

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

TIKKUN

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ISRAEL/PALESTINE?**

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KATHLEEN KERN • JEROME SEGAL**

CHANUKAH SUPPLEMENT

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2001

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HEALING FROM TERROR

FEAR VERSUS HOPE



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OUR RESPONSE: The Founding Statement of The Tikkun Community

**GLOBALIZATION AFTER
SEPTEMBER 11**

Antonia Juhasz

**PRAYER AS
REBELLION**

Leonard Felder



PLUS: Cherie R. Brown on Lessons from Durban • Sheila P. Weinberg on Judaism as Transformational Practice • Mordechai Gafni on Chanukah • Roger S. Gottlieb on Religious Passion and Public Life

Rest in Peace

I am a World Trade Center tower, standing tall in the clear blue sky, feeling a violent blow in my side, and
I am a towering inferno of pain and suffering imploding upon myself and collapsing to the ground.
May I rest in peace.

I am a terrified passenger on a hijacked airplane not knowing where we are going or that
I am riding on fuel tanks that will be instruments of death, and
I am a worker arriving at my office not knowing that in just a moment my future will be obliterated.
May I rest in peace.

I am a pigeon in the plaza between the two towers eating crumbs from someone's breakfast when fire rains down on me from the skies, and
I am a bed of flowers admired daily by thousands of tourists now buried under five stories of rubble.
May I rest in peace.

I am a firefighter sent into dark corridors of smoke and debris on a mission of mercy only to have it collapse around me, and
I am a rescue worker risking my life to save lives who is very aware that I may not make it out alive.
May I rest in peace.

I am a survivor who has fled down the stairs and out of the building to safety who knows that nothing will ever be the same in my soul again, and
I am a doctor in a hospital treating patients burned from head to toe who knows that these horrible images will remain in my mind forever.
May I know peace.

I am a tourist in Times Square looking up at the giant TV screens thinking I'm seeing a disaster movie as I watch the Twin Towers crash to the ground, and
I am a New York woman sending e-mails to friends and family letting them know that I am safe.
May I know peace.

I am a piece of paper that was on someone's desk this morning and now I'm debris scattered by the wind across lower Manhattan, and
I am a stone in the graveyard at Trinity Church covered with soot from the buildings that once stood proudly above me, death meeting death.
May I rest in peace.

I am a dog sniffing in the rubble for signs of life, doing my best to be of service, and
I am a blood donor waiting in line to make a simple but very needed contribution for the victims.
May I know peace.

I am a resident in an apartment in downtown New York who has been forced to evacuate my home, and
I am a resident in an apartment uptown who has walked 100 blocks home in a stream of other refugees.
May I know peace.

I am a family member who has just learned that someone I love has died, and
I am a rabbi who must comfort someone who has suffered a heart-breaking loss.
May I know peace.

I am a loyal American who feels violated and vows to stand behind any military action it takes to wipe terrorists off the face of the earth, and

I am a loyal American who feels violated and worries that people who look and sound like me are all going to be blamed for this tragedy.
May I know peace.

I am a frightened city dweller who wonders whether I'll ever feel safe in a skyscraper again, and
I am a pilot who wonders whether there will ever be a way to make the skies truly safe.
May I know peace.

I am the owner of a small store with five employees that has been put out of business by this tragedy, and
I am an executive in a multinational corporation who is concerned about the cost of doing business in a terrorized world.
May I know peace.

I am a visitor to New York City who purchases postcards of the World Trade Center Twin Towers that are no more, and
I am a television reporter trying to put into words the terrible things I have seen.
May I know peace.

I am a boy in New Jersey waiting for a father who will never come home, and
I am a boy in a faraway country rejoicing in the streets of my village because someone has hurt the hated Americans.
May I know peace.

I am a general talking into the microphones about how we must stop the terrorist cowards who have perpetrated this heinous crime, and
I am an intelligence officer trying to discern how such a thing could have happened on American soil, and
I am a city official trying to find ways to alleviate the suffering of my people.
May I know peace.

I am a terrorist whose hatred for America knows no limit and I am willing to die to prove it, and
I am a terrorist sympathizer standing with all the enemies of American capitalism and imperialism, and I am a master strategist for a terrorist group who planned this abomination.
My heart is not yet capable of openness, tolerance, and loving.
May I know peace.

I am a citizen of the world glued to my television set, fighting back my rage and despair at these horrible events, and
I am a person of faith struggling to forgive the unforgivable, praying for the consolation of those who have lost loved ones, calling upon the merciful beneficence of God/Lord/Allah/Spirit/Higher Power.
May I know peace.

I am a child of God who believes we are all children of God and we are all part of one another.
May we all know peace.

—Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat
September 11, 2001

inspired by the poem "Please Call Me By My True Names" by Tich Nhat Hahn

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If there was ever a time to gather our resources to work towards peace and world transformation, it is now. We have a plan, but we need your help to bring it to fruition. Read to see if you'd like to join us.

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First published at www.spiritualityhealth.com

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Back Cover:

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Letters to the Editor

Although we normally reserve our letters column for responses to articles that appear in the magazine, Rabbi Lerner's written statement in response to the events of September 11 (which appeared on our website www.tikkun.org), generated thousands of responses from which we decided to select a few for publication here. Many of the others will be available on the website. If you wish to be on our email list, please send your email address to magazine@tikkun.org and put in the subject heading: "add me to your e-list." Though the editorial in this issue incorporates some elements of that original article, it is substantially new and should be read as a fresh document.

To the Editor:

Before September 11 I could read your articles and think how nice it is to have someone who believes in peace and love the way you do, even if it is perhaps naive. But how can you still talk about the feelings of people who would do such a thing! In your web editorial (*A World Out of Touch*),

you say the terrorists are hungry. We are not seeing the starving peoples of the world do these terrible things, they are just surviving. The people who did this were well fed, well educated and well financed. They were not driven by hardship but by hate. I used to be like you believing there is good in everybody. But that is not true: there are some people who are pure evil. The Torah says that God told us to eliminate Amelik, every man, woman and child. I could never understand this command. I liked to think of my God as a loving God who cries when his children are fighting. But what I think he was trying to tell us is that in every generation there is an Amelik, and we must not have any mercy on "Amelik." In the last generation that was Hitler's Germany and in this it is these Terrorists. In a war, and this IS war, we can have no mercy. We must fight for total victory.

DAVID BACH,
New York, NY

To the Editor:

How wonderful to read Rabbi Lerner's excellent *Time* magazine article

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(*The Case for Peace*). I am the Fire Chief in Maitland, Florida, which is just north of Orlando. In homage to the sacrifice of so many firefighters, our mayor allowed me the great privilege to deliver the Invocation at the last City Council meeting. In my prayer, I said: "In this loss of our security, May we find our security in You, And unite with the poor and disenfranchised who live without security." Thomas Merton wrote: "There are two things which men can do about the pain of disunion with other men. They can love or they can hate." Thank you for your eloquent advocacy of love.

DAN HARDESTER
Lake Mary, FL

To the Editor:

I have just read your web editorial (*A World out of Touch*) and it frightens me. I am also a psychologist and recognize your description of a pathological context for acting out. However you know as well as I that when you have a resistant and dangerously ill person this is not the time to conduct family therapy. Now is the time for restraints and other means to keep that person from hurting you or others. You seem to be saying we have created this context that allows or encourages acting out and more of the same will not help. What should we then do?

STEVEN H SIMON
Lansdale, PA

To the Editor:

Although I am not Jewish, I appreciate the truth of your words (in the web editorial *A World Out of Touch*) which cut across all boundaries religious and otherwise, and speak to our basic human understanding. I pray that the political and corporate leaderships of this country (USA) and that of other countries recognize the deeper issues at stake enough to move forward with a sense of inclusiveness and an awareness that irresponsible actions that devalue and denigrate other human beings can have serious repercussions. It is high time for our institutions to reflect our highest ideals. Meaning well just does not cut it anymore in our increasingly interconnected global populace. It is time for us to begin the work of tolerance and inclusiveness, uplifting with dignity rather than exploiting with indifference, providing a new structure for global peace and harmony.

ROBIN L. FISHER
Sunnyvale, CA

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Steven E. Aschheim, Editor

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Harvey E. Goldberg, Editor

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LETTERS

To the Editor:

In your web editorial *A World Out of Touch* you equate three different types of violence: The terrorist attacks on America this week, Palestinian terrorist acts (for instance, the suicide bombing of innocents in restaurants and discotheques) and ... the "violence" of Israeli soldiers against Palestinians. This "equation" is an affront to all Israelis and to all decent human beings everywhere, since the actions of the IDF are entirely acts of self defence. The Palestinians have shown time and time again that "compromise" is not in their lexicon, while Israel has shown flexibility in every possible quarter. I serve, proudly, in the Israeli Reserves, I serve in Judea and Samaria, and I pray every day for a peaceful solution to the conflict. But I will fight till I drop to ensure the existence of my Jewish State, and to protect my family and friends. Does that make me equivalent, in your eyes, to a suicide bomber?

JEREMY HOYLAND
Bet Shemesh, Israel

To the Editor:

I have been sympathetic to many of your remarks on the Palestinian-Israeli struggle. Like many American Jews I have misgivings about how the Israelis have dealt with the Palestinians and I resent the manipulation of the Jewish community by Israeli and American politicians as well as by "establishment" Jewish leaders in this country. The complexity of the issues involved in the Palestinian situation are too often reduced to the simplistic rhetoric of team sports and other emotionally charged but intellectually vacuous metaphors. However, in reading your critique of this past week's events in *A World Out of Touch*, I was somewhat disappointed that you failed to touch upon a very disturbing trend in some Islamic intellectual circles to promote a worldview in which the time has come for "jihad" against Western values and institutions. In some respects, their analysis is not far removed from many progressive voices in the United States and Europe, and, in particular, your own assessment of globalization. It seems to me that once one accepts the economic, social, and political consequences of this critique it isn't such a stretch to begin rationalizing all sorts of responses. And, of course,

one man's revolution is another man's terrorism.

I think you might serve your community well by addressing the question of how we evaluate whether the terrorism experienced this past week is qualitatively different from past responses to Israeli injustices, or perceived injustices, and antipathy towards the US for its support of autocratic "moderate" regimes in the Middle East—or whether, on the other hand, these actions reflect the vanguard, so to speak, of a small but not insignificant number of groups and individuals in the Islamic world now ready to move beyond the rhetoric and engage in an all out "jihad" against the United States.

HOWARD HERTZ
Berkeley, CA

To the Editor:

I've followed you and TIKKUN, have read your articles, essays and opinions and unequivocally support your voice of reason and moderation.

I just returned from Israel—where I go for business every 6 months or so—and was concerned and consternated to see friends and acquaintances who I previously viewed as moderate and objective, falling precipitously into a well of anger and vengeance.

On every trip I've made to the country, I've tried to observe and analyze the situation from a variety of perspectives: as a businessman, as the son of a Jewish father and Christian mother, as a father himself, and mostly as an idealist who believes in compromise and peace.

The objective/rational answers and solutions are gradually being buried as extremism takes over in all its forms. Please send me your list of media people and let me know what I can do to help.

PETER WYCKOFF
from the internet

To the Editor:

We need to stop looking at the Afghani people as a monolithic, like minded mass. There are numerous individuals and groups (especially underground women's groups) that question the beliefs and practices of Islamic terrorism. They frequently point to the fact that Bin Laden, who is one of the world's wealthiest people, can very well invest in human capital (e.g. education for children of both genders, health care, the arts, etc.), if he so chooses. Instead, he

uses his wealth to fund hate and terror both abroad and within his own borders (this type of story is all too familiar, of course). Perhaps the greatest indignation comes from widows of the "Holy War" who are left to beg on the streets (which is illegal) and often watch their youngsters die. Bombing Afghanistan means, for the most part, bombing these people, not the terrorists who have the financial and logistical means to hide away safely. I agree that those who organized the atrocities on September 11th ought to be brought to justice, but not at the expense of the families they abuse at home.

AC DEL ZOTTO
San Francisco, CA

To the Editor:

Reverend Jerry Falwell was quoted in the *New York Times* (September 14, 2001) as stating that the secularization of our society by various groups has so offended God that the attacks could occur. "He lifted the curtain of protection." There is a restaurant in my town owned by a person who is Muslim. The restaurant was vandalized last week. When we view others as without validity and not deserving of human dignity, we become terrorists. It is the denial of the innate Worth of others that is the essence of the terrorist attack. Our war against terrorism must be not only a struggle against evil, but a struggle for what is best in each of us. It is as a Jewish American that I pray for the infinity of Divine love to assuage the despair in many of the followers of the Koran, to ennoble the fortunate and gifted to embrace those in need, to bless the followers of Reverend Falwell and all of us with wisdom, compassion and determination to heal this world.

BRUCE HIRSCH
Port Washington, NY

To the Editor:

If Americans want to feel safe again in their own country, they must begin to understand the insecurity many feel in theirs. More importantly, they must examine their nation's policies vis-à-vis the rest of the world, and ask themselves honestly if these policies have contributed in some way to this insecurity. Now that its own worst fears have been realized, America can no longer afford to ignore the fears of others.

AUNG ZAW
Chinag Mai, Thailand

Transformation, Not "Normalcy"

George Vradenburg

The events of September 11 continue to weigh heavily. The loss of so many, so quickly, in such a dramatic manner, was shocking and traumatic.

Our reaction, swift and decisive, has drawn on spiritual and social reserves we may not have realized we had. Firefighters, police, and other emergency personnel rushed to the scenes of attack, risking—and even losing—their lives in rescue attempts. News outlets instantaneously reported events, enabling all of us not only to share the shock of events but also to share our grief and then our national pride at the heroism of rescue personnel. Businesses quickly fixed communications, financial, and transportation systems and restored service within days. New Internet and wireless communications enabled us to contact family members, to share information about the missing, and to grieve over those killed. Web sites to aid victims and families sprang into existence to generate individual contributions in amounts that will ultimately surpass one billion dollars. The government offered low-cost loans to salvage damaged businesses. Our political leaders, New York Mayor Giuliani in particular, reflected—honestly and publicly—the grief, anxiety, and hope for recovery that every one of us felt.

Our response to these unanticipated events was unplanned, yet seemingly organized and coherent, arising from a spontaneous and personal sense of compassion and generosity. Even as we feel a loss of innocence and a continuing anxiety, these recent events have caused us to put "caring" for family members, friends, and communities higher in our success-obsessed value systems.

Could these tragic events produce a transforming point in the spiritual and social life of our nation? Might this become a "defining moment" for younger generations not previously touched by war or depression? Can we maintain this new, healthier balance between "caring" and "success"? Will we extend our compassion and generosity to a global community that sees us only as arrogant and indifferent to their suffering?

Or should we seek to return to "normalcy"?

I believe we can and should take this moment in our his-

tory to transform ourselves and our country. But we cannot do so if we think that our goal is a return to "normalcy." We must internalize what has happened to us and change our behavior to match our *new* perceptions of values. This is not a desire for "normalcy," this is aspiring to personal and social transformation.

*We can and should
take this moment in
our history to
transform ourselves
and our country.*

Media interviews reflect our sense of the unique character of this moment. Millions seemed personally to have been affected by events in New York and in Washington. For everyone, firefighters, policemen, and rescue workers are generating new models of sacrifice and heroism. Transformation is happening at the personal level even to those not directly impacted. A friend called me recently saying that she had decided, in the wake of the World Trade Center

attacks, to call a friend every single day simply to say how much she cared about him or her. She didn't want to wait until disaster or death, when it would be too late to express her feelings. I think that conversation is being repeated all over America.

There are other signs of change. The *Forbes* 400 list of the wealthiest individuals is now mirrored by a list of the country's largest philanthropists, responding to a call for such a list by Ted Turner, who himself contributed \$1 billion to a new UN Foundation to eradicate hunger. Repeal of the inheritance tax was opposed by our nation's wealthiest individuals on the grounds that it would discourage philanthropy. "New economy" leaders, such as AOL's Steve Case and Gateway's Ted Waitt are attacking the "digital divide" through an innovative initiative called PowerUp. The Gates Foundation has laid out an ambitious campaign to attack infectious diseases around the world. Our business leaders, frustrated by the lack of progress on education, malnutrition, and poverty, are stepping up to the plate.

This incipient spiritual and social transformation needs now to be intensified on the international scene. We have declared a war on terrorists, but not on the underlying causes that breed terrorism. To paraphrase Alan Greenspan, America cannot long remain an island of health and prosperity in a world sick with malnutrition and poverty.

The resolve and determination we are showing to eradicate terrorism must be matched by a campaign of equal

(continued on page 12)

George Vradenburg is husband to publisher Trish Vradenburg.

Healing After Terror Healing After Terror Healing

Michael Lerner

Our mourning for the victims of September 11 will go on for a long time. The shock, the horror, the grief, the anger, the sadness have not abated. We're all somewhat scared, and we should be. We are not used to being this vulnerable.

So it was with great upset that we realized that, while we were still grieving and consoling the mourners, the Bush administration and a host of right-wing ideologues had managed to manipulate Americans' legitimate outrage and channeled it into a revival of the deepest held belief of the conservative worldview: that the world is mostly a dangerous place and that our lives must be based around protecting ourselves from threatening "others." In this case, terrorism provides a perfect base for this worldview—it can come from anywhere, we don't really know who the enemy is, and so everyone can be suspect and everyone can be a target of our fear-induced rage. With this as a guiding principle, television network news has obediently complied with requests to censor the statements that might reveal the thinking of the enemy, and liberal Democrats have jumped to show their patriotism by voting for wild escalations in defense spending and for laws that limit Constitutional freedoms.

But while this is happening at the top, there are millions of people around the world who have remained in a new state of openness, humble in the face of death and destruction, willing to open our hearts to others and recognize that the real need of the moment is for a fundamental rethinking of the way we are running our world.

The central struggle of the post September 11th period is this: Will we see the world through the prism of the terrorists? Or will we see it through the prism of goodness and generosity demonstrated by the firemen, police, and citizens who risked (and in many cases lost) their lives to save others? It is a battle of fear versus hope. If fear wins, the world will revert to an endless battleground of all against all. We will find ourselves surrounded by people who feel that we must constantly defend ourselves from the dangers lurking at every turn—and this will become self-fulfillingly true. Or we can acknowledge the shadow elements in the world and in ourselves, guard ourselves from danger to the degree that we are able by taking sensible precautions and police actions, but consciously choose to focus our energies on building trust,

love, and goodness in the world. And that path will itself be self-fulfilling: the more generosity and open-heartedness we show to the rest of the world, the more it will be reciprocated by others and the safer we will be. The greatest security will not come through armies or counterviolence, not through revenge or hatred, but through building a world of love and open-heartedness, a world in which the recognition of the sanctity of everyone on the planet shapes every economic, political, and social institution. We choose hope over fear not only because it is more consistent with who we really are as embodiments of the sacred, but also because it is the path that will lead to greatest security.

We don't hide from ourselves that the people who perpetrated the evil deeds of September 11 are a real threat to the human race.

The perpetrators deserve to be punished, and I personally would be happy if all the people involved in

planning and providing logistical support for this atrocity were to be imprisoned for the rest of their lives. It's also true that the Taliban have been oppressing their own people and conducting a campaign of abuse against women that justifies international intervention.

But intervention could have happened in a very different way: the United States could have given its evidence against Bin Laden to the UN Security Council and announced a willingness to wait six weeks to allow that world body to issue an indictment and to assemble an international police force to arrest these criminals and bring them before an international tribunal. In so doing, we would at least have validated a notion that was supposed to have been established 2,500 years ago: That the family of the victim of violence doesn't act on its own as avengers of the violence, but instead goes to a larger community, presents its evidence, allows the other side to defend itself, and then accepts the judgment of the larger community.

If the UN became paralyzed by internal politics and did not act, we could have used that time to assemble our own military force and then acted on our own. (We might note that the reason this process doesn't exist is because the United States has opposed the creation of an international court).

What we don't need are new cycles of violence. We should learn from Israel's mistakes and not follow its disastrous path. When faced with a handful of Islamic terrorists,

It is always in emergency situations that we discover what we really believe in.

After Terror Healing After Terror

Israel has retaliated by sieges, border closings, and other punishments of the entire Palestinian people—thereby succeeding in generating greater support for the terrorists and giving Palestinians little grounds to hope that their legitimate desires might be acknowledged and addressed. President Bush deserves our praise for having avoided the path of singling out an entire people for punishment; as of this writing in late October, 2001 he has attempted to show that the United States is not condemning all Muslims or targeting all Afghans. In fact, spurred by the need to keep Islamic forces supporting our war, Bush shows some signs of being willing to give Israel the “tough love” it needs (namely, forcing it to recognize a Palestinian state and end the Occupation), though probably in a form far too weak to actually work and resolve the conflict. Still, the bombing of Afghanistan threatens to provoke a new cycle of violence.

Since September 11 we’ve been facing a genuine emergency. And it is always in emergency situations that we discover what we really believe in and what our ideals amount to in practice.

So let us reaffirm some basics:

- We are the inheritors of the love of the universe which has provided us with a magnificent habitat as part of the living system of planet earth. We are inheritors of the goodness of the human race which has passed on its intelligence, wisdom, languages, technologies, science, literature, poetry, and music from generation to generation for thousands of years. We recognize ourselves as mutually interdependent with all the generations that have gone before and with the six billion human beings currently alive, and as stewards of our planet and our culture which we hope to pass along to future generations. We see in other human beings the reflection of the Sacred, and we recognize that our own personal fulfillment as humans is inextricably bound up with the fulfillment of the needs and aspirations of all other human beings.

- We recognize that human beings have also been distorted by a history of pain and cruelty embedded in patriarchy and in class societies, manifesting in wars, violence, abuse, and oppression. But that history need not determine our future. We live at a moment when we can clearly envision and begin to build a world based on love and respect for others.

- We know that building a different future requires us to live a different way in the present. The way to peace is a way of peace. The way to a world of love is a life in which we



become more loving. A central step in this process is to recognize ourselves as part of the Unity of All Being, abandon our ego-driven fantasies of control and permanency, and acknowledge ourselves as a momentary manifestation of the evolving consciousness of the universe.

- In every act that we do, we either affirm and strengthen the sanctity of human beings and bring God’s presence in our lives more fully into focus, or we contribute to the desanctification of human life and the distancing from God/Spirit/Ultimate Being/Universal Love (or however you want to refer to the spiritual dimension of reality). We can’t simply say, “Time out now for a war, but later we will build a society of love.” What we do now inevitably shapes the world we will face later.

So, yes, we want to stop the Bin Ladens of the world. We reject the implications of some on the Left that somehow America deserved all this. The people in the World Trade Tower were innocent American civilians doing nothing wrong. We have to recognize terror as the quintessential act of desanctification and dehumanization—a violation of God’s presence on this planet and an act that hurts each and every one of us. But the notion that once we wipe out Bin Laden and his Al Qaeda organization we will be “safe” or free from violence is a fantasy.

When violence becomes so prevalent throughout the planet, it’s too easy to simply talk of “deranged minds.” We need to ask ourselves, “What is it in the way that we are living, organizing our societies, and treating each other that makes violence seem plausible to so many people?” And why

is it that our immediate response to violence is to use violence ourselves—thus reinforcing the cycle of violence in the world.

We in the spiritual world see the root problem as a growing global incapacity to recognize the spirit of God in each other—what we call the sanctity of each human being. But even if you reject religious language, you can see that the willingness of people to hurt each other to advance their own interests has become a global problem, and it is only the dramatic level of this particular attack which distinguishes it from the violence and insensitivity to each other that is part of our daily lives.

We may tell ourselves that the current violence has “nothing to do” with the way that we’ve learned to close our ears when told that one out of every three people on this planet does not have enough food, and that one billion face malnutrition, homelessness, or other intense forms of material deprivation. We may reassure ourselves that the hoarding of the world’s resources by the richest society in world history, and our frantic attempts to accelerate globalization with its attendant inequalities of wealth, has nothing to do with the resentment that others feel toward us. We may tell ourselves that the suffering of refugees and the oppressed have nothing to do with us, that child prostitution and sweatshop conditions have nothing to do with us—that these are different stories going on somewhere else.

Most Americans, like most people on the planet, are very decent and good hearted people. That’s what makes it so difficult to open the conversation about the role of America in the world. Most Americans are genuinely befuddled when they hear that others around the world are angry at us. After all, we think, we’ve been generous to a fault, we’ve given foreign aid and charity, we’ve sent our troops to fight oppressive regimes, and we’ve paid high taxes to provide police services for a world that might otherwise be even more filled with violence. Why doesn’t everyone appreciate us more?

Even when I personally got a few seconds on national TV in September to remind people that we are 5 percent of the world’s population consuming 25 percent of the world’s resources, the response was often something like this: “Well, others resent us because we are so successful—and that’s their problem. It’s not our fault that we are just better at being more productive than they are. And certainly no one has a right to take their resentment out on us for not being more charitable than we already are.”

A central problem here is that most Americans have never been exposed to the notion that we live in one world system that is inextricably interconnected. Don’t blame Americans that every inch of education we’ve received has encouraged us to think of ourselves as different, better, unique, special, and “not like them.” It never occurs to many Americans that when we kidnapped tens of millions of Africans and used them to provide unpaid labor to create the infrastructure of American wealth that the ripping apart of African societies would have devastating consequences

on the ability of those societies to function. Nothing in our schooling helps us understand that several hundred years of colonialism and imperialism were not done so that Western societies could educate the natives, but so that the West could enrich itself at the expense of the rest of the world—leaving behind poverty and local elites who would remain in power by virtue of continuing Western military assistance (for example, to the Saudi elites).

Our college professors, newspaper editorialists, and television commentators have never sought to teach us about the way the United States sets conditions of trade so that Third World countries end up being further impoverished. Most Americans believe the lies drummed into their heads that corporate globalization is both unstoppable and good for everyone around the world. Liberal Democrats, dependent on electoral funding from large corporations and the wealthy, have cheered on globalization and never acknowledged that this process has accelerated the gap between the wealthy countries and the poor (for more on this read Antonio Juhasz in this issue of *TIKKUN*—or check out Jerry Mander’s article in the September/October 2001 issue).

It’s not that Americans are willfully deceiving themselves. Most Americans have never ever heard a serious presentation of our history and our current role in the world. Our media has induced a societal amnesia so that no one remembers the way our power was used to murder three million Vietnamese in the name of democratic values. No one remembers that our CIA participated in the violent overthrow of the democratically elected regimes in Iran and Chile, or that our military trained and supplied military elites who tortured their own populations in Argentina, Guatemala, El Salvador, Haiti, and dozens of other countries. Most Americans have no idea about any of this, and that’s why they are so perplexed.

It’s also why the angry tones of the Left make no sense and only alienate Americans. No oppression can ever justify killing 6,000 innocent civilians. The fact is that Americans have created a very decent society that deserves to be celebrated, not denigrated. For 220 years Americans have struggled against our own domestic elites, and have won major battles to limit the elements of oppression in this society. We’ve made major advances against the racism, sexism, and homophobia that have been used to divide us. We’ve managed to put some constraints on corporate arrogance—enough so that the ruling elites of our society have to wait for moments like the Bin Laden attack to push back some of the civil liberties and respect for human rights that we’ve won. We haven’t yet fully created a democratic society or offset the immense power of the wealthy, but we’ve taken significant steps to protect minimal rights of working people and the poor. There’s a lot to be proud of in America and in the victories of ordinary Americans against arrogant elites. So when those elites call upon us to rally around their worldview (that no one could possibly have a legitimate reason to

be angry at us) and call that "patriotism," it's our complicated task to support a different version of patriotism—one which is proud of America's democratic values while simultaneously critical that we have not allowed those values to shape the way we run our corporations or our foreign policy.

A similar complexity is needed in dealing with the rise of fundamentalism. As we've argued in *TIKKUN* (and as I've stated in my book *Spirit Matters: Global Healing and the Wisdom of the Soul*), fundamentalism is in part a distorted response to a distorted world reality. Global capital is not only an economic system, it is a crusading worldview, a militant religion of its own engaged in a worldwide jihad which seeks to remake every social institution in its image. It frequently employs local elites to use violence to impose this new religion on their own people. The religion of world capitalism, like the religion of world communism, has its own "politically correct" ways of thinking and acting. The notion that individuals should always look out for themselves before anyone else, that it's OK to hurt others to advance one's own interests because if we don't some-

one will do that to us, the notion that sexuality should be another legitimate article for consumption in the public marketplace and that corporations have a right to display near-naked sexily-posed skinny bodies on billboards to arouse us and sell their products, the notion that people who cannot find jobs and hence face malnutrition are "acceptable costs" for the glories of "modernization," the notion that every enterprise should be judged productive by how much profit it makes—these are elements of the "modernity" that we impose on others as part of their "playing ball" with the global economy.

In response, and using variously different religious vocabularies, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Islamic fundamentalists have declared various forms of jihad. If the warm and fuzzy communities to which many fundamentalists aspire to return had their own (sexist, homophobic, racist, anti-Semitic) distortions, they also had some valuable elements of human solidarity that really are being undermined by the dominant religion of materialism and selfishness. Much of the criticism of the one-dimensionality of Western secular society is in fact quite legitimate. Western culture is increasingly successful in shaping a world in its image, and its image is that of materialism, selfishness, reduction of human relations to a narrow utilitarian framework, transformation of nature into commodities, destruction of all that was good in small traditional communities, and a totally militant religion of secularism which aggressively promotes a mechanistic worldview and denies the validity of spiritual truth.

Similarly, the critique of Israel and its policies toward the

Palestinian people, cynically manipulated by Bin Laden and his cronies, is nevertheless basically legitimate. What is amazing is that even at this moment when the Middle East is exploding, there is no serious analysis of Israel's role. A unique combination of Jewish establishment power and Christian guilt (deserved) for the Holocaust has led to an amazing reality in America: there is no public discussion of the role Israel has played in generating the wild level of anger at the West from which the terrorists are able to recruit. Such a discussion would be totally proper, provid-

ing it were done in a way that made it perfectly apparent that anti-Semitism of any form is never, never, never appropriate or justified, and did not allow double standards (such as saying that Zionism is illegitimate because it is based on conquest without similarly noticing that virtually every Islamic country and most other countries also had their origins in conquest).

I am not saying we should attribute the responsibility of this attack to Israel. Truth is that much of the hatred of Israel is generated by its identification as an outpost of the ethos of global

capitalism and Western secularism, the resistance to which is legitimate but unfairly directed against Israel and the Jews. The reason why many Jews are afraid of this discussion is that they assume it will devolve quickly into anti-Semitism, whereas we at *TIKKUN* have much greater faith in the American public and believe that the real threat of anti-Semitism will come from Jews playing a role in suppressing rather than encouraging free speech and open debate about these kinds of issues.

So, yes, the world system which disproportionately benefits the United States is morally unacceptable. Yet the fundamentalist alternative is even more distorted. It creates a community of value but it simultaneously demeans some "other," identifying them as the embodiment of evil and worthy of destruction. Ego-driven and power-hungry clerics and self-deceiving holy men see their opportunity to shape the world by positioning themselves as the only alternative to the (quite real) degradation generated by capitalist globalization. The outrageous assaults by the Taliban against the freedoms of women are indicative of the hatefulness and repression that would become global realities were the fundamentalist forces allowed to triumph. Capitalist society proclaims itself the only possible antidote to fundamentalist distortions. It is tolerant of differences, willing to accept all different religions, an "open society" that has now been "forced" by the intolerance of the fundamentalists to engage in a war of self-defense. Yet we should not be surprised that those who witnessed the U.S. murder millions of Vietnamese, overthrow governments around the world, arm

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elites and train their soldiers so that they could suppress democratic movements, should question this “tolerance” and point out that it extends to people in the center of our world system (who live in the U.S.) but not to anyone else.

Most of the peoples of the world (including most people in Islamic countries) are caught between two powerfully distorted forces—the corporate capitalist version of modernity and the reactionary religious fundamentalist version of community. Both alternatives are lousy. We urgently need a third path—what we call Emancipatory Spirituality or a Politics of Meaning. We need a path in politics that validates the deepest truths of the spiritual world, a path that affirms open-heartedness, insists we love not only our neighbor but also the stranger, and builds economic, social, and political institutions on that basis. The Emancipatory Spirituality TIKKUN champions is based on a commitment both to social justice and spiritual truth, to a recognition that economic equality is necessary, and to a recognition that true healing of this planet requires us to see ourselves as part of the Unity of All Being and to be able to respond to each other and the universe with awe and wonder at the grandeur of creation. It is both about social change and about deep inner change.

This is the task of the TIKKUN Community—to insist on a new kind of discourse that is neither waving the flag of “America can do no wrong” nor the flag of “our enemies are justified in attacking us.” They are not!!! And yes, this is the most practical path for protecting ourselves. As the frenzy around anthrax-by-mail is demonstrating, no amount of bombing, no stationing of police on every corner, no suspension of civil liberties, nor any other strategy of repression can work in a world in which our biological, chemical, and technological sophistication allows people to act out in powerful new ways.

There will always be lone crazies and distorted people who will act out—and that’s why we still need a police force. But if we really want to protect ourselves we need to start now creating a world which no longer dehumanizes others, no longer tolerates oppression, no longer imagines that we can live our own private lives and find our own private solutions while closing our ears to the sufferings of others. There is only one unified world system today; in that sense, globalization has already ended the possibility of American security unless everyone on the planet is equally secure. Though there will still be Bin Ladens no matter what we do, they will have much greater trouble recruiting people willing to sacrifice their lives in anger against the world system sponsored by the United States if this country becomes widely known as:

- a. The major power using its vast resources to eliminate global poverty, hunger, homelessness, and all forms of economic inequalities in the world (let’s start by using the entire 1.4 trillion tax cut monies for the purpose of building an economic infrastructure for the poor of the world).
- b. The major power using its resources to combat global

warming and to make all global investments and finances in accord with the best interests of preserving the ecological sustainability of the planet.

- c. The society that has required its own corporations to abide by a Social Responsibility Amendment (SRA) to the U.S. Constitution which mandates and rewards a new bottom line, so that institutions only have a right to operate if they can prove a history of social responsibility as measured by an Ethical Impact report.
- d. The society that is in its actual practices embodying an ethos of mutual caring and open-hearted generosity to the peoples of the world.

These are the kinds of changes that we need in America to provide lasting safety and security. This is a moment in which fundamental changes in the way we have organized our world are at least as practical and realistic as attempts to track down every potential terrorist. If we don’t change the basic way we’ve structured our world it is naive and self-delusional to believe that we can protect ourselves from people driven crazy by a world so deeply out of touch with itself. A political leadership that is minimally responsible would be giving equal energy to these proposals at the very moment that it was attempting to extinguish this particular network of terrorists. Instead, our worst fantasies of the indistinguishability of Democrats and Republicans have been played out in front of our eyes. Except for a handful of courageous Congressional Democrats, members of both political parties are unwilling to move beyond the very language of dehumanization and violence which got us into this mess in the first place.

That’s why we at TIKKUN have decided that we need to begin the process of creating a third alternative based on spiritual insight and an ethos of love. We are starting what we call “The TIKKUN Community” not only as a vehicle to support the magazine (though that is part of what is needed in order for this worldview to be heard) but to constitute a spiritual community of people who agree with our worldview and are willing to champion it in the public arena. The founding statement can be found in this very issue of TIKKUN magazine (November/December 2001) and on our web site at www.tikkun.org. We hope you’ll join us in trying to build a new kind of social change movement.

We act to honor the memory of the dead and wounded and to keep in public view the outpouring of loving energy and generosity that was shown by so many human beings who risked (and sometimes lost) their lives for others. That day they demonstrated to the world a deeply held secret: the desire we all have to care about each other. If we could legitimate that part of ourselves without having to wait for a disaster, we could empower a part of every human being which our social order marginalizes.

The most immediate task of a healing movement in our society is to struggle against the tendency to see the world

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Confronting Evil

Andrew Kimbrell

Pure Evil," "The Faces of Evil," "Evil in the Skies"—the headlines and media coverage in the days following the September 11 terrorist attacks were rife with references to evil, and this was as it should be. As the veil of mourning lay heavily on the entire country, most Americans could only shake their heads and shudder at the enormity of what they had witnessed. "Evil" seemed the only word apt to the horror of these terrible events.

Until the recent attacks, the use of the word "evil" often met with resistance. For many it connoted an overly pejorative or judgmental mindset, and seemed redolent of outmoded taboos and attitudes. Yet, the shock and scope of the terrorist attacks jolted people into the realization that evil remains both relevant to the modern world and pertinent to our daily lives.

With the images of terror still vividly etched in our personal and collective consciousness, it is easy and tempting to project all of modern evil on to terrorists or other villainous people. At the same time, as the gravitas of the tragedy is replaced by a return to our normal lives, it is likewise tempting to let the question of evil return to the limbo into which modern ethics has sentenced it. Both reactions would signal a tragic loss of opportunity. For one of the graces that could emerge from the recent wreckage would be a new self-reflection about all evil, and especially the systemic evil in which so many of us are complicit. That reflection on, and exploration of, the nature of modern evil is essential not only for addressing the issue of terrorism and how to respond to it, but also for understanding the widening environmental and social crises that are engulfing us.

The Nature of Evil

Evil is an illusive concept, remaining the focus of moral, theological, and even psychological dispute. We can say, however, that evil is not simply wrongdoing or what theologians call "sin." Evil is that dysfunctional human condition which leads us into repeated patterns of wrongdoing. Under the sway of evil, wrongdoers are blinded or seduced so that they fail to understand the full consequences of their actions. Ultimately, the evil impulse is felt as so powerful

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Evil masks sins and emasculates the sinner. It prevents growth.

and pervasive that it renders the individual powerless to avoid doing wrong in the future. Seen in this context, evil is a kind of ultimate illness which fatally erodes our sense of responsibility for, and ultimately connection to, all else.

Put another way, sin is a breach in one's relationship to others, to the creation and to God. It is an act of alienation from the other. We can, however, heal the wrong and break that alienation. This healing requires the reestablishment of the breached relationship through self-reflection, acknowledgment, and atonement (an at-one-ment). Evil is that force which seeks to make healing impossible. Evil makes sin, the alienation of one from the other, permanent. It makes the re-establishment of relationship and healing appear impossible. The bond is forever broken. That is why evil is so chilling. Its victory results in complete *diremption*, the loss of all hope of relationship, atonement, or redemption.

This dichotomy between sin and evil has extraordinary implications for human freedom. Acknowledging one's wrongdoings and choosing not to offend again (even when imperfectly realized) is the basis for gaining ethical maturity. The capability to sin, to make conscious the causes of sin,

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Future Positive?

Michael Edwards

It's time for the United Nations to get the hell out of town, and take with it CNN war slut Christianne Amanpour. The UN clogs our city like sewage." Not exactly balanced reporting is it, but pretty standard for the *New York Post* (September 21, 2001). These are uncomfortable times for people like me, who advocate a "Future Positive" through international cooperation. The foreign policy realists are back in the saddle, eager to expose woolly-minded theories about global partnership that have taken root since the end of the Cold War.

The paradox, as Michael Lerner points out in *TIKKUN*, is that the events of September 11 have created an opportunity to embark on a new era of collective action unparalleled since the end of World War II. The opportunity was seized then, through the Marshall Plan and the birth of the United Nations. Will it be taken now? Logic says "yes," since international cooperation is the only way to achieve the three things necessary to overcome the terrorists:

- a shared commitment across the world to stem the flows of people, money, weapons, and information that sustain diffuse but deadly networks of terror
- a climate of security (economic, political, and religious) that makes it less likely that people will vent their frustrations on others using violence; and
- coalitions that legitimize the use of necessary force through negotiations built on reciprocity and mutual respect

International cooperation means exactly that. The world will cooperate with America when America cooperates with the world, and others will follow our lead when we *decide* to lead, not through threats or bribes, but through example—by ratifying the International Criminal Court and other international protocols, paying our UN dues in full, expanding and reforming foreign aid, supporting democratic settlements in conflict zones (not supporting one faction against another), giving other countries more voice in decision-making, and pushing for lasting peace in the Middle East. War, even death, would be no defeat for Bin Laden and his kind. This is what they want. Only the triumph of nonviolence, secured through just laws justly applied, will bring the terrorists down.

This is a tremendous challenge to American foreign

policy and, more fundamentally, to the U.S. public, since governments need permission from their constituents to do things differently. One of the most striking things about the last two weeks has been the willingness to do precisely that—to do things differently. Remember the feeling during those first hours after the attack, when you were trying to contact everyone you loved and they were trying to contact you? If experience is any guide, we'll allow such feelings to dissipate before too long. Our task is to make them a permanent wellspring of solidarity, to extend them beyond those buried in the rubble of "ground zero" to those already buried, and still threatened, in Rwanda and the Congo, Bosnia, Israel, and Palestine.

To do that, we have to recognize that we are part of a loving and limitless Self. True freedom is only attainable through relations with others, since in an interconnected world I can never be safe unless you are secure. Is that the sort of world we want to live in and bequeath to those we love? If so, our responsibilities are clear. □

TRANSFORMATION, NOT "NORMALCY" (from page 5)

resolve and determination to alleviate ignorance, injustice, and economic deprivation. State-of-the-art financial techniques (including micro-lending, venture capital, and technology transfer) must be deployed to raise global standards of living, not simply to choke off terrorist funds. A sustained political and diplomatic coalition must be launched to reform autocratic regimes unresponsive to human suffering and to human rights, not simply to improve intelligence gathering. And military delivery systems, in new partnerships with the private sector, need to be utilized to distribute food and medicine to combat isolation and hunger, not simply to capture or kill terrorists. Just as we need to restructure our national defense systems to reflect new threats to our people, so we must find new ways to project our compassion and generosity in an increasingly intimate, but hostile, world.

There is no doubt in my mind that, as President Bush has said, "Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done." But commitment to "doing justice" should entail more than dealing with the individuals responsible for the events of September 11. It must involve a commitment of global dimension to spiritual and social transformation. For, if we do not heal what is sick in our world, the sickness in the world will devour us. □

Michael Edwards is the author of Future Positive (Earthscan).

Terror and the Construction of a Sacred Space

Roger Friedland

Minoru Yamasaki, chief architect of the World Trade Center, has said: "World trade means world peace and consequently the World Trade Center buildings in New York... had a bigger purpose than just to provide room for tenants. The World Trade Center is a living symbol of man's dedication to world peace." Yet it was the twin towers' role as a "world trade center" that made them the target of Osama Bin Laden's attack.

By castrating New York's twin trade towers with our own technologies of circulation, by penetrating the pentagon of American power in Washington, Osama Bin Laden is seeking to build a new space, a battlefield the likes of which we have not witnessed since the wars of religion ripped Europe apart. The destruction of the Trade Center and the Pentagon is part of an attempted reconstruction and expansion of a politicized sacred Islamic community. By profaning the West's most sacred sites, by their bodily sacrifice, these new warriors hope to set in motion a war and thereby to create an impassible boundary between Islamic sacred space and the rest.

Bin Laden was deploying the forces of one transnationalism—Islam—against the powers of another—American guns and multinational capital. The World Trade towers, which housed securities and government bond traders, are both sites and symbols of the global power of American money. "We—with God's help—call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded," reads Bin Laden's fatwa, "to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it." Bin Laden's warriors did not, like pirates, steal American money; they sought to render it lifeless, to stop its circulation, to vaporize it.

Why focus on money? In contemporary Western society, money's capacity to hold and transmit value hinges on the authority of the nation-state from which it issues. That relation is integral, not arbitrary, thus the connection between money and state power marked by the suicide planes in New York and Washington.

The irony is that just as Bin Laden's warriors used mod-

ern techniques—airplanes and electronic money transfer—to violate what he perceives as the profane space of Western modernity, we deploy pre-modern faith to conduct our war against him. The American president and countless others call us repeatedly to pray and from the churches, including the National Cathedral, we are called to war. To counter Bin Laden, we will have to rely on religious nationalist states like Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and India. Indeed, President Bush's election likewise depended on the electoral support of the Christian right.

A Matched Set

Two days after the "bombings," Rev. Jerry Falwell claimed on Pat Robertson's "700 Club" that those secularists who had stripped God from the public sphere and who had legalized abortion in this country had been responsible for God's lifting America's divine "curtain of protection" which permitted the terror to take place.

Just like Islamic militants around the world, Christian fundamentalists in the United States point to global money as a force of moral evil that must be contained and controlled. In their vision, it is not money per se that is noxious, but transnational money, money beyond the control of the nation-state. In his 1991 bestseller, *The New World Order*, Pat Robertson argues that the financiers of the West, families like the Rockefellers and the Morgans, the Rothschilds, Kuhns, Loeb's, the Lazard Freres, have plotted first the bankers' takeover of the creation of American money, and second, the construction of global institutions of governance, both the United Nations and transnational financial and monetary regimes like the World Bank and the IMF.

It is striking that, both in the fundamentalist Middle East and among the Christian right, the common understanding is that it is Jewish money that is doing nefarious work; from fundamentalist Muslims, we hear the incredible charge of Jewish complicity with the attacks, and from the Christian right, we are told of a Jewish cabal behind the erosion of America's control of its own money, the banishment of God from the public sphere, and the legalization of abortion. If you follow Pat Robertson's analysis of global money to its limit, the new fundamentalist Muslim blood libel and the central voices of the Christian right are arguing precisely the same thing.

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The Monetary Golem

Money is a collective representation, a symbol of the national states from which it issues. Money has become a global medium and store of social valuation over which the national state has increasingly lost control due to the multinationalization of finance and the deregulation of financial markets. While trade, direct investment, and equity markets remain highly regionalized, a global market for currency and for government bonds has definitely emerged. Is it surprising, at this moment when money has outstripped control of the territorial nation state, that the other totemic principle, God, might have such mass appeal? What else can match money's powers, its territorial and temporal reach?

The value of money rests openly on faith, on belief in belief. Money, like a transcendent God, has become an invisible numeric network of promises, pure abstraction. Money has become a force of social nature whose powers are unmasterable, whose identity is non-national, seemingly beyond accounting or specification.

Religious nationalists in this era thrive on the difference between God and money as symbolic orders. If capital is nervous and fickle, an uncertain guest, God is constant, always available, accessible. God's teller never closes; the currency does not devalue. God provides the immutability that nations have sought in nature, including their nature as a collectivity defined by race. If money relativizes, God absolutizes, offering a foundation for a zone untouched by relative price. If money is an abstract value, a common metric devoid of substantive rationality, God is known through the distinctive substantive values He represents. If money is necessarily a medium of invidious individuality, among the faithful God is potentially a medium of equality and solidarity, a unifying representation. If money is an object that appears to dominate the subjects who pursue it so diligently, God is a subject who guarantees the subjectivity of the men and women who submit to Him.

The Battlefield

O sman bin Laden is out to demonstrate not just that the Islamic world can and must defend itself against Western capitalist culture, but that Allah is more powerful than American guns and money. Islamic warriors believe they have already shown this is true within the *umma*, the Islamic community, in Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen, Afghanistan and the Sudan. If Bin Laden can engage the forces of the American infidels in the *umma* itself in a long-term campaign of violent incursions, he is counting on showing that militant Islam can defy American power just about everywhere. For Bin Laden, the destruction of the towers was a feint designed to draw us into war on his battlefield, indeed to construct that battlefield. We should take care that we do

not become fellow builders in his Manichean architectural project, that we do not build precisely what he hoped to construct through his destruction.

To win, the United States is going to have to wage a moral war as well. This is not going to be won by smart bombs and listening posts. While there are millions of Muslims who abhor what Bin Laden's warriors wrought in Manhattan and Washington, D.C., many do share his vision of America's posture in the world. They know that in 1991 the United States was willing to defend militarily the political existence

of narrowly-based, oil-rich regimes in the Gulf, but quickly retreated from an impoverished and fractious Afghanistan once the Cold War was over. They know that the United States has been singularly unresponsive to efforts to inject issues of social justice into the deliberations and rulings of the World Trade Organization. They know that the Bush administration has chosen John Negroponte as its ambassador to the United Nations, once President Reagan's ambassador to Honduras, a man who—as part of America's drive to overthrow the Sandanista's in Nicaragua—covered for the death squads in Honduras which were torturing and killing their political opponents. They know that the United States government stood by without a word while Israel radically expanded the settlements in the occupied West Bank at the same time it was negotiating a peace settlement with the Palestinians.

In constructing its coalition against terrorism, the United States is developing a particular moral architecture. It has allied itself with two global powers—Russia and China—both of whom face territorial challenges from Islamically inspired populations. Both have brutally repressed those populations. The Islamic alliance is more problematic. To those Islamic states whose territories, security services, and banks it depends on to stop Bin Laden, the United States is providing debt relief and favored-nation trading status on the one side, and promises of military support on the other. In this war, the United States is making no demands for justice, for democracy, for civil or political, let alone human rights. Instead, the United States' conduct of this war is organized around two principles: the state as the organization that has a legitimate monopoly on violence and a free market whose circulation of money is strictly accounted by those same states. State control of violence and money is to be the machine language of the new global order.

But this response to Bin Laden's profanation only confirms his reading of our intentions. It is precisely the moral poverty of this institutional architecture—of the nation state and the capitalist coin—against which militant Islam has mobilized. In the long haul, to win this war, it will take more than guns and money. We will have to consider what it means to be the good guys. □

For Bin Laden, the destruction of the towers was a feint designed to draw us into war on his battlefield

Roundtable

Medea Benjamin, Peter Gabel,
Jo Ellen Green Kaiser,
Mark LeVine, Michael Nagler,
Jerome Slater, and Jim Wallis

In late September, we convened a roundtable discussion among people who are progressive peace activists to discuss building the groundwork for a national response to the violence of September 11. Of course, by the time you read this events may make some of it feel outdated, but the underlying perspectives will almost certainly continue to be relevant in the months ahead.

—the Editors

MEDEA BENJAMIN: Our first task in this period, of course, is to help people with the process of grieving for the terrible tragedy on September 11. But it was only a day into the grieving that we discovered we had to divert energies also into protecting Arab Americans and Muslims from attacks. In fact, even in our own community in San Francisco there were these kinds of attacks. So we started what quickly became a "No Hate In Our Community" campaign. Moving forward, the main issue we as progressives have to address is: "How do we regain security in this country, and does getting us into a war actually accomplish that? No."

JO ELLEN GREEN KAISER: Honestly, my first reaction to a possible war in Afghanistan was: "Here's our chance to overthrow the Taliban." The Taliban are incredibly oppressive to their own people, especially women, and are now extending this particular form of terroristic oppression to the world. But I drew back from that gut response when I realized it is the ordinary Afghan civilians who have already been oppressed by the Taliban who are the ones most likely to be harmed in a U.S. attack. Also, I'm concerned that any attack would only provoke the Taliban and their kin to more action.

MICHAEL NAGLER: I've been working hard on the idea of trying to create a "nonviolent peace force." I've been

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ILLUSTRATION BY MAC MCGILL



very impressed with the maturity, balance, and energy with which the current generation of students is approaching the current situation. I sense that there is an openness in America to think more deeply about issues. If we could at least get people to see the "terrorists" as human beings with a cause, I think we could move the discussion to a much deeper level.

JERRY SLATER: My greatest concern as a political scientist has been the possibility that in the coming period states and terrorist groups will gain access to weapons of mass destruction. Bin Laden's fanatical and apparently extensive organization cannot be deterred (you can't deter suicidal individuals), is consumed by hatred, and has been seeking weapons of mass destruction—which eventually they will get. There is no way for this to be stopped except by the use of force. I don't think there should be a full-scale attack on Afghanistan, nor is that what the Bush administration proposes. The attack is going to be on the terrorist organization and maybe on the Taliban, and I'd have no objection to that—provided it doesn't result in widespread civilian destruction. This organization poses a threat to the whole world and there is no choice but to destroy it.

PETER GABEL: In order to achieve the goals that Jerry Slater is correctly addressing, we need to understand the

underlying causes of the current situation. I understand the current situation as an expression of the alienated nature of human relations on the planet—the fundamental distortion of our common humanity and our common longing for love and mutual recognition and interconnectedness. I feel that in order to protect ourselves from acts of violence, we need to build an international peace movement that has as its main goal bringing into awareness the sense of awe in the presence of death which was widely experienced in the first week after September 11. We need a movement which in its very timbre and tone can bring into awareness how terribly distorted reality has become.

I agree that the Taliban is a frightening organization that is doing terrible things, brutalizing women, slaughtering people in rural villages, fostering starvation among their own people—all this in some ways shaped by the terrible history of suffering caused by the Soviet invasion, the counter invasion supported by the United States, the humiliation of the entire country to which the Taliban is a response, and the destruction of the base of their society. I'm most concerned to keep us from leaping into the "practical" discussion of what to do without bringing along with us an awareness that at the heart of the situation lies a deep spiritual distortion.

The only strategy that could do anything about the real danger of the Taliban and its ilk in the future is a strategy that seeks to separate the Middle Eastern masses from the terrorist leadership. The way to do that is to build a movement which is built upon the principle articulated by Martin Luther King Jr.—"Love correcting that which revolts against love."

I favor restrained use of force along with diplomacy—but I also favor an intense public campaign to end starvation in Afghanistan and to intervene before the winter to save thousands of people who face immediate starvation, people who have nothing to do with the Taliban. It is through acts of generosity that the frame of thinking could shift and we could begin to split people away from the terrorists.

JIM WALLIS: We in the religious community have developed a public response, now signed by over 3,000 religious leaders, that says we must deny the terrorists a victory by refusing to submit to a world created in their image. The religious community is united in standing against any kind of indiscriminate retaliation.

In pursuing a response, we need to talk a language of justice and international law, not the language of war which knows no moral boundaries and degenerates into tremendous loss of innocent life. The Gallup Poll reported recently that 73 percent of the American people want only those who are actually responsible to be punished. So we need to support a response that is focused, effective, and moral.

Second, I think it is crucial that we defend Arab and Muslim Americans.

Third, the American people want to understand why people hate us so much. This is a teachable moment for the

American people. But it must not become a blame game. Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson blamed the attacks on America on our society's willingness to tolerate abortions, gays and lesbians, and the ACLU. The peace movement should not allow itself to sound like left-wing versions of Falwell and Robertson, inserting different sins: the sins of economic globalization and U.S. militarism. That message sounds like the American people deserve this attack, and that is the worst possible thing we can say. How to speak prophetic language about the real causes of this attack is a very significant task and difficulty we face.

The root cause of these attacks is not, in the final analysis, the economic injustice facing the poor and the oppressed of the world. Rather, these are attacks upon the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, democracy. To be sure, we have fallen short of these values and often contradicted them, and I've been critical of American foreign policy for thirty years. But while we can critique America for not living up to its dreams, we should recognize that these terrorists are not freedom fighters. These are not people who, like people we've known in various struggles in South Africa or Palestine or El Salvador, in fighting injustice have lost their sense of balance and engaged in immoral acts. These are fanatical people, the face of evil. They are not angry because we did not pursue democratic reforms in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia—they would be against those reforms.

We have to stop the threat that the terrorists are to the world, but we must not, in doing so, inflame tens of millions of Muslims. Whatever we do to root out this network, we have to show another vision: we have to drain the swamps of injustice out of which these mosquitoes of intolerance breed. But you can't just blame American injustice for what these terrorists are doing—their grievance is against our best values.

MARK LEVINE: As the proverbs say, "He who sows injustice will reap calamity." I'm not just thinking about America, it's the whole world that stands in judgment today: the colonized and the colonizers, the oppressors and the oppressed are now all implicated in the spiraling cycle of violence. But I don't know how we are going to use this moment to raise these deeper issues that many of us, including Michael Lerner and Peter Gabel, have been articulating through the alternative media. I have called many, many media outlets, and can't get anyone to pay attention. As one news booker told me in all seriousness, "We're just doing terrorism now. If you know any old generals who've fought wars in the Middle East, please send them our way." The mainstream media doesn't want to teach the history.

But more than history, [this attack is about] the present—the events of September 11 have everything to do with globalization. In fact, some of the earliest demonstrations against globalization took place in Algeria and Egypt in the 1980s. Muslim activists, however, have been largely ignored by the rest of the anti-globalization movement, despite a century and a half of prescient criticism of "our" way of life.

BENJAMIN: This is precisely the time to examine the antagonism toward us in the larger world. You can't just say that these terrorists are a small group of fanatics—there may well be thousands of people who believe that theirs is a cause worth dying for. There may well be thousands in their network, and many millions who would join them if they perceived this as a holy war against Islam.

If we ask the question, "what makes these people angry at us?" we could start with the fact that so much of Middle East policy has focused on our desire for access to oil and our consequent huge military buildup, including holy sites like Mecca and Medina. We should also address the connections to globalization, because even though the specific people who were involved in the attack may not have themselves been suffering economic deprivation, the potential of this widening to a larger war against millions of Muslims is real because of the widespread resentment in the Muslim world at the way people have been driven into poverty by policies imposed by the IMF and the World Bank. In fact, the basic social services normally supplied by governments have been so dramatically cut in many countries trying to follow the dictates of globalization that people have had no choice but to turn to Islamic fundamentalist institutions for schooling, health care, and other necessary services.

WALLIS: I agree with critiques of globalization and militarization—and helping people understand connections is part of our task. But let me emphasize a point made by Hannan Ashwari and other Palestinian intellectuals in response to September 11: "No cause, not even a just cause, can make legitimate the killing of innocent civilians.... Terror never paves the way to justice, but leads down the shortest path to hell."

The terrorists are using these legitimate grievances to recruit for another cause. They are using injustice, using the desperation of hopelessness to recruit for their cause, but their cause is not for social justice or a higher level of humanity. Their values have little in common with ours. The Taliban's vision is totally opposed to all the things that we'd like to see in the world.

NAGLER: One of the sharpest disagreements here is on the question of whether we should destroy the group that has done this terrible deed. While I totally agree with you, Jerry Slater, on the way you characterize that deed—its sophistication, its immorality, etc.—there is a line I cannot cross: to say that the people themselves are irredeemable and that therefore the only way to deal with them is to kill them. Nor would I agree that if we destroy them we will have laid our danger to rest. On a deeper level, it's all about dehumanization and the glorification of violence in our own (now global) media which has contributed so much to making life so cheap that people think it's appropriate to kill others. If we kill people in order to prove that this is a wrong view, we are embedded in a paradox. Using violence to overcome violence is just certain to keep violence going.

SLATER: If we could eliminate the danger without killing them, that would certainly be useful to know. The purpose of the use of force is not revenge or retribution, it is self-defense—if they are not eliminated, they will strike again, and in even worse ways.

I tend to agree with Paul Wolfowitz in his view that we made a mistake to not get rid of Saddam Hussein in 1991, for today there no effective way to prevent the Iraqi regime from getting weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, in principle, it would be morally acceptable to me if we could eliminate the regime of Saddam Hussein as part of this struggle against terror, provided we could do so without major destruction of innocent Iraqi civilians or major political damage in the Islamic world. However, I doubt that this can be done, and that is where I differ from Wolfowitz and others who are pressing Bush to use September 11 to go after Saddam.

NAGLER: I am certainly for self-defense. I just don't believe that the most effective way to do that is to eliminate or kill people. Instead, we should convert them to a saner and more rational viewpoint. When you look at history, it just doesn't seem to have worked to fight hatred by eliminating people who bear that hatred. I guarantee you that if we do succeed in "eliminating" Osama bin Laden, ten more will rise to take his place. If we reach him, win him over, even he will convert others away from the way of terrorism.

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TIKKUN: From a spiritual perspective, we need to preserve a recognition of the unity of all being, and hence look at these particular offenses more in the way we might view a particularly painful wound or infection on our finger—not as something which would lead us to want to cut off the finger (because that is still “me”) but instead to see this problem as one generating sadness and restraint. We might, after careful deliberation, decide that a particular kind of infection or cancer can only be dealt with by cutting out the relevant part of the body, but we’d do that with grief, not with a triumphalist “I’ll show that part that it can’t threaten me.” And we’d certainly be concerned about any operation that might have the chance of spreading, rather than containing, the malignancy. And, if we had an ounce of sense, we’d also want to be sure that we stopped whatever behavior we were engaged in which made us prone to these kinds of wounds, infections, or cancers. Doesn’t this situation require something like this—an approach that helps us develop a greater sense of our mutual interconnectedness?

GABEL: Absolutely right. So, if we conclude that force is necessary, it is absolutely essential that it be a restrained and careful use of force. Jim Wallis is right to say that this can’t be reduced simply to economics. We’ve driven Arab cultures crazy by Western policies that have created a Western world (increasingly successful in impinging on and reshaping the rest of the world) which has reflected a fundamental distortion in the longing of human beings to be loved, recognized, and to be seen as created in the image of God (or, if you are not religious, to be seen with profound respect and dignity). But this is different from saying that the central issue is freedom and equality, which we support and they don’t.

The key element is to enrich the realm of the invisible, the felt realm of reality that does nor does not carry empathy and compassion for the spiritual longings of every human being. The world we seem to be imposing is one that rejects I-Thou relationships and instead valorizes the individual in isolation or opposition to the other. In a global market that encourages us to see each other in paranoid and distancing ways, and in a historical process that undermines human solidarity, we see massive distortions in human relationships which eventually produce this kind of terrible violence. To respond to that violence is not to adhere to liberal ideology and American values, but rather to communicate through a new spiritual/political worldview a whole different way of being in the world—a sense of the importance of love and community, and a way to make people feel validated in wanting that kind of care outside their nuclear families and in the public sphere.

The vast majority of humanity, including humanity in the Middle East, longs for that kind of public world reflective of love and community. That condition of longing has eventually contributed to the development of a small group of people who are literally out of their minds and who need to be removed from the public realm—but that act of removal

must be done within a framework that validates for the vast mass of humanity their desire for loving connection and recognition. That is the only way to undermine the spiritual base of terrorism, which depends upon a continuation of the feelings of non-recognition and cultural humiliation among the Middle-Eastern masses.

WALLIS: We at *Sojourners* have been raising these underlying issues for all of the time we’ve existed as a voice in the Christian world. It is a central part of our mission. But that doesn’t mean that we turn away from the immediate task of dealing with these violent people. I live in the center city in Washington, DC, and there is frequent violence on my block. As a pastor, I love many of these kids who deal drugs and do violence, but sometimes those people have to be incarcerated and stopped from doing what they are doing to protect the neighborhood from their violence. We’d all prefer international mechanisms to deal with Bin Ladin and the Taliban and I hope we can build them. The religious community wants to limit the U.S. and multinational response to finding and incarcerating those people; we are against causing massive loss of life.

BENJAMIN: I think it important to note that we have a court system and that people have fought long and hard to establish a juridical process by which criminal acts are dealt with. Evidence has to be presented. We’ve demanded that Bin Ladin be handed over without having presented evidence, and we’ve proclaimed that countries who are not on our side will be treated as though they are on the side of the terrorists. We have to demand that this be done through a civilized process. If the evidence has been presented and the country harboring alleged terrorists does not extradite them, then I think we should send in a small number of ground troops to apprehend and bring those people to trial.

NAGLER: If we ask ourselves why we don’t have such an international process in place, we have to acknowledge that it is the United States which has blocked this. President Bush was the one who refused to consider the treaty submitted to him which would establish an International Criminal court. We need that court to be in place, but we are the obstacle to having that court. As Thucydides said, “Those who spurn justice when they are strong will not have it to protect them when they are weak.”

GABEL: But what if the measures being suggested are inadequate to actually stop the terrorists?

BENJAMIN: Then we need a truly international effort. Let’s call an emergency meeting of the UN and have the UN create an international force against terrorism, rather than having the intervention come from the United States alone. This attack also underscores the need for an international criminal court, something the United States has unfortunately opposed in the past.

LEVINE: If we look deep enough at the problem, we come back to having to deal with our own role. We want to rid the world of evil-doers, but the United States is the

biggest supplier of arms to the Middle East and everywhere else: \$41 billion in arms in the last decade alone.

To talk of harboring terrorists—sadly, the United States has supported regimes that harbor and themselves engage in terrorism throughout the Middle East: we have supported a horrendously corrupt and oppressive Saudi regime since the 1940s; we overthrew the Mossadeq regime in Iran in 1953 and installed the Shah in his place, which became one of the most despotic regimes of the twentieth century and paved the way for “radical Islam” as the only viable alternative.

We are deeply implicated in all this. But I’m not sure what the role of scholars and activists like us is. We might not have the expertise to discuss legal and military alternatives to the coming war, but we can use our talents to understand the larger context. It makes sense for us to focus on the message we can give, which is that if we want to rid the world of evil-doers, the United States and the Western world need to address the evil we have done and supported till today.

GREEN KAISER: I’ve noticed an incredible sense of vulnerability among many Americans. One of the responses to this vulnerability is to lash out militarily. But we at least need some other strategy to address this vulnerability. And part of that is learning to live in a world where people do really disagree with us.

TIKKUN: Perhaps, following Jim Wallis’ important point, we should be talking about a world system in which the United States plays a shaping role. That world system has evolved in ways which has undermined people’s capacities to recognize each other as created in the image of God and deserving of respect and caring. That evolution cannot be attributed to the United States—it is rooted in the entire development of Western civilization with its particular form of secularism which has valorized material rather than spiritual sensibilities, and led people to feel uprooted, surrounded by a media and economic institutions which devalue them and their traditions, and created a world in which money and power are the primary currency of human interaction. This, in turn, has produced a reaction: the emergence of various forms of fundamentalism which have offered people a connection and community with each other, and often very supportive mechanisms to help each other, but only at the cost of buying into a worldview in which some “Other” is blamed for the evil and demeaned. And the primary demeaned Other in the Middle East these days is the Jewish people, on the one hand, and Western civilization and the United States on the other. The “evil Other” is given the blame, and in that way they are deeply misguided.

But there is a real problem to which these fundamentalists are responding, albeit in irrational and hateful ways. If

we could acknowledge this, then we’d have to say, “Yes, we do have some part in the causal chain that leads to these hateful acts, because even though those acts are immoral and irrational and outrageous and need to be stopped, what they are responding to is a real human deprivation while we in the West, even now, pretend that there is no real deprivation and that these people are nothing more than irrationally targeting us.

This is what the media does: it pretends that there is no connection between anything in Western civilization that is screwed up and this particular response to it.

SLATER: There are some situations which create a real moral dilemma. When the Palestinians are repressed, their land stolen, their rights systematically denied, their non-violent demonstrations met with violence, then the response of an armed revolution directed against the Israeli occupation—as distinct from pure terrorism directed against Israeli society as a whole—creates a moral dilemma for us. But in the case of Bin Ladin there is no such dilemma because these people don’t stand for the liberation of an oppressed people—they are both mur-

derous to an unimaginable degree and highly reactionary.

LEVINE: Absolutely. We have to look at ourselves, but we also have to demand that the so-called Muslim or “Third World” countries do serious soul-searching. And that applies to all the antiimperialist and anticolonialist movements—they can’t use the sins of the West to justify their own immoral actions. We have to demand what Michael Lerner has described as a “global period of atonement” in preparation for what Emanuel Levinas reminded us is our obligation toward radical recognition of our Others. But how can we if we refuse to critically examine our own history and policies?

WALLIS: Those who committed these acts have to be brought to justice and the world has to be protected from them. When people are shooting you have to stop them from shooting. But let’s do so in a context where we are also dealing with deeper causes.

GABEL: We have to find ways to do all this that manifest our loving and generous humanity, so that we can separate the Middle-Eastern masses from these terrorists rather than take actions that will solidify the hold that these terrorists have and extend their popularity. Perhaps we need to combine what we are doing to find the terrorists with an announcement in which we launch a massive program to feed the people of Afghanistan so while we are pursuing the perpetrators we are also showing our human solidarity for the people of that society. We have to find symbolic actions and substantive interventions that can unleash the longing of people to go beyond this terror situation and the cycle of violence. □

When people are shooting you have to stop them from shooting. But let's do so in a context where we are also dealing with deeper causes.

The Globalization of Poverty

Antonia Jurasz

United States Trade Representative Robert Zoellick has begun to use the horrific tragedies of September 11, 2001 as a rationale to push an aggressive free trade agenda, arguing that we must “counter terrorism with trade.” An expansive economic globalization agenda is one of the four policy priorities President Bush asked Congress to address immediately following the attacks of September 11. The administration is arguing that we will end terrorism through trade because economic globalization is the solution to poverty. But all evidence shows the contrary, that economic globalization is a cause of global poverty and inequality, not a solution. Furthermore, this evidence is increasingly coming from within the institutions of economic globalization itself.

For example, the Central Intelligence Agency itself warned in a December 2000 report that economic globalization would increase inequality and poverty, thereby fostering violence: “The rising tide of the global economy will create many economic winners, but it will not lift all boats. ... [It will] spawn conflicts at home and abroad, ensuring an even wider gap between regional winners and losers than exists today.... [Globalization’s] evolution will be rocky, marked by chronic financial volatility and a widening economic divide. Regions, countries, and groups feeling left behind will face deepening economic stagnation, political instability, and cultural alienation. *They will foster political, ethnic, ideological, and religious extremism, along with the violence that often accompanies it* [emphasis added].” (*Global Trends 2015*, United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2000).

The most reliable data available, predominantly from supporters of economic globalization, demonstrate how economic globalization has caused the most dramatic increase in global inequality and poverty in modern history. Furthermore, this outcome is intrinsic to the economic globalization model. Arguments that economic globalization allows “fragile democracies” to “overcome poverty and create opportunity,” as Trade Representative Zoellick wrote in the *Washington Post*, are seriously mistaken. If such policies are pursued, the world could find itself in even worse circumstances in the future than those we find ourselves in today.

Antonia Jurasz is the project director of the International Forum on Globalization. Material for this article was drawn from “Does Globalization Help the Poor?,” a report by IFG available at www.ifg.org.

The administration has already begun to move ahead with IMF loans to Pakistan and Indonesia in the name of fighting terrorism. If we wish to help these countries with their economic problems, why are we providing loans instead of direct aid? Why are we using the IMF, an institution that has failed miserably in this region (as former World Bank chief economist Joseph Stiglitz wrote, “All the IMF did was make East Asia’s recessions deeper, longer, and harder.”) instead of alternative funding sources, such as the United Nations, that historically represent the interests of developing countries? The answer may be that the U.S. government can control the funds that go to a country through the IMF by linking conditions to the loans. These conditions have historically benefited corporate and elite interests over those of the populations of the countries in question.

The CIA is not alone in its assessment of the catastrophic impact that the policies of economic globalization have had around the world. For example, the World Bank—one of economic globalization’s leading institutions—reports that “Globalization appears to increase poverty and inequality... The costs of adjusting to greater openness are borne exclusively by the poor, regardless of how long the adjustment takes.” (*The Simultaneous Evolution of Growth and Inequality*, The World Bank, 1999).

The United Nations echoes these words in its 1999 Human Development Report, “The new rules of globalization—and the players writing them—focus on integrating global markets, neglecting the needs of people that markets cannot meet. The process is concentrating power and marginalizing the poor, both countries and people.... The current [globalization] debate is ... too narrow ... neglecting broader human concerns such as persistent global poverty, growing inequality between and within countries, exclusion of poor people and countries and persistent human rights abuses.”

The policies of economic globalization such as free trade, financial liberalization, deregulation, reduced government spending, and privatization concentrate wealth at the top, removing from governments and communities the very tools needed to ensure equity and to protect workers, social services, the environment, and sustainable livelihoods. In this way, economic globalization and its institutions—including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and the North American Free Trade Agreement, have created the

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I wrote the following article about the U.N. World Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa, one day before the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. What I wrote about here is even more important to understand now in light of the recent events of the past few weeks. The United States is trying to build a world-wide coalition and is talking about going to war to defeat terrorism. The unsolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict is once again in the headlines and is being considered an impediment to a U.S. strategic plan to court support from Arab countries. This in turn is leading to increased anti-Semitism, with some U.S. citizens thinking Israel (and Jews) are to blame both for the attacks in New York and D.C., as well as any difficulty the United States may encounter in building an anti-terrorism coalition. Yesterday, a taxi driver screamed at a Jewish friend of mine as she stood in front of the Jewish Community Center in D.C., "Are you Jewish? You should go back to where you came from. This is all your fault."

The recent U.N. conference was not an isolated event, separate from the events of the past few weeks. In Durban, the United States withdrew from a key conference on racism, incurring the resentment of peoples' movements around the world. As progressive Jews now are trying to figure out a

I have just come back from the NGO (non-governmental organization) meeting of the World Conference on Racism, in Durban, South Africa. I was in Durban as a delegate for two organizations. I was part of an eight-person delegation with the National Coalition Building Institute, a nonprofit leadership organization that I founded seventeen years ago which trains leadership teams around the world in prejudice reduction, intergroup conflict resolution, and coalition building work. I was also part of United To End Racism, a fifty-person delegation of people from around the world who belong to Re-Evaluation Counseling and

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response to the recent events that both slows down the current calls for war and yet still enables us to stop terrorism, it is going to be important to understand what happened in Durban and to understand the negative way that progressive movements around the world that are working against racism view the alliance of the United States with Israel (particularly the support of the U.S. government for the anti-Palestinian policies of the current government in Israel). In Durban, confusion about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict derailed a worldwide effort to defeat racism. And now, once again, the Israel-Palestinian conflict is at the center of the current campaign against worldwide terrorism. It is a wake-up call for progressive Jews. It is up to us to put forward policies on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that are just both for the Israeli people and the Palestinian people. The following insights from the conference in Durban can help us to shape our next steps in developing those policies.

who came to Durban to share with other anti-racism activists the tools and practices of Re-Evaluation Counseling for ending racism.

It was not easy being a Jew in Durban. The "Zionism is Racism" rhetoric drowned out many other important discussions. Cartoon caricatures of Jews could be seen in a number of places. Important distinctions were not always made between the policies of the Israeli government, the Israeli people, or Jews in general. But it was also wonderful being in Durban. Contrary to all the negative press reports, there were 6,000 people from all over the world who came to South Africa to increase their commitment to fighting racism. As a White person, I was in the minority at the conference. And everywhere I went all week, I was treated with

REPORT FROM DURBAN

respect and generosity. The people of South Africa opened their hearts to us and worked very hard against great odds to make the conference work.

Lerner, I, and others wrote a number of important articles addressing the anti-Semitism in the Left. There is a need once again to bring the Left to task on anti-Semitism.

important work of reaching out to allies. At one point, the Jewish caucus made up T-shirts with a Jewish star and peace symbol on one side and a quote from Martin Luther King stating that if you are anti-Zionist, then you are against Jews. As I wandered from tent to tent in Durban, I ran into a lot of Jewish young people wearing these.

The attacks on Israel left these young Jews feeling vulnerable. And in their vulnerability, they stayed only with one another and missed an important opportunity to build friendships with people from around the world. Members of establishment Jewish groups that attended the conference in Durban could have played a powerful role over the week in helping to maintain the focus of the conference on ending racism. Instead, they too got caught up in the diversionary politics and spent the week in a defensive posture about Israel.

3) We Need to Take a Clear Stand in Favor of the Right of Israel to Exist as a Jewish State

This past year, at the founding conference of Junity (a group of progressive Jews who came together at a national meeting to work against the Israeli occupation) no agreement was reached on a policy for a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict. Some participants supported the need for a Jewish state alongside a Palestinian state. Others did not. Before Durban, I had been more willing to accept this diversity of views, even though I had personally always fought for a two-state policy. But given the “Zionism is Racism” rhetoric put forward in U.N. documents, it is now clear that support for a Jewish state must be a key part of a progressive program for peace in the Middle East.

It became clear to me at Durban that anything less than unequivocal support for Israel and the right of Jews to have our own self-determination through a state, even when that state practices oppressive policies, will collude with anti-Jewish oppression. The continued existence of Israel as a nation, as a national homeland for all Jews, as a base for Jewish struggle for survival must be actively supported by all liberation programs. Jews, like every other people, have a right and a need for a state to ensure their self-determination and to provide a base for building unity. No people can be fully liberated without a homeland.

The support for Israel's right to exist does not require ignoring or defending wrong or oppressive policies of the Israeli government, but criticism of such policies should be based on prior unconditional support for Israel's right to exist. We do not have to ignore the grave injustices done to the Palestinian Arabs that accompanied the establishment of Israel, but such injustice does not in itself justify the destruction of Israel. All present homelands on the earth were established by much injury to their previous inhabitants.

4) We Can and Need to Take a Stand against “Zionism Is Racism” Platforms Even as We Admit That Many of the Current Practices of the Israeli Government Are Racist

In Durban, I heard Palestinians and allies of the Palestinian people rallying against the racism of Israel by denouncing Israel and Jews. And I heard many Jews denouncing the anti-Jewish rhetoric of Palestinians by defending the policies of the Israeli government. The progressive Jewish peace movement was missing in Durban. A

number of us realized only too late that we should have organized a large contingent of progressive Jewish peace activists to come to Durban. We needed a strong presence of Jews who understood that Zionism is not racism, but at the same time were prepared to fully back Palestinian Liberation and to take the Israeli government to task for oppressive and racist policies towards Palestinians.

In the same way that Israel has a right to exist, even if the policies of the Israeli government are not correct, so too the Palestinian people have a right to fight for a full Liberation program for the Palestinian people—even if their policies are not correct yet. It will take a large force of progressive Jews who are willing to fight for the need for a strong Palestinian Liberation movement alongside a Jewish state to build allies amongst the Palestinian people. The presence of communities from the Diaspora like TIKKUN, the Shalom Center, the Break the Silence Campaign, or from Israel like the Women in Black and Rabbis for Human Rights, would have made a huge difference in being able to build alliances with Palestinian groups in Durban.

5) When Jews Ask Black Civil Rights Organizations to Help Us Defeat “Zionism Is Racism” Policies, We Need to Be Prepared to Partner with Them on Programs for Defeating Racism

Leading Black-Jewish dialogue programs or sponsoring annual Black-Jewish seders is not the same as working as an organized Jewish community to defeat racism. I kept hearing Jews in Durban who wanted allies amongst Black Civil Rights organizations to help defeat the “Zionism is Racism” resolutions. But I did not see an equal willingness among these Jews to fully take on issues of racism. The organized Jewish community, for example, has not taken a position on reparations—one of the key issues for the Civil Rights groups. We, as White Jews, need to be prepared to do more of our own work on racism and then to speak out in favor of reparations and other issues that are important to Black Civil Rights organizations. What if progressive Jewish organizations offered forums across the United States this next year and took the lead, visibly as Jews, in

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The support for Israel's right to exist does not require ignoring or defending wrong or oppressive policies.

Among Palestinians, we hear little that encourages us either. Friends who never used to make generalizations about what Jews and Israelis are like are beginning to spout the rhetoric of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Palestinian gunmen continue to shoot from the neighborhoods of Haret Sheik and Abu Sneineh with no regard for the people who will have their homes destroyed by Israeli military missile and tank fire. The nightly shooting in Hebron has killed both Israeli and Palestinian children.

Ironically, perhaps the one encouraging bit of news I brought home had to do with the reactions of Palestinians in Hebron to the terrorist attacks on September 11.

"I wanted to call to tell you how so, so sorry I am about what has happened to Americans this day," a Palestinian friend told me on the phone that evening. "I am watching what happened in New York on the television; it is so sad." I told him that my co-workers and I in Hebron did not have a television, and he said, "It is better. No one should see these pictures."

Other Hebronites echoed his sentiments a hundred times during the days following September 11, as I prepared to leave the country. Strangers approached us on the street to express condolences. Our Arabic teacher began crying as soon as we arrived for our lesson and embraced us. During the lesson she said there were no Arabic words she could give us for what she had seen on TV. I suggested "Nakhba" or "catastrophe"—the word Palestinians use to describe what happened to them in 1948 when 750,000 of them were turned into refugees. "Yes," she said. "You can say, 'nakhba' for this."

As our team was being flooded with sympathy calls, Israeli soldiers began breaking into our neighbors' homes at night. When we asked them why they were screaming at the Palestinians living there and throwing their furniture around, they snarled, "Didn't you see these people dancing?"

But we hadn't. At no time that week did I see a Palestinian dancing or hear one expressing approval for what the terrorists did to my fellow citizens in New York or Washington, DC. The Palestinians in Hebron know that my organization, Christian Peacemaker Teams, often criticizes U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, and they had plenty of opportunity to express their own bitterness regarding U.S. policy to us. But they didn't. It seemed that everyone knew at some level that grief was the only appropriate response in the days immediately after the bombing.

As I sit here in front of the computer, back in the land of civility and hot showers, I am conscious of my chest tightening with unanswered questions—or perhaps in denial of the real answers. How can I persuade people that it's much easier to film several hundred Palestinians celebrating the attacks than it is to show two million Palestinians grieving in front of their television sets? It took the death of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 for the Israeli government to grant police and prosecutors the political power to crack down

on settler violence. What will it take this time?

On a personal level, I wonder when I am going to regain my nerve. A couple days before I left the country, I saw a group of settler boys throwing stones at Palestinian shops while soldiers watched and laughed. A Palestinian family—father, mother, and two small girls—walked past them on the street. The father's face registered little emotion beyond anger and disgust as the boys began throwing stones at them. As he strode past without turning his head, his daughters clung to his arms, one girl's eyes wide with fear, the other's face crumpled with incipient tears.

They passed me without looking in my direction. I had not intervened, because I was afraid. □

LESSONS LEARNED IN DURBAN *(continued from page 23)*

working with other Jews on racism and on supporting the need for reparations around slavery?

6) We Need to See That Our Real Allies Are the Palestinian People and Other Peoples' Liberation Groups

The walkout by the U.S. government in Durban only served to set up Israel and Jews in opposition to other liberation movements. Throughout Jewish history, Jews have sought protection from ruling class forces, only to be abandoned by those forces when it no longer fit their economic interests. Expecting the U.S. government to be our primary ally fits into this historic pattern of anti-Semitism. The U.S. government offers support and protection for Israel. Israel continues to oppress the Palestinian people. Other liberation movements see these oppressive policies and then attack Israel's right to exist. Israel is further isolated from other people in the world. Israel seeks further support from the U.S. government. However difficult it may be, we need to break this cycle by reaching out directly for allies amongst the Palestinian people and other liberation groups. Contrary to the barrage of media coverage that daily convinces us that there aren't peace seeking Palestinians ready to meet with us, there are many, many Palestinians ready to meet with Jews. We need to take the peace process out of the hands of our governments and put it back where it belongs—with daily contacts and relationship-building between our peoples.

In the toughest moments in Durban, it was clear that we have many allies. In the middle of the conference, it was reported on the front page of the conference newspaper that Mary Robinson, the commissioner for the U.N. meeting and an Irish Catholic woman, had come out and said (in response to seeing several cartoons attacking Jews), "I'm a Jew." Contrary to all the press reports, I met so many people in Durban who were eager to figure out how they could be for the Palestinian people and for Jews. People are looking for policies that support both Jewish Liberation and Palestinian Liberation. It is up to us, as progressive Jews, to offer those policies. □

AN INTERVIEW WITH Azmi Bishara

Azmi Bishara is a Member of Knesset. He was the Israeli-Arab candidate for prime minister in 1999 but withdrew at the last moment in favor of Ehud Barak. Right-wing Members of Knesset are seeking to end his immunity from prosecution and to bring charges of disloyalty for a speech he gave in Syria critiquing Israeli policy towards Israeli Arabs. He is a regular contributor to *TIKKUN* magazine.

TIKKUN: How do Israeli Arabs understand why the Intifada started and has continued?

BISHARA: Ehud Barak went into the negotiations at Camp David with the mistaken view that all differences between Israel and the Palestinians could be overcome if the Palestinians were granted a state, because the Palestinians would agree to everything else Israel wanted. And if they did not, then Barak would be able to reveal to the whole world that there was no partner for peace. Some of us warned Barak that this was a terrible mistake and very dangerous. When the Palestinians failed to agree to his conditions, he didn't then say, "OK, I see that this strategy I had of jumping over the steps of the Oslo Accord won't work, so let's go back and implement the agreements we already made." That would have entailed withdrawing Israeli troops from more of the West Bank. Instead, Barak sought to portray the Palestinians as rejecting peace. And then when Sharon made his provocative visit to the Al Aqsa mosque and the next day Israeli troops fired on the demonstrators, that created a set of reactions in the West Bank and Gaza that had their own dynamics, unleashing much pent up anger and disillusionment that Palestinians had been feeling for years about the way the peace process was not being implemented.

Israeli Palestinians sympathized with West Bank Palestinians' desire to end the Occupation, and in any event they felt very disappointed at the Barak government's failure to keep his promises to them about eliminating inequalities in the way Israeli Arabs are treated. But Israelis were shocked that their Arab minority would publicly demonstrate in support of Palestinian demands. So the response was repression, which was qualitatively different response from how Israel handles rock-throwing demonstrations by Haredi Jews in Jerusalem. The Israeli police dealt with the Arab demonstrators as though they were enemies, not as protesting citizens, and this caused a deep polarization.



The police response has to be understood also in the context of an Israeli public that was shocked at Palestinian rejection of what had been portrayed to them as the most generous possible offer by Ehud Barak, followed by Barak's declaration that "we have no partner for peace." As a result, we have a powerful polarization, not between Left and Right, but between Arab and Jewish Israelis—and this had never happened before in any comparable way. Never before were Arab Israelis threatened by Jewish mobs. Suddenly it became legitimate for Israeli Jews to express publicly in the media and in public gatherings their antagonism toward Arabs—not just to West Bank Palestinians but to Israeli Arabs. Whatever feelings had already been there suddenly found public expression—and it was shocking to many Arab Israelis. Barak and his arrogance in stating that there was no peace partner set these events in motion. It will take a lot of time to repair the relationship. Many Israeli Arabs who previously sought integration into Israeli society are now beginning to think that goal is completely unrealistic.

So now many Israeli Arabs are turning their attention toward equal rights, but this is a very difficult moment for us because Jewish Israeli public opinion has swung against Israeli Arabs, and with that there are specific assaults on the limited rights we have achieved (e.g., there are now attempts to cut the budgets for Arab towns, increasing the inequality that already existed). But while this struggle for

equality must continue, many realize now that we need to be recognized as a national minority with national rights. And this is a position which has become much more prevalent today than it was when I first articulated it. Today, our community recognizes that it is a national minority and must ask Israel for a society that recognizes that it has a national minority; we are asking for equal rights not in a Palestinian state, but as Israeli citizens. Arabs in Israel do not want to separate from Israel—we want to be equal citizens, but don't want to deny our cultural/political reality as a separate national minority.

TIKKUN: When you spoke to us last a year and a half ago you said that most Israeli Arabs were seeking personal solutions and didn't have much interest in political solutions. Has this fundamentally changed?

BISHARA: Yes, there are fewer illusions about the possibility of personal solutions or individual integration. It became more clear under Sharon, because even though Sharon brought an Arab into his government—something Peres and Barak had refused to do—the situation of Arab Israelis has deteriorated.

TIKKUN: Some Jews who have been identified with a peace perspective in the past today criticize the Palestinians for not having accepted Barak's offer, even though they can agree with us at TIKKUN that the offer wasn't a "generous" one. Their argument: if the Palestinians don't really secretly nurture the fantasy that they can eliminate Israel altogether, why didn't they put forward their own alternative vision of what they would settle for and state it clearly? Was this the stupidity of Arafat, or did it flow from a deep ambivalence about the existence of an Israeli state and their unwillingness to abandon the hope that the state they achieve at this stage might someday become the launching pad for another level of struggle that would eventually obliterate an Israeli state? I've read recent polls in the post-September 11 period which indicate that now a majority of Palestinians reject the two-state solution and think that only the elimination of Israel will make it possible for them to have the social justice they seek.

BISHARA: Polls reflect the shifting moods in the Palestinian people, and there is no doubt that after the expansion of settlements on the West Bank, the refusal to share Jerusalem, and the continuing assaults against Palestinian civilians, there has grown a deep cynicism about peace and a willingness to express more extreme positions. This mood would shift if there were a new sense of progress in peace negotiations that involved a partial withdrawal and dismantling of settlements.

But there's nothing hidden about the Palestinian position on what it requires for a final settlement: withdrawal to the borders of 1967, dismantling settlements, and sharing Jerusalem as the capital of both a Palestinian and Israeli state—all these are clear, but probably all are negotiable.

TIKKUN: ...and the right of return?

BISHARA: That's also clear—but I assume that for the Palestinian leadership it's probably negotiable if Israel were serious about dismantling settlements and creating a Palestinian state with the boundaries of 1967. How much they would move on that question was never decided in the negotiations, so we don't really know. But the giving back of land was never resolved at these negotiations, and though the media made it sound as though Barak had made a concrete offer of 97 percent of the land, that was not so: I never heard Barak actually say from his own mouth any such offer—that was the spin given by media and by associates. There was never a clear public offer, and when people in the Palestinian world tried to calculate what he was really offering, it sounded much closer to 80 percent. Nor was it ever clear what the Israelis meant in regard to sovereignty or in regard to what they were offering in Jerusalem. On the one hand they insisted that Arafat sign, saying that there was a final agreement; on the other hand it was totally unclear whether Israel was going to allow Palestinians to have real control over the Palestinian sections of Jerusalem or unimpeded access to the Temple Mount. Even on the issue of access from the West Bank to Jerusalem, questions as basic as whether people would have to go through check points which Israeli troops could shut when they thought there was a security reason to do so, or whether Arafat himself would need Israeli permission each time he entered Jerusalem, were not made clear. Israel was offering words, but not a substantive agreement. As to refugees—it was never even seriously discussed. So how could one blame the failure of these negotiations on the Palestinians, when the issues were never really negotiated?

TIKKUN: What would a right of return that would work look like?

BISHARA: I don't know of any form of "the right to return" that would be accepted by Israeli Jews as long as the Zionist ideology prevails and their idea of the Jewish State is the dominant category in the political culture. Only bi-national values could make people tolerate an implementation of the right of return for the Palestinians. I think that Israel in its present stage wouldn't even consider allowing 50,000 refugees to come back. But I don't think that the Palestinians should give this up—because the right to return of refugees is accepted as a basic right internationally and is yearly re-supported by the United Nations. This is an individual right that can't be given up by political leaders. So I think that negotiations can lead only to a partial settlement without inclusion of the issue of refugees, because I can see no solution (a so-called final status) that would be reasonable to the Palestinians at this time that Israelis would accept. I think one way to break out of this box is to have a final status negotiation take place in the context of including Syria and Lebanon, so that a comprehensive peace is established. Oslo is dead. The logic of Oslo with its interim confidence building steps could not work. So we need

negotiations with Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon to reach a final conclusion that will include everybody—and that is the only way to even begin to speak to the Israeli public. If you come to the Israelis with a package that includes peace with all of the neighbors, and it's really final, an end to all the

11th events in New York. I've said this to the PLO—that there must be limits on our struggle in accord with rational and moral standards. Of course, for Israeli Arabs who are struggling for equality inside Israel, our choice of nonviolence has always been part of the struggle. We've been

except perhaps raising money in the United States, but as a serious force in Israel it simply has not been functioning. There are a handful of wonderful individuals who have good ideas and they are doing their best particularly against settlement activities, but as an effective movement in Israeli society it has vanished, because its base was composed of many people in the Labor party who have reverted to the nationalist and chauvinist ideas that Labor always embraced. And the Labor party itself has been dealt a mortal blow by Barak, because once he declared that there is no partner for peace, there was no longer a logical function or task for the Labor party, so it merged into a Unity government with Likud. Since Labor has no ideas left, they feel that they have to be part of the national unity government. Avram Burg has no new ideas either, and his medium level of charisma isn't enough to compensate for his lack of ideas.

Meretz has a better foundation, so it's not as worried as Labor—Meretz has the upper middle-class secularist Ashkenazis and elitist liberals. It is for rational policies and, although it doesn't particularly care about Palestinians, it does want peace so that people can pursue their own self-interest. So, it has a solid but limited class base who are ready for territorial compromise. In Barak's government they played a role of trying to push him further to the Left, but after the first month of the Intifada the Meretz people were really terrible. Yossi Sarid was attacking Israeli Arabs when we were being attacked by the Israeli police, and it was only a week later that he woke up and began to notice that we had been victimized by the Israeli police and hostile Jewish mobs. The Meretz people let themselves be swept by the nationalist tides of the media, and then after a few days they catch themselves and become more rational. But frankly I've found someone like Yossi Beilin in Labor to be more consistent and reliable than Meretz—he does not change his political line according to switches in public opinion in the way that some people in Meretz do. I disagree with Beilin, but I respect him.

TIKKUN: Can American Jews play any role in this period?

BISHARA: You are more important now than ever. Sharon is attempting to use the tragedy of September 11 to reaffirm that Israel's approach to terrorism was always right. American Jewish progressives like those who read *TIKKUN* understand something about the suffering of the Palestinian people—much more than the rest of the American public—and it becomes all the more important to share that information in order to give Americans a deeper contextual understanding of what drives some Arabs to despair.

I also believe that this is the perfect moment for liberal American Jews to align themselves with progressives in the Arab American community and together articulate a new perspective. When I say "liberal" I don't mean in reference to their approach to issues like abortion but in respect to their approach to Palestinian rights. □

THE GLOBALIZATION OF POVERTY (continued from page 20)

most dramatic increase in global inequality—both within and between nations—in modern history and have increased global poverty.

For example, the income gap between the fifth of the world's people living in the richest countries and the fifth in the poorest doubled from 1960 to 1990, from thirty to one to sixty to one. By 1998 it had jumped again, with the gap widening to an astonishing seventy-eight to one. Poverty trends have worsened as well; there are 100 million more poor people in developing countries today than a decade ago. The assets of the three richest people on earth are greater than the combined Gross National Product of the forty-eight least developed countries. Even in the United States, where median earnings of workers more than doubled from 1947 and 1973, the past two decades have seen median earnings fall by almost 15 percent, with the earnings for the poorest 20 percent of households falling the furthest behind. In fact, the only segment of the U.S. population that has experienced large wealth gains since 1983 is the richest 20 percent of households. The net worth of the top 1 percent of U.S. households now exceeds that of the bottom 90 percent.

As Professor Robert Wade of the London School of Economics wrote in *The Economist*, "Global inequality is worsening rapidly.... Technological change and financial liberalization result in a disproportionately fast increase in the number of households at the extreme rich end, without shrinking the distribution at the poor end.... From 1988 to 1993, the share of the world income going to the poorest 10 percent of the world's population fell by over a quarter, whereas the share of the richest 10 percent rose by 8 percent. The richest 10 percent pulled away from the median, while the poorest 10 percent fell away from the median, falling absolutely and by a large amount."

It is time to recognize that economic globalization does not serve the poor, it serves the wealthy. It actually adds to the numbers of poor while concentrating greater amounts of wealth among an ever-dwindling number of people. As Thabo Mbeki, the president of South Africa, said, "We believe consciousness is rising, including in the North, about the inequality and insecurity globalization has brought about the plight of poor countries."

For the U.S. Trade Representative to argue that expanding the World Trade Organization, signing the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and granting the President "Trade Promotion Authority" (formally Fast Track) to side-step Congress in the creation of national legislation will address the root problems of global instability is opportunistic, disrespectful, and cynical. It is time to reject failed models and embrace new alternatives. In future columns, we will discuss alternative models to economic globalization that put environmental protection and social and political equity above the interests of corporations and elites. □

Settler Violence and September 11

A Report from the Mean Streets of Hebron

Kathleen Kern

As the four teenagers in kippot approached the bus stop in Jerusalem where I was waiting for an Israeli friend, I instinctively whipped off the red hat that identified me as an international observer. A British friend visiting our team in Hebron had been wearing one when a settler assaulted her recently. The young men drew closer, and I realized with some panic that I had forgotten about the red Christian Peacemaker Team armband pinned to my sleeve. I looked at the ground to avoid making eye contact, but they stopped in front of me.

(The rules of the game in Hebron: If Israelis are attacked by Palestinians, Palestinians are punished. If Palestinians are attacked by Israelis, Palestinians are punished.)

Our British friend, a Ploughshares activist, had witnessed a girl heave a rock at a seventy-five-year-old man and then laugh as his white headscarf became soaked with blood. My

*Hebron settler boys
between the ages of five
and twelve wandered the*

friend pled with an adult male settler to stop the girls from throwing rocks. He proceeded to cover her Women in Black solidarity outfit with white globs of saliva, call her a Nazi, punch her in the head, and smash her camera.

Reflections on Palestinian Strategy

The Intifada Has Delivered Its Message—Time Now for a Palestinian Peace Initiative

Jerome M. Segal

By the time these reflections appear in print (it is now September 24, 2001) it is possible that new events will have transformed the situation beyond recognition, but at the moment, in the wake of the terror attacks on the United States, there appears an opportunity to attain a cease fire between Israelis and Palestinians and to begin the confidence building measures, including a settlement freeze, called for in the Mitchell Report. Yet it is highly doubtful that the Mitchell program, which calls for renewed negotiations, will in the end be successful.

The Mitchell Report, it may be remembered, concluded that there was no convincing evidence that the Intifada that began in September 2000 was instigated at the direction of the PLO. Many observers believe that the key trigger event was the killing of several Palestinian stone-throwers the day after Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. What is clear, however, is that the Palestinian leadership made a deep mistake in not moving forcefully to bring the violence to a close shortly after it erupted. At the very least, once things got going in earnest, the leadership sanctioned its continuation. To have done differently would certainly have cost the leadership support among the Palestinian public, especially after scores of Palestinians had been killed. But it is a cost that they should have been willing to take. To not have done this while Barak was still in power, was a leadership failure of historic proportions. While what was sacrificed was not "the most generous peace that could be imagined," it was a serious opportunity to negotiate an acceptable permanent peace settlement.

Jerome M. Segal is a Senior Research Scholar at the University of Maryland's Center for International and Security Studies. Founder of The Jewish Peace Lobby, he is most recently the co-author of *Negotiating Jerusalem* (SUNY Press, 2000).



The Palestinian leadership made a deep mistake in not moving forcefully to bring the violence to a close shortly after it erupted.

It should not be thought that the violence itself led to an end of negotiations. The Intifada began at the end of September 2000. Yet negotiations only ended in February 2001. Indeed, in December 2000 the United States put on the table a proposal significantly more attractive to the Palestinians than what had been offered at Camp David.

Had Ehud Barak been re-elected, the following months would have provided intense negotiations focused sharply on the two key issues of Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees. The general framework would have been the Clinton Plan and the entire world would have expected an end to the conflict. The decisive event which derailed such possibilities was the election of Ariel Sharon as Israel's Prime Minister. Of course, Sharon's election was itself, in part, a consequence of sustained violence coming at a point when many Israelis were still absorbing the shock of serious permanent status negotiations (e.g. suddenly facing the division of Jerusalem after years of a self-delusory public discourse that believed in both "Land for Peace" and excluding from the land under consideration the area of greatest importance to the Palestinians).

The existence of the current unity government, and the united front against the Intifada, obscures how much Sharon's election changed the equation. For one, Palestinians don't see a clear reason to end the violence. Consider this argument, one that many Palestinians have accepted:

"If Sharon can bring an end to the violence, then he will remain in power in Israel. If he remains in power, then there will be continued occupation, no sharing of Jerusalem and no accord on Palestinian refugees. Therefore, we cannot end the violence."

While I believe this argument to be erroneous, it cannot be denied that, from a Palestinian point of view, it has a powerful appeal. What is particularly striking about this "Sharon cannot be allowed to win argument" is that it places the Intifada within the context of Israeli politics. And this is just where it needs to be situated. To deal with the fundamental issues of the conflict, there must be negotiations. And for such negotiations to be successful there must be a new Israeli government.

Continued violence this time, however, will not bring a new Israeli government. At present most Israelis, whether on the Left or the Right, believe that Palestinians are not truly interested in ending the conflict, and thus conclude that a comprehensive negotiated agreement is out of reach. Hence the differences between Left and Right on permanent status issues has become irrelevant. Under present conditions, escalating violence does not turn the average Israeli away from Sharon and towards an opposition party. Rather, escalating violence confirms, in the minds of Israelis, that it is impossible to negotiate an end to the conflict. And while Sharon may not be successful in ending the violence, he is viewed as the most powerful Israeli figure. Rather than unseating Sharon, escalating violence pushes Israelis further to the Right, believing that the only response to violence is more violence.

Israeli commentators regularly talk about "the mask having slipped from the Palestinian face." Indeed, Barak, betraying the best of his own legacy, now takes credit for this "exposure." This has two versions. In the first version, it is claimed, the mask has slipped from the face of the Palestinian leadership. It has revealed an Arafat who is not prepared or ready to make peace. Dennis Ross has leant his support to this interpretation. In the second version, it is said that the mask has slipped from the face of the Palestinian people, revealing the supposed commitment of this people to Israel's destruction—no matter how long it takes, no matter the cost. Either way, it is believed that the Barak government made very substantial compromises, that the Palestinians flatly rejected them and that they instead chose the current warfare. Even among the Israeli peace movement, there is widespread uncertainty as to why an agreement was not reached. As one moves across the political spectrum, the view that the Palestinians want only the destruction of Israel increasingly becomes the dominant view.

Recent articles, such as those by President Clinton's advisor on the Middle East, Rob Malley, as well as Deborah

*What is needed more than
anything else is a comprehensive
Palestinian peace initiative.*

Sontag's *New York Times* essay, have chipped away at the "rejection of the most generous offer" perspective. But it remains largely intact, especially in Israel, where it counts most. The coalition government, which brings Shimon Peres and Ariel Sharon together, remains possible because they continue to agree on one conclusion: that it is impossible to reach a final comprehensive peace with the Palestinians at this time. Those such as Yossi Beilin who reject this view remain out of the coalition.

A political solution cannot be found unless Israelis can again be brought to believe in the seriousness of Palestinian claims that they do accept the two-state solution, and that they are willing to live in genuine and lasting peace with Israel provided there is a Palestinian state in virtually all of the West Bank and Gaza, with its capital in Jerusalem and with some recognition of the rights of refugees.

Palestinians may conclude that what is required is a two-pronged strategy: one that involves armed struggle, to constantly remind the Israelis that there is a price to be paid for continued occupation, and one that puts forward a peace initiative, to remind Israel that its deepest needs for peace and security can be attained if it is willing to end the Occupation. But what does a two-pronged strategy mean? Does it mean that violence and peace diplomacy must occur at exactly the same time? Certainly, it cannot mean that, for incidents of violence cause peace efforts to lose their credibility. For a diplomatic strategy to succeed, there must be some degree of calm, some taste of the future of peace.

A two-pronged strategy might then mean that negotiations and violence alternate, that at some point violence stops, just so that a peace initiative might be taken seriously. I myself feel it is sufficient for serious negotiations that all parties have a vivid awareness that if diplomacy fails there will be a return to violence. During the Oslo years, an illusion took hold among the Israeli public that the process could be drawn out indefinitely without collapsing into violence. If Arafat's commitment to resolve all issues through negotiations contributed to this illusion, then the drafters of the Oslo documents should repent—no commitments to eschew violence would be effective forever in the absence of progress towards ending the occupation. And the Palestinian public saw no progress. Israeli security analysts understood the problem. There were clear warnings well before Camp David that a new Intifada might break out.

Today, however, we are long past such illusions. If we have a return to serious, permanent status negotiations, all parties will be well aware that if such negotiations fail, renewed and more intense violence will result. There is no complacency to be dispelled. The Intifada has made its

(continued on page 69)

REFLECTIONS ON PALESTINIAN STRATEGY (from page 32)

point. Israelis now know that negotiations cannot go on indefinitely. If they do not succeed then they will be replaced by violence. That message has been delivered. This does not mean that Israelis have to accept every Palestinian demand. Rather, they have to face reality and decide what they are willing to fight for. What is critical, however, is that they come to believe that there is an alternative, even if it comes at a higher price than they had been led to expect. What is needed more than anything else is a comprehensive Palestinian peace initiative. In particular, the Palestinian leadership must authoritatively make clear the nature of the end-of-conflict agreement that they would be willing to sign.

Were there to be a genuine, detailed, and convincing Palestinian plan for ending the conflict, then the Bush Administration would find itself in the same position that George Bush Sr. found himself when Prime Minister Shamir was in power: looking for a new Israeli government.

Moreover, even if a Palestinian peace initiative fails to bring peace, it will establish the context within which any potential escalation of violence will be perceived, both by the international community and by the Israeli public. If it is believed that a credible peace offer by the Palestinians is on the table and that the Sharon government has turned its back on it, then Sharon will be blamed for the violence that

occurs. This in turn will help to control the flow towards the full engagement of Israeli and Palestinian military forces.

The most powerful diplomatic step that the Palestinian leadership can take is to present to the world a detailed treaty document, one that addresses reasonable Israeli security concerns and responds to Israel's deepest fears and vital concerns. It should do this publicly, going over the heads of the Israeli government directly to the Israeli people. It should say, "This does not give us full justice, but it is what we are prepared to settle for. Are you willing to pay this price for peace?" There have been, in recent months, peace statements of a general sort by Israeli and Palestinian individuals. This is useful but insufficient. The distrust is now so profound that proposals that express only the ideas of select doves will have little benefit. Indeed, even a repeat of the Yossi Beilen-Abu Mazen exercise of 1995 would not produce the desired effect unless President Arafat was to say unequivocally that he would support such an agreement.

Let me conclude by offering a framework for such a treaty document. I offer it as a starting point, but it expresses my sense of an agreement that would meet the most basic Palestinian needs yet be acceptable to many Israelis, and would clearly establish to most Israelis and to the international community that the Palestinian side is prepared to end the conflict provided that a balanced agreement is achieved.

Thinking of the Holidays

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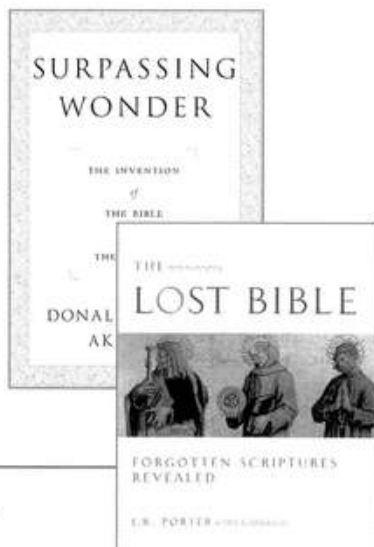
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Healing the Heart, Healing the Planet

Judaism as Transformational Practice

Rabbi Sheila P. Weinberg

I was born in 1946, a year after the liberation of Auschwitz and two years before the Declaration of the State of Israel. It was a great act of faith to have a Jewish child in 1946; a great spiritual statement of defiance and courage after one and a half million Jewish children had just been murdered. I grew up, as many of my generation, with a tremendous sense of the need for Jewish survival.

Then came the Sixties. A generation came of age that started asking "Why?" While some heard the rallying cry "Never Again!" as a call to eternal vigilance against any new enemy of the Jews, others of us heard a call to justice and dignity for any marginalized or oppressed group. I remember feeling disappointed with the organized Jewish world.

In the 1970s new questions were asked. Can we look inside our own souls, our relationships, our assumptions, and even our very minds to meet and truly face the roots of oppression? Again, the organized Jewish world seemed to lack interest in exploring what was then a fresh and dazzling word: "spirituality."

I was a child of my generation. I was a volunteer on a kibbutz in the summer of 1967. I was arrested at Columbia in 1968. I spent two years in the Peace Corps. I smoked a lot of dope. I got divorced. I became a feminist and I turned east with the Beatles. I could have become a Buddhist, a Hindu or a Sufi. Instead I started reading Buber, Heschel, and Kaplan looking for the answer to the question "Why survive as a Jew?" I fell in love with the wisdom and vision of Mordecai Kaplan, founder of the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism. Kaplan wrote: "The ideas and ideals which a tradition transmits constitute spiritual capital. Belonging to the past, they are like currency of a country from which we have migrated. If they are put into circulation, they have to be converted into the

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*I remember feeling disappointed
with the organized Jewish world.*

currency of the present-day world. The process of conversion is known as interpretation or reinterpretation. That process enables the spiritual energy stored in a tradition to continue operating in worlds far different from those in which it arose and grew."

I was inspired by this idea of liberating the spiritual energy of Judaism through its creative encounter with the urgent needs and accumulated wisdom of this very moment. So inspired, in fact, I became a rabbi. After four years as the rabbi of a Conservative congregation in Philadelphia, I relocated to Amherst, Massachusetts. One of the selling points for my relocation to Amherst was the proximity of a wonderful retreat center run by the Insight Meditation Society and staffed by some of the leading teachers of Buddhist meditation.

The teachers at IMS had names like Goldstein, Salzberg, Boorstein, and Kornfield. They were Jews and seekers who also had not been inspired by the survivalist thrust of contemporary Jewish life. In Asia they discovered a potent and ancient practice of paying close attention that had been transmitted without change since the time of the Buddha.

Hungry for silence and curious about meditation, before long I went on a ten-day silent retreat at IMS. It was both

difficult and powerful. I experienced boredom, sleepiness, agitation, anxiety, and confusion at first. But, I found that my mind settled in time and I began to see more clearly. I felt comfortable and natural expressing what I saw and understood in the language of Judaism. I understood, by closely watching my own recurrent and obsessive thoughts, how filled with fear and desire my mind usually is. These thoughts held me in their grip of delusion. They barred me from connecting with the unity of the divine. However, there were also moments of clear seeing when the radiance of that unity peered through, when I felt truly present, even if just for one fleeting moment. There were moments when the expansive peace and receptivity of Shabbat alighted or the words of the siddur leapt into my mind, the words of Psalms or Torah. I felt how good it is to dwell in the loving presence of this moment, this eternal moment.

Since that first retreat eleven years ago I have taken daily time to sit in silence and have spent many weeks on silent retreats. I have tried to introduce the habit of paying close attention to the content of the experience of each moment as a way I live my life. It is not easy. There are so many distractions, not least of which is the incessant chatter of my own mind. Based on my experience, I would like to share some thinking on three questions that are always present with me. *First*: What do you learn from mindfulness practice? *Second*: How is it Jewish? *Third*: Is it a technique?

What do you learn from mindfulness practice?

A friend of mine told me the story of her Aunt Margaret. Margaret lost a great deal of memory as she aged. It became more and more difficult for her to remember words until finally she only had two words left in her vocabulary. Whenever anyone would ask her a question or engage her in conversation she would contribute one of these two words. The words were, “temporarily” and “unexpectedly.” My friend and I both thought that these words summed up the learning one acquires when one observes life closely. One gets to realize how temporary everything really is. Here comes the in breath and there it goes out again. Here comes a thought. Oh, where did it go? It was just here a moment ago. One day we are thinking about coming to a program, organizing our plans, making arrangements, telling people, wondering about whether it will be worth the effort and time. Now we are here, listening to the speaker. Soon, very soon, it will all be a memory, just something in the past to reflect upon and talk about—or maybe just forget.

Aunt Margaret’s second word—“unexpectedly”—characterizes another quality of our experience. Rarely are our expectations fulfilled in life. In a moment, a phone call, a chance meeting, a doctor’s report, and lives suddenly need to walk a new road. Most of life takes place unexpectedly even if we spend a huge amount of time planning and trying to be in control of the consequences. We are never fully in control.

Reality is elusive and constantly changing. Everything is here, but only *temporarily* and usually *unexpectedly*.

We all know this to be true, but when we sit in meditation we notice sensations in the body that arise and change. We notice that we are warm and then we are cold; comfortable, then uncomfortable. Resting our attention again and again on one object we are forced to deeply integrate the incredible impermanence and essential unreliability of all experience.

The culture that we live in promises permanence and predictability. Everything can be fixed—or bought. Think of some of the slogans that fill the airwaves: “Diamonds are *forever*,” Coke is the “*real thing*,” vodka is *absolut*, satisfaction *guaranteed*. We are promised *lasting* flavor, *eternal* lip color, *perpetual* care. In fact the least satisfying and most ephemeral items—like coke and chewing gum—have the most tantalizing promises of enduring fulfillment.

When we sit in meditation the doors of perception are cleansed. We see how deeply unsatisfying it is to crave the next moment and how conditioned the mind is to be dissatisfied. We discover how we are so seduced by our dreams of the past and our fantasies and fears of tomorrow that we fail to connect to this very moment as it is happening.

I would like to share a story Joseph Goldstein told on a retreat I attended. One time he was on retreat with his Burmese teacher U Pandita. At one point Joseph and others were doing walking meditation. This simply consists of walking, usually at a pretty slow pace, with the intention of being fully present to the experience of walking as a series of bodily sensations. As Joseph was walking, he noticed U Pandita looking down from a window above him. It seemed to him that U Pandita was watching Joseph walk. Joseph was excited and eager to show that his walking looked very serious and concentrated. Every once in a while he looked up, and sure enough U Pandita was still there. Joseph began to ponder why the teacher was looking so closely at him walking. After about twenty minutes of this ongoing rumination, while trying to look like he was focused on the walking, Joseph looked up and realized that what he was looking at was a hat on a rack in the window. U Pandita was never there. How many times are we duped into mind states by shadows that do not really exist? How thrilling it is when we wake up to the truth of our experience and realize a moment of freedom.

Nearly two years ago I was celebrating the anniversary of my tenth year as the rabbi of the congregation and folks decided to have a celebration on a Friday night. I invited my mother, who lived four hours away. At first she agreed, but as the time grew closer she had misgivings. She was approaching her ninety-second birthday, and was concerned that the trip would be too strenuous and exhausting. She started worrying a lot about what might happen. I said to her, “You know, Mom, what Mark Twain once said? He said, ‘the very worst things in my life never happened.’” She laughed and we hung up. The next day she called and said

she had been thinking about that Mark Twain line all night and she wanted to come to Amherst. Reflecting on her life, she recalled how many terrible things she had worried about that *hadn't* happened. (Of course the really terrible things in her life happened *unexpectedly* and were not anticipated with worry.) She had a moment of holding her chronic anxiety in a spacious mind, a mind of humor and gentleness, a mind that allowed for the possibility of freedom.

How is all this Jewish?

The teachings of impermanence, the power of awareness to transform suffering, and the possibility of liberation are intrinsic to many core Jewish practices, texts, and symbols. The Jewish liturgy guides us to open our eyes to the reality of change all around us. We are enjoined to pray at dawn and dusk; we celebrate the circle the moon makes around the earth as Rosh Chodesh, a mini holiday dedicated to moral inventory and reflection. Daily and monthly cycles are then situated in the great cycle of the year, the movement of the earth around the sun. At various points along the journey of the year we rest and devote time to contemplation, appreciation, and celebration of the order and mystery that surround and sustain us. The great underlying teaching of this consciousness of change helps to free us from the illusion of permanence and enslavement to the solidity of experience. To be alive and awake is to connect to the fluidity and the dynamism of life in all its dimensions.

Let us look at a few of the teachings and symbols of the Jewish holidays. First, Sukkot, which comes in the fall. It is the time of gathering in the harvest, acknowledging with gratitude our deep connection to the earth, and preparing for winter's darkness and barrenness. The primary practice is moving into a temporary shelter (a *sukkah*) with a roof that allows one to see the stars. This message is radically counter to the culture of materialism that we all inhabit. Rather than a promise of permanence to quiet our anxiety as we face the winter, rather than a quick fix of a pain killer or an electronic diversion, we are asked to enter into an environment of temporality. The shelter and protection offered by the *sukkah* lies in its capacity to dissipate our reliance on promises of permanence, on those partial solutions that would pose as the whole. Sukkot moves us to turn our eyes to the stars and to the mountains and ask, "Where is the true source of my help?" It turns our gaze toward gratitude and hospitality, love, faith, and connection that offer abiding sustenance.

Passover, like Sukkot, begins on the full moon, only a half-year later, in the spring. Rather than shelter, it has food as its central organizing principle and symbol. Again it is the food of transition, the food of transformation. The flat bread with little taste is both the poor bread of slavery and

the precious bread of freedom. What has changed? Nothing and everything. What a message for a culture of comfort and excess to recognize that liberation is not about changing the pain-pleasure quotient of one's experience!

Pharaoh and the system he presided over gave the appearance of permanence. But there is no possibility of liberation when the moment or the system is experienced as an unchanging monolith. In the Passover story, awareness dawns in Moses, activated by the suffering of the people that breaks open in a cry for help, a cry beyond itself. Once awareness shines, Pharaoh and his system are revealed to be unstable and fluid. The plagues are a description of the breaking open and apart of the intractable into the liquid and transient. The hitherto inconceivable becomes the possible. The liberation of a people or the liberation of an individual mind occurs as a result of this shift in focus. The story of Passover is told and retold in order to infuse our personal and collective lives with hope and faith in freedom from the illusion of permanence and the suffering that entails.

Shavuot, the gateway to summer, festival of first fruits, is associated with the revelation of Torah to the Jewish people. What happened at Sinai? Years before, Moses met God at a burning bush in the same wilderness. Now he is back with the band of freed slaves. Back to the same mountain to meet the same living God with a name that is all pure being in motion—I am that I am I will be what I will be. We are present to meet the reality that is dynamic, changing, evolving and in this meeting we come to understand that everything that masquerades as permanence is a false god, a delusion, an ultimate disappointment, and a cause of suffering to ourselves and each other.

If we look at the Ten Commandments revealed on Sinai, we see that they warn us not to put our trust in our own cravings for permanence or pleasure, our fears or our illusions of perfection. Our desire for control will lead us to work without stopping. Our illusions of independence will lead us to imagine that *we* have created ourselves and to forget that *we* are but a part of a continuing progression of generations. We will forget to honor and care for those who gave us birth.

When we forget our deep connection to all life, we so crave and worship wealth, sexual pleasure, or power that we are willing to lie, cheat, steal, and even murder. We imagine that we can harm another, without harming the whole and therefore causing great suffering to ourselves. We are not aware of the cravings within our minds for control and comfort that keep us in a state of agitation. We focus on external sources of gratification, depending on tomorrow to provide what we need. All of this obscures our knowing the security and love that resides in this very moment of being. *This is the message of Sinai. This is the practice of Sinai.*

*To be alive and awake is
to connect to the fluidity
and the dynamism of life
in all its dimensions.*

For the freedom of Passover to lead to the cooperation, partnership, and intimacy of Shavuot, we must continue to observe and struggle with our belief that there is permanence in our world. The first part of the ten *dibrot* (often translated as commandments, but misleadingly since *dibrot* are really “words” or “sayings”) is cautionary. Do not think that you can make yourself a god. There is no absolute certainty in your world. Life is energy and constant motion. The God that liberates you cannot be seen, cannot be captured in images or statues or idols or even in enduring concepts. To stay free you must challenge anything that purports to have absolute authority or perfect wisdom.

We sit quietly and refrain from any outward action. We simply notice that we are sitting. Sounds arise and pass away. We note, perhaps, sensations passing through our bodies, pressure, warmth and coolness, lightness, tingling. We become aware of the sensation of breathing. As we gather our attention and rest it on our breath we see that it is rising and falling, sometimes with more or less force, slow and easy or rapid, with pauses of various duration between each breath. If we watch closely we will realize that we are not breathing. Breath is entering and leaving our bodies without our effort. Soon we will find that our attention is someplace else, thinking about yesterday or tomorrow; images, colors, stories unfold before us and then disappear into the mist. We catch another breath rising and falling. It is the thread that keeps us alive. All life is being breathed every moment. Nothing seems to have much substance or permanence. A thought, feelings, sensations, the breath itself comes and goes. Do not think otherwise. Do not imagine that you are in charge of this life, this living process. Do not have any gods before me. I am Yud Hay Vav Hay—the spirit that animates all, the mystery that is beyond your comprehension in its vastness. But sit here and you will know that you dwell in my presence.

At Sinai we are given specific *dibrot*, or precepts, to train our capacity to live from this awareness. As we try to apply these precepts we inevitably uncover qualities in our hearts that cause suffering and separate us from each other and from fulfilling the promise of a world of harmony and justice. This is the practice, this is the path. Each effort that sings of our connection to each other is a healing of our brokenness.

I had a strong inkling of how this process occurs in the heart when I was on a silent mindfulness retreat. I remember once noticing a man who particularly annoyed me. I had no contact with this person. I just didn’t like the way he looked and acted. Every time there was a chance to ask a question, he invariably had a question. He seemed restless when sitting and made more noise than I thought appropriate when he breathed. While no smoking was permitted at the retreat, they had set up a smoker’s hut where you could go if you were desperate. Several times I would see this man going into that hut. As a former smoker, I disdained that behavior.

Meanwhile the teacher urged us to focus our attention

on our own experience in the moment. As the retreat continued my mind settled. I started to see how the sight of this stranger stimulated my irritated feelings and thoughts. Then I realized that I was feeling aversion caused largely by fear. I became afraid that I might be like that person. I started identifying my own thoughts as born of a desire to control and be safe. Indeed, while I was physically safe in the current setting, this could be an opportunity to explore the ways my mind manufactured danger and created separation, antipathy, negativity, even the seeds of hatred. I realized that every time I indulged these attitudes, I suffered. Instead, by being aware of them, seeing their reactivity and conditioned nature, I would allow myself to have mercy on myself. This mercy felt like a relief, a kind of divine forgiveness and release.

In the silence we can pay close attention to the causes and nature of suffering in the heart and mind and our own true wish to be free and to realize our connection with others and with life itself. In the stillness, when the mind relaxes a little, we can come to know how fluid and fleeting are our cravings, ideas, feelings, and even our fears. I love the midrash that says that “When the Holy One gave the Torah, no bird chirped, no fowl flew, no ox lowed, not one of the *ofanim* (wheel angels) stirred a wing, not one of the Seraphim said, ‘Holy, holy, holy!’ The sea did not roar, creatures did not speak—the whole world was hushed into breathless silence: it was then that the voice went forth: ‘I am the Lord your God.’”

Shabbat of course, is also part of the revelation on Shavuot. It comprises, in fact, the largest section of the ten *dibrot*. It is the container that holds together all the transformational practices of Jewish life. The Sabbath is a day of just being and letting go of all our agendas and habits of control. It is especially difficult for those of us raised in a materialistic culture. The only thing that is important in a material world is having and holding. Our society tempts us with the possibility that we can have our need for security and certainty met by acquiring more things. It frightens us with the danger that we will not have enough. In contrast, all spiritual life depends upon letting go. The Sabbath is one day out of seven to experience the end of the cycles of desire, of seeking and trying, of disappointment and loss as well as success and failure. It is a day to be free of comparison and competition.

The Sabbath is the most radical idea in human history. It is at the center of the revelation. It asks us to just leave one day empty, to leave creation as it is for twenty-five hours. It asks us to touch each moment of a day without looking backward or forward. See what happens. Is it frightening? Of course it is. What can we expect to fill the space that is vacated by our interminable busy-ness—our producing and consuming? Could we fill it with silence and calm, beauty and song, study and prayer, delicious food and sweet friends? Could we fill it with pleasure of body and soul?

Could we resist filling it with anything that appears to last? Could we refrain from filling it with contention, with achievement, with complaining? The Sabbath is a spiritual retreat once a week. The Sabbath is Sinai once a week. It is a day to devote to the soul.

There are countless domains in which we could describe how Judaism and mindfulness practice have intertwining goals and means. I will point to only one other, the extraordinary collection of ancient Hebrew spiritual texts called the Psalms. A member of my congregation, Ellen, chose to read Psalm 126 when she and her husband named their baby girl in the synagogue. The baby was born after many years of longing for a child, several crushing miscarriages, much anger and alienation. I knew the psalm, called a song of ascents, *shir hamaalot*, as the one we always sing before the Birkat HaMazon, grace after meals on Shabbat. When Ellen read it from the bimah on Shabbat, I was deeply moved. Then she told me how the psalm focused her and held her all during the pregnancy. It is a psalm of the awareness of impermanence. It is a poem about the possibility of the transformation of sorrow into joy. It is a hymn to the unanticipated and the miraculous and to the sustaining potential of faith and hope in life itself. It goes like this:

A Reaching up Song

We will be like dreamers
When the Redeemer brings us back to Zion.
Then we will laugh again.
Then we will sing again.
Then will it be said abroad
'Great is what he Mighty One did for them!
The Truthful will do great things for us,
And we shall rejoice.
Source of Life, bring us back!
As you bring back water
To dried up Negev streams.
We who sowed with tears
Will reap with song.
When the sowers cast their seeds
They feel like weeping.
Yet they go on trusting
That they will come back.
They will surely come back singing
When they bring in the harvest's sheaves.

Psalms are added to our liturgy on festivals and on the New Moon in the form of Hallel—special psalms of praise. These times of celebration connect us to the liberating understanding of impermanence. However, Hallel *does* tell us what is trustworthy and permanent in two central phrases: *Key L'Olam Chasdo* and *Emet Adonai L'Olam*. Olam is the world, eternity, and all time and space. It is filled with *chesed* and *emet*, love and truth. We begin to understand that everything is passing except for the possibility of being present in this

very moment. *Chesed* is the awareness that listens closely, it is the love that is pure being; *Emet* is the truth that is not hiding, concealing, or escaping. This is unity, connection and wholeness. This is how we are made in the image of the Divine. This is the simplicity of sheer presence that is grounded in and leads to wisdom and compassion. This is what is cultivated through mindfulness.

Is this a technique?

Definitely not! Meditation is not a technique any more than Judaism is a technique. Both are profound rejections of the very idea of a quick fix or easy solution to life's challenges. In our culture an addictive attachment to convenience, comfort and speed are driving forces. A recent article in the *Boston Globe*, written from Little Rock, Arkansas, begins: "In a nation of fast food restaurants, cash machines and even drive-through liquor stores, the city's First Church of the Nazarene is finding people like their religion quick and convenient as well. This week, the church is closing its parking lot to set up a drive-through Nativity scene for those who want to 'experience the true meaning of Christmas,' but don't want to get out of their cars."

Our culture of rushing and consuming keeps us in a state of anxiety. Then we try to relieve our anxiety by acquiring more things, more data, or a new technique. We find that each fad or fashion is ultimately only as satisfying as alcohol or sugar. It calms us down very briefly then leaves us with a hangover, more anxiety, and more despair. The late Rabbi Edward Friedman wrote: "The worship of data and technique is very simply a form of idolatry. The sin of idolatry may lie less in the actual action of worshipping a foreign god than in the denial of the universals that such worship implies. The higher power to be surrendered to here is the natural connection between all forms of life."

Judaism and mindfulness practice seek to awaken us to the natural connection between all forms of life. In classic Jewish language this is called accepting the yoke of Divine sovereignty. Or it may be called "Loving God." How does one love God? One sees the whole and overcomes a sense of separation. One is stirred by awe. One loosens the bonds of ego and selfishness. One develops patience and tolerance and lets go of the habit of self-pity and casting blame. One learns to listen and see. One develops generosity and gratitude and diminishes greed. One pays attention to what is harmful to oneself and another and one learns to live with wisdom and compassion in this very temporary place. One surrounds one's speech and one's action with the deep silence of Presence.

There is no technique for any of this. It is a lifetime work of effort and intention. As the poet Rilke wrote: "For one human being to love another human being: that is perhaps (continued on page 41)



Prayer as a Rebellion

Leonard Felder

From interviewing over 250 men and women about why they pray or why they don't pray, I have found that the reasons are almost never theoretical or theological. Rather, they are highly personal. If you want to understand what draws someone into a deep relationship with spirituality or what sends an individual far away from belief, ask that person to tell you his or her personal story.

Thirty years ago when I entered Kenyon College in Ohio as a freshman psychology major, I was just about ready to stop believing in God and to start taking a break from Judaism. For two summers in high school I had volunteered with my temple youth group to teach in the inner city of Detroit, only to find out that the slum landlord who was gouging the families of the students at my summer school was actually the president of my temple. In addition, my mother had died at the age of forty-six after a four-year battle with cancer that kept getting worse despite my frequent prayers for her recovery.

So when my brilliant and charismatic Kenyon English professor insisted during a well-composed lecture that "Religious faith is for cowardly sheep," I was more than ready to sign up for his brand of elitist atheism. For the first time in my life I imagined breaking free of the shackles of being a Jew, the son of a Holocaust survivor—where at each family meal if I didn't finish my vegetables my father told me it was a "victory for Hitler."

My atheism felt good for a while, until I began to read some fascinating books that made me skeptical about my skepticism. The turning point came when I began to devour the writings of Dr. Viktor Frankl, which explored the possibility of finding daily meaning, purpose, and dignity even in Auschwitz. Despite losing his father, mother, brother, and wife to the Nazis, Frankl continued to help people in the camps focus on the powerful inner voice deep inside us that looks for holiness, creativity, and meaning even in the most awful and oppressive conditions.

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Essentially, Frankl's message was that even if you can't control many of the externals of life, you can still find strength and a profound humanity by looking deep within for a connection to your own soul and to the soul of the universe, which many call God. He demonstrated, both in his own life as a camp survivor and as a rebel against the atheism of Freud, that if you search for a spiritual connection

to a loving Source that co-partners with human beings to repair this broken world, you may be able to create a life of dignity and purpose.

For over twenty years I have been working as a psychotherapist with a specialty in spiritual and religious issues, in many cases helping men and women regain their connection to Jewish spiritual teachings that can help keep them on track toward co-creating a better world. Like Viktor Frankl, whom I later studied with personally, I have been amazed at how much a person's spiritual search for meaning and ways of being of service can improve his or her sense of health and fulfillment. I've seen repeatedly that intelligent men and women, especially those who have lost faith in God or religion, are still very hungry for a connection to a sense of spiritual meaning and daily purpose.

I had thought as a freshman at Kenyon that atheism was the most rebellious thing I could do. From working with hundreds of courageous and passionate counseling clients, I now believe that finding progressive ways to use prayer and daily spiritual practice for connecting with holy energies of compassion and creativity is an even more rebellious act. Following are a few brief examples of what I mean by "prayer as rebellion."

1. *Rebelling Against the Mortal Kings and Queens.*

When I was a teenager reading the prayer books at temple, I never warmed up to the Hebrew phrase found in many prayers, "*Melech ha-olam*," which often gets translated, "King of the world." It seemed patriarchal, anthropomorphic, and old-fashioned to my child-of-the-1960s sensibilities to be praying to a "King" or a "Sovereign." It reminded me of servants in ancient and medieval times bowing down to corrupt kings and queens,

or to modern sheep following lock-step behind a political party or a flawed politician who was telling them what to do.

But during more than twenty years of courses, readings, and study with some outstanding rabbis from all branches of Judaism, I have come to see the prayers that seek to connect with "*Melech ha-olam*" in a very different light. I think of Jews in ancient times and the Middle Ages who were able to stand strong against corrupt kings and queens because we Jews believed there was a higher morality, a more universal guiding force, a Source of justice and compassion that was far more profound than some mortal king or queen. To pray each day for guidance and strength from an energy source that is the quintessence of mercy and caring, even while a mortal king or queen is threatening to kill us for not being loyal to the local despot, is quite a radical concept. It has made Jews continue to be a dangerous thorn in so many corrupt leaders' power grabs over the centuries.

During these twenty years of study with numerous Jewish scholars and teachers, I've also learned to see "*Melech ha-olam*" not as a ruler, but rather as a "Ruling Force," a "Guiding Principle," or a "Preeminent Source" that is perpetually expressing and co-creating the world. In Jewish spirituality, we are not cowardly sheep but rather important partners and repairers in the ongoing process of creation. To pray each day and to ask for guidance on how to help create justice, fairness, compassion and healing is a bold act of strength and dignity.

But what if you don't believe in a God who co-creates the world or expresses the whole of the world in daily life? For example, I recently counseled a very intelligent woman named Sheila who teaches biochemistry at a nearby university. During her third session, when we happened to be discussing her estrangement from Judaism, Sheila told me, "My husband and my daughter want me to come with them more often when they go to synagogue, but I simply do not feel comfortable in a cavernous sanctuary saying, 'Help me! Help me!' to a nonexistent father figure or heavenly king."

I didn't try to change Sheila's mind, but several weeks later I was struck by the way she explained why she loves biochemistry: "There's this indescribable sense of mystery and wonder I feel when I'm trying to understand the nature of how cells communicate with each other and turn into such remarkable life forms. It is beyond words to contemplate the beauty of how life unfolds." Sheila's passionate description of the miracle of life sounded to me a lot like Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel's theology of "radical amazement," in which humans are essentially connecting with the Preeminent Source of life during those moments when we feel deeply moved by the wonder and mystery of it all.

I suggested to Sheila, "The next time you are in a synagogue with your family, or if you are out in nature taking a walk, or if you're at home about to connect with your loved



ones before a meal, try an experiment for a moment. Offer up a prayer to the same mysterious force that animates the cells and creates such amazing life forms. Whether you call that mysterious ruling force God, or higher wisdom, or the guiding principle of the universe, imagine yourself connecting with it directly and expressing what a blessing it is to live in such a world. Instead of translating the words '*Melech Haolam*' in your blessing as 'King of the Universe,' see how it feels if you translate these words as 'Ruling Force' or 'Pulsing Source of all that is.' Try and connect with that same radical wonder and mystery that you feel for the miracle of cells, biochemistry, and amazing life forms."

Sheila told me a few weeks later, "At first I was hesitant. Could I really think of God as the ruling force or hidden pulse that underlies all of biology and chemistry? I felt skeptical until one Saturday at synagogue during a silent prayer when I was holding my daughter's hand and I imagined connecting with the ever-present pulse of the universe that I sometimes can feel between her and me. At times like that, I feel as though she and I are connected on a soul level far beyond just biology. In those moments, I tend to be somewhat open to the possibility that we might be connected through the Preeminent Source of all that is, through some sort of higher wisdom, or maybe even God."

2. Prayer as a Rebellion Against the Tyranny of the Anxious Human Mind.

In 1927, at the University of Berlin, a Jewish woman named Bluma Zeigarnik who was researching brain psychology mechanisms came upon an important finding that says a lot about how human beings respond to prayer and spirituality. She showed a large number of human subjects a

circle that was $\frac{7}{8}$ complete and found that the vast majority focused their eyes and their attention on the $\frac{1}{8}$ of the circle that wasn't complete. This phenomenon, which was later named "the Zeigarnik effect," explains why our anxious, problem-seeking brains can't seem to notice what's going right in our lives but seem to be pulled toward the next unsolved problem. Is it any wonder your spouse, your boss, your parents, or your own self-critical brain tends to focus only on what's incomplete and takes for granted or ignores what is healthy or going well?

Jewish spirituality recommends saying a prayer or reciting a blessing whenever you notice, even for a moment, that something is going right. It's as though the ancient rabbis knew that our brains were good at problems but lousy at appreciating life or moments of peace. It is a radical liberation step to rise above anxiety for at least a few moments each day to appreciate that some things are going well, even in tough times.

If you want to outsmart the anxious/never-satisfied brain, Jewish spirituality offers you the chance to get in the habit of starting each day with *Modeh Ani* (if you are a man) or *Modah Ani* (if you are a woman), a profound twelve-word Hebrew prayer that can be translated in English this way: "I am so grateful in front of You, ruling force of time and existence, for renewing my soul with compassion and purpose. You are dependable beyond measure."

Instead of starting the day with immediate worries, discomforts, or a sense of falling behind already on your schedule, Jewish teachings recommend saying essentially to God or the universe, "I have a beautiful soul and it's being renewed for another day so that I can be of service and experience the wonders of being alive. *Modah/Modeh Ani*, I am very grateful for this." You may find that if you start some or all of your days with this spiritual practice, your mind becomes more adept at noticing not just what's a problem but also what's a source of joy.

For some of my counseling clients, saying thank you to God for renewing our souls each morning has made these individuals significantly less anxious and more productive. But for many of my counseling clients who are skeptical or not interested in talking to a mysterious and indescribable Divine Presence, the prayer can be just as effective if you use it to offer heartfelt thanks each morning to the universe or to nature.

As one counseling client told me recently, "If I imagine myself feeling grateful to God, that starts a whole argument in my head about what God is or isn't. But if I say the *Modeh* prayer and express my gratitude to life or the universe, I feel immediately more energized and I just might be including God or the Divine Presence in this thank you message."

3. *Prayer as a Rebellion Against Passivity or Withdrawal.*

I think back again to the Kenyon College professor and to the dualistic view of human beings he offered. He said there were those who fought for justice and there were those who did nothing more than pray and ask God to do it all for them. Only by studying Jewish history and theology for many years did I begin to realize just how wrong this professor was with regard to the way prayer is viewed in

Jewish prayer is a way of waking up the soul, clarifying the mind, and summoning up strength for doing good in the world.

Judaism. Rather than being a passive act or a withdrawal from the world, Jewish prayer is a way of waking up the soul, clarifying the mind, and summoning up strength for doing good in the world. I have found a few specific Jewish blessings (which I've detailed in my book, *Seven Prayers That Can Change Your Life*) that I have seen numerous counseling clients use on a daily or weekly basis in order to make sure they follow through on their goals and visions for repairing the world.

One of the most remarkable prayers I have been prescribing to men and women for many years is the *Netilat Yadayim* ("Raising up the hands") prayer that includes washing your hands and asking God or the Creative Source to help you raise up your actions to make an impact on your corner of the world. In English this prayer can be translated this way: "Blessed are You, Eternal One, Source of all that is, Who guides us on ways to become holy, and Who inspires us to lift our hands, to raise up our actions, and be of service."

I have seen many men and women use this prayer mid-morning when they're procrastinating or having trouble staying on track. Simply by running water over your hands and connecting with a Creative Source, it has been effective for over 70 percent of my counseling clients who have used it. Far from being passive, this ancient prayer has helped many men and women bounce back from disappointments and get back on track with their progressive goals. Rather than being held back by feelings of sluggishness or discouragement, this prayer can clarify the mind and lift up your spirits by renewing your efforts at making each day meaningful and productive.

For example, Joyce is an extremely brilliant woman and talented social worker who grew up with leftist parents who had given up on Jewish theology but had stayed involved in secular Jewish activism. Like many atheists, Joyce had always assumed prayer was a passive activity and that repairing the world demanded that people stop waiting for God's help.

But one afternoon we were discussing Joyce's tendencies for procrastination and distractibility. Like many innovative people, Joyce has several good ideas and projects she hasn't been able to focus on or complete. I asked her if she'd be willing to try an experiment—to wash her hands and offer

up a prayer. In Joyce's case, this prayer was being offered up to the infinite Source of justice and compassion, asking for help in following through on a project Joyce had thought up for assisting unwed mothers who were falling through the cracks of the social services system. Joyce's innovative ideas regarding how to help these moms and their children were excellent, but she'd been too busy and too distracted by other demands on her time to focus sufficiently on this important project.

A few days after our discussion, Joyce noticed she was procrastinating again and so she went to the sink, washed her hands, and asked silently for help with focusing and following through. As she later reported, "There was a part of my brain that was still skeptical and hesitant. I'd say maybe 90 percent of my mind was still not sure if it was ok for a nice Jewish atheist like me to be saying a prayer. But there was also 10 percent of my mind that was curious about the possibility that maybe there truly is a higher source of justice and compassion. And that if I asked this Source to give me strength and focus, it might help me stay on track and get a very important project done."

In fact, that *is* what happened. Like many others, Joyce found the radical act of connecting with a higher wisdom did help her stick to her goal of putting together a program that has been very useful for assisting numerous unwed mothers. As Joyce admits, "I still don't know for sure if there is a God or if my parents were right and it's all an illusion. But I do know that letting myself open up to the possibility of making a commitment 'to be of service,' and declaring that commitment to an infinite Source of justice and compassion, has helped me get the job done. I've learned that true prayer is not about being passive—true prayer is a way to make sure you boost your energy and push for positive changes to happen."

As I've discovered with many of the people I've counseled, each of us has a different story and a different set of issues to overcome if we are to live up to our potential as spiritual human beings, guided by a tradition that asks us to be instruments for healing and repair. I hope that if you, too, have been held back—by personal frustrations with parts of Judaism, or by bad experiences with people who were not living up to their spiritual values, or by a professor or other role model who told you that atheism was more courageous than prayer—that you will consider reexamining the power and the intelligence found in prayers that are meant to stir up our rebelliousness and our strengths. Even though most people go through their entire lives without knowing the deeper meanings of the prayers that are recited each day by millions of Jews, I hope you will take the time to find out what these prayers have to say about courage, renewal, and commitment to doing good. You may find that even some of the prayers you never took seriously are in fact an important source of strength and clarity for making each day count. □

HEALING THE HEART, HEALING THE PLANET (from page 37)
the most difficult task that has been entrusted to us, the ultimate task, the final test and proof, the work for which all other work is merely preparation." In the Torah we are told something similar: Love your neighbor as yourself.

The practice of Judaism and meditation do not take place in a pew or on a cushion. They each involve going out of Egypt again and again. They involve the ongoing revelation at Sinai. Each time we notice that we are lost, that we are in exile, we have the opportunity to practice waking up, to become free, to learn to love, to return. This is our destiny, our promise, and our fulfillment. Jewish mediation is not a replacement for Jewish tradition. It can be a doorway for those who are fearful and intimidated and it can serve as an enhancement and deepening for those already rooted and connected.

May we be embraced by a sense of peace and well being,
hope and purpose!

May we have the courage to join the power and meaning
of our ancient tradition with other streams that water
our roots and give us life!

May we honor and respect all the love that we have
received by returning that gift to the world!

May we have the courage and patience to be present
for Life! □

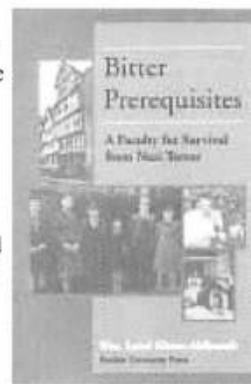
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by Wm. Laird Kleine-Ahlbrandt

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They hoped merely to survive and find a new way of life and identity, and they had no expectation of returning home at all.

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CONFRONTING EVIL (continued from page 11)

and to atone for sin, are essential for our exercise of personal freedom and our spiritual growth. Evil, on the other hand, masks sins and emasculates the sinner. It anaesthetizes the wrongdoer so he is unaware of the nature and impacts of his actions, or feels powerless to halt his actions, until it is too late. It prevents growth. Whenever evil is endemic there is a moral and ethical "developmental arrest" in a person or a society.

"Hot" Evil

In Western culture, evil has been most often represented in personal form. A despicable villain, or perhaps "the devil himself" in human trappings, tempts a sinner, blinds him with promises, and lures him into sin, alienation, and damnation. Evil's triumph was most often reflected in an individual's spiraling descent into the "hot" sins of passion—senseless violence, cruelty, sexual promiscuity. As the events of September 11 vividly illustrate, the sins of "hot" evil are obviously still with us. Filled with hatred and perhaps misplaced religious fervor by their leaders, the terrorists committed their heinous acts. These acts and other crimes of passion obviously create enormous suffering and garner most of our collective attention and media headlines. Murders, acts of terrorism, rapes, violence, hate, and sex crimes still fascinate and rightfully repel. When confronted with such evil deeds we still wonder, with a shiver, "what could have possessed them?"

Our religious traditions seek through understanding and love to provide us with tools with which to deal with evil, "possessed" people. We are led to understand that meeting hot evil with matching hatred and violence only results in the ultimate illness of evil spreading to ever more people and leading to ever more evil acts. Martin Luther King Jr. is generally credited with the quip that "the only problem with an eye for an eye is that everyone ends up blind." We are taught not to seek revenge but rather justice, and to temper our judgment with mercy. These are difficult lessons to apply but we ignore them at our continued peril.

Most of our established religions and moral teachers devote much of their energy to addressing this personalized "hot" evil. But here we come to an enigma of modern evil. Consider: for much of the last half of the twentieth century, a nuclear arms race pushed the world to the brink of Armageddon—the unimaginable final destruction of all society and nature poised on a computer trip line. More recently, the public has been jolted by revelations of a whole new genre of global environmental threats to the biosphere itself, almost unthinkable perils to life on earth—ozone depletion, global warming, species extinction, acid rain,

desertification, and deforestation. And even as the world produces ever more food and wealth, hunger and poverty increase at an astounding rate. Now close to a billion people are starving every day with many more living in poverty. Evil has never been so omnipresent as it has been over the last decades, so perilous to the earth and the very future of humanity. Yet there seem to be very few evil people. The

very idea of our American society being filled with roaming masses of evil people purposefully causing hunger or ecological havoc seems somewhat comical.

"Cold" Evil

As we meditate on the nightmares of a nuclear holocaust, corporate-led globalization, and impending environmental catastrophe, we begin to unravel the enigma of modern evil. In our age of megatechnologies and massive corporate and government bureaucracies, evil no longer requires evil people to purvey it, as it did in the past. Rather evil is now primarily mediated by, and incarnated

through, our "cold" technologies and technocracies. We are witnessing the "technification" of evil. Modern society has created a technological, institutional plane where "the system" effectuates evil in circumstances where individuals and their emotions or morals play no significant role. While recent events show that the "satanic" villain still is with us, passionate, feverish "hot" evil has been largely usurped by this automatic, systemic "cold" evil in which we all partake, in which we are all complicit. As M. Scott Peck notes in his *Healing Institutional Evil*, modern evil is that which "one percent of the people cause, but in which 100 percent of us ordinary sinners participate through our every day sins. Theologian Alfred Schutze in *The Enigma of Evil*, sums up this evolution of evil in our technological times:

... only a few centuries ago evil, so-called, had to be considered pertinent to moral behavior, more specifically the backsliding or weakness of the individual. Today, it also appears in a manner detached from the individual. It shows up impersonally in arrangements and conditions of social, industrial, technical and general life which, admittedly, are created and tolerated by man. It appears anonymously as injustice, or hardship in an interpersonal realm where nobody seems directly liable or responsible.... It has become the grey eminence infiltrating all areas of human existence...

Unfortunately, despite the unprecedented perils it spawns, we have utterly failed to register the appropriate recognition and abhorrence of this new form of institutional evil brought on by and through our economic and technological system. Focused almost solely on "hot" evil, our religious institutions, moral leaders, and teachers rarely



recognize or speak out against this cold evil which impersonally has devastated so many lives and destroyed and disfigured so much of creation. The tragic result of this failure is that technological “cold” evil flourishes, causing ever greater ecocatastrophe and genocide, even as it remains unnamed and unaddressed.

The Anatomy of Cold Evil

A synonym for cold is the word “distant,” and a vital component in the success of modern “cold” evil is the physical and psychic distance that technology creates between the wrongdoer and his deed. We have defined evil as that force which leads to wrongdoing while simultaneously hiding the sin and obscuring responsibility for it. Distancing, especially through impersonal technologies and systems, accomplishes much of this goal for cold evil.

Through technological distancing, the victim becomes little more than a computerized abstraction. During the Persian Gulf War, enemy troops and houses were viewed by pilots as so many blips on computer screens which disappeared after a “hit”—a kind of desert Nintendo. Computer scientist and author Joseph Weizenbaum noted this distancing and the irresponsibility it fosters when he critiqued a massive bombing strategy outlined by a Department of Defense “science panel” during the Vietnam war:

These men were able to give the counsel they gave because they were operating at an enormous psychological distance from the people who would be maimed and killed by the weapons systems that would result from the ideas they communicated to their sponsors. The lesson, therefore, is that the scientist and technologist must, by acts of will and imagination, actively strive to reduce such psychological distances, to counter the forces that tend to remove him from the consequences of his actions.

—*Closing the Distance* (1976)

Nuclear war perhaps best exemplifies the facelessness and technological distancing so essential to modern evil. These weapons capable of destroying life as we know it, the aptly named inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), are to be launched half a world away from their intended targets. To compound this physical and psychic distancing, and to further deflect responsibility, the missiles will not even be launched by humans but rather by technology—computers programmed to assess the threat and make the “cold” launch decision.

Modern evil’s distancing is not solely a result of high-impact military technology. The behavior and nature of modern technocracies, businesses, and government organizations are equally illustrative of cold evil’s distancing. Witness how corporations, now working on the global scale, routinely make calculated decisions about the risks of the products they manufacture. Typically they weigh the cost of adding important safety features to their products against the potential liability to victims and the environment

and make the best “bottom line” decision for the company. More often than not safety measures lose out in this calculation. As for the people affected, they have been “distanced” into numerical units moved into profit or loss columns. The corporations decide how many “units” they can afford to have harmed or killed by their products.

The individual people involved in these decisions are not evil; I have been in many corporate law firms and boardrooms and have yet to see any “high fives” or hear shouts of satisfaction at the death, injuries, or crimes against nature these organizations cause. But that of course simply underscores the problem; the corporation is fully distanced in time and space from its actions. The pesticide company is not there, perhaps has even gone out of business, when twenty years after it has abandoned its chemical plant, local aquifers and rivers become hopelessly polluted, fish and wildlife are wiped out, and there is a fatal cancer cluster among those relying on local water supply. The tire company executives are not around to see the crash, hear the screams, or see the deaths caused by their badly made tires.

The workings of the global trade and finance organizations truly epitomize the physical and psychological distancing of cold evil. In the isolation of their first world offices, members of the World Trade Organizations and their partner financiers and economists at the World Bank and the IMF make decisions affecting hundreds of millions. This is most evident in the “cold” evil practice of what is euphemistically referred to as “structural adjustment.” The IMF and World Bank have for decades loaned money at considerable interest to “developing” nations, essentially to capitalize their modernization and technification through the funding of huge, ecologically devastating, industrial projects. Not surprisingly, much of this money ended up in the hands of corrupt governments and entrepreneurs. As interest skyrocketed, many countries found themselves unable to repay these loans. To solve this repayment problem the IMF and World Bank implemented a set of “structural adjustment programs” (SAPs). These SAPs involved renegotiating a country’s loan on more favorable terms if it agreed to “adjust” its policies, which meant reducing wages, lowering labor and environmental standards, slashing government spending (particularly in health, education, and welfare), and allowing increased foreign domination of the country’s industries.

The effects of SAPs were devastating. Millions lost their jobs and found themselves with no access to housing, health care, or food. Spending on education in many countries declined by more than 25 percent in less than a decade. It is estimated that approximately 19,000 children die every day as a direct result of the SAPs mandated by the IMF and the World Bank. Imagine the world’s response to any series of “hot” evil actions that would kill thousands of children daily. Yet the cold evil of SAPs and corporate-led globalization went without mass recognition until quite recently.

To be sure, it is now generally accepted, even by the global institutions, that these SAPs have been fiscally ineffective as well as socially and environmentally devastating. But the bureaucrats simply view this decades-long regime of international deprivation and oppression as a policy "miscalculation" that requires "modification."

Cold evil's distancing is also profoundly present in those who work for corporations and other technocracies. Our minute and specialized jobs have distanced us from the morality and consequences of our collective work. Whether processing financial statements at a bank, riveting at a Boeing defense plant, litigating for a large law firm, or delivering online data to corporations, most people's work is simply a tiny cog in the great machine of production. As such we remain psychologically numbed and removed from the ultimate consequences of the collective work being done. We fall into what E.F. Schumacher terms "the sullen irresponsibility" of modern work.

Moreover even if the worker were able to somehow overcome this irresponsibility, to breach that distance and cry out against the immorality of modern production ("I reject this alienating labor, stop the machines! They are destroying nature, society, and the dignity of work!"), her employment would quickly cease. Virtually all corporations and government bureaucracies are dictatorships. These autocratic managers quickly punish any underling who would begin to demand an ethical basis for work and production. Each of us is caught, therefore, in a kind of job blackmail. We allow ourselves to be numbed by inhuman, meaningless work and fully distanced from what we actually produce. We thereby forsake responsibility for the consequences of our production system. We sell our moral birthright, all in order to "pay the bills." In this way the tremendous distancing endemic to our huge technological system has turned workers, the vast majority of us, into ethical eunuchs and unintentional criminals.

Whatever their ultimate moral and physical cost, our paychecks do allow many of us to become profligate "consumers." This, ironically enough, is termed "living the good life." The cold evil so endemic to our technological systems richly inhabits the purported "good life." We proudly bring home the new, convenient, "family friendly" SUV without a thought as to how this polluting gas guzzler contributes to widespread respiratory illness in our children and to the catastrophic environmental devastation of global warming. We calmly munch on hamburgers without a thought as to the rainforests being destroyed for cattle grazing or the immense cruelty involved in the raising and slaughtering of these animals. We turn the computer on without thinking of the power supplied by a nearby nuclear power plant with all of its social and environmental risks. We could go through our shopping days and find that we are complicit in myriad wrongdoings brought to us by systemic evil but which we do not easily recognize because of distancing.

The Techno-Cocoon

Whether it be within the automobile, office cubicle, or airplane, whether we use the television, computer or telephone, we are ever surrounded and circumscribed by technologies and technocratic thinking. Our daily work usually involves being cocooned indoors in artificially lit, temperature-controlled, machine-laden office cubicles and locked into the technocratic hierarchies emblematic of corporate or bureaucratic life. As for our non-work hours, the average American spends more than four hours a day in front of the TV and an increasing number of hours at the computer. In the transition between home and work, the majority of Americans commute alone, inside temperature-controlled cars, tuned in to their radios or stereo systems. This absorption of each individual into what I call the "techno-cocoon" is the ultimate in psychic distancing, profoundly limiting our experience and consciousness.

Techno-cocooning leads to huge segments of the population becoming "autistic" to the natural world. Non-human creation goes almost completely unnoticed. When nature is seen it is usually viewed on TV or glimpsed from a whizzing car, train, or plane. For the short periods when we are in nature it is usually experienced as technological "recreation" (re-creation) mediated through the roar of RVs, motor boats, jet skis, snowmobiles and other power toys.

Our circumscription by technology has also made us "autistic" to one another, markedly eroding our social lives in recent years. Come evening time I often note the startling difference between the streets of suburban Northern Virginia where I currently live and those of the streets of Queens, New York City, where I was raised more than three decades ago. During my upbringing there were people on the stoops each evening talking, kids were playing various games, babies were walked in strollers—there was a real sense of neighborhood. Now as I walk my dog each twilight through successive suburban cul de sacs, all I see are the glowing blue lights emanating from the various TVs and computers in each home, as different members of the family cocoon themselves into their favorite nighttime techno-entertainment or work. This technological isolation and collapse of community is not merely anecdotal. Author and scholar Robert D. Putnam in his aptly titled book, *Bowling Alone*, carefully documents the precipitous decline in all forms of civic participation during the last decades.

Ultimately, techno-cocooning makes impossible the "acts of will and imagination" required to defeat cold evil's psychological distancing. We passively, and with little awareness, abandon our minds and wills to the convenience, power, and amusement offered by the technological cocoon. In fact, the technological environment becomes to us as water is to a fish; we do not even consciously recognize our enclosure in the cocoon, and therefore do not realize the ongoing devastation of nature, society, or even our own

spirit. As we slip into near total technological “autism,” we cannot hear the great machines as they level the world’s forests and dig up and destroy the earth. We cannot hear the cries of animals being abused, slaughtered, or harassed to extinction. We cannot see the suffering of our fellow humans whether they are the homeless we step over to get into cars or offices, or our own despondent family members locked into nearby, but utterly separate, cocoons. We do not even recognize the banalization and ultimate death of our own wills and imaginations as we “amuse ourselves to death” in the techno-cocoon.

All in all, the techno-cocoon provides a kind of final anatomy of cold evil, creating a continuous buffer between each person and the many horrific wrongs of our technological system, sins in which we are all complicit but now blissfully unaware. We sit in our various techno-cocoons fully distanced from nature and each other, yet fully entranced and engaged with the machines. The mass autism engendered by the techno-cocoon is surely unprecedented in both the scope and extent of its alienating impacts. We literally are no longer present to participate in the creation, the social world, or the spiritual world. Memory and faith become equally irrelevant. The diremption of cold evil is complete. We are deprived of the very relationships required for our healing.

Relationship and Healing

I have no panacea for addressing the growing threats of cold evil, entwined as they are with so much of our daily lives in our technological society. However the first step is awareness. As we confront the terrorists’ “hot” evil, we must not use the fact that the vast majority of us are not involved in this kind of evil as a vindication of our own society or our personal ethics. Rather we must avoid this trap and finally confront the cold evil with which we are complicit and recognize the potential catastrophic threat it represents to ourselves and Creation.

As for dealing with cold evil directly, I know that there cannot be healing or atonement without relationship. And to restore our relationships to one another and the natural world we must shatter the distancing so critical for cold evil. A first step could be to cease distancing ourselves as “consumers.” The word “consume” means to destroy (as in a consuming fire) or waste (tuberculosis was called consumption because it wastes away the body). We must no longer be mere consumers, destroying and wasting the natural world. We must no longer be complicit in the crimes of our industrial system. To face cold evil we must become “creators” not consumers. We must break our techno-cocoons and truly see that each action we take in deciding which products we buy, or services we use, creates a very different future for ourselves and the earth. We must take responsibility for the consequences of how we fulfill our basic human needs.

We must also change our relationship to work. We can no longer be content with mere jobs and the wage blackmail through which cold evil works. Despite the often overwhelming economic pressures, we must at least attempt to seek a vocation, a “calling,” that expresses our values and fits our needs. Our work should be a “profession,” a profession of our beliefs—good work whose consequences we can embrace.

Ultimately confronting cold evil requires us to begin dismantling the structures and systems in which it thrives. Author Kirkpatrick Sale has urged us to reconsider the importance of “human scale.” Moving toward the restoration of human scale in our social and production systems as alternatives to current global scale organizations and technologies may be the only way to permanently defeat the distancing that has been such a moral disaster for modern man.

In the memorable phrase of Father Thomas Berry, our current economic and technological system has turned all of nature from a community of subjects into a collection of objects. To restore relationship and begin healing we must again treat the living kingdom as a community of subjects, each with its own meaning and destiny, none as merely exploitable objects or means of production. Moving towards this new moral community involves nothing less than replacing the infrastructure of cold evil with technologies and human systems which are responsive to our physical and spiritual needs and the needs of the rest of the biotic community. This means evolving a means of production and social organization for which we can take true responsibility. It is a daunting, almost overwhelming task, but the alternative is to continue to live in state of cold evil, complicit in the current system’s crimes and distanced from relationship and healing. This we can no longer do. □

HEALING AFTER TERROR *(continued from page 10)*

through the prism of the terrorists and to ignore the incredible goodness and generosity that were shown by the rescuers. The central struggle is an ideological struggle. Those who are itching to “do something” should understand that the most important form of “doing” is to help people regain their confidence in the possibility of a world based on love and kindness—in short, to see the world through the prism of the rescuers and not through that of the terrorists.

We need a global period of atonement and repentance dedicated to finding a way to turn the direction of our world at every level, a return to the notion that every human life is sacred, that “the bottom line” should be the creation of a world of love and caring, and that the best way to prevent these kinds of acts is not to turn ourselves into a police state, but to turn ourselves into a society in which social justice, love, and compassion are so prevalent that violence becomes only a distant memory. Sharing these ideas with your friends and neighbors can be an important part of the process of healing after terror. □

From Athens to Jerusalem

From Balanced Personality to Passionate Risk-Taker

Mordechai Gafni

Matthew Arnold, writing in his celebrated work *Culture and Anarchy*, suggests that Hebraism and Hellenism are the two essential philosophies of life between which civilized man must choose. For Arnold, Hebraism is primarily a system of obedience to an external source (the Mosaic Law) while Hellenism advocates perfecting the self (as the Greeks did) by expanding our consciousness through culture. Chanukah is the tale of the clash between these two world visions, the clash between the Hebrew Maccabees and the Hellenist Romans. Thus, in the Jewish calendar, Chanukah becomes the time of year when we try to relocate our spiritual direction on the road between Athens and Jerusalem.

Often, as Chanukah approaches, I wonder if I am becoming more of a Hellenist. Am I unconsciously sliding towards becoming a sort of “inverted Marrano,” biblical on the outside, Hellenist on the inside? In seeking an answer, as part of my own Chanukah ritual, I try and look at some new dimension of that ancient conflict of ideas.

This year I’m thinking a lot about balance and stability. How many of us at some point in our lives thought of pursuing a new direction but held back for fear of being branded unstable? Balance and stability are certainly important values. However, it may not be irrelevant that their source in Western intellectual history is rooted in ancient Athens and not Jerusalem.

For the Hellenist, the harmonious and balanced personality is the ideal. However, Hellenistic harmony comes from a place of detachment. In the platonic myth the ideal is to “become a spectator to all time and existence.” This is certainly not biblical myth. The basic Hebraic posture in the world is passionate involvement in the realness of life (doing, not thinking, as Arnold would say).

The Hellenist seeks eternity. He cannot find it in the world of particulars, which are here today and gone tomorrow. So he searches in the realm of essences, universals, and

principles of logic. In their unchanging shadow, he feels the breath of eternity. For the Hellenist, theory is always more important than application, thinking is higher and more pure than doing.

For the Hebrew there is no greater sin than the sin of detachment. The Hebrew requires the full embrace of the concreteness of being. God is in the details. God is in the ferment of our lives.

Biblical wisdom-masters rarely make sweeping universal statements about the nature of reality. They are relatively unconcerned with grand systems and elegant structures of logic. Their vision is almost always of the particular indi-

vidual and his or her choices. For the Jew, eternity resides in the human encounter with the moment.

The Hebraic worldview—or what I have termed in other writings biblical myth—shapes the way we understand and live our lives in at least three important ways. Deep meditation on these particular dimensions of biblical myth is the spiritual technology of Chanukah.

First, the biblical myth vision of God differs from that of the Hellenist. The biblical God is personal and cares deeply about all of His creatures. Biblical myth prophet Isaiah as well as the talmudic wisdom masters describe a God who is fully engaged and radically empathetic to the joy and pain of his creatures. The Hebrew believes in and experiences a God who cares.

Our God knows our name. Indeed the very designation of God in biblical myth is Hashem—accurately translated as: the name.

When a person dies we recite the Kaddish prayer. The prayer begins with the Aramaic words—“Magnified and exalted be God’s name.” Biblical myth commentary is aghast. Is theological pronouncement about the magnification of God’s name appropriate to the existential pain and confusion of the open grave!? Do we not need to roundly condemn Job’s comforters for offering theology instead of solace at their friend’s time of sorrow?

Deep reading of Zoharic texts suggests a radical re-reading of the Kaddish. Death—teach the Zoharic masters—is a

The basic Hebraic posture in the world is passionate involvement in the realness of life.

Rebbe Mordechai (Marc) Gafni serves as Dean of Melitz Beit Midrash in Jerusalem.

diminishment of divinity. Every human being expresses an infinitely unique face of God. Indeed, God's name is no more and no less than the name of every being who lives, lived, and will live on the planet. The name of man and the name of God are one. Thus, when a person dies we offer eulogy. Its essential goal is to receive the soul print of the departed—a soul print that perhaps we were unable to fully receive in his or her lifetime. In biblical myth the primary symbol for soul print is name. Thus names are so crucial in understanding biblical text—particularly the mythic sections of the Bible like the books of Genesis or Samuel.

When someone dies and divinity is diminished for the loss of a wholly unique expression of the name—we say Kaddish—"Magnified and exalted be the great name." And we mean not the abstract designation of divinity but the name of the departed—which in the deepest of places is the name of God.

The mandate of Hebraic man is *imitatio dei*, to be like God. To be like God is to never receive service from a person without knowing their name. To be like God is about moral commitment to the betterment of our world and deep existential empathy with every individual who suffers. To be like God is to express and implement a passionate social vision, which addresses all facets of humanity. It is to be concerned, engaged, and attached.

Secondly, for the Hellenist and the Hebrew, love takes on very different meanings. For the Hellenist, love is the desire to know the essence of the matter. God is the ultimate object of love. God however is not a personal force or even a force for healing and transformation in the world. God is, rather, an unmoved mover. The love that moves the universe is the contemplative love of the philosopher seeking to decipher the nature of divinity. Love is an intellectual category realized in the privacy of one's heart and mind. It involves no other personal being—it is neat and orderly, focused in the realm of eternal truths. Thus for the Greek, freedom—in the sense of personal autonomy—is a fundamental goal. The great desire is to be free of all enslaving powers, be they the human body, an oppressive state, or desires that might imbalance one's moral and intellectual virtue.

For the Hebrew the essential category of being is Encounter. Biblical myth imagines relationship as the crucible in which human perfection is forged. Love is the love of the personal Other—which wells out of a deep relationship and embracing of one's own name—the love of self. Indeed in biblical myth it is the drive to move from loneliness to loving which is the fundamental ground of both being and becoming.

Thus the biblical lover gives up on the ordered ideal of independence and autonomy. Protestant theologian Schleiermacher was not completely wrong when he described the essence of the religious experience as being one of radical

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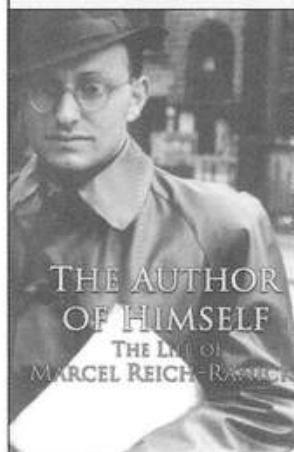
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dependency. And yet he was not entirely right either. Interdependence would be a better description of the biblical myth ideal. Human beings depend on each other and God depends on human beings. The Kabbalists understood—suggests sixteenth-century master Ibn Gabbai—that the need and ability to receive is a virtue of perfection. God then—the ultimate perfection—must be, in some sense, needy and capable of receiving.

For the Hellenist, the person loves the unmoved mover. For the Hebrew, the person loves a perfect yet paradoxically personal and needy God. Moreover—and this is what shocks the Hellenist to the core—the person is passionately loved by God in return.

Recently I gave a talk at Cambridge University titled “Towards the Redemption of a Crying God.” The chairman of the philosophy department, a fine Aristotle scholar, in genuine puzzlement asked me after the lecture—How can you believe in a God who cries?

I responded—not logically, but with the primal intuition of a biblical myth teacher—“How—in the twentieth century—can I believe in a God who does not cry?”

The notion of a God who cries is blasphemous to the Hellenist. For the Hebrew the notion of a God who doesn’t cry is blasphemous.

This difference expresses itself as well in the different sensory orientations of the Greek and the Hebrew. The primary sensory perception for the Greek was through the eye—visual—while for the Hebrew it was auditory—the ear. The visual modality invites contemplation but not necessarily relationship. “Look but don’t touch” is not just a contemporary idiom; it is the very nature and experience of reality for both the Platonist and the Stoic.

Objects in the environment are by nature visible. They reflect light and are therefore immediately apparent to visual perception. Objects, however, do not emit sound merely by virtue of their being objects. Therefore the perceiver cannot choose to hear something. He must rather wait to be called. Hearing implies becoming and relationship. Thus the biblical myth clarion call is “Pay Attention” or in more biblical parlance—“Hear O Israel.”

The Hellenist seeks to prove via rational demonstration—symbolized by vision and contemplation—that an unmoved mover, God, exists. The Hebrew desperately, ecstatically, seeking union, longs for intimacy and full sensual absorption by God.

Thirdly, as a function of this intimacy, the Hebraist, unlike the Hellenist, may occasionally even challenge God. Abraham becomes the first Jew by challenging the justice of God’s intended destruction of Sodom and Gomorah.

The Jew, cries Hasidic master Levi of Berdichev (a cry echoed by Elie Weisel)—the Jew can be angry and even shout at God, but can never ignore God. Such is the nature of intimacy. The Hellenist, however, must shape his God to be beyond taking any responsibility for the world. For the Hellenist, to contemplate is to embrace. For the Jew, to struggle is to embrace.

This entire set of ideas plays itself out in all sorts of very practical ways. One small example: For the Hebrews there is always a legal obligation to rescue. That can apply to lost

property or a friend who is drowning. Not to get involved is a violation of God. For the Hellenist and many of his spiritual descendants, “Don’t get involved for it may ruin your personal harmony” is the unspoken mantra of the day.

For the Hebrew, *tikkun olam* is the categorical imperative of becoming. For the Hellenist, a Western liberal education which helps one

better understand reality is the mark of a truly cultured human being.

Now I am not arguing against balance and stability. However, for the Jew, balance and stability are values which are subservient to moral passion, reality, and empathy. They cannot become code words, allowing us to live blissfully in inherited truths unwilling to genuinely struggle with ourselves and the world.

For the Jew to realize the Divine within is to be always rising and becoming. And to become you have to risk falling, failing, and losing your place. Change by definition involves instability. Balance needs to be disrupted when it fronts as an excuse for fear of growth and change.

Let’s give ourselves a Chanukah present this year. Let’s risk the new. We need to try and break the hold of the Hellenistic shadow on our psyche. There is something comfortable about the Hellenistic vision—all is harmony, life never really touches me, and I don’t have to pay the price of becoming. Perhaps it’s time for commitment in places where we’ve been bravely maintaining our detachment because we were scared to death. Maybe we need to become unstuck from the tired idea that our life is what it is. Our life is what it could be. Chanukah invites us to become passionate lovers, daring the uncertainties as our reaches exceed our grasps, yearning for heaven.

Athens was a great city, but we are children of Jerusalem. Jewish eternity resides in the infinite value and holiness of our personal story and our potential for change. In the tradition of Hasidism, let us bless each other that this Chanukah should be the year for us; a year in which the flame of the Chanukah candle in our soul dispels the darkness of our fears—giving us courage to dare, to be, to care and love. Let the Maccabees be victorious. □

*Chanukah invites us to
become passionate lovers,
daring the uncertainties as
our reaches exceed our
grasps, yearning for heaven.*



The TIKKUN Community Founding Statement

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, many people are becoming aware that the world needs new directions, new vision, new political categories, and a deep period of atonement, healing, and transformation. Because we see little evidence of that fundamental rethinking taking place in traditional political parties or movements, we are beginning that process ourselves.

Many of us have been involved in social change movements like the women's movement, the environmental movement, the movement for economic justice, the civil rights movement, the gay rights movement, the labor movement, and the disability movement—to name just a few—and have greatly admired the energy, courage, and moral commitment of the people with whom we have worked. We all have rejoiced in the significant victories that these movements have won. And yet, we believe that these movements have tended to underplay or even deny a very important dimension of human life—the spiritual dimension. And this deficit has limited the potential impact that all these movements could have. Only a spiritual vision, we believe, will allow us to create a real alternative to our society's ethos of selfishness, materialism, and cynicism.

We seek to create that alternative.

We are a community of people from many faiths and traditions, called together by TIKKUN Magazine and its vision of healing and transforming our world. We include in this call both the outer transformation needed to achieve social justice, ecological sanity, and world peace, and the inner healing needed to foster loving relationships, a generous attitude toward the world and toward others unimpeded by the distortions of our egos, a habit of generosity and trust, and the ability to respond to the grandeur of creation with awe, wonder, and radical amazement.

We are guided in our work by our belief in the principle of solidarity. For us, this principle has spiritual roots in the Jewish commandment to remember that we were all slaves in Egypt; we believe that we are all harmed by oppression directed at any group or individ-

ual. Solidarity means that we affirm our responsibility towards each other within our families, within our nation, and within our spiritual/religious community—and also beyond the narrow boundaries of ethnicity, religion, and geography. We affirm the obligation to actively resist injustice and refuse to take part in it even when we can't prove that our resistance will produce change.

In solidarity with the oppressed, we wish to see the democratization of economic and political institutions and a redistribution of wealth so that all people can share equally and sustainably in the benefits of the planet. We hope to have the courage, in the tradition of the Jewish prophets, to speak truth to power. At the same time, we will challenge the lack of a spiritual dimension in the agendas of our allies in progressive social change movements. That gap has allowed the Right to present itself as the force that cares about spiritual issues. And the Left's failure to address spirituality has led many to believe their hunger for a larger framework of meaning and purpose must be separated from their involvement with social transformation. Social change activity gets focused on narrow political agendas that lack the depth that can inspire sustained commitment and nourishing involvement.

Imagine an international group of people who would see themselves as allies to each other in advancing this way of thinking, people who are unashamedly utopian and willing to fight for their highest ideals, yet unashamedly humble in knowing that we don't know all that we need to know to do the healing that needs to be done. Imagine that this group would help each other in our individual as well as group activities, affirming what is good and brainstorming with us about how to create a movement that gives equal priority to our inner lives and to social justice, that takes loving and caring as serious goals for social healing, and that rejects the utilitarian and materialistic assumptions of the contemporary world and actively fosters awe and wonder in its participants. Imagine that you could be part of creating that. You can—by helping us create the TIKKUN Community.

The TIKKUN Community

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The TIKKUN Community starts from this fundamental recognition:

The sources of external injustice, suffering, and ecological numbness are to be found not only in economic and political arrangements, but also in our alienation from one another, in our inability to experience and recognize ourselves and each other as holy, in our inability to respond to the call of the universe which bids us to deeper levels of consciousness and love, and in our inability to overcome our own egos and see ourselves as part of the Unity of All Being. We need a spiritual consciousness along with a political consciousness if we are to heal and transform the world.

Some of us in the TIKKUN Community are atheists or secularists, some of us belong to traditional religious communities, and some of us are just beginning to work out our relationship to Spirit. But all of us understand that we need a movement that can address spiritual needs.

It is our contention that social change and inner change go hand in hand. We must build a movement in which we can talk about love and caring for each other if we are ever to overcome the old left/right dichotomies and dead policy debates that fill academic journals and the rhetoric of elected officials. For too long these divisions have paralyzed American politics and made most of us feel like withdrawing into a purely personal life.

At this moment, we are particularly excited by and supportive of the upsurge of social justice activism aimed both at promoting environmental sanity and at challenging the destructive impact of globalization. But we hope to play a role in deepening these and other social change movements, encouraging them to integrate into their core the kind of spiritual awareness that can make it possible for them to reach a much wider audience and thus be able to actually achieve their social justice goals.

To do so we must talk at a far deeper level than merely repeating or reframing the traditional leftist demands for economic and political rights. While we support these demands and thus welcome any advances that provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, child care, and other basic rights, we also believe that these will only be won on a global level when the social change movements are able to address the spiritual consequences of the triumph of corporate globalization: a society-wide depression and repression of what we can variously call the life-force, eros, God-energy, or Spirit.

This spiritual depression and emotional repression are

Social change and inner change go hand in hand. We must build a movement in which we can talk about love and caring.

the near-universal responses to the globalization of a self-congratulatory individualism, obsessive materialism, and consumption—all provided as compensation for the meaninglessness of our present-day culture. The one-dimensional technocratic consciousness, speed-up of work, perception that we have “no time” to do what we really believe in, and our inability to recognize others in terms that go beyond what they can do for us to advance our own agendas as rational maximizers of self-interest—all these combine to create human beings who, if they don’t explode in violence or succumb to self-destructive alcohol and drug abuse, find themselves in varying degrees of disconnection from their inner selves, their feelings, and their capacities to be loving towards others and to respond to the universe with joy.

In contrast to this, we encourage an engagement with the Sacred, an Emancipatory Spirituality which affirms pleasure and joy, and the recognition that “there is enough,” a replacement of postmodernist self-alienation with a renewal of Being based on awe, wonder, and radical amazement at the mystery of the universe and the mystery of every human being on the planet as a manifestation of the sacred. Our economic, social, and political institutions need to be replaced and rethought not only because they are unjust, but because they foster a consciousness that keeps us from connecting to the deepest truths of the universe and make it harder for us to recognize each other as fully free, fully conscious, self-creating, loving beings. In this sense, the globalization of Spirit is the antidote to the globalization of Capital.

We reach out for a spiritual dimension not as a replacement for, but as a deepening of our understanding of social action; not as a replacement for, but as a deepening of our understanding of informed science. Our spirituality does not reject the value of rational thought nor does it suspend scientific enquiry.

Why is it that people who live in the advanced industrial societies of North America, Europe, and Japan, the richest societies that history has ever known, believe we “can’t afford” to share what we have with the rest of the world so as to eliminate poverty, hunger, and homelessness? It is partly our collective paranoia that no one will be there for us if we should ever really need their help that leads us to think our only security lies in endless accumulation to protect our isolated self-interest in the face of a deep inner certainty that others can’t be counted on. And partly because we have a deep emptiness inside and we have come to believe that only

material goods can fill it. We buy things to buy happiness, to compensate ourselves for the alienated work, the disconnection from each other, and the estrangement from our own inner selves that constitute the texture of our daily lives. In our spiritually impoverished world, acquiring ever more things provides an illusion of fulfillment—and a replacement for the deep connection with each other and for the spiritual realities of the universe for which we both hunger and simultaneously deny ourselves (lest we re-experience the pain and disappointment we had at earlier points in our lives when we allowed ourselves to be vulnerable and then failed to receive the loving and recognition we needed but didn't fully get).

Additionally, almost every child in our culture gets strong messages to focus attention on that which can be useful, and away from the spiritual dimension, which has no "practical application." Indeed, this message has been so deeply ingrained in many of us that we instinctively shy away from the spiritual realm as though it were as dirty as not being toilet trained. We fear that were we to acknowledge to ourselves or to others that we actually wish for connection with that which cannot be used or made practical, and which cannot be subject to empirical observation or turned into a commodity or something that will make us more attractive or salable on the job or relationship marketplace, we would subject ourselves to ridicule and humiliation.

Fearful that we will experience that pain once again, we often build strong external walls to keep us out of touch with this deep yearning for connection to each other and to the universe. Instead of drawing on our own inner resources, we too often find ourselves looking to the media-dominated mass culture for fulfillment and reassurance that our scaled-down sense of possibility is "what everybody else is doing" and hence "the only possible path for us too." The media is one of the many institutions that speeds up time—protecting us from the quiet moments in which we might doubt the whole way our lives are being lived. Instead of finding our own pace, we find ourselves rushing about, seeking machines and gadgets that make things go faster, becoming accustomed to media and technology which speed the pace while shallowing the intellectual and emotional level of our daily consciousness. We learn to forget the past, focusing only on the new while devaluing the old, which leads to decreasing literacy and an increasing difficulty in following a complex discussion, sustaining a long-term relationship, or committing to social goals that can't be accomplished immediately.

Sadly, our social institutions only reinforce this materialist view. Our institutions provide us with the illusion

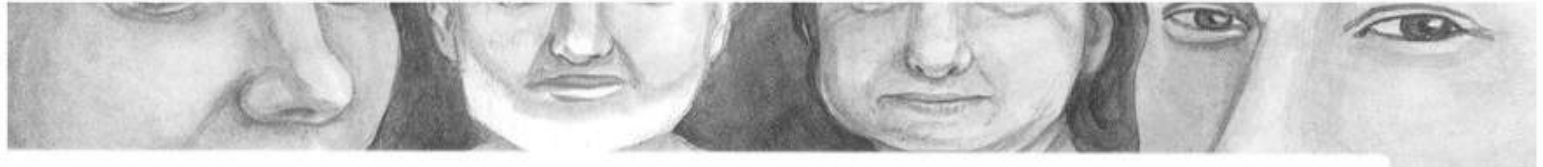
of permanency (pretending we won't die) and the illusion that the "real world" is the world of power and wealth. Compound this with the patriarchal assumption that we should be tough and ignore our feelings, and we are left with a "common sense" that dismisses the relevance of our inner lives. We are told that spirituality should be left in the home, relegated to the weekend, kept separate from the pragmatic decisions that should shape politics and the business world.

In the TIKKUN Community, we refuse this kind of "realism." We will unashamedly use and learn from the language and practices of spiritual communities. The spiritual life can give us a level of mindfulness, focus, and calm so that we can re-center ourselves and discover what we truly value. One reason we are proud to have the TIKKUN Community draw upon the spiritual wisdom of Judaism is because we think that the spiritual practice of Shabbat, a twenty-five-hour meditation focused on turning our energies from "getting things done" to a "celebration of all that is," can empower us in the struggle to heal our planet. This is one example of the kinds of spiritual practices that we encourage among our members and for the larger world—even though we say this in a non-coercive way without implication that you must be doing a particular spiritual practice to be part of our community. So too the Biblical idea of a Sabbatical Year for all and the Biblical idea of Jubilee, with its call for a redistribution of land and wealth back to a basic equality once every fifty years, provide us with inspiration for how to learn from the wisdom of sacred texts.

Although our organization will speak at times in the name of the best in the Jewish tradition, we will also honor all major spiritual traditions represented in our membership. We believe that there are many paths to spiritual truth, and we want to honor all of those which are open to an Emancipatory Spirituality as presented in TIKKUN.

We do not believe that every particularistic tradition must be totally left behind in some new globalized spiritual mush. While we support the attempts within existing religious and spiritual traditions to renew their foundations, we do not seek a spiritual melting pot, but a world in which plurality and difference can be respected, even as we affirm the Unity of All Being, the interconnectedness of all with all.

At the same time, we will challenge reactionary spirituality that privileges one group above all others while demeaning those who are not part of the group, or forms of spirituality which seek to impose racist, sexist, or homophobic values. And we will challenge spirituality which leads people into quietism or a *de facto* accommodation to a world of oppression. In this and other respects we want to be clear that we do not embrace a



vapid "tolerance" which refuses to make moral distinctions or a deconstructionist logic which sees all forms of discourse as little more than strategies for some group or other to gain power over others.

Our goal is to build a community of people who share a common intellectual/spiritual perspective. We will bring this into existing social change movements in the hopes of strengthening them and making them more successful. Our task is to support each other as we bring into the public sphere ideas that are often dismissed as "too idealistic" or "too spiritual"—and to help each other sustain a commitment to a transformative agenda against all the pressures to be "more realistic" and settle for much less than we actually believe in. In this work, we see ourselves as fundamentally connected to the thinking being done in *TIKKUN* Magazine. We connect with all who hope for a real *TIKKUN* (the Hebrew word for healing, repair, and transformation).

The *TIKKUN* Community will not be a traditional organization—certainly not an organization that would compete with or take resources away from other social action groups. We are trying to create something which doesn't have an exact analogue in contemporary life. The truth of the matter is, many of us are wary of any organization—they remain human institutions, susceptible to the ever-present reality of human frailty. The capacity to underwhelm, frustrate, disappoint, and madden is common to all human organizations, whether spiritual or secular, whether on the left or the right or in the middle.

Particularly when people start hoping for a loving reality, we often get so scared—because we have been so deeply shaped by the pathogenic belief that we don't really deserve to be loved—that we try to prove to ourselves that a better world isn't really possible. That's when we find people in our organizations hurting each other in the name of love, being brutal and lacking compassion, creating endless fights over theoretical differences, or clinging to ego at the cost of finding real solidarity with others. We will do what we can to provide a supportive context, but we will also not hesitate to ask people to leave our organization who would prefer to fight with each other than to lovingly support each other.

Creating an international community of people who start with agreement on the points in this document can generate generous amounts of comradely love and solidarity. We expect that in the *TIKKUN* Community we will find ourselves learning from our dialogue with each other, having intense conversations, listening to each

other's formal presentations but also, and equally importantly, each other's life experiences and current struggles. Our community will only be sustainable if it provides many opportunities to laugh with each other, to pray with each other, to meditate together, to sing and dance together, and to experience each other as sources of surprise, joy, and transcendence.

If you are interested in joining us, please read the fundamental principles printed below. Are they principles you share?

We are trying to create something which doesn't have an exact analogue in contemporary life.

1. Interdependence and Ecological Sanity

We are one mutually interdependent human race, and we have a responsibility to be stewards of the planet and of all other life forms.

Our well-being depends on the well-being of every other human being on the planet and on the well-being of our environment.

It is time to overcome all forms of national, religious, and ethnic chauvinism. It's time to realize that it is in our own personal self-interest to ensure a world in which everyone is invited to be part of loving, spiritually deep, emotionally satisfying, and materially thriving communities of their own choice, and to live in a world in which mutual respect and care are the common sense truths by which we live.

Those of us who are Americans can no longer worry only about what is "best for America" and as Jews we can no longer worry only about what is "best for the Jews." We need to see ourselves as manifestations of Spirit—the unfolding of the love and goodness of the universe as it becomes conscious through us.

The world is entering a new period in which this understanding of ourselves as fundamentally aligned with all other human beings on the planet becomes the prerequisite for building a global political and economic movement capable of challenging corporate power and saving the planet from ecological destruction.

We strongly support First Amendment bars to the establishment of any particular religion as official policy, just as we reject fundamentalist religious practices and reactionary forms of spirituality (whether Islamic, Jewish, Christian, Hindu, etc.) which seek to impose racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, or homophobic values. Yet the best alternative is not the militant secularism that has marginalized every form of spiritual practice and championed individualism and moral relativism—in effect, waging a world-wide anti-religious war while pretending to be nothing more than a morally neutral globalization of capitalism—but instead an Emancipatory spirituality

(defined in more detail in *Spirit Matters*) which is committed to civil liberties, human rights, respect for the Other, and a deep ethos of love, social justice, non-violence, and ecological sensitivity.

Our responsibility to the planet requires us to make dramatic transformations in our patterns of production and consumption. We must:

- Take all necessary steps to halt and reverse global warming (really, global scorching).
- Encourage graceful simplicity in living. We must commit to sharing the resources of this planet equally with all six billion other human beings while also committing ourselves to the planet's ecological sustainability. This commitment requires that we alter our notions of private property in ways that give adequate attention to the needs of the whole, rather than approaching the world first and foremost from the standpoint of our individual rights without sensitivity to the needs of others.
- Adopt a new attitude of caring toward animals and other life forms, and a recognition that stewardship implies responsibility to take all necessary steps to preserve the diversity and integrity of life forms on this planet, to the greatest extent possible consistent with protecting human life. (We don't "respect" the "rights" of cancer or forms of life that are aggressively destructive to human beings.)
- Exercise extreme caution in the uses of biotechnology. We should immediately remove the profit motive and ensure that all significant decisions are made within a context of democratic control. A new sense of humility should govern any decision that might potentially alter the biosphere or the genetic structures of plants, animals, or humans.
- Commit ourselves to what the Jewish Renewal movement calls eco-kashrut (building on the traditional Jewish concern with the origins of the food we eat as a tool to actualize the environmentalism of our tradition). Eco-kashrut requires that all purchasing decisions, including but not limited to those necessary for physical sustenance, be made in a way that has the least negative environmental impact. We hope to enlist many people in the Jewish world and in other religious and spiritual communities to participate in the formulation of standards and the ongoing observance of eco-kashrut. The standards of eco-kashrut are a fundamental component of the new bottom line that must be established in our economic and social institutions. But we recognize that this is a direction for our communal aspiration, rather than as a club to beat each other up with (as in "you own an SUV, so you can't be part of our movement" or "you have too big a house" or "you shouldn't take vacations"). As in all things, spiritual balance is critical: recognizing a direction for our energies, but being compassionate and

tolerant of the different paces at which people move toward that goal: tolerant to individuals, but not tolerant toward social and corporate policies that are environmentally destructive like policies opposing sensible constraints on ozone-destroying emissions or permitting environmentally hazardous global trade accords.

2. A New Bottom Line in Our Economic and Social Institutions

Productivity and efficiency must no longer be judged solely by the degree to which any corporation or institution maximizes profits or power, but also by:

- The degree to which a corporation, school, government institution, or social practice tends to support ethical, spiritual, and ecological sensitivity and to promote the sustainability of our environment;
- The degree to which a corporation, school, government institution, or social practice tends to support human beings in being loving, caring, and capable of sustaining long-term loving relationships;
- The degree to which a corporation, school, government institution or social practice helps people overcome a narrow utilitarian attitude toward each other or toward the universe and instead encourages them to see other people in a non-utilitarian way and to view the physical world not primarily as something that can be used for human purposes but also through the lens of awe and wonder at the grandeur of creation;
- Beyond all definitions of efficiency and productivity, we seek to shape a society in which there is time not only to Do and to Make but there is time also to Be and to Love—time for family, community, and spiritual exploration.

We want this New Bottom Line brought into all aspects of our public life, so that we can begin to reshape our schools and hospitals, our government, our professions, and our media in ways that encourage people to see each other as fundamentally valuable and deserving of love and caring. We reject the notion that values should be kept out of public life, and instead seek to champion the values articulated in this statement, and to encourage social change that would foster these values throughout the society.

So, for example, we want schools to be assessed as successful or as failures not only to the extent that they produce students who can read and write, but also to the extent that they tend to foster caring human beings who are ethically and ecologically sensitive, who excel at taking care of others and at developing their own inner resources, and who have developed the capacity to respond to the universe with awe and wonder. We want corporate charters to be dependent on the corporation's



ability to prove a history of social responsibility as measured by an Ethical Impact Report. We want all of our economic and social institutions to be judged successful to the extent that they foster caring and respect for all peoples and for the planet.

3. Supporting the Struggles for Social Justice and Peace

We are committed to the efforts to create peace and social justice throughout the world. We insist that hunger and poverty can be eliminated—and that this be given a very high priority in allocating our taxes. We support the struggles for adequate health care and access to medicine, for child care and elder care, and for other fundamental human rights including the right of working people to organize in defense of their own interests, the protection of children from exploitation, and the end to all forms of slavery, forced labor, and sweatshops. We support efforts to give primacy to ecological and social justice concerns in all global economic arrangements. We align ourselves with the efforts to challenge the kind of globalization that is being forged by the world's elites of wealth and power.

We stand in strong opposition to the use of torture or violence and all forms of abuse (physical, sexual, and emotional), and insist that children be treated with respect and nonviolence.

We call for an end to imprisoning drug users and for the creation of a sane drug policy that mixes prevention and treatment with a recognition that some of the psychedelic drugs currently illegal have positive medical and/or psychological benefits and should be made responsibly available rather than having their use criminalized. We oppose the War on Drugs and its use as an instrument of assault against young African Americans (jailing them for use of drugs that whites also use without facing similar penalties) and as an excuse to intervene in Colombia and other countries.

We support disarmament both on an international level and on a societal level. We support the enforcement of international human rights. And we support efforts to create an international peace force to intervene with techniques of nonviolence to prevent wars and violence. But we insist that peace depends also on economic security and feelings of respect and openheartedness toward "the Other," and that these need to be an intrinsic part of our conception of international assistance and aid.

We join with Jubilee 2000 in calling for a worldwide agreement to abolish all Third World debt, and call for a guarantee that loans in the future will go directly to the development of education, training, health care, and housing of the people in recipient countries. And we support massive funding from the Western world to fight AIDS, poverty, homelessness, and inadequate education and health care.

We are committed to advancing the struggles of women in all spheres of life for full equality. Women's experience and wisdom must become a shaping force as we build a more liberatory and more nurturing culture and work world. We support the struggles of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people who seek full equality, respect, and opportunity to live their lives without being bound to traditional ideas about gender and sexuality. We see the oppression of gender as inextricably linked to the oppression that takes place within the categories of race and class, so we support those who are seeking to build healing in all three realms simultaneously.

We call upon the United States to move toward an honest recognition and repentance for slavery, for post-slavery segregation, and for the long history of oppression and racism toward peoples of color, most particularly with regard to African Americans, but also including its treatment of people from Mexico, Central and South America, its treatment of Japanese, Chinese, and other Pacific Island immigrants, and its treatment of Native Americans. In this regard a society-wide strategy must include education of the entire population on the realities of how racism functions in our society, as well as an honest and serious plan to provide a meaningful rectification of this history of oppression (which may include, for example, reparations to African Americans and to Native Americans).

Similarly, we call for reparations and rights of return (where doing so would not cause even greater levels of suffering) for all populations around the world who have been forced from their homes by war and oppression (we think particularly of the people of Central Africa, the people of Chechnya, the people of Tibet, and the tens of millions of other refugees around the world). Where reparations or return will not rectify past oppression without creating new forms of dislocation and oppression, we commit to other strategies to provide rectification—and these must not only be economic, but must involve public and systematic atonement on the

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part of societies that have materially benefited from the misuse or oppression of others.

This same principle should be applied in matters of class oppression, as well as racial oppression.

We don't seek here to list all forms of oppression which must end—that laundry list concept of politics usually leads nowhere. So we will resist the efforts of some to join our community in order to spend their time adding new issues to our list of oppression and claiming that somehow we are oppressing someone or some group if we haven't mentioned them at this point. That kind of discourse is usually just a way to avoid taking any of these principles seriously.

On the other hand, we do at least want to give special attention in this founding statement to what has become a particularly egregious focus of right-wing energy: the assault on gays and lesbians. TIKKUN magazine has long championed the transformation of Jewish practices that demean queers or that limit marriage to heterosexual unions. The TIKKUN Community will oppose all use of state power, in the United States, Canada, England, Israel, and other countries both to disadvantage queer relationships and to limit marriage or family to traditional heterosexual forms. We honor those who are developing what they call a “queer politics” that forces all of us to rethink gender relationships, even while rejecting any attempts to privilege any one approach as “the politically correct way” for sexual life.

Our community also affirms support and honor for heterosexuality as an equally valid form of family and marriage. We seek to create a society which is supportive of families and of people making and sustaining long-term loving commitments, and we will do our best to support people to work through the inevitable difficulties that emerge in all loving relationships. And we also will provide emotional support to those who have chosen to remain single or who have chosen communal forms of living. For those who are single but don't wish to be, we believe that a community of caring people should give time and attention to helping singles find appropriate partners of whatever gender they seek, rather than abandoning them to face the problem of finding a partner as a kind of lone entrepreneur in a marketplace of relationships. Similarly, we will give warm welcome to bisexuals and those who are transgendered.

We also want to emphasize the central importance we give to creating a loving and spiritually rich environment for children, recognizing their right to have an education that is stimulating and meaningful, to be involved in loving and caring relationships, and to be introduced to the spiritual practices and social transformation movements that can enrich their lives. In part,

this means learning from our children, trusting them, and giving them opportunities to shape their own paths. In part, this means that we have an obligation to impart to the young (and not just our own children) all that we have learned about the joys and excitements of life, including a responsibility to keep them from inflicting lasting hurt on themselves or others. Within that context of responsibility, we also wish to affirm pleasure, not only for ourselves but also for our children, as an important aspect of life.

Similarly, we wish to create contexts for learning the wisdom of our elders, and forms of support that show them respect and caring, affirm their right to deepen their own knowledge, affirm their right to pleasure and sexual and spiritual fulfillment, and provide opportunities to use their creativity in service to the community.

4. Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation for Israel and Palestine

We are committed to full and complete reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinian people within the context of social justice for the Palestinians and security for Israel.

We call upon Israel to end the Occupation, to return settlers to the pre-1967 borders of Israel (providing them with decent housing), and to take major (though not total) responsibility for Palestinian refugees.

We oppose Israel's violations of Palestinian human rights, and we insist that Israel adopt a strategy based on open-heartedness toward the Palestinians, repentance for past misdeeds, reparation, and genuine acknowledgement of the ways that we were oppressive, murderous, and oblivious to the legitimate needs of the Palestinian people. We call for an end to the teachings in Jewish and Israeli schools and media which demean or demonize the Palestinian people; instead we seek to replace those with teachings that emphasize the humanity and goodness of the Palestinian people, Arabs, and Muslims. Although we affirm Israel as a Jewish state side by side with Palestine, we believe that all non-Jews in Israel, including most importantly Arab or Palestinian citizens of Israel, should have full civil rights in Israel and economic entitlements equal to any Israeli who has served in the army.

We envision a limited “right of return” for those Palestinians who choose it—coupled with reparations for those who choose to settle within a Palestinian state or within surrounding Arab states. Reparations should not be merely symbolic—they must provide economic support sufficient to create a viable and attractive alternative to “return.” The right of return must be implemented in a way consistent with the safety and integrity



of a Jewish state. We do not support a massive return of millions of people at one time which would almost certainly lead to civil war and would not be feasible. Israel needs to accept a number (some people suggest 10,000 a year; TIKKUN has suggested 25,000 a year) that is high enough to give Palestinians the message that many will be able to return eventually, but low enough so that Israelis do not feel that they will no longer be able to have a Jewish state and so that Palestinians can be integrated into Israeli society in a respectful manner.

At the same time, we call upon the Palestinian people to acknowledge the right of Jews to maintain their own homeland in the pre-1967 borders of the state of Israel, with Jewish control over the Jewish section of Jerusalem (including French Hill, Mt. Scopus, and the Jewish Quarter of the Old City), the Western Wall, and unimpeded access to the cemetery on the Mount of Olives. We call upon the Palestinian people to stop acts of terror against Israel and to listen and heed the growing number of Palestinian voices that are calling for a strategy of nonviolent civil disobedience. We call upon Palestinians to end all teachings in their schools and media which demean or demonize the Jewish people or Israel and to replace them with teachings that emphasize the humanity and goodness of the Jewish people.

We recognize that some Palestinians will respond by pointing out the structural violence inherent in the presence of the Israeli Occupation and the settlements. We agree with these points, but still believe that the breakthrough necessary to free Palestinians from Occupation will only come when the Israeli people feel enough safety to contemplate arrangements based on trust. Just as Israelis must demonstrate that they see Palestinians as created in the image of God and deserving of full respect, so the Palestinians must demonstrate that they see Israelis as created in the image of God and deserving of full respect.

Both sides need to recognize a need for repentance for past deeds that were hurtful and oppressive. Jews must understand why Palestinians were fearful that the more highly organized and politically sophisticated Zionist movement that began to emerge in the period 1920-1948 might lead to the disenfranchisement of Palestinians, and why Palestinians today feel that "the right of return" to their homes is no different from the right of return that was at the basis of Zionism.

On the other hand, Palestinians need to acknowledge their own role in helping create the conflict by

their armed resistance to Jewish immigration to Palestine in the years when Jews were being annihilated or crawling out of the death camps and crematoria of Europe. This is just a sample of the stories we must learn from each other so that we can build reconciliation of the heart, based on genuine compassion for each other.

Political arrangements cannot be trusted until there is a serious commitment on both sides to compassionate listening to each other. Only when each side can tell the other side's story with compassion and conviction, and each side recognizes that in some important respects both sides are wrong and both sides are right, can we hope to move to a real reconciliation of the heart. All the fancy agreements and all the political maneuvering is secondary to developing an open-heartedness and generosity in both peoples to the legitimate needs of the other.

We call upon the United States and other world powers to intervene with all their influence and economic power to stop the cycle of violence, and to achieve the creation of a demilitarized Palestinian state in all of the West Bank and Gaza (minus the most minimal border alterations), an end to the Occupation, and an end to acts of terror. We will support efforts to convince the United States to condition aid to Israel on the end of the Occupation. We call upon the peoples of the world to come to Israel and Palestine and actively interpose ourselves between the warring sides to provide protection to civilians on both sides. And we call for all parties to adopt the nonviolent philosophies and strategies of Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi.

Although we do not support any form of nationalism as an ultimate good, we understand why, in this historical moment, the Jewish people need a state of our own. With memories of the murder and genocide of our people still fresh and the perception that we would have been far less vulnerable had we had a state and an army—with the persistence of virulent anti-Semitism in the world today—the Jewish people cannot be asked to be the first to voluntarily eliminate the protections of the nation state. That's why, at this point in time, the TIKKUN Community is supporting a two-state rather than a bi-national solution to the Israel-Palestinian crisis, even though some members of our community believe that such a bi-national state is the only way to achieve social justice for Palestinians. After what Jews have been through, it is not reasonable to expect them to be the first to give up the protections of an armed state. On the other hand, we see nationalism as a

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perverting influence in Jewish life—and one that must be overcome. So we do hope Israel will become one of the first 20 percent of countries of the world to overcome the trappings of national chauvinism, militarism, and excessive focus on boundaries—say, for example, after the United States, Russia, China, Japan, Iraq, Iran, Syria, India, Pakistan, England, France, Germany, Italy, Egypt, Poland, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda, and South Africa have pioneered that path by abolishing borders and have accomplished full disarmament. Until then, the Jewish people have a right to their own state, which we hope will eventually move in the direction of confederation with Palestine and Jordan for economic and political cooperation.

A state with many Jews in it is not a Jewish state unless it embodies an ethos of love and justice and becomes a living proof that healing and transformation are possible. Israel is not yet a Jewish state in this sense, so we will support the forces that will help it evolve in that direction. To make it possible for Jewish values of love, justice, and peace to triumph inside its own society, and to open the possibility that Israelis could rediscover the deep spiritual truths of Judaism, Israel will have to eliminate all forms of religious control of the state, end all religious coercion, and allow people to find their own religious and spiritual paths, giving equal rights and treatment to non-Jews. We oppose all attempts by some sectors of the Orthodox world to use the Israeli government as a vehicle to impose its own particular perspective about Judaism, including who is “really” Jewish, what counts as a legitimate wedding, divorce, or conversion, etc. We support instead the fostering of a climate of mutual tolerance and respect among all sectors of the Jewish people. We reject all practices which lead to unequal treatment of Palestinians or other non-Jewish minorities within the State of Israel. So, when we affirm preserving “the Jewish character” of Israel, we do not mean merely a demographically Jewish state, but a state which lives up to the highest Jewish values of “love the neighbor,” “love the stranger,” and “justice, justice shalt thou pursue.”

In the short term, the greatest obstacles to the creation of a state living up to the values of an ethically and spiritually renewed Judaism are the Occupation, the settlements, and what is described in Michael Lerner's book *Jewish Renewal* as the “Settler Judaism” mentality. Settler Judaism sees the world as always against the Jews, always ready to hurt us—and hence rejects universal ethical standards and equates “good” with “what's good for the Jews.” Similarly, settler Judaism assumes that Jewish interests can be achieved through the use of

power, coercion, and the obliteration of those with whom we disagree, and believes that Jews have some special right to the Land of Israel that allows them to be insensitive to others who live there.

Yet in the long term, the greatest obstacle to Jewish values in Israel, as in the United States, lies in the triumph of the ethos of selfishness and materialism. For that reason, we reject the vision of an Israel which finds its ultimate mission in becoming “the globalization miracle and new technology and finance headquarters of the Middle East.” Rather, we support those who favor a genuinely Jewish society built on principles of love, justice, peace, and caring for others, including non-Jewish others. The path requires rejecting those themes and currents within our Jewish tradition or our interpretations of history which tend to bring out chauvinism or a narrow focus on the well being of Jews to the exclusion of others, and instead requires renewing Judaism to focus on those parts of our tradition and our history that bring out in us greater empathy for others and develop our capacities as loving, generous, open-hearted, and compassionate human beings. And it is this same kind of renewal that we support in every other religious and spiritual tradition.

5. A Spiritual Movement

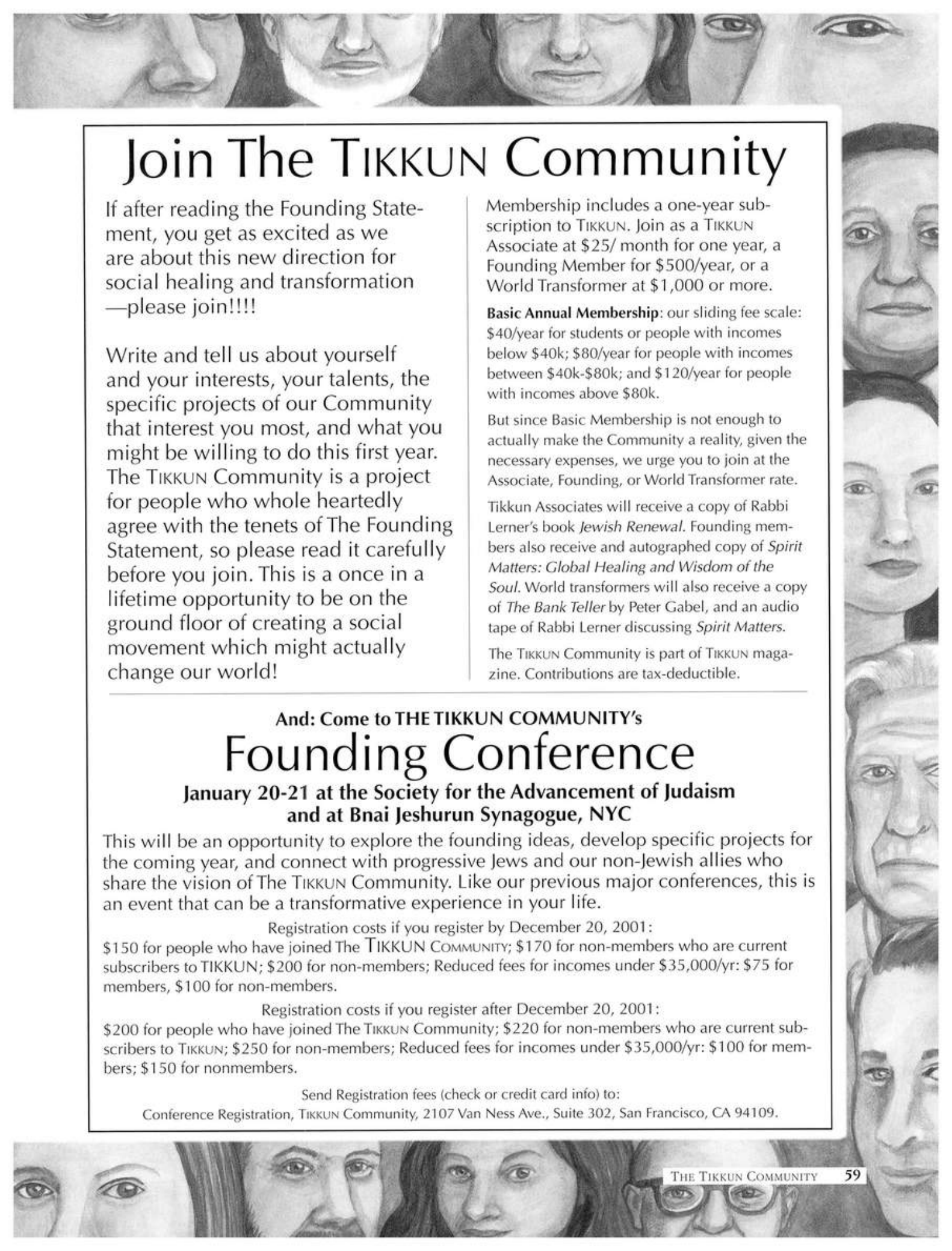
The world we want to see cannot be created solely by external economic and political changes. We wish to see the democratization of our economic and political institutions, and a redistribution of wealth so that all people can share equally in the benefits of this planet. But as we indicated above, the sources of our worldwide economic and political problems are not solely external in nature, but also reflect distortions in how we experience ourselves and each other. So work on changing our own inner selves and our ideas about the world is an important aspect of changing the world—not a diversion from the healing that is necessary, but an important component of it.

We need to engage in activity that aims at fostering a new consciousness and developing an inner life that is not merely private and individual in nature, but rather is both social and spiritual in nature—an inner life that is also a life interconnected with other human beings and with the Unity of All Being.

In short, the political must have a spiritual dimension.

This is a dimension of life which is rarely given attention in social change movements, but it is a central concern of the TIKKUN Community. Among the central building blocks of such a spiritual dimension:

- The development of a personal spiritual practice such as meditation or prayer.



Join The TIKKUN Community

If after reading the Founding Statement, you get as excited as we are about this new direction for social healing and transformation—please join!!!!

Write and tell us about yourself and your interests, your talents, the specific projects of our Community that interest you most, and what you might be willing to do this first year. The TIKKUN Community is a project for people who whole heartedly agree with the tenets of The Founding Statement, so please read it carefully before you join. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to be on the ground floor of creating a social movement which might actually change our world!

Membership includes a one-year subscription to TIKKUN. Join as a TIKKUN Associate at \$25/ month for one year, a Founding Member for \$500/year, or a World Transformer at \$1,000 or more.

Basic Annual Membership: our sliding fee scale: \$40/year for students or people with incomes below \$40k; \$80/year for people with incomes between \$40k-\$80k; and \$120/year for people with incomes above \$80k.

But since Basic Membership is not enough to actually make the Community a reality, given the necessary expenses, we urge you to join at the Associate, Founding, or World Transformer rate.

Tikkun Associates will receive a copy of Rabbi Lerner's book *Jewish Renewal*. Founding members also receive an autographed copy of *Spirit Matters: Global Healing and Wisdom of the Soul*. World transformers will also receive a copy of *The Bank Teller* by Peter Gabel, and an audio tape of Rabbi Lerner discussing *Spirit Matters*.

The TIKKUN Community is part of TIKKUN magazine. Contributions are tax-deductible.

And: Come to THE TIKKUN COMMUNITY's

Founding Conference

January 20-21 at the Society for the Advancement of Judaism
and at Bnai Jeshurun Synagogue, NYC

This will be an opportunity to explore the founding ideas, develop specific projects for the coming year, and connect with progressive Jews and our non-Jewish allies who share the vision of The TIKKUN Community. Like our previous major conferences, this is an event that can be a transformative experience in your life.

Registration costs if you register by December 20, 2001:

\$150 for people who have joined The TIKKUN COMMUNITY; \$170 for non-members who are current subscribers to TIKKUN; \$200 for non-members; Reduced fees for incomes under \$35,000/yr: \$75 for members, \$100 for non-members.

Registration costs if you register after December 20, 2001:

\$200 for people who have joined The TIKKUN Community; \$220 for non-members who are current subscribers to TIKKUN; \$250 for non-members; Reduced fees for incomes under \$35,000/yr: \$100 for members; \$150 for nonmembers.

Send Registration fees (check or credit card info) to:

Conference Registration, TIKKUN Community, 2107 Van Ness Ave., Suite 302, San Francisco, CA 94109.

- The practice of generosity and sharing what we have with others.
- Compassion towards others and towards oneself, including the open-hearted acceptance of one's own and other's flaws.
- Developing the habit of affirming the being of others even when we may disagree with some of their beliefs or practices.
- Careful attention to one's speech so as to not say hurtful things towards others.
- Joyfulness and the affirmation of pleasure.
- Treasuring our bodies through conscious eating and exercising (but without politically correct guilt trips).
- The practice of forgiveness and repentance.
- Giving to give and not to get.
- Letting go of fantasies that we can control everything, and recognizing that there is enough and that we are enough.

We are particularly sensitive to the ways that social movements in the past have used their own ideals as clubs with which to beat up themselves and those who are not part of the "in" group, so we want to insist that our movement have a compassionate attitude towards its own members as well as towards those who do not agree with us, while simultaneously rejecting a mindless moral relativism which makes everything OK or acceptable.

Building this balance between compassion and striving for transformation requires practical wisdom, and so our movement rejects the anti-leadership tendencies that have often been associated with progressive politics and embraces the notion of spiritual leadership based on inner depth, compassionate understanding, practical wisdom, and a powerful sense of humor.

Why Create a New Organization?

There are many organizations doing good work in each of the areas discussed above, and we intend to support all of them.

We especially encourage the creation and strengthening of truly transnational grassroots movements focused not only on resisting corporate globalism but on creating a new democratic "globalization"—a planetary movement that is not controlled either by national governments or by corporations. We especially support efforts to require that corporations serve the public good such as the proposed Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

What does not exist is an organization that brings all these concerns together within the context of a unified worldview (there are many groups who have laundry

lists of demands, but these demands do not flow from a shared theoretical perspective). As a result, many people involved in one or another of the concerns described above don't really recognize themselves as part of a larger movement for healing and transformation of the planet, don't see these others as their allies, and don't inject into their own activities a larger understanding that could deepen their specific important work.

The TIKKUN Community can provide that larger framework. We are people who share the basic ideas of an Emancipatory Spirituality as described in Michael Lerner's *Spirit Matters: Global Healing and the Wisdom of the Soul*—a book which provides our basic framework. We also see as foundational the writings of Peter Gabel, particularly as articulated in *The Bank Teller and Other Essays on the Politics of Meaning*, Judith Plaskow's *Standing Again at Sinai*, and Arthur Waskow's *Down to Earth Judaism*. We draw upon the wisdom of many teachers, including the work of Abraham Joshua Heschel and Zalman Schachter Shalomi, Marcia Prager and Rachel Adler, Susannah Heschel and Lawrence Kushner, Art Green and Judith Antonelli, Jerry Mander and David Korten, Ken Wilber and Jim Wallis, Matthew Fox and Zygmunt Bauman, Thich Nhat Hanh and The Dalai Lama, the Ishbitzer Rebbe and Teilhard de Chardin, Mordecai Kaplan and Adrienne Rich, Roger Gottlieb and Walter Brueggemann, and the work of Catholic liberation theologians, feminist theologians, Socially Engaged Buddhists, and many more. What the TIKKUN Community seeks to offer is a vision that positions the quest for economic and social justice, peace, and ecological sanity within the framework of a spiritual consciousness and a practice of open-heartedness, generosity, caring for others, and outpouring of loving kindness.

The TIKKUN Community is for anyone who shares the perspective articulated here. As a community that emerges from the Jewish world, we are interested in supporting a Jewish Renewal movement aimed at reviving the spiritual life in all branches of Judaism—Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform, Humanistic, and secular communities. Our events will honor the Sabbath and will be vegetarian and, to the greatest extent possible, eco-kosher (that is, supporting environmentally-sensitive consumption). As the TIKKUN Community grows, we will welcome the inclusion of the language and historical/spiritual traditions of other peoples and religious communities as well, and will be open to articulating our visions in those languages and in providing time at our public events during which people in other traditions can form prayer groups or otherwise actualize their own specific traditions.



The TIKKUN Community's major organizational contributions to the worldwide movement for social justice and spiritual well-being will be:

- To provide a support mechanism for people who wish to bring this new way of thinking into the world. When people try to do this by themselves, they often find themselves burning out or becoming "realistic," that is, adjusting to the frame of reference of the larger society. We will provide support to each other to remain focused on a larger and more utopian vision.

- To do consciousness-raising in the larger world and in social change movements, so that they can begin to incorporate our perspective as they strengthen their ability to survive the burnout, cynicism, and despair that often debilitate those who wish for social change.

- To change the intellectual framework within which most Americans view contemporary social reality and their own possibilities for a fulfilling life.

- To provide ongoing education and the development of theory and practice that could become models for social healing. We do not intend to replace or duplicate existing social change movements. But there are many arenas even in those movements where a more coherent worldview and an organization linking them intellectually and spiritually would only strengthen rather than detract from their important work.

- To provide a context within which older and seasoned activists and those involved in social healing in their work can interact with the new and exciting generation of younger activists—and both can learn from each other.

- To be a national think tank for social change movements—a think tank that can help them move beyond narrow economic frameworks and begin to incorporate a spiritual wisdom and framework both in their conceptualizing the issues they address and in building a supportive community for their own activists.

- To be an information-gathering network that can provide an alternative to the polling done by establishment-oriented groups—and to ask the questions that reflect a psychological and spiritual sophistication rarely brought to the task of understanding what is happening in our society.

We see the educational, consciousness-raising, and linking work we do as a critical contribution to social healing. We see ourselves as a corps of spiritual transformers—that is, a cadre of people who share a fundamentally similar perspective and wish to work more effectively by supporting each other, learning from each other's experience, and more deeply internalizing the ideas and ideals we hold. This is one reason why we place a great deal of emphasis on agreement with the

details of this founding document—because intellectual coherence is only possible if we start from the same place. And we see TIKKUN magazine, along with the TIKKUN website and TIKKUN email group, as the primary vehicle through which we can communicate with each other about the new thinking and activity that the TIKKUN Community develops. As a community that is being called into existence by the efforts of TIKKUN magazine, we will give special attention to building the readership of TIKKUN, using it as a vehicle for our discussions, and supporting it with time and money.

So How Do I Get Involved?

There are many ways to be involved in the TIKKUN Community. We imagine that in a few years these will be the answers some of us will be giving about what we've been doing to build the TIKKUN Community:

- Some of us are seeking to bring these ideas into our professional or workplace contexts and to campaign for a "New Bottom Line." We are creating groups of like-minded people at our annual meetings of professional associations, at national conventions of unions and political parties, or at the national gatherings of our religious communities. Some of us are business people introducing these ideas into our businesses and experimenting with new ways to work—or we are developing communities of people who infuse their philanthropic activities with this kind of orientation. Some of us are working in foundations and some of us are working in universities and some of us are working in media and some of us are working in local churches, synagogues, and mosques, and wherever we are, we are raising the kinds of issues raised in this founding statement.

- Some of us are creating chapters or salons of the TIKKUN Community in which we can work to educate people in our local areas about this perspective and deepen our understanding of our principles in monthly conversations. Once chapters are formed, you will be able to choose to belong to the TIKKUN Community as an individual member or as part of a local chapter.

- Some of us are participating by talking about these ideas in every context in which we find ourselves and by convincing others to read TIKKUN magazine.

- Some of us are students who are seeking to create campus chapters of the TIKKUN Community.

- Some of us are engaged in solidarity work with the Israeli peace movement or in developing local initiatives to challenge the Occupation. Some of us are developing teach-ins about Israel-Palestinian peace, and in other ways challenging the mainstream interpretation of that struggle.

- Some of us are bringing these ideas into the anti-globalization, ecological, and social justice movements or affinity groups of which we are part. Some of us are trying to do this in the Democratic Party, the Natural Law Party, the Green Party, and other political parties.

- Some of us are intellectuals working in academia or in policy institutes or in media and seeking to foster an understanding of this perspective.

- Some of us are artists, poets, writers, musicians, and others who will be participating by using our skills and talents to advance the consciousness described here.

- Some of us are challenging local and national media, insisting that they recognize the distorted and cynical nature of their presentations, and educating the public in alternative ways to think about reality. Some of us are retirees who are making phone calls and writing letters to the media or to neighbors about these ideas.

- Some of us are trying to influence foundations to adopt and support this perspective. Others of us are involved in fundraising projects to support the TIKKUN Community and fund educational work. Some of us are trying to change the way people think about philanthropy, or the way they use their charitable donations—so that they become a force to convince social change movements to incorporate this broader perspective.

- Some of us are working in communities of seniors and developing spiritual eldering projects to support the ways that retired people can provide spiritual leadership for the society. Others are working in schools and pushing for a New Bottom Line there. Still others are working to get the Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on the ballots of local and state elections (requiring corporations to get a new charter that would only be awarded if they could prove a history of social responsibility). Some of us are helping shape a spiritually oriented political party, while others are working within existing parties.

For all of us, the TIKKUN Community is a place where we can talk about these ideas and give each other mutual support for being unequivocally utopian and committed to large scale *tikkun olam* (transformation of the world). We get this nurturance through TIKKUN magazine, the TIKKUN website and email group, and through annual TIKKUN Community national gatherings.

What will the National Organization Do?

- We will hold a yearly national conference/training which will be aimed at exploring more fully the ideas put forward in this statement and applying them to current social, political, and spiritual realities. Meetings of our conference will not be about passing resolutions or debating policies, but rather about developing our own inner spiritual resources, thinking through ideas together, and learning from cutting-edge thinkers, spiritual leaders, social activists, and practitioners of healing and transformation.

- We will provide an email discussion group for those who want daily briefings on current national happenings and priorities. Right now, we don't have the resources for a moderated bulletin board, but that could happen in the future.

- We will develop educational material that will help people do organizing around the national priorities for that year.

- We will seek publicity in national and local media to highlight the perspectives articulated in this founding statement.

- We will take public stands on issues that connect to this founding vision and publicize those stands, organize public gatherings or other events to forward those ideals, develop a corps of speakers who can speak to these issues, encourage artists, film and video people, and writers to integrate our perspective into their works, and find other creative ways to provoke public

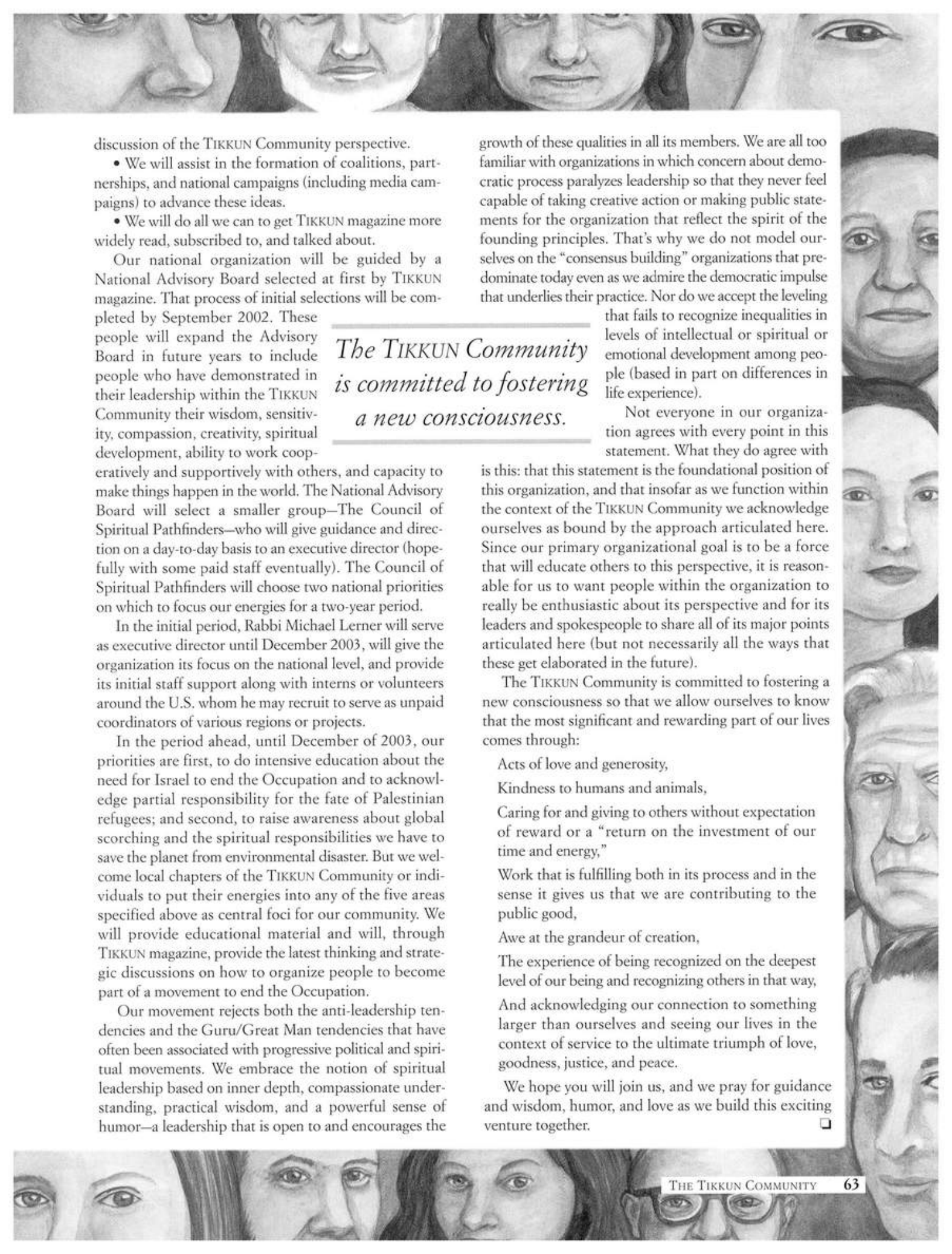
Annual Membership in the TIKKUN Community, which includes a one year subscription to TIKKUN, is: Students (or income under \$40K/yr) \$40; Basic Membership (income \$40K–\$80K/yr) \$80; Supporting Membership (income above \$80K/yr) \$120; Tikkun Associate (billed \$25/month for one year); Founding Member \$500; World Transformer \$1000.

Tikkun Associates receive Rabbi Lerner's *Jewish Renewal*. Founding Members also receive an autographed copy of Rabbi Lerner's *Spirit Matters*. World Transformers also receive Peter Gabel's *The Bank Teller* and a tape of Rabbi Lerner discussing *Spirit Matters*.

No one will be kept out if they genuinely have financial hardship reasons that make this cost too expensive for them (just write to us and tell us your situation and what you can afford in light of that).

The TIKKUN Community is part of TIKKUN magazine. Contributions are tax-deductible. The TIKKUN Community will not support or endorse political candidates.

Send payment to: TIKKUN Community, c/o TIKKUN Magazine, 2107 Van Ness Ave, Suite 302, San Francisco, CA 94109.



discussion of the TIKKUN Community perspective.

- We will assist in the formation of coalitions, partnerships, and national campaigns (including media campaigns) to advance these ideas.

- We will do all we can to get TIKKUN magazine more widely read, subscribed to, and talked about.

Our national organization will be guided by a National Advisory Board selected at first by TIKKUN magazine. That process of initial selections will be completed by September 2002. These people will expand the Advisory Board in future years to include people who have demonstrated in their leadership within the TIKKUN Community their wisdom, sensitivity, compassion, creativity, spiritual development, ability to work cooperatively and supportively with others, and capacity to make things happen in the world. The National Advisory Board will select a smaller group—The Council of Spiritual Pathfinders—who will give guidance and direction on a day-to-day basis to an executive director (hopefully with some paid staff eventually). The Council of Spiritual Pathfinders will choose two national priorities on which to focus our energies for a two-year period.

In the initial period, Rabbi Michael Lerner will serve as executive director until December 2003, will give the organization its focus on the national level, and provide its initial staff support along with interns or volunteers around the U.S. whom he may recruit to serve as unpaid coordinators of various regions or projects.

In the period ahead, until December of 2003, our priorities are first, to do intensive education about the need for Israel to end the Occupation and to acknowledge partial responsibility for the fate of Palestinian refugees; and second, to raise awareness about global scorching and the spiritual responsibilities we have to save the planet from environmental disaster. But we welcome local chapters of the TIKKUN Community or individuals to put their energies into any of the five areas specified above as central foci for our community. We will provide educational material and will, through TIKKUN magazine, provide the latest thinking and strategic discussions on how to organize people to become part of a movement to end the Occupation.

Our movement rejects both the anti-leadership tendencies and the Guru/Great Man tendencies that have often been associated with progressive political and spiritual movements. We embrace the notion of spiritual leadership based on inner depth, compassionate understanding, practical wisdom, and a powerful sense of humor—a leadership that is open to and encourages the

growth of these qualities in all its members. We are all too familiar with organizations in which concern about democratic process paralyzes leadership so that they never feel capable of taking creative action or making public statements for the organization that reflect the spirit of the founding principles. That's why we do not model ourselves on the "consensus building" organizations that predominate today even as we admire the democratic impulse that underlies their practice. Nor do we accept the leveling

that fails to recognize inequalities in levels of intellectual or spiritual or emotional development among people (based in part on differences in life experience).

Not everyone in our organization agrees with every point in this statement. What they do agree with

is this: that this statement is the foundational position of this organization, and that insofar as we function within the context of the TIKKUN Community we acknowledge ourselves as bound by the approach articulated here. Since our primary organizational goal is to be a force that will educate others to this perspective, it is reasonable for us to want people within the organization to really be enthusiastic about its perspective and for its leaders and spokespeople to share all of its major points articulated here (but not necessarily all the ways that these get elaborated in the future).

The TIKKUN Community is committed to fostering a new consciousness so that we allow ourselves to know that the most significant and rewarding part of our lives comes through:

Acts of love and generosity,

Kindness to humans and animals,

Caring for and giving to others without expectation of reward or a "return on the investment of our time and energy,"

Work that is fulfilling both in its process and in the sense it gives us that we are contributing to the public good,

Awe at the grandeur of creation,

The experience of being recognized on the deepest level of our being and recognizing others in that way,

And acknowledging our connection to something larger than ourselves and seeing our lives in the context of service to the ultimate triumph of love, goodness, justice, and peace.

We hope you will join us, and we pray for guidance and wisdom, humor, and love as we build this exciting venture together. □

*The TIKKUN Community
is committed to fostering
a new consciousness.*

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We live in a blind-siding, head-spinning world that undergoes cataclysmic shifts without regard to press time. Such is the situation that we have found ourselves in for this issue of TIKKUN. This past summer we had asked a number of young and important novelists and writers to contribute thoughtful essays on a TIKKUN, or tikkun olam, theme, all in commemoration of the 15th anniversary of TIKKUN's founding. That issue was designated for September/October. But the essays were so powerful that we decided to split them into two issues, some appearing in November/December, which would then become an anniversary issue as well.

But then the events of September 11, 2001, like they did for most Americans, changed everything that had come before and reoriented everyone's thinking on what was to follow. Synagogues are now faced with both the political and moral decision of whether to allow streetside dancing on Simcha Torah. Is it unseemly to dance on such dark days, surrounded by so much immediate collective death, even when the dancing honors an ancient ritual and celebrates, for Jews, the ultimate book of life and continuity?

TIKKUN is faced with a similar choice. Should we at this time once more celebrate our 15th year anniversary when the focus of everyone's attention, and most of the pages in this issue, are properly and poignantly devoted to the aftermath of the terrorist attack on this country? Is this the time to dance, celebrate, and self-congratulate, or is this more appropriately a period of mourning and national grief, a time only to reflect and sit with all the sadness?

We have decided to offer our readers the words of some of America's finest Jewish writers. Yes, these were the words they had written before the attack, when the cause was this magazine's celebration, when America was more innocent, when everyone felt safer and more hopeful, when thoughts of mending and healing were in the air, and in these writers' hearts. Perhaps now the longing for tikkun, not necessarily the magazine, but what it represents, is what's most needed of all. The longing for tikkun olam, the emotions and the words, the moral imperatives amidst the solemn obstacles, is always with us, even now, particularly now.

In light of everything that has gone wrong, perhaps our poets can help remind us who we once were only a few short weeks ago. That itself is an essential and moral endeavor before we attempt to regain our bearings and find our way back.

—Thane Rosenbaum, Literary Editor, TIKKUN

Janice Eidus

Janice Eidus is the author of the story collection The Celibacy Club and the novel Urban Bliss among others.

I am no stranger to grief: In the past decade, I have lost my father and sister, each after a lengthy illness. In both instances, I was able to comfort myself somewhat with the thought that at last they had been released from their years of suffering.

I had been a stranger, however, to the grief that follows deaths that are abrupt and premature, sudden and shocking, that offer relief to no one. But this year, within a span of a few months, I lost two beloved friends. Both were talented artists at the peaks of their creative powers, and both were far too young to die.

I had long assumed that I would grow old with these two friends by my side: he, a composer of operas, an irreverent, irreligious Catholic, witty, and apolitical; she, a Jewish poet, deeply religious, a dedicated member of Peace Now. When I learned of their deaths, I felt angry, betrayed, and at moments singled out, as though only I had suffered their loss.

Now, months later, my anger and sense of betrayal lessen each day, as I come to see that they will always live inside me, and that my memories of them are indeed a blessing.

Merrill Joan Gerber

Merrill Joan Gerber's novel, Anna in the Afterlife, will be published in April 2002 by Syracuse University Press.

My middle daughter was married under the arch of two olive trees in the walled garden of the college where I teach. A klezmer band had played for the soulful march to the *chupah*, where my daughter stood with her betrothed under the hand-painted canopy made by my daughter's close friend, a female rabbi.

Standing on the grass beside my husband, listening to the rabbi's incantations and blessings, I heard some loud noises beyond the stone wall and experienced an involuntary flash of fear. An image of a pogrom came to my mind—Cossacks on horseback bursting in and setting the *chupah* on fire, sending us all fleeing for our lives. But what appeared over the wall were the faces of some students like the students I taught in my classes: Indian, Asian, white, black, Latino—young men and women smiling at a wedding foreign to them, but interested and respectful, wanting more to appreciate than annihilate.

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With gratitude and fullness of heart, I turned my attention again to the ceremonial exchange of rings, to the smashing of the glass, to the kiss and shouts of mazel tov! Afterward we all danced in celebration.

Yona Zeldis McDonough

Yona Zeldis McDonough's first novel, The Fourth Temperament, will be published by Doubleday in 2002.

In the summer of 1979, when I was freshly hatched from a nice Seven Sisters College, I took a job writing pornography in the kind of quasi-factory-like office the advent of desktop publishing has now made obsolete. I found this job compelling in ways that went much deeper than the obvious (in fact, I was rather clueless about sex at the time, and the experience resonated for many years afterward.) I wrote and published an essay on the subject, but found my greatest satisfaction came from writing a short story entitled "Blue Movie," loosely based on my own brief tenure as a pornographer.

But during the process of sending out this story for publication, I foolishly left myself without a hard copy of it. And because the word processor on which it had been written was fabulously antiquated and had been consigned to the trash, I also found that I had lost the story entirely. This loss, discovered only recently, felt like a small death, one which I mourned for weeks. I mentioned what had happened to my mother, who offered an appropriately encouraging and maternal response: "You'll rewrite it," she said confidently. "And it will be better."

Several more months went by before I took her advice. But when I did, I found myself engaged in a remarkable process of recovery: trying to restore the lost story meant re-inhabiting the young woman I had been more than twenty years ago. In the intervening years I had fallen in love, married, had two children. At first I found the process both strange and stilted. But I persevered, determined to reclaim what had been mine; what had been me. As I worked, the process became easier, more fluid, even joyful. I could fill the loss not with a replica, but with some provisionally gratifying simulacrum of the original, whose faint image hovered just out of reach. The story is completed now, and its completion makes me feel whole once more. Maybe its loss had an important lesson to teach me: that the stories you need and want to tell reside within you forever. Telling them is sometimes the best—or only—way to heal all the wounds that life on earth will most assuredly inflict.

Ehud Havazelet

Ehud Havazelet is the author of Like Never Before. He is at work on a novel.

In May, in Philadelphia, my son Michael celebrated his bar mitzvah.

It would be easy, and true to family disposition, to have looked around the room and dwelled on what the day was not. It was not in Israel, for one, as my bar mitzvah was, at the Wailing Wall in 1968. It was not in an Orthodox shul—another family first. The family itself was not "intact": there were step-parents, stepgrandparents, people flown in from California, Tennessee, Oregon, worlds away from the tribal contiguity we enjoyed (or endured) worlds ago in Brooklyn, Russia, Jerusalem. When I said hello to my ex-sister-in-law for the first time in ten years she actually sneered. When Michael was presented with a set of *tefillin* by my father he looked at the straps and boxes with the most perfect expression of bewilderment I've ever seen.

But here's what the day was. My father telling Michael about our family, the rabbis, the dreamers, the luminous and strident and barely sane. His maternal grandmother holding up a cell phone so Michael's grandfather, in the hospital, could hear and share in what was going on. Michael's sister, from the new marriage, happy for him. Cousins, including a three year old adopted from China two years back, her first big party, in a new dress. My new wife, eight months pregnant, gamely hoisting herself to dance. Michael swung in a chair above us all, dancing with his mother, refusing to take off his suit jacket even when sweat rolled off him because it was a nice suit and he looked good in it, and after, when everyone had gone home or to their rooms, collapsed asleep with his head under a pillow on our bed, still, after all this, my child.

The day was what such days should be—a gathering, a celebration, a—if the word must be used—covenant. Maybe Michael didn't know *tefillin* from tofu but he was glad to get them. This was a new type of family, sprawled, fractious, separated by creed and geography, but it was a family, that's the point, his family who had gathered from thousands of miles to celebrate him, this day with him. The night before I noticed a line I'd sung hundreds of times growing up, in *Lecha Dodi*: "*Sof ma'asse b'machshava techila*," "the end deed begins with a thought." It applied also, I thought, to this gathering, this child who was the unconscious thought and aspiration of so many before him, Jews and non Jews; this family moving in fifty

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directions toward its various fates; this boy of mine just beginning to conceive his own future, taking his first steps toward it.

Nessa Rapoport

Nessa Rapoport is writing House on the River, a memoir of family and place.

Several years ago, I was co-editing a book of spiritual import with an unlapsed Episcopalian. One day, while we were idly talking, he said: "Every morning I pray for the humility to do justice to this work."

I found his prayer astonishing. In my livelihood as an editor and my life as a writer, I have encountered many figures who might be described as great. Only a handful are humble. Or, to use the Jewish term, *anav*, that signal attribute of Moshe—Moses—the greatest leader of our people. The *anavim* I know are unwavering in conviction but receptive to the faintest receptivity in others, speaking little but listening with acute attention, recognizing wordlessly the image of God in every created being.

In this year of Jewish life, when events in Israel have been humbling for many—including me, when opposing certitudes have been rendered ironic and embittering, I pray that questing people find the prayer for humility ardent, frequent and welcome.

Gerald Shapiro

Gerald Shapiro is the author of Bad Jews, a finalist for the 2000 National Jewish Book Award in Fiction.

I live most of the time in Lincoln, Nebraska, where I teach fiction writing and Jewish American fiction at the University of Nebraska. Lincoln is a town of 225,000 people, almost none of them Jewish. In its review of my second collection of stories, the *Jerusalem Post* called Lincoln "the middle of nowhere." This prompted my Jewish friends in Kearney, Nebraska, a small college town two hours west of Lincoln, to ask, "If Lincoln's the middle of nowhere, what's Kearney?"

My presence in the Lincoln Jewish community is negligible. In fact I'm invisible in it. But at the university I've become more Jewish than I ever thought I could be. My course in Jewish fiction is always over-enrolled. It's full of non-Jews. Once in a while I'll have a forlorn Jewish kid from Omaha (Nebraska's largest city) who's been sent to the university because of grades too low to go out of state.

But for the most part my students are not only non-Jews, many of them have never seen a Jew before.

For these students, I become the walking embodiment of all things Jewish. Four thousand years of history and entire libraries of Jewish thought rest on my shoulders. I lug those four thousand years into class and take them home with me all semester. It's exhausting. But in written evaluations of that course, year after year, students have told me how thrilled they are to have learned so much about Jewish culture and literature. How could I go wrong, with a course full of Sholom Aleichem, I.L. Peretz, Anzia Yezierska, Saul Bellow, Cynthia Ozick, Norma Rosen, Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud, Melvin Bukiet, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Joseph Skibell, Elinor Lipman, Helen Schulman, and so many others—a cast of writers so brilliant they take your breath away?

My parents were disappointed in my lack of fervor for things Jewish. They disapproved of my choices, and were saddened by my lack of faith. But we all have to find a way to be of use, even those of us who've lost our faith, or never had much faith to begin with. So here's my part: in the middle of nowhere—or a couple of hours east of there, depending on your compass—I teach Nebraskans about Sholem Schachnah, the addled hero of Sholom Aleichem's "On Account of a Hat." On one level it's a story far from their world; but on another level, who better than a Nebraskan to ponder the difficulties of getting from place to place—from here to the promised land—in the wild blank landscape of the provinces?

Richard Zimler

Richard Zimler's latest novels are The Angelic Darkness and The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon. He lives in Portugal.

After the execution of Timothy McVeigh I saw two reporters who had witnessed his killing recounting what they'd seen at a televised press conference. They said things like, "He was looking up at the ceiling when the first injection was given, and his lips lost their color. Soon, his breathing seemed to grow shallow..." Feeling debased, I switched off the TV. I didn't know precisely why till later: the reporters were discussing McVeigh as if he were a laboratory animal observed during a fatal experiment. They, the researchers, were discussing their findings with "scientific" rigor, noting every nuance of the creature's demise.

To Jews, this reduction of a human being to the status of laboratory animal has special significance, of course, thanks to Dr. Mengele. Unwittingly, these reporters had acted in his spirit. And they were insisting that we view McVeigh with the same horrific, pseudo-scientific

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distance. Of course, our own dignity as human beings depends on our refusal to do so. I'm also convinced that the spiritual well-being of our world requires that we remain able to view even contemptible persons as human beings with much the same feelings, needs, and weaknesses as ourselves.

To me, their televised testimony comes as yet one more indication that something has gone very wrong with America, the only Western nation where such a press conference could take place. As a Jew and as a human being, I find it very scary.

Tova Mirvis

Tova Mirvis is the author of a novel, The Ladies Auxiliary.

When I was pregnant, I waited for a sign of blood. In bathrooms and taxis and elevators, I was checking my underwear and worrying. To me, blood meant miscarriage, and I had had one before. These things happen, I was told. One out of every three. No reason to worry.

But worry, this was in my family. Handed down from mothers and grandmothers and great-grandmothers. When phones rang late at night or early in the morning. When children did not drink enough milk or went out with wet hair. And with this pregnancy, this second-try, it turned out that there was something to worry about. The blood I was dreading did appear. I spent the rest of my pregnancy in bed, and the world outside my one bedroom apartment all but disappeared. After trips to the emergency room, after waiting and worrying, and finally, after a morning with no fetal kicking, my son was born, two months too soon.

In a neonatal ICU, worry can fester. Alarm sound on fetal monitors. Babies are one, two, three pounds. Looking at the vein that ran down my son's almost translucent chest, I couldn't stop asking myself, what if we hadn't gone into the hospital when we did, what if we had waited another hour? I touched his foot, the size of my thumb, covered with pin pricks, and thought, this is how I will always see him.

But it isn't at all. This image has been long lost among first smiles, first teeth, first words. And it started to fade the day we took him home. It was a few hours before the first Passover Seder, and I had spent the morning buying diapers and grating apples for haroset. My son was one month old, he

look inside

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had grown to almost five pounds, and he was fine. All this worry, all this reason to worry, and now we were coming out on the other side, just in time for Passover, the holiday of springtime, my holiday of new beginnings. With my son in my arms, I walked out of the hospital, exhausted, chastened, but calm. I have no more worry left inside me.

Aryeh Lev Stollman

Aryeh Lev Stollman is the author of two novels, The Far Euphrates and The Illuminated Soul (Riverhead).

I am often asked what medicine has in common with writing fiction. Might they somehow feed each other, transform each other? I like to believe my two careers, writing and medicine, are both life-affirming endeavors. Aside from the complex science and accumulated knowledge, medicine contains within it an ongoing intensity of experience. It goes without saying that one sees the full range of human emotion—great life and death dramas are played out before one's eyes. And often one witnesses the most intense manifestations of love.

I am not suggesting, of course, that one should go to medical school to become a writer. A little of every possible human emotion already exists in each beating heart and can be witnessed even in the most solitary room where the writer sits alone. It is through the recognition of these multiple emotion—in ourselves and in the world around us—that we may be led to understanding and compassion. Nevertheless I am grateful for the wide privilege of practicing medicine. I have always tried to keep my eyes open to the world and be a compassionate doctor. I hope this has enabled me to be a more compassionate writer.

Nomi Eve

Nomi Eve's first novel, The Family Orchard, was published by Vintage in paperback in September.

When I was twenty-three, I was rescued by a French couple. I was traveling with my cousin in Europe when I was stricken with an unsightly illness: oral herpes! Because I had never had a cold sore before, the virus clobbered me with a very high fever. After taking two wrong trains and running for the third in pouring rain, we made our way to the American Hospital in Paris. The doctor took one look at me and ordered me to bed for at least a week.

Afterwards, in the hospital lobby, a beautiful French woman overheard my cousin and me discussing our

options. I was too sick to stay alone, but my cousin wanted to run with the bulls in Pamplona the very next day. Paris was so expensive we couldn't have afforded to stay there anyway. What to do?

That's when she spoke. I remember her saying, "I am sorry, I overheard you. Would you like to stay with us while you get better?" The French woman and her husband took us home and installed me in their elder son's bedroom. They made my cousin a big meal. When I woke up, twenty hours later, he was in Pamplona.

I stayed with them for an entire week. Let me stress that I looked infectiously horrible. My lip looked like it had been colonized by Mount Vesuvius. They fed me at their table with their sons. Treated me in all ways like a daughter.

This is a small story about one kind couple. But I often wonder what it would be like if the whole world were filled with people like them: kind strangers who would swoop down on us and hold us in safe embrace while cousins are off gallivanting with bulls and our bodies need time to recover.

Daniel Asa Rose

Daniel Asa Rose is Arts & Cultural Editor of the Forward and author of Hiding Places (Simon & Schuster)

My dad was like so many dads of that militaristic World War II era: ever the heroes, the rescuers, soldiers to the end. Bent smaller and smaller, they carried their gruffness with them. They would carry on as they aged, making the same tough-as-nails declarations, but more and more often tears would invade their eyes when they were speaking. It confounded them. They wouldn't cry, of course, but even tearing up was such an unfamiliar sensation to these resolutely unsentimental people that they would shake their heads to try to make the tears evaporate, they resented the tears, they were impatient with the tears, but still the tears came, the tears had dominion over them, the tears had the final say, the tears won.

When that happened, the world shifted for me. This entire generation I had spent my life battling suddenly started dying off, and those who weren't dying were in need. I had never thought of them as people I should nurse gently. I had spent so much energy combating these soldiers that it came as a gaping shock to realize it was my duty now to manage their gruffness for them, to pretend not to see their tears, and even sometimes, without letting them see, to cry myself for a world that was indeed ending with them, and what were we being left with? □

A General Framework for Peace Between Israel and the State of Palestine

1. A contiguous Palestinian state will come into being within ninety days of this framework being signed. With the full implementation of this framework, Israel and the State of Palestine will be at peace and will enter into a formal peace treaty establishing the end of the conflict.

2. An international body will be established to monitor implementation of this agreement.

3. Palestinian sovereignty will encompass 98 percent of the West Bank and all of Gaza. It shall also include all of the Palestinian residential and commercial areas in East Jerusalem. Undeveloped areas within East Jerusalem shall be Palestinian territory.

4. Palestine will agree to the Israeli annexation of up to 2 percent of West Bank territory in order to incorporate Israeli settlements within Israel. In exchange, Israel will agree to Palestinian annexation of Israeli territory in equal amounts, and of equal quality, the exact location of which will be negotiated.

5. Once the State of Palestine is established, it will take full responsibility for maintaining order within its territory and for ensuring that there are no attacks on Israel or Israeli citizens.

6. The State of Palestine will maintain only a small armed forces and limited weaponry. It will not enter into military alliances with any states that have not similarly entered peace treaties with Israel.

7. The State of Palestine will control its own immigration policy and its own international borders, including borders with Jordan and Egypt and on the Mediterranean. It will permit the stationing of international observers at those borders to verify compliance with agreed upon restrictions in the import of advanced weaponry.

8. Israel will remove from territories of Palestinian sovereignty all Israeli citizens, unless exceptions are expressly agreed to by Palestine. Settlement areas to be vacated will be turned over to the Palestinian government intact and in good condition.

9. Within the Old City of Jerusalem, Palestine will have sovereignty over the Christian, Muslim, and Armenian quarters. Israel will have sovereignty over the Jewish quarter of the Old City.

10. The Wailing Wall shall be under Israeli sovereignty, as shall the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives.

11. The State of Palestine will exercise full control over the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif. No Israeli police or security personnel will be permitted on the Temple

Mount/Haram al-Sharif. The Palestinian authorities will have absolute power to limit access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. Within this framework, the two sides agree that ultimate sovereignty belongs to God. It is further agreed that no excavations or archeological endeavors will be undertaken at or within the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif without the consent of both states. It is further agreed that no person will be denied, on grounds of religious belief or national identity, access to peacefully and non-disruptively

visit the plateau area. The State of Palestine will ensure that no disturbances on the Haram will interfere with the ability of Jewish worshipers at the Wailing Wall.

12. With respect to Palestinian refugees, the two sides agree that the refugees shall be offered a wide range of options including resettlement within Israel as well as in other states. They will also be provided with resettlement assistance and with compensation for property not returned to them. Once it is ascertained how many refugees desire to

resettle within Israel, the two sides will negotiate a mechanism for implementation, with it being agreed that the pace of resettlement within Israel will in no way undermine the existing demographic balance between Jews and non-Jews within Israel. To accommodate these concerns the Palestinian side is willing to agree that no more than 25,000 refugees would be resettled within Israel per year. This limitation will not apply to refugees settling in areas of Israel (2 percent) that will be transferred to Palestinian sovereignty—that being a Palestinian decision alone.

13. Each side will recognize the other's capital. The Palestinian capital, Al-quds, will be established in the area of East Jerusalem, and Israel's capital, Yerushalayim, in West Jerusalem.

Readers will no doubt disagree with one or another specific provision of this plan. I put this forward not as a perfect proposal, and certainly not as something that only makes sense in this specific formulation. Rather, it should be seen as a reference point. Here is something that spells out a price for peace that many Israelis would be willing to pay—provided they believed that true and lasting peace would result. More importantly, a Palestinian proposal of this sort—even if not fully acceptable to Israel—would count, to all fair-minded individuals, as a serious effort to end the conflict.

If these specifics do not capture the answer to the question “What will the Palestinians accept to end the conflict?” then this proposal should be modified so that it does. The key is to be able to say something definitive, authoritative, and realistic to the Israeli people, and to the people of the world. □

A Palestinian proposal of this sort would count, to all fair-minded individuals, as a serious effort to end the conflict.

Jewish Renewal Makes It to Film

Rami Shapiro

- *Raising the Sparks: A Personal Search for a Spiritual Home in Judaism.* 60 minute video by Chuck Davis. Throughline Productions and Delphi Productions.

With its very first scene, *Raising the Sparks*, a delightful and disturbing documentary of producer/director Chuck Davis' year-long sojourn into Jewish Renewal, draws us into the central dilemma of postmodern Judaism: the tribe. The film opens with his youngest son's *brit milah*. Amid the boy's screams of terror and the practiced nonchalance of Jewish friends and relatives, Chuck verbalizes his angst at circumcising his son to appease a God he does not believe in and to make his son a member of a tribe he is not sure is worth joining. In a sense, *Raising the Sparks* is Chuck's attempt to justify tribalism in what for him and most secular Jews is fast becoming a post-tribal world.

Each of the world's religions responds to a specific question. As long as the question is compelling and the answer relevant, the religion thrives. When the question is moot, the religion dies. This is why centuries of effort to convert Jews to Christianity



The old question: "How to be a Jew?" has to be replaced with the older and timeless question: "How to be holy?"

have been so unsuccessful: Jesus is the answer to a question Jews don't ask. And it's also why, without even attempting to convert Jews, Buddhism is making such inroads among us.

Christianity answers the question: "How can we overcome Original Sin and avoid eternal damnation?" Most Jews don't ask this question, so Christianity is irrelevant to them. Buddhism answers the question: "What is suffering, and how can we end it?" This is a question Jews do ask, and the concise, practical advice of the Buddha is quite compelling. The question Judaism answers is this: "How do I adhere to the tribal standards set by God Who chose us from among all peoples to be His holy nation?" This is a question fewer and fewer Jews even think to ask. If Judaism is to survive it must answer a different question.

Different, not necessarily new. Judaism must shift its focus from tribal survival to planetary survival; it must move from halachic conformity to aggadic creativity. God did not command us to be Jewish; God commanded us to be holy. The old question: "How to be a Jew?" has to be replaced with the older and timeless question: "How to be holy?" And it is here that Chuck's journey into Jewish Renewal is most welcoming and helpful, for he shares with us a Judaism that dares to ask the right question.

What Jewish Renewal does, and does so well, is shift emphasis from *pesbat*, the literal meaning of Torah and tradition, to *drash*, psycho-spiritual interpretations that transform tribal teachings and custom into a dialect of universal truth. Judaism in the hands and hearts of the wonderful Renewal rabbis interviewed in *Raising the Sparks* is no longer the parochial culture of tribal Israel, but the highly sophisticated spiritual lifeway of *yisra-el*, of the god wrestlers and spiritual warriors from

PHOTO COURTESY OF THOUGHTLINE PRODUCTIONS AND DELPHI PRODUCTIONS

Rami Shapiro is senior rabbi and president of Metiva, a center for contemplative Judaism in Los Angeles, CA. His most recent book is *Proverbs* (Bell Tower 2001). *Raising the Sparks* can be purchased from Delphi Productions, 888-443-2400.

many backgrounds seeking to infuse and repair the world with holiness.

Jewish Renewal asks not "How can we maintain our uniqueness as a people?" but "How can we use 3,500 years of Jewish experience to repair the world and ourselves with holiness?" Here is a question worthy of our utmost attention. And answering it will insure Judaism's survival as a vital spiritual force in the world for generations. But before Judaism can be the answer to this question, Jews must begin to ask it. And this is where *Raising the Sparks* is disturbing.

Chuck encounters in Renewal Judaism a practice that is devoted to holiness, to universal questions. God is the Nameless Source of Reality that manifests all life. Torah is a spiritual map written in symbols open to endless interpretation. *Mitzvot* are spiritual practices for chipping away at ego and freeing the soul from the enslaving self. Prayer is a technology for stepping outside boundaries and experiencing the unity of all things in God. Halachah is a toolbox for repairing both person and planet. Yet at the end of his journey, Chuck is still struggling with the old question of tribalism. He cannot get over the fact that Judaism is for the Jews. He hears and even appreciates the Jewish Renewal answer, but he cannot yet bring himself to ask the new question. For Chuck Judaism is still a matter of tribe.

He is not alone. Most Jews still think of Judaism as something parochial. They see themselves as members of a beleaguered tribe. While few are willing to adhere to the customs of that tribe, even fewer are willing to let the notion of tribe go altogether. Why?

I suspect the answer lies in an unarticulated fear of the hyphenated identities demanded by postmodernity. The emerging global village will not see an end to human diversity, but an expansion of it. As barriers fall between seekers of different faiths, hybrids will develop. This is not new. Moses Maimonides created Aristotelian Judaism. Abraham Abulafia cre-

ated Jewish Sufism. What is new is the self-conscious nature of postmodern hybrids. Maimonides and Abulafia did not admit, let alone celebrate, their creativity. But our age is different. What earlier Jews saw as *peshat*, postmodern Jews see as *drash*.

In the postmodern world everything is *drash*. We borrow openly and liberally from other faith traditions and begin to speak of ourselves as JuBus, Jufis, and Hinjews. Ironically, we draw the tribal line at Jesus, the one world-teacher who was Jewish and who addressed the world through the medium of Torah. I suspect this barrier, too, will fall, and when it does it will be a sign of the final fading of tribalist thinking.

Jewish Renewal offers an alternative to both tribalism and hybridization. Choosing the way of interspirituality, Jewish Renewal uses the insights and sensibilities of other faiths to search out, reveal, and revive similar insights and sensibilities in our own faith. Jewish

Renewal takes advantage of postmodern openness without falling into the blather of spiritual Esperanto, abstract talk about God, and holiness stripped of all cultural richness and nuance. Where much of New Age talk pits religion against spirituality and offers a pristine spirituality devoid of religion, Jewish Renewal allows spirituality to do what it was meant to do: uplift religion.

Spirituality without religion is like the sap of a tree without the tree itself. The sap has nowhere to flow, nothing to enliven, no way of manifesting life in the world. Jewish Renewal, in all its forms—from the most ecstatic to the most silent and contemplative—resurrects the tree of Jewish life by freeing the spirit of holiness it was meant to embody.

Raising the Sparks is an excellent and honest portrayal of a contemporary Jew's search for Judaism. It offers a compassionate and clear-eyed view of Jewish Renewal and her teachers. It is a film worth seeing. More importantly, it is a film worth talking about. □

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Religious Passion and Public Life

Roger S. Gottlieb

- *Religion and the Demise of Liberal Rationalism: The Foundational Crisis of the Separation of Church and State*, by J. Judd Owen. University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- *The Transformation of American Religion: The Story of a Late-Twentieth-Century Awakening*, by Amanda Porterfield. Oxford University Press, 2001.
- *Landscapes of the Soul: The Loss of Moral Meaning in American Life*, by Douglas V. Porpora. Oxford University Press, 2001.
- *Spiritual Questions for the Twenty-First Century: Essay in Honor of Joan D. Chittister*, edited by Mary Hem-brow Snyder. Orbis Press, 2001.

Seeking an end to centuries of bloody religious conflict, Enlightenment thinkers proclaimed that religion should be free—but private. Because modern society was religiously diverse, and because science possessed the rationality religion lacked, our spiritual lives were to be excluded from the public realm. Yet modern society finds itself confronted by a vital interest in God, spiritual development, and cosmic meaning—an interest which constantly challenges the location and, indeed, the appropriateness of boundaries between public and private, state and religion, reason and faith. At the same time, contemporary

believers who want to coexist with rather than overthrow democracy and human rights must fashion a religious identity that can resist fanatics who think faith requires orthodoxy and the crushing of “unbelievers,” as well as the tendency to make religion so private and narcissistic that it has no more social, moral, or spiritual relevance than any other “lifestyle.”

The books by Owen, Porterfield, and Porpora each illuminate an important facet of religion’s complex relation to current public life. Yet their central claims are weakened by critical omissions of historical perspective. As a collection, the Snyder anthology is necessarily less analytically developed than the other books; yet it manages to convey a rich sense of the best of religion’s current social meaning, and also to be an inspiring example of what it discusses.

• • •

J. Judd Owen rejects the way three of secular philosophy’s biggest guns try to relegate religion to the sidelines of

public life or dismiss it as irrational. His adversaries are no less than John Rawls, Richard Rorty, and Stanley Fish, the first two of which are among the half dozen most influential philosophers of the last twenty years. Despite important differences, the three share a basic concern with the public status of religion now that the Enlightenment belief in universal standards of knowledge and truth has fallen into disrepute. Thirty years of post-empiricist philosophy of science has challenged the detached objectivity of science’s account of nature. Political movements have shown gender, racial, and ethnic bias in every humanistic discipline. An awareness of other cultures and of history makes us all realize that what we believe is historically and socially determined. With reason in retreat, how will the liberal state delimit religion’s public presence?

Rawls tries to separate out political rules that will work for everyone from substantive religious (or philosophical) perspectives that will necessarily manifest wide differences. The former will be public and universal, the latter private and particular. Unlike earlier liberalism, this one will provide rules we



Roger S. Gottlieb is the author of *A Spirituality of Resistance: Finding a Peaceful Heart, Protecting the Earth, and Joining Hands: Religion and Politics Together for Social Change*. He teaches philosophy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

can share, and not try to impose a vision of human nature which we can't.

Rorty, by contrast, doesn't believe that any universal rules can be found. The liberal trust in natural science and rights is just one more ethnocentric habit, no more "rational" than fundamentalist Islam or alchemy. The best we can hope for is that we'll all tolerate each other's idiosyncratic beliefs, while trying to develop some compassion for each other's suffering. Instead of trying to impose competing truths, we'll share our stories.

Fish rejects altogether the notion that we can construct a realm of tolerance, reason, or compromise among different perspectives. Different religions, just like different secular world views, are simply opponents, motivated by fundamental principles, none of which are susceptible to rational justification. The liberal's or multiculturalist's vaunted "tolerance" is a sham, a "boutique" attitude sure to stop just at the point where the fundamentalist is most passionate. For to "tolerate" the fundamentalist is to allow the price on Salmon Rushdie's head, the suppression of Afghani women, or the killing of abortion providers.

Owen's treatment of these complex arguments is excellent. To make a long story—and one well worth reading—short, he criticizes Rorty for a fundamental inconsistency. Sometimes Rorty writes as if his position is just one among many. At other times he uses it to exclude those whose passions he finds uncontrollable. Rawls falls victim to a similar error, claiming neutrality towards difference while using a trumped-up concept of "reasonable" to exclude anyone who is really zealous about religion. Fish is consistent, but misses the heart of the matter. Liberalism is not refuted by Fish's critique of tolerance, for liberalism is not just about the free choice to adopt any perspective whatsoever, says Owen, but about the freedom to inquire into the truth. If believers and secularists disagree, there is no reason they cannot talk. We may find that we agree on a

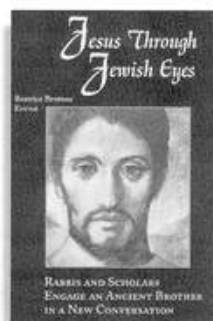
great deal more than we disagree on. Or we may at least learn something in the process. Fish's irrationalism would freeze the entire gamut of secular and religious views into endless antagonism. Owen suggests that we should neither rule out religion from the start nor throw up our hands in despair. Rather, we need a kind of "deliberative democracy," in which everything is up for grabs, including the rules of the discussion and the topics on the table; and in which everyone is entitled to speak and encouraged to listen. If some religious types aren't very good at listening, neither are some nonreligious ones.

Rorty, Rawls, and Fish are all afraid that dogmatic religion will disrupt civil society. They seem to be unaware—and in a serious omission Owen fails to explore—how religious thinkers themselves have wrestled with this problem. As early as the seventeenth century John Locke defined "toleration" as the mark of the "true church"; and William Penn counseled that "union in affection

is not inconsistent with disagreement in opinion." Kierkegaard claimed that personal spiritual passion, not doctrine, was the essence of religion. For him, a devoted pagan was more "Christian" than a self-satisfied Lutheran. In our day persons like Thich Nhat Hanh claim it is religiously wrong to impose one's views on another; and Protestant theologian John Cobb says that openness to learning from other faiths is essential to Christianity.

Politically, publications like *TIKKUN* and *Sojourners*, and groups from Engaged Buddhists to the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, struggle for a faith that is authentic because it can manifest a loving presence in the world, not because it has found the Perfect Description of God. Yet they do not offer an anything goes "tolerance," but rather a shift towards a subjective, personal relation to transcendent truths and a disciplined emphasis on social ethics. For this perspective freedom of worship and ritual are absolute, but

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freedom to oppress and exploit is not. Of course the line between ethics and the transcendent is contested. But the point is that there exist countless voices who seek to combine passionate religious life with the lessons of progressive political movements.

Ignoring this fact severely weakens the arguments of secular philosophers. If we applied the same kind of sloppy generalizations to nonreligious political thinkers as they often do to religious ones, we might lump Strom Thurmond with Robert Kennedy, Barry Goldwater with Ralph Nader, and perhaps Stalin with FDR. And if we compare, for example, the anti-war civil disobedience of Catholic Daniel Berrigan and secular Daniel Ellsberg, with the pro-war stands of Catholic Bishops and the secular Robert MacNamara, we see that the distinction between "religion" and "secular" is perhaps not so enlightening after all. For every authoritarian Bible-thumper using Jesus to hate homosexuals there is a cold-blooded technocrat who masks exploitation and imperialism as "democracy" and "development." In our tortured time, religion has not cornered the market on sin.

• • •

A deeper sense of the varieties and complexity of American religion during the last century is found in Amanda Porterfield's lively, informative, and valuable book. Porterfield's thesis is that the particular Protestant combination of individual spiritual integrity and pragmatic approach to social reform has colored a religious awakening in late twentieth-century America. In the course of this awakening, however, the initial combination has transcended its initial doctrinal boundaries. American religion has been enlivened by a Catholic spirituality that offered more gusto than mid-century liberal Protestantism, led towards social critique by religious responses to the Vietnam War, profoundly altered by infusions of Buddhism and critical feminism, and opened to pluralism by theologians like Paul Tillich, Joseph Campbell, and Mircea Eliade.

As a result there is a widespread awareness of the "social and psychological construction of religion" and a "new pressure on people to define their religious traditions in terms of humane standards and human flourishing." In other words, the kinds of fears animating Rawls and Rorty should have been assuaged by a new religious spirit much more in harmony with liberalism's own

The human search for cosmic meaning can now help shape a society of justice and care.

interest in human happiness.

Porterfield's book includes fascinating details about the entry of the term "spiritual" into American religious discourse, the unfolding of liberation theology, how Buddhism has taken root in the U.S., and how coalitions of Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and freelance spiritual types joined to oppose the Vietnam War.

Despite Porterfield's awareness of politics, the veritable explosion of ecotheology and the religious presence in the environmental movement are not given nearly the attention they deserve. Since Porterfield emphasizes the affinities of contemporary spirituality with earlier efforts by Ralph Waldo Emerson and William James to locate the "essence of religion in terms of responsiveness to the beauty of life," the omission is strange indeed. This issue is crucial because taking nature seriously as a religious question undermines dominant anthropocentric and individualistic models of religion and secular society alike. Far from tying religion to "human flourishing," as its ultimate standard, ecological religion challenges liberal capitalism not by appealing to "Revelation" or individual rights, but by rejecting the global economy's destruction of the web of life.

• • •

If the subjects of Owen's book either fear religious passion or take for granted that it cannot be limited—and Porterfield finds such passion rendered benign by integration into humanistic concerns—Porpora's *Landscapes of the Soul* is one long lament for its loss. The heart of *Landscapes* is a series of in-depth interviews with "ordinary Americans" about their moral and spiritual lives. Porpora is, however, no mere chronicler of views, but has a definite ax to grind. He thinks his interviews show how much "meaning" has been lost in people's lives because their personal concerns no longer unfold in a broad religious horizon. Popular culture tells us that religion is "inner." Intellectual culture tells us that postmodern humanity lacks grand narratives or universally shared human purposes. Consequently, we live without attention to our collective human destiny, and to the "cosmic meaning" of existence; and we are necessarily lead towards despair. "To know who we are, we need to locate ourselves

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within a morally meaningful cosmos."

The difficulty here is that Porpora constructs a concept of a "meaningful cosmos" that in some ways seems ignorant of history. For him, the nature of the divine is hinted at by the convergence of world religions and suggested by natural and social evolution. God is a universal force or spirit which animates existence. This Hegelian interpretation signals a kind of cosmic confidence in our human role in a universal story; and it is the current lack of faith in this story which Portero laments. Yet our lack of faith is not simply a matter of cultural sabotage by liberalism and postmodernism; or a product of science and the mall. Rather, it comes from a profound despair over humanity's moral stature and capacity to embody the divine; and from a sense that the universe is unresponsive to our sorrows.

Many years ago, after having seen a devastating film about the horrors of the Cambodian genocide, I asked my wife, "How can you still believe in God?" No less shaken by the film than I she replied, "And you, how can you still believe in Marx?" Multiply those questions by the horrors of the last two centuries—from the Holocaust to the executions during the French Revolution, from the Gulags to the native tribes destroyed by economic "development"—and you get a sense of the real obstacles to "cosmic meaning" of any kind. And you see why many people try to construct spiritual lives without confidence in the cosmos, but rather by simply trying to believe, like Levin at the end of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, that despite everything life still has a "positive meaning"—that of the goodness we can bring to it. Such a life has no metaphysical self-assurance, but has escaped despair nevertheless.

• • •

Spiritual Questions for the Twenty-First Century comes from Orbis Books, in my view America's most consistently principled and path-breaking publisher of books linking religious devotion and social activism. The

book's twenty-six essays—including contributions by "names" like Martin Marty, Daniel Berrigan, and Matthew Fox—are dedicated to Joan Chittister, a Benedictine whose own writings range over spiritual life, the Bible, Christian practices, nonviolence, social justice, and feminism.

Chittister's essay, a moving retrospective focusing on the "power of questions," signals the overall tone of the book and helps solve some of the dilemmas facing the other books reviewed here. Without a "culture of questions," Chittister writes, we become "pawns" of our time. In her life this spirit led her to challenge what she had been taught about sin, women, American foreign policy, and the necessity of war. This passionate Catholic woman, whose life has been devoted to Jesus and the Church, measures her own spiritual life by a persistent spirit of inquiry. Such a spirit, which secularists claim is precisely what the religious lack, was no impediment to Chittister's life of faith. In that life she could coexist quite happily with Rorty and Rawls, though not with Henry Kissinger or—at least on matters of women's equality—the Pope. Similarly, she happily prays with Hindu and Buddhist friends, solving any tensions of "religious pluralism" by defining sanctity as "making life good for everyone whose lives we touch."

The other essays of the book reveal men and women seeking for the cosmic meaning Portero hopes for, wanting religion to serve a humane end as Porterfield does, and simply dissolving questions of religious dogmatism by their concerns with social justice and spiritual love. Many are committed to the Catholic Church, but in a way that would make the Vatican rather nervous. Voices from Brazil, London, Australia, and the Philippines show an international community that is politically activist, spiritually devout, and socially sophisticated.

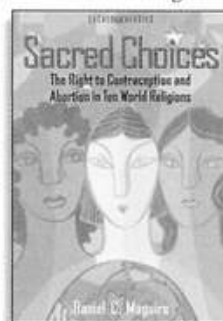
Would such passionate religious souls upset our liberal society? I'm sure they would if they could. But so

have the union movement, SDS, King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Greenpeace. The lesson of these provocative essays is that there need be no special concern with religion, since the best of the religious spirit has learned its lessons and the worst is no more horrible than secular fanatics, totalitarians, and exploiters.

For that reason alone those of us who are as aware of Stalinism as the Inquisition, of the excesses of Political Correctness as the narrowness of the Moral Majority, must use the resources of both religion and politics if we are to respond to the world's pain. The openness to other faiths, theological modesty, and political activism of at least certain forms of contemporary religion are not only historically unprecedented, but signal a profound possibility that the human search for cosmic meaning can now help shape a society of justice and care. There are few hopeful signs in today's (or yesterday's) headlines. But this is one of them. □

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Freaks Are Us

Laurie Stone

■ *A.I.*, directed by Steven Spielberg. Warner Bros., 2001.

Steven Spielberg's *A.I.* is a messy, three-layer concoction made of startling and plodding ingredients, but its moments of originality, plumbing fears of Otherness, engage adventurous ideas seldom broached in art. Act one sets up an Oedipal fairy tale, in which David, a robot child designed with the capacity to love, beams megabytes of devotion at a fretful, weak-willed woman who, in the manner of a 1950s housewife, spends her days drinking coffee and folding sheets. The movie is set in the future, but Spielberg's take on sex roles is stuck in the past. David loves Mommy and then David loses Mommy. In the third act, David retrieves Mommy and gets to sleep with her in bed. Although Mommy's been dead for 2000 years, she is resurrected for a day by evolved robots who use the DNA in a remnant of her hair. The sequence, bathed in morgueish blue light, borders on necrophilia, but Spielberg's treacly piety drains it of even that enjoyment.

Adding to the mess, *A.I.* is a dystopia, projecting a future that is worse than our time now, a consequence of our failures. Due to the misuse of Earth's resources, the ice caps have melted, coastal cities have been

submerged, and the population has become tightly controlled, hence the need for robot children. Implicitly, this vision levels a criticism of the present as a time of downward trend, a decline and fall, a view of history that romanticizes the past as a time that was better, simpler, and that provided people with a greater sense of wholeness (and mommies who stayed at home).

But lo and behold, with gratifying perversity, the middle section of *A.I.* breathes life into the film. We're introduced to Gigilo Joe, a robot, played by a radiant Jude Law, who's been designed as an ardent sex toy and is the most charged and canny being on screen. This section presents a witty analysis of the decline-and-fall perspective and a wise gloss on the scapegoating of perceived cultural polluters. In the world of *A.I.*, robots, known as

mechas, are so advanced that many are indistinguishable in appearance, intelligence, and emotional response from humans, called orgas. The ranks of mechas have swelled because they perform labor without needing food. But although created by orgas to serve them, mechas are hated, tagged with identification chips, herded into ghettos, and ritually tortured in gatherings called Flesh Fairs.

One of the shrewdest aspects of the film is that it's shot almost entirely from the perspective of mechas. David and Joe are captured and caged, and we see a Flesh Fair through their eyes. The atmosphere is part rock concert and part Nuremberg rally. The audience is a mob, whipped to a frenzy by the event promoter, who, in a sermon lofting the rhetoric of race hatred and ethnic cleansing, represents the slaughter as preservation of species purity. "This is a commitment to a truly human future," he brays, as buckets of acid eviscerate and liquefy sacrificial mechas. He swears by "the law of blood and electricity."

Gripping and sly, these scenes swipe at the religion of humanism, not to vent misanthropy and disenchant idealism but to diagnose fears of miscegenation. The scenes illustrate that although the focus of fears of Otherness keeps shifting, the mechanics of this dread remain the same. The fear is of contamination, some sort of pollution seen to have a diluting, enervating



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Laurie Stone is an author and cultural critic. Her most recent books are *Close to the Bone* and *Laughing in the Dark*.

ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN HARRIS

effect on a group that considers itself whole and defined by essential, unchanging characteristics. The threat of contamination is perceived to be from outside. All campaigns of hate against perceived Others and all laws against miscegenation are based on this notion of a purity at risk of becoming degraded. In this setup, the invigorating effects of hybridization aren't valued, if they're even recognized. Rather, mixing is imagined as a decline and fall. In the mind of the person who sees a threat advancing, a sentence loops over and over: "Things used to be great, but now they stink, and something has to be done about it."

The film shows that, in fact, there is never a time when this sentence isn't ticking away, because as soon as the idea of purity is formed, worry is conjured about its fragility. As soon as there is worry, it feels like proof that the contamination has already occurred, so in the minds of purists, the present is always a time when things are worse than they were in an imagined, safer past. (No one has to lose a penis for castration anxiety to exist; all you need are people thinking that penises don't work as well as it's thought they were designed to—let's say, to guarantee penis-people top slot in the pecking order.) In other words, fear of Otherness is a forceful denial that any dilution has occurred, because the secret belief is that, indeed, it has.

The orgas know that the contamination they fear doesn't come from outside, because they feel only too keenly that they are hybrid, multiple, and in a state of constant revision. The orgas are aware that the boundary between what characterizes them as human and what defines mechas as nonhuman is continually altering. "I'm real," an orga child taunts David, even as the boy, recently resuscitated from a cryogenic coma, clomps around with prosthetic devices on his legs. Amid a dumpsite filled with extinguished mechas, damaged mechanical beings rummage for replacement parts, attaching a new arm or jaw with an

ease that humans awaiting organ donations can only long for.

Orgas know that humans change all the time—evolution being based on gene mutation. They know that technology has never been separate from human existence—the opposing thumb being a tool. They know that all intelligence is in some measure artificial, in that it's programmed by genes and later by ideologies. They know that all emotions have a technological component, in that nerve cells conduct electrical impulses. "The law of blood and electricity" indeed!

But the movie shows how much orgas hate this knowledge. Mechas remind them that nothing in existence is intrinsic, that the boundaries that appear to separate one category of being from another are permeable, and that the distinction between orgas and mechas, to the degree that it exists, may not be important, because humans represent only one kind of intelligent being and haven't been ordained as the model for all of them. This knowledge wounds the cherished human belief in species' specialness. In reaction, people throw tantrums and hunt for witches. Spielberg makes a point of this not only in the *Flesh Fair* sequences but elsewhere. On a wall in the building where David is fabricated is a painting depicting "The Emperor's New Clothes," a fable about the power of mass suggestion and the difficulty of acknowledging reality that's staring you in the face.

Alas, Spielberg, himself, has trouble digesting what he's filmed. In the last section, he reels back from the understanding—just as he's shown orgas doing—drifting to mystifications that may console him but strand his movie in an airless room. There, motherhood is sanctified and love is so cleansed of ambivalence it comes off cheesy and plastic.

Never mind. The movie stimulates thought about what, right now, characterizes people as human and computing machines as nonhuman. The mapping of the human genome, the

increasing miniaturization of computer chips, research into brain function, and advances in robotics—all these promise increasingly intelligent, sentient machines, some of which will aid human beings by mixing with and penetrating them. Implantable devices are in the works that will enable blind people to process visual images and people with spinal cord injuries to use their leg muscles. Does anyone consider the heart patient now living with a mechanical ticker less human, because a machine has replaced a muscle? Are people with other prostheses less than human? Today amputee runners, outfitted with newly-engineered titanium legs, can outstrip sprinters with flesh-and-bone limbs. The metal legs don't look like human legs and aren't trying to imitate them. They are beautiful according to their own, alternative aesthetic. The freak over there has always been inside us. In time, we may hope, we won't be so horrified. □

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Wonder

Jane S. Baron Rechtman

One of my favorite biblical characters is Moses, mainly because of his sense of wonder. Think about it: There he was, out in the desert taking care of his father-in-law's sheep. That's a lonely, boring job—in a desert no less! Then he saw

a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked and behold the bush burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when God saw that Moses turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush..."

Exodus 3.2

Whether you take the story literally or figuratively, Moses saw something so astounding, so out of the ordinary, so amazing, that he turned aside to see it. And it was *only then* that God spoke to him. It was only when Moses was willing to stop his daily routine, stop following or leading the sheep, stop wandering in a la-di-da or driven sort of way, and turn towards this sight before him that the essence of creation spoke to him.

I don't know about you, but I think about that burning bush almost every day at this time of the year. I look around at the trees with their bright oranges, yellows, and reds, I see the sun slant light through the branches, and to me they look like burning bushes. They look awesome and beautiful and on fire, although they are not consumed. Unfortunately, too often I'm rushing from here to there or there to here. So while I might take note of those trees, I don't "turn aside to see them" as often as I should. And what would I hear if I did turn aside and see these great sights?

I think trees talk to us. Of course, they don't use words. But with their beauty and their majesty they remind us of who and where we are in this world. So do birds and sky and ground. They speak to us, but we no longer have the patience to listen to them. Our inner ear has atrophied from lack of use. We fill ourselves up with so much human noise that we don't leave any room for nature sounds. Indigenous

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people have always read the signs of nature around them. As did Buddha when he sat under a tree for forty days and there became enlightened. Or Jesus when he said, "Consider the lilies of the field."

The philosopher Martin Buber, in his short but dense book, *I-Thou*, wrote that when we have a relationship with someone or something, we participate in a dialogue. We face the Other, connect, relate—and that's two-way communication. The Other doesn't have to be a person; it could be a tree, a rock, or a bird. But that Other is in relation to us, so both are affected. When we are in an I-It rela-

tionship, says Buber, the other is just a thing, an object, nothing that touches our being. Unfortunately, too often we see the people around us as "its," as mere objects for our use. Too often we see the trees, the grass, and the stars as mere backdrops for our lives.

But when we stop and face them, when we turn aside from our own dramas, we can't help but be in awe of the creative power in front of us. It changes our perspective, our whole way of looking at life.

Last night everyone in my family was rushing around. Half of us were coming in and half of us were going out. My husband went out to his bridge game; my older son to a babysitting job; my little one to the TV; and I to write this essay, correct papers, and read the newspaper. But when my older son came home, he took us all outside because Mercury and Jupiter were in an alignment that only happens every seven years. We looked up at the sky and there they were. It was awesome! Like two stars, these two planets, so far away and seemingly on opposite sides of our earth, were sitting side by side shining away. Reflected light beamed down on us from millions of miles away; they were there in that place, for us to see, just for that one moment in time. We stood there huddled in the dark, little human beings. And I was very glad that despite all that I *had* to do, I had said, like Moses, "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight." Did God speak to me? I think the energy force of creation—which is what I call God—speaks to me or any of us every time we turn aside to listen. □

3

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