does happen, but it is not torture) and justification (anyway "it" was morally justified). Liberals were uneasy and concerned. Yet there was no outrage. Soon a tone of acceptance began to be heard. Abuses were intrinsic to the situation; there was nothing to be done till a political solution was found; something like torture might even be necessary sometimes; anyway, we don't want to keep being told about this all the time.

State denial is facilitated by: euphemism ("transfer of population", "collateral damage"), legalism ("it does not explicitly fall within the definition"), isolation ("this was an aberration, not routine practice"), righteousness (the nation is exalted, represents a higher good, e.g. ethnic purity, Western civilization), necessity ("there was no alternative"), denial of the victim ("they started it", "they got what they deserved"), contextualization and uniqueness ("if only you really understood our history, politics, the nature of the conflict ..."), and advantageous comparison ("this is nothing compared to what they do," "why does everyone keep picking on us?"). (p 103-113) The great contribution of *States of Denial* is that it generalizes and universalizes denial practices. As theory, Cohen's framework cuts through the politics of blame and guilt. Suddenly, the microdiscourse of politics can be discussed as variations on a continuum.

One of the most perceptive chapters in the book is an analysis of how denial can be put to use for consciousness- and fund-raising for worthy causes (a must read for every treasurer and secretary of any Jewish organization). Cohen analyzes the common complaints of "donor fatigue," "revelation fatigue," and the more general problem of "compassion fatigue." While these problems seem real to

organizers, for Cohen they are themselves a form of denial. Cohen particularly finds "compassion fatigue" to be a disingenuous and counterproductive instance of myth-making. He remains cautiously optimistic about the possibilities for promoting and sustaining a more compassionate world order.

Cohen masterfully reviews current strategies to overcome denial such as lustration, compensation, criminalization, expiation, and reconciliation, concluding that they all have serious limitations. Nevertheless, for Cohen, the social significance of truth-telling should not be underestimated. Quoting Marx, he suggests that "shame is a revolutionary emotion." The solutions lie in establishing circumstances which sustain more altruism and in strategies which encourage an "inquiring mind."

Stan Cohen has this inquiring mind in ample measure and has had it all his life. In the preface he recalls his "earliest political memory": As a young boy, growing up in South Africa, he questioned the practice of hiring a Zulu "boy" (actually a man) to guard the house while his father was away.

Why did this old man have to sit out in the cold all night? Why had our family (and everyone like us) been allocated black men and women (who were called "boys" and "girls" or just "natives") as domestic servants? Why did they live in a tiny room in the backyard? Where were their wives and husbands and children? Why did they address me as "baas" or "master"?

In both his political practice and his writing, Stan Cohen has consistently and persuasively posed similarly challenging questions. *States of Denial* is the theoretical "summa" and his often moving reflections on this life-long quest. Artfully crafted and beautifully written, *States of Denial* is certainly not an easy read: it forces us to confront our own blind spots and rationalizations. After the twentieth century no serious intellectual can afford not to read this book and absorb Stan Cohen's profound insights. □

## BEST CONTEMPORARY JEWISH WRITING

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# Peace Begins Inside

Susan Dermond

**T**his year's visit of the Dalai Lama to Portland, OR, brought about renewed discussion, especially among young people here, of how we may achieve peace, both within and without. The Dalai Lama's commitment to nonviolence and compassion is an ideal that inspires more and more of us.

How can we help our children practice these qualities and begin to experience compassion and understanding rather than blame? forgiveness rather than retaliation? active calm rather than anger or passive victim-consciousness?

Of course, the first and best way to teach anything is to model it yourself. When someone cuts in front of you in traffic or honks at you if you hesitate, do you mutter an epithet or react with fear? Or do you cheerfully say, "Go ahead, I hope you make it safely!" Can you perhaps comment with compassion to your child, "Imagine being so tense and unhappy?"

We achieve peace and nonviolence when we understand that the impatience and anger of others is coming from their own lack of inner peace and that theirs is a vortex of blaming, negative energy that we can enter or not, by our own choice. It may be asking too much of most children that they see this when the negativity is coming from another child toward them personally. Yet if they live in a home where the parent has modeled this understanding, and if they have seen this understanding tested through their parents' relationships with neighbors, co-workers, and even family members, children eventually gain the maturity to see this truth in their own lives.

When I was a classroom teacher, I had many opportunities to observe the difference it makes when a family supports this view of conflict. I have had students who had a disagreement outside the classroom where the parents took their own child's side with no attempt to understand or forgive the other child's shortcomings.

In one incident, two students had a misunderstanding that spilled over into their parents' world. One parent, perhaps feeling inadequate and defensive, became angry. This family dealt with the situation with anger, blame, and feelings of insult and indignation.

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Of course their daughter stopped playing with or speaking to the other child.

The other family, while supporting their daughter, discussed how their intentions could have been so misinterpreted and how to make the other family feel better. In the end, they realized the best thing to do was to forgive and to say nothing while keeping the family in their prayers.

The daughter of the first family often had emotional blocks at school and was unable to overcome disappointment on her own. The other girl was almost always happy and able to pick herself up after a mistake and try again. A couple of weeks later, I observed her happily cheering on the other girl in a contest. She was well-adjusted and not living in the thought of their former disagreement at all. Whereas the girl of the parents determined to be "right" lived in countless contractions of the heart and could not let others in.

Discussions about teaching children not to resort to violence often focus on teaching "conflict resolution." Teaching conflict resolution is an excellent thing and helpful to students who find themselves embroiled in conflict. But I would like to see more attention given to uplifting the consciousness of children so that so many conflicts don't even arise.

Giving children an environment of love and acceptance for all (acceptance does not mean tolerating destructive behavior), modeling kindness and a peaceful heart (sarcasm and much media programming are enemies of these qualities), and practicing compassion for the reality that negative and angry people must endure, can prevent many conflicts from arising in the first place. □

ILLUSTRATION BY JULIE SCOTT

Tikkun (te-kün) ... to heal, repair and transform the world. All the rest is commentary.

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