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PASSOVER SUPPLEMENT

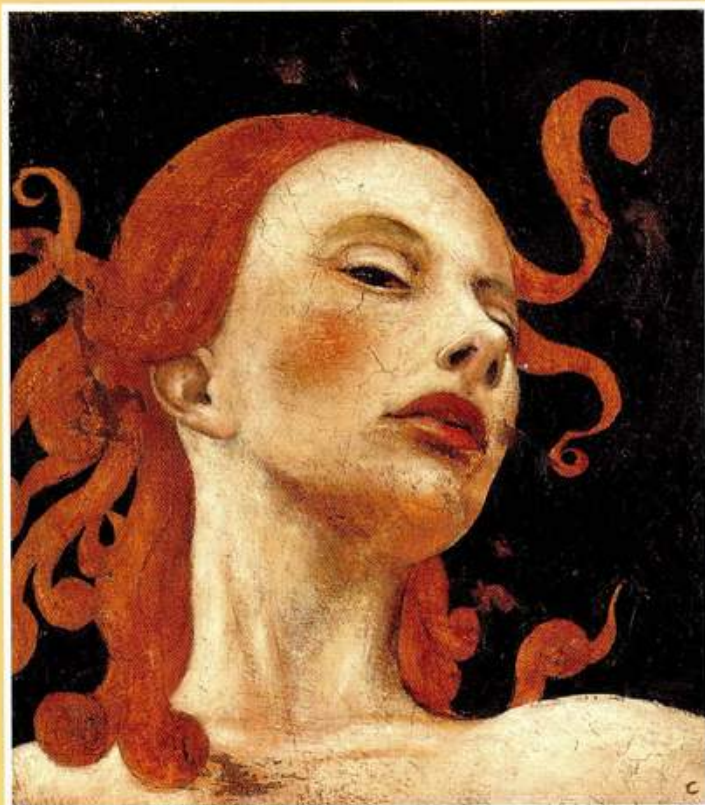
TIKKUN

SPIRITUALITY AND LAW

Peter Gabel

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY

MARCH/APRIL 2003



The Erotic and the Ethical

by Mordechai Gafni

AMERICAN VISION

Congressman Dennis Kucinich

DARK EMOTIONS

Miriam Greenspan

MUSIC OF HOPE

Steve Earle

ISRAELI ELECTIONS

Michael Dahan

WAR IN IRAQ:

Bad for the Soul – Michael Lerner, Arthur Waskow, Richard H. Lowery

Bad for the Jews – Stephen Zunes • George Vradenburg – The Case for War (2)

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PLUS:

Julian Levinson on Moyshe-Leyb Halpern and Modern Yiddish Poetry • Awakening to the Day
by Michael Strassfeld • God's Bride on Pesach by Kim Chernin • Paul Buhle on Jewish
Liberalism • Jeffrey J. Kripal on Jorge Ferrer • Deborah Kory on the Anti-War Movement •
Healing in Community by Deena Metzger • Jo Ellen Green Kaiser on *Lord of the Rings*

Survivable Space

Before she crosses the street
to offer what she brought from home,
let her be imagined at rest.

Let her be a random single
point in space, and let the space
extend upward from the plane the street
defines, so that in this dimension
it entails the upward-
tending structures she can see and what

sky shows above them. From her place
at the corner, which is no longer
random, the second and third dimensions
are defined. The second

entails motive and
destination: she brought a bag from home
and has crossed the city to cross
this street with it. The street

defines the third. It brings
the truck traffic toward and away from where,
under the new gap in the skyline,
the work goes in double shifts.

These definitions must suffice, there being now
no possibility of more. No possibility

the little dust-colored birds
that peck along the gutter know anything
of this. Nor the blown paper, nor
the ash still carried here and there on stray
currents rounding the corners,
nor the dead.

Now as the dimensions of space lack
meaning of their own, they must depend for it
on line of sight, motive and destination,
the needs of work, on thoughts
of them and those who make

their lives in them. Inside
the space made
by the bag, a comb.
Around one tooth one
strand of her husband's hair.
The strand encodes the space he used
to take up next to her. No longer

a point, the space she takes up
at the corner is held
open in every direction. This remnant
that survives him holds it open. Sufficient
if she can keep it open just enough to know
where *here* is at each step. From here

to the other side of the street is
a matter of steps, but space
has the property of not being

full, so that stepping across becomes
an act of faith. It does for her.
To be able to cross at all she must let
the curb let her go. Then reaching

her destination, not now
at rest or ever again, she will offer
what she brought in faith
that when he's found he can be
known by it. She will give it
the way the lower floors gave.

Blocks from here, the work goes
in double shifts in hopes
of finding those spaces called
survivable—those spaces which, life-
threatening as they are, are held
open just enough for life. Possible

in any collision or collapse such spaces
will remain since what defines
a space is what's inside. Not more

than what's removed is what returns
to earth, or anywhere, as when the singularity
believed

to be the first of all things opened
space to being with. Not less than all things
possible when it began, the explosion
made a space to come
back into. Nowhere is there
any rest, nowhere places made proof
against what threatens from outside.

—Lisa McCollough

2 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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6 The Iraq War

Beginning with our Publisher's Page, **George Vradenburg** once again argues *The Case for War* (2), while editor **Michael Lerner**, in *The Triumph of Fear*, explores the social/spiritual dynamics that have led to this war and how we might build an effective anti-war movement (7). Managing editor **Deborah Kory** follows with a twenty-something view of the anti-war movement (11). Democratic presidential candidate Congressman **Dennis Kucinich** (D, Ohio) argues against using war to make peace and offers a holistic alternative for the future of politics (12). **Miriam Greenspan** instructs us on *Healing Through the Dark Emotions in an Age of Global Threat* (19) while **Richard H. Lowery** finds biblical parallels to Bush's war in *David, Bathsheba, Nathan, and War* (23). We end with **Stephen Zunes**, who debunks the myth that the war with Iraq is being fought for Israel (25) and **Arthur Waskow**, who ponders *Oiloholics and the Burning World* (32).

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Front Cover: *A Twist Of Fate* by Craig LaRotonda. Oil and acrylic. www.revelationart.net



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Inside Back Cover: *Sikkum*: Books TIKKUN Recommends.

Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

Israel/Palestine

How to End the War of 1948

Tanya Reinhart

Seven Stories Press, 2002

Tanya Reinhart is an expert on theoretical linguistics who teaches at Tel Aviv University and a columnist for Israel's largest newspaper *Yediot Achronot*. She details here the negotiations between Israel and Palestine, and makes a strong case for the argument that negotiations could only work if Israel engaged in an immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the West Bank. She cites a 2002 survey (at the height of the violent struggle) which indicates that 77 percent of Palestinians still agree that both Israel and Palestine have the right to live in peace and security. Yet she is stark in her portrayal of what she calls "The Oslo Apartheid." Reinhart lacks the compassion for Israel that is a necessary component for reconciliation, but her account is a powerful challenge to all who underplay the ruthless commitment of many in Israel to perpetuate domination at all costs.



explores the tensions mothers in traditional patriarchal religions face as they try to bring their daughters into religious faiths that restrict some of the power and respect their daughters might rightfully seek for themselves. Many of these mothers are familiar with feminist tenets, yet they also have a commitment to powerful elements in their own religious traditions. Though scant on solutions, Halbertal is acute in defining the tension.

State of the World 2003

The Worldwatch Institute

W. W. Norton & Co., 2003

TIKKUN regularly calls your attention to this important yearly report on progress toward a sustainable world. In the latest such report, the editors warn that the human race has only one or two generations in which it must reinvent itself to deal with the challenge of planetary survival. Anyone who tells you they are being "realistic" by settling for the existing political choices in America should be required to read this study each year—to understand how wildly unrealistic it is to settle for politicians who are ignoring the devastation we face. Among the articles in this powerful study: "Watching Birds Disappear" by Howard Youth, "Charting a New Energy Future" by Janet Sawin, and "Engaging Religion in the Quest for a Sustainable World" by Gary Gardner.

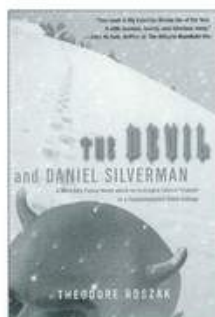


The Devil and Daniel Silverman

Theodore Roszak

Leapfrog Press, 2003

In this hilarious novel, Roszak brings us a failed San Francisco-based gay Jewish writer who gets trapped in a Minnesota fundamentalist Bible College during a snow storm. Daniel Silverman had no idea what he was in for when he accepted the invitation to talk in this world, and Roszak's deft portrayal of this hero and his fundamentalist hosts bares the prejudices of both cultures.

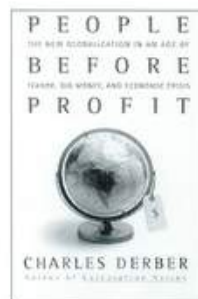


People Before Profit

Charles Derber

St. Martin's Press, 2002

Global monopolies are crushing local community economics and cultural diversity in nearly every sector of the economy. Derber argues for a new global democracy and for a system of collective security in which American unilateralism would be cured and U.S. power more evenly distributed—something that Derber believes will weaken America's dominance of the world market but will be in the nation's long-term economic interest, saving it the debilitating economic and military costs of Empire.



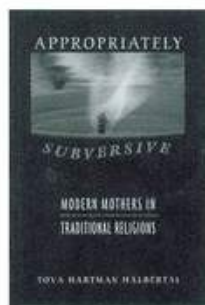
Appropriately Subversive

Modern Mothers in Traditional Religions

Tova Hartman Halbertal

Harvard University Press, 2002

Tova Halbertal is a lecturer in education at Hebrew University who created a new Orthodox minyan in the Baka section of Jerusalem where women lead the davening. In this fascinating study, she



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Peter Gabel

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Michael Bader, David Biale, Charles Derber,

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Art Director & Assistant Editor

Eric Zassenhaus

Copy Editor

Phillip Deitch

Editorial Assistants

Evan Derkacz, Jonah Gelbach,

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David Van Ness

Contributing Artists

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Sabrina Jones, Dorian Katz, Jon Krause,

Caren Belle Loebel-Fried, Josh Neufeld,

Andrew Rodman, Tiffany Sankary, Stan Shaw,

Alec Solomita, Michelle White

Web Design

David King, Jer Welter

Publisher

Trish Vradenburg

Controller

Valerie Bach

2342 Shattuck Avenue, #1200

Berkeley, CA 94704

510-644-1200

fax: 510-644-1255

magazine@tikkun.org

Visit the TIKKUN website at

http://www.tikkun.org

Editorial Board

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Letters to the Editor

New Letters Policy

In the past, we've only allowed letters that specifically address articles in the magazine. However, given that events in Israel and Iraq are moving at such a fast pace, and that we have active discussions of these events on our website and through Tikkun Mail (go to www.tikkun.org to subscribe to Tikkun Mail for free, and check out our website at least once a week), we are now going to consider letters that respond to issues on



our website and in Tikkun Mail for publication.

We select only a handful of the letters we receive, though everything we receive is carefully read. Letters are also subject to editorial review—we will sometimes select only a single paragraph or point from a long letter. If you don't want your letter considered for publication, please say so. Send all letters to: TIKKUN, 2342 Shattuck Avenue, #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704, or email us at magazine@tikkun.org.

Wake Up!

To the Editor:

TIKKUN readers, Democrats, Liberals, Americans, Jews—

WAKE UP!! OPEN YOUR EYES!!

You are targets marked for death by radical Islamists who want to kill you "just because"—just because you are TIKKUN readers, Democrats, Liberals, Americans or JEWS!

Realize that it is not poverty that

coaxed upper middle-class Saudis to pilot planes into the World Trade Center. It was not the lack of "social justice" that brought Islamists to bomb the World Trade Center and bomb the USS *Cole* when Clinton was president.

"Kumbaya" will not deter a North Korean nuke or an Iraqi smallpox attack.

It's time that we Jews wake up and realize that our fellow Christian country-

TIKKUN (Vol. 18, No. 2, ISSN 0887-9982) is published bimonthly by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. TIKKUN, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. TIKKUN subscribers are members of the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. Publications mail agreement number: #1549111. Canada mail distributor information: Express Messenger International; P.O. Box 25058; London BRC, ON N6C 6A8. Printed in USA. Printed on recycled paper.

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Letters to the Editor: Via mail or email to magazine@tikkun.org. Letters may be shortened for space.

Advertising: Contact Eric Zassenhaus, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704; (510) 644-1200; eric@tikkun.org.

Distribution: International bookstores and newsstand circulation by BigTop Newsstand Services, a division of the IPA. For more information call 415-643-0161 or fax 415-643-2983 or e-mail: info@BigTopPubs.com.

Postmaster: Send address changes to TIKKUN, P.O. Box 460926, Escondido, CA 92046. Periodical-rate postage paid at Oakland, CA and additional mailing offices by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, 3137 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, CA 94609.

men and our Republican president are our greatest allies in a war that was thrust upon us and Israel.

There is a right and wrong in this world and in this matter. President Bush is right. Celebrate his victory. Celebrate our good fortune that we finally have a president who will stand behind a free and democratic Israel as well as a democracy for the Palestinians.

If we cannot clearly see this writing on the wall, we will surely see it on our gravestones.

GARY MIRKIN
Great Neck, NY

War and Peace

To the Editor:

As President Bush prepares to lead a coalition to disarm Iraq and liberate its people, Jews in the United States and throughout the world need to question not only the wisdom of this war campaign but also the President's motivation. I for one, as an Israeli Jew, highly doubt that Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld care about my family. I am certain that they care little about my countrymen, Jewish and Arab, and even less about the Iraqi people. Call me a cynic but I seriously doubt the ability of the United States in general, and led by this president in particular, to effect positive change in the Middle East. President Bush has shown little more than a shallow understanding of the disastrous effects of occupation that have enveloped Israelis and Palestinians alike. He overlooks the human cost of violent policies of oppression and colonialism which feed the violence that we continue to experience in Israel and in the Occupied Territories. If Jews sincerely care about their cousins in Israel and humanity in general, they will make an intensified effort to stop the march to war.

The only thing that is certain in the Bush war scenario is that the president will be safe, just like those Israeli leaders who support the president's efforts. The rest of us remain vulnerable to terror and war, both of which are the result of patriarchal attitudes that perpetuate the arrogance we display in our continued policies of war and occupation.

LOUIS FRANKENTHALER
Jerusalem, Israel

To The Editor:

I agree with and support your analysis and vision of what needs to be done

in your editorial "A New Light for America and for Israel." (Jan/Feb, 2003). Most people, regardless of their political identification, desire a more meaningful life and caring relationships but have no idea how this could be achieved, either personally or politically. It is incumbent upon us who have a larger, more holistic vision to act on it to bring into being a new politic. We are talking about "evolving" our humanity, a call for more than the "new socialist man/woman," and something much more than another "10 Point Program," even beyond the one received on the Mount.

Thirty years ago we chanted "Make Love, Not War" and "Give Peace a Chance." But now I sense a greater understanding of what this requires of us. Signs held by demonstrators [at the October 26 rally in Washington, D.C.] called for opening our heart, for seeing beyond the great divide between us/them, for love grounded in vulnerability, dialogue, communication. Embrace the enemy, truth, not bombs.

These signs represent a more holistic and compassionate approach, a recognition that the personal and global spheres of our lives are wholly interdependent and that we are all collectively responsible for the world we have created. They go beyond blame and invite all to participate in a new way of being.

I believe the defining political issue of our time is the nature of our human relationships and that the fundamental contradiction on which all others (class, race, and sex) rest is the I/Thou split separating us from ourselves and each other. The critical political work of our time is to acknowledge process as a political act, end the means/ends divide and radically re-conceptualize and restructure organizational forms.

"Community Building" (one of many models and processes) takes us beyond political theory and creates the terrain to help heal the split. A community is a group of individuals who have learned to communicate honestly with each other, developed a commitment to each other, and are striving to move beyond distortions of the ego. Relationships go deeper than a social mask.

Community building is to the collective what spiritual practice is to the individual. And this is the essential point:

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LETTERS

relationship is sacred, and if we are in community, we get to know the best and worst about ourselves in an environment of love. Authentic community, once achieved, allows dialogue and harmony in collective action.

Then, moving out from our own community, we can humbly go to places of worship, neighborhood groups, and businesses and create forums where we can all speak truthfully about our fears, hopes, and the kind of world we want to live in and leave to our children.

We need to gather in the millions, one-by-one, two-by-two, building slowly and carefully, not numbers but relationships, till we are the visible palpable force of planetary transformation. If our public rallies for peace can carry this flavor and this approach, they will be far more effective in building fundamental change in our society.

ROSA NAPARSTEK,
New York, NY

To the Editor:

Regarding your editorials on Iraq, I think your readers could benefit from a lighter touch:

(Sung to the tune "If you're happy and you know it")

*If you cannot find Osama, bomb Iraq.
If the markets are a drama, bomb Iraq.
If the terrorists are frisky,
Pakistan is looking shifty,
North Korea is too risky,
Bomb Iraq.*

*If we have no allies with us, bomb Iraq.
If we think that someone's dissed us,
bomb Iraq.
So to hell with the inspections,
Let's look tough for the elections,
Close your mind and take directions,
Bomb Iraq.*

*It's pre-emptive non-aggression,
bomb Iraq.
To prevent this mass destruction,
bomb Iraq.*

*They've got weapons we can't see,
And that's all the proof we need,
If they're not there, they must be there,
Bomb Iraq.*

*If you never were elected, bomb Iraq.
If your mood is quite dejected, bomb Iraq.
If you think Saddam's gone mad,
With the weapons that he had,
And he tried to kill your dad,
Bomb Iraq.*

*If corporate fraud is growin', bomb Iraq.
If your ties to it are showin', bomb Iraq.
If your politics are sleazy,
And hiding that ain't easy,
And your manhood's getting queasy,
Bomb Iraq.*

*Fall in line and follow orders, bomb Iraq.
For our might knows not our borders,
bomb Iraq.
Disagree? We'll call it treason,
Let's make war not love this season,
Even if we have no reason,
Bomb Iraq.*

ANONYMOUS
from the Internet.

The Real World

To the Editor:

At a time when Israel is under siege by a gang of bloodthirsty murderers, who are supported by almost the entire Palestinian population (and not just a few fanatics), the Israeli people will trust their future to a realist, and not a dreamer. They are the ones whose lives are on the line, not you and your collection of secular elitists.

You and your magazine are what the communists used to call "useful idiots," who undermine your own co-religionists, and Israel.

No, you really don't know what is best for Israel, the Israeli people do.

RONALD GINSON
Lee's Summit, MO

To the Editor:

I happened across an article in a Jewish newspaper in Delray Beach, written by Rabbi Michael Lerner. With piqued interest, I went to the TIKKUN website to explore (www.tikkun.org). What a fine and lofty set of goals; and the value system espoused, as highly evolved as one can aspire to.

What a shock, then, to read Lerner's take on Israel. Should I bother to search

for an Islamic counterpart? It would be heartening to find such honesty there.

Jews seem to be the only people so willing and able to be so self-critical. Is there not enough hatred and criticism against Jews without our own input? How can we forget history so readily, how can we so readily hang out our "dirty wash" (by some lights), to offer fodder on a platter to those so hungry for Jewish annihilation? Please find me one other people who practice this! Are we Jews so arrogant to believe that we are so civilized, so highly evolved, to be able to do so with impunity. And history has shown, Jews do not enjoy impunity. Is it not dangerous and self-deluding to think we do? While your thoughtfulness and high-mindedness are to be admired, they are so at the same time thoughtless and dangerous. I believe you want to rise above the nether side of human nature and ignore that the world we abide in is rarely at the level you hope and strive for. Would that the world be filled with people with such a mind as yours. Be ever mindful, sadly, that it is not. It is more important then, again sadly, to stay reality-based. Never forget. Never, ever forget.

EMILY WINTER
Delray Beach, FL

To the Editor:

This is a message of support from the middle of Arabia. I am one of many people who believe that among the Jewish people there are as many who are ethically sensitive and fair-minded as any community. I wish that the majority of Arabs become aware that voices of racists and extremists among Jews, though louder, represent but a minority of misguided groups. Let people of good will and reason reach out toward each other.

AZEER HANEY,
From the Internet

Note from the Editor:

Last year, in the aftermath of the founding conference of the Tikkun Community and in response to increasing repression of the Palestinian people by the Israeli army, we at TIKKUN took out an ad in the *New York Times* praising the Israeli Refuseniks who will not serve in the West Bank or Gaza. That statement was signed by several hundred people whose names were listed.

At the bottom of the same ad, we included a statement about the Tikkun Community in which we listed the members of our National Advisory Board. Some of our National Advisory Board members were not involved in the drafting or signing of the statement in support of the Refuseniks. It appears that the combining of all this information in one ad was confusing to the public and led to the assumption that everyone on our National Advisory Board mentioned in the ad supported the statement praising the Refuseniks.

I apologize to all those whose names were listed in the *New York Times* ad who did not intend to support the statement praising Israeli Refuseniks.

To the Editor:

I generally enjoy the breadth and depth of *TIKKUN* and your articles in particular—whether I agree with them or not. They breathe intelligent life into often dead and limited discussions.

In your Jan/Feb 2003 editorial, however, I was disappointed to see you fall into the not infrequent trap of assuming that “dollars are dollars.” You say, “Let’s start by taking the \$1.5 billion the Bush tax cut gives to the rich and upper middle class and use that instead to fund the building of the infrastructure for ending global poverty, illness,” etc....

That’s a lofty sentiment—but your math and economics are just plain wrong, and that makes your whole argument appear misguided. In Econ 101 we learn that a tax cut releases money to be spent, and if it is spent and re-spent, it results *potentially* in an increase in economic activity in the United States that *potentially* spurs the economy and increases the real tax take. Rather than hurting the U.S. economy, believers in tax cuts conclude that the impact is either to reduce deficits or to cause only a very minor increase in them. Whether you believe that or not, one must at least consider the argument.

By way of contrast, if we ship \$1.5 trillion to underdeveloped countries, only a small share will come back to the United States, and there will be a real deficit of close to \$1.5 trillion—a rather huge sum even for the United States—causing real contraction of the economy, cutbacks in welfare programs, possibly higher interest rates, and surely more poverty at home. That needs to be considered too.

You personally may prefer to see a larger deficit and a smaller U.S. economy, but you have overlooked basic economics. Your argument is fatally flawed—and that bothers me as I seek more intelligent arguments from your magazine.

LARRY ISAACSON
from the Internet

Physicians for Social Responsibility

To the Editor:

Physicians for Social Responsibility approved the following resolution at its December, 2002, Executive Committee meeting:

Whereas we recognize the humanity

and fundamental decency of both the Israeli and Palestinian people, and wish to see them living in peace with each other, side by side in a safe Israel and a safe Palestine, and;

Whereas we abhor acts of terror and violence against Israeli civilians, and reject the notion that these attacks on civilians can ever be justified (no matter how justified the anger at the Occupation), and whereas we abhor acts of terror and violence against Palestinian civilians, destruction of Palestinian homes, confiscation of Palestinian land and property, and other violations of their human rights, and;

Whereas we reject any notion of moral equivalence because we see each act of terror and violence as uniquely awful and a violation of the sanctity of human life, and;

Whereas we see all attempts to put the blame primarily on one side or the other of this conflict as yet another way to keep the conflict going and as fundamentally obscuring the way that both sides participate in co-creating the struggle, and;

Whereas the continuation of this conflict is destructive to the people of the Middle East, counter to the best interests and values of the United States, and might contribute to an increase in Anti-Semitism and anti-Arab sentiments both worldwide and in our own community;

Be It Hereby Resolved that PSR endorse the efforts of the Tikkun Community (www.tikkun.org) and other organizations to achieve peace in the Middle East through a balanced two-state solution that respects the desire of both the Israeli and Palestinian people for peace and security.

ROY FARRELL, M.D.
Seattle, WA

History's Objective?

To the Editor:

I am a long-time subscriber, and while I don't agree with everything you propose, you do cause me to question much of what I believe—have believed—my whole life.

I must admit that part of what causes me to hold on to my “old beliefs” is that I am skeptical about your facts, figures, and reevaluation of the history regarding Israel's creation. Can you recommend any books that intelligently and

“objectively” give historical perspective on the causes of the conflict between Palestinians and Jews in Israel?

MICHAEL RUBELL
Morristown, NJ

Editor Responds:

There is no such thing as an objective account. Every account selects from the myriad of facts according to the author's own criteria of significance, and these are not given by the facts themselves. We have just published what we believe to be a balanced account—it's called Healing Israel/Palestine, and it tries to tell the story from the standpoint of both peoples. It will not satisfy those who believe that Israel is illegitimate and a colonial state, and it will not satisfy those who believe that Palestinians have no claim on the land or that there is no Occupation. But for most people looking for a middle path, this book will be extremely useful because it presents the history in a way that helps you understand how each side came to think the way they do, and why neither side is crazy, and neither side is righteous. You can order the book from us by sending \$18 to TIKKUN, 2342 Sbatuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704 or going to www.tikkun.org.

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The Case for War (2)

George Vradenburg

In a prior Publisher's Page (TIKKUN Nov./Dec. 2000), I argued that action should be taken to disarm Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power.

Four months later, there appears to be strong public support for doing just that if done under UN auspices, but anxiety about the United States acting alone. I think the public has it about right, although polls (at least in the United States) will no doubt show support for the Bush administration should it decide to take action absent UN sanction.

The strategic imperative remains unchanged. With the demise of the Soviet Union and proliferation of technology to make weapons of mass destruction, the structure of international power is being dramatically transformed. Potentially, Western hegemony is facing off against terrorist networks armed with biological, chemical, or radiological weapons supplied by hostile or "failing" states.

In such a context, the Cold War notion that a muscular Iraq and other hostile forces can be individually contained and deterred dangerously misses the point. The hostile forces we now confront do not live within political boundaries. The very forces of globalization that have democratized finance, communications, and transportation are dispersing the ability to produce and deliver mass weaponry. When proliferated through Iraq to smaller states and terrorist groups, mass weaponry threatens to empower small states and non-state actors. For that reason, smaller nations such as Iraq and "failed" states such as Afghanistan today provide a greater security threat to the United States than larger, conventionally more powerful nations.

This threat to our national security can be addressed with a two-pronged strategy: first, by relentlessly resisting the proliferation of mass weaponry technology—by force if necessary—and, second, by building a network of successful nation-states committed to shared values of peace and freedom in all regions of the world. We have already seen the positive results from such a strategy as newly-democratic (including some newly-disarmed) nations in the former Soviet bloc, in Latin America and in the Pacific Rim countries have joined the United States, Western Europe, and Japan in an anti-terrorism coalition. Now, we need to turn our attention to the Middle East.

Anti-proliferation and nation-building jobs should be the responsibility of the international community acting through the United Nations. The international community, however,

has demonstrated little willingness to act decisively without clear leadership from the United States. Indeed, it is only as a result of U.S. policy—to "go it alone" if necessary to disarm Iraq—that has caused other nations to breathe new life and a new backbone into that institution. And while the Bush administration has resisted support for the notion of nation-building, its policy will necessarily change as it confronts the consequences of intervention in Iraq.

Opponents of military action against Saddam Hussein in Europe and among Arab governments warn of "regional instability" and argue for a continuation of the status quo. But what is so appealing about the status quo in a region whose governments have failed so miserably to advance the interests of their own people in freedom, democracy, economic opportunity, and social justice? Is it not possible that regime change in Iraq will produce political and economic reform more rapidly than continuation of the status quo?

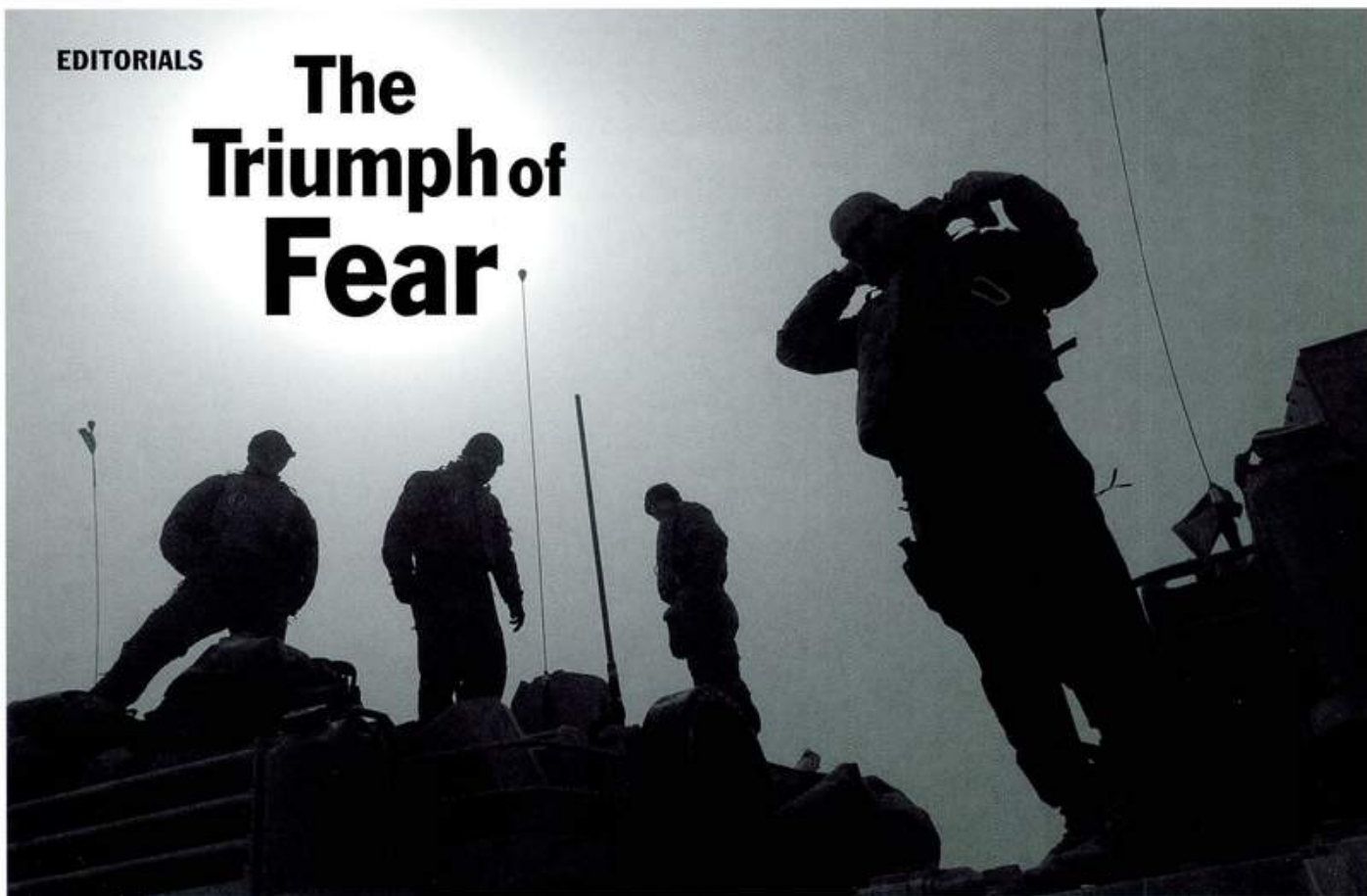
Post September 11, there has been added focus on the "failure" of Arab societies, a failure which many believe has fostered terrorist networks and global insecurity. The perceived need for external intervention to address that issue has highlighted among Arabs the need to take responsibility for reforming their systems. For example, Bahrain has given women the right to vote. Jordan has set a minimum quota for women in its Parliament. Several Arab states are meeting in Turkey to develop a peaceful strategy for regime change in Iraq. Egypt is hosting discussions among Palestinian factions designed to effect a cease-fire with Israel. The prospect of instability is causing the region to take positive steps toward reform.

For Israel, these developments should not be viewed as unconditionally positive. The United States' desire to build regional momentum for further reform in the Middle East will require that the Israeli-Palestinian issues be addressed, perhaps through a newly-empowered United Nations. The Arab League's two-state proposal within the 1967 borders is the most likely path to that resolution. That will be a hard nut for Israel to swallow.

The rapid, continuing change in the structure of international power makes predictions about future political developments difficult and uncertain. But the effects of that change on America's national interest and global role cannot be ignored. Driven by its own needs for safety and security, America is being compelled to use all its resources to bring about a world of peace and freedom—multilaterally if possible, but unilaterally if necessary. □

George Vradenburg is co-publisher of TIKKUN.

The Triumph of Fear



U.S. Marines in Kuwait.

The U.S. War Against Iraq

Michael Lerner

I. The Decline of Hope

How could it have come to this? The fundamentally decent people of the United States destroying the homes and lives of innocent Iraqis, just twenty-eight years after most Americans were so sickened by war-making that they chose to abandon the ill-conceived war in Vietnam! From my analysis of the psychodynamics that make this war possible comes a new strategy for the anti-war movement outlined in the second part of this editorial.

The purported reasons for the war are too transparently vacuous to be given much credibility. Stop the development of weapons of mass destruction? Then why not focus the attention on North Korea, which has admitted trying to develop these weapons, rather than Iraq, which doesn't have much. Sure, we are convinced that Saddam Hussein is a militarist who would love to join the club of nations like the United States, England, France, Israel, Pakistan, India, Russia, and Ukraine that have nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.

As Congressman Dennis Kucinich points out in a conversation with TIKKUN on page 12, there are over seventeen nations that have or are in the process of developing nuclear capacities and—in part through the help of Western countries like the United States—already have or are developing long-range delivery weapons. Twenty nations have or are in the process of developing chemical and biological weapons. Yes, this makes the world unsafe—but we have ourselves to blame for it in large part, including for the role we played in training and arming al Qaeda operatives when they were terrorists fighting against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

We are deeply opposed to Saddam Hussein. We are convinced that he has violated the basic human rights of his own citizens (including regularizing the use of torture), that he is responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of innocents, and that he should be brought to trial for crimes against humanity. We would love to see Saddam Hussein's regime replaced by a democratic and human rights-respecting regime in Iraq. But war is not the way to achieve that.

The record of regimes the United States has supported

around the world in the past forty years, and the ultra-right wing and human rights-insensitive proclivities of the Bush administration give us little reason to believe that a democratic regime will result from Bush's war.

Despite Secretary of State Powell's presentation to the UN about contacts between Iraq and al Qaeda (reminiscent, perhaps, of the long history of United States contact and support for bin Laden in the 1980s), there is no serious evidence that Saddam Hussein has had any interest in supporting Islamic extremists or terrorists—much less giving them weapons of mass destruction—at least, not until this war. In fact, Saddam ran a secular Islamic state which fought a bloody war against Iranian fundamentalists, and Saddam's chemical and biological weapons were supplied in part by the United States to encourage Saddam in that struggle.

If giving weapons to irresponsible terrorist forces were sufficient reason to overthrow a regime, the U.S. role in spreading these kinds of weapons in the past—for example to the terrorist Contras in Nicaragua, or to the Taliban in its struggle against the Soviet Union, or to terrorist groups seeking to overthrow Castro in Cuba, or to regimes with proven human rights violations—and our failure to participate in serious programs to stop proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons to those we consider our allies, would by this logic provide grounds for the people of the world to call for “regime change” in the United States, “by force, if necessary” as Bush says.

Tikkun Community Conference

The Tikkun Community's second annual conference will take place June 1st through the 4th. It will be a time to gather in community to share insight and inspiration so that we may continue the vital work of peace in these difficult times.

Our Teach-In to Congress will be on June 3rd. We are asking people and groups from all over the country to come and meet directly with their congressional representatives. We will show our policy-makers that there is a strong and organized constituency supporting a very different American policy in Israel/Palestine: one calling for an immediate end to the Occupation and a return to 1967 borders, with minor changes. One that begins with recognition of the pain on both sides, and the affirmation of the humanity of both peoples.

Conference Registration:

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Of course, we at TIKKUN reject this kind of reasoning—not because what the United States is doing is legitimate, but because in principle we reject the use of force and violence as an appropriate mechanism to stop behavior of states or individuals that we find might *possibly* endanger the world (except in the case of genocide, ethnic cleansing, or aggression against other states in the current moment without any possible way to save lives or protect the attacked country outside of intervention—an argument that might have been relevant when Iraq was gassing its Kurds, but is not today).

Many of America's most principled religious leaders have joined in the public appeal against this war. Some have argued that there is no proximate threat beyond that posed by the war the United States is bringing to Iraq. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter made this case very effectively on January 29, 2003:

“With overwhelming military strength now deployed against him and with intense monitoring from space surveillance and the UN inspection team on the ground, any belligerent move by Saddam against a neighbor would be suicidal. An effort to produce or deploy chemical or biological weapons or to make the slightest move toward a nuclear explosive would be inconceivable. If Iraq does possess such concealed weapons, as is quite likely, Saddam would use them only in the most extreme circumstances, in the face of an invasion of Iraq, when all hope of avoiding the destruction of his regime is lost.”

Carter might have added that there are no similar constraints on U.S. power, no monitoring of our weapons of mass destruction, no supervision of our chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, no restrictions on the delivery systems we've been developing.

If the predictions of U.S. strategy are correct, you may well be reading this after the United States has let loose the most massive bombing of a civilian city (Baghdad) since we nuked Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Tens of thousands of people will be killed, most of them having played no role whatsoever in the selection or maintenance of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship.

Even if the war doesn't occur, or if it occurs without high levels of civilian casualties (though don't expect Americans to know much about that since the media's obsequious subservience to government censorship is likely to continue—we will, no doubt, be flooded with glorifications of how “clean” and “efficient” and “smart” our technologies of war have become rather than stories of the human suffering of ordinary Iraqi people) the question remains: “How could decent Americans have allowed this to get to the place where it *could* happen?”

The surface answers are relevant but not finally satisfying:

1. **Oil.** True enough, George Bush represents that section of capital most tied to the oil and gas interests of the Southwest, some of whom could care less about the collapse of Wall Street or the pressures on finance capital that this war engenders. If the American oil industry could exercise



Iraqis search for survivors among the ruins of a house destroyed during U.S.-British airstrikes in 1999.

direct control over the oil wells of this most productive oil-producing state in the world, their own level of profits would be assured for quite some time and they would not have to yield to the interests of environmentalists who are urging a crash program to develop non-fossil fuels. Still, this seems like a risky path when Saddam Hussein would be happy to raise the level of oil production, flood the market, and push down dramatically the cost of oil for these same oil companies.

2. Bush's re-election. The economy has been in huge trouble since Bush took office, and it got worse after some of the largest firms revealed criminal behavior and started to collapse. Aided by Bush's massive tax giveaways to the rich, economic prosperity for all seems increasingly unlikely. Distracting attention from this by a focus on war seemed to work effectively to allow Bush to reverse the historic trend by which the party of the president in power tends to lose seats in the midterm election. Perhaps if the war drags on, and is associated in a clear way with the war on terror, Bush could use this war effectively in his re-election campaign.

3. Global hegemony and protection of the globalization of capital. Many of the old Cold Warriors in the administration believe that in a unipolar world, American political domination is in the best interests of everyone, assuring global order and allowing for the safe development of global capitalism, which, they sincerely believe, will benefit everyone. Thomas Friedman, in his impassioned pleas in the *New York Times* for war against Iraq, adds to this the belief that democracy would eventually flourish in regimes supported by American power and the globalization of capital.

Yet why would Americans allow this kind of thinking, with the evident consequence of being led back into war

again, just twenty-eight years after the end of Vietnam? The human race has already recognized that any line of reasoning which leads to the conclusion that "I must kill some Other who stands in my way or does not act the way I wish" is a fallacious way of thinking.

TIKKUN's answer is that Americans are in a state of fear, and that fear has been manipulated by militarists and political opportunists to lead ordinarily decent people to the conclusion that we can be safe only by wiping out others.

"Ah, the September 11 syndrome again?" you might wonder.

Well, yes, partly. But that fear goes much deeper than September 11. To understand it, we need to consider how it functions in the daily life experience of people. Let's start by considering the central fallacy that underlies all this fear: the belief that we are separate from each other, and that our individual well-being can be achieved without the well-being of everyone else on the planet.

"Isn't this just our ontological condition—the basic reality of life that we are thrown into this world on our own, and must face it on our own (to paraphrase the fascist philosopher Heidegger)?" you might ask.

No!

In fact we come into this world and survive through an attachment to a mothering being whose love, constancy, and nurturance are critical to our ability to survive and function. Our first experience of the world is one of love, caring, and selfless giving. It takes a lot of conditioning—living in a social reality that teaches us to see ourselves as counterposed to everyone else, that constructs an economic world in which our interests are set up against the interests of others—to unlearn our basic loving experience.

EDITORIALS

Yet as society grinds its way into our consciousness, it eventually succeeds in undermining our capacity to recognize the deepest truth of the world's spiritual and religious traditions (as well as the fundamental teaching of ecological theory): that we are all interconnected and mutually interdependent. In religious language, we are all created in the Image of God and equally deserving of well-being and care.

Once we remember or begin to allow ourselves to truly appreciate the Unity of All Being, we realize that the damage being done to the Iraqi people is being done to everyone on the planet including ourselves. They are us. They are not "Other."

Their pain and suffering will be ours.

And this is true not only because the devastation we are delivering to Iraq will create new generations of terrorists who may in fact strike at us, or our children, in decades to come.

The energies unleashed by this war will further destroy the social/psychological/spiritual environment and weaken the bonds of trust among all peoples alive at this moment in history, and will make it more likely for people to come to believe that:

- a. The world is a scary place.
- b. Our own interests are in conflict with everyone else's.
- c. If we don't act to protect ourselves from them and to win at their expense, they will hurt us to win at our expense.
- d. Getting power over others is the only realistic thing we can do to protect ourselves.
- e. If we want to be successful, we need to become good at manipulating others (subtly if possible, overtly if necessary).
- f. Even the people closest to us are likely to be motivated by their own self-interest (it's just "common sense" to believe that that is everyone's bottom line) so we'd best be sure to watch out for ourselves, because no one else will do that for us, no matter how much they claim to love us.

Taken together, this litany of beliefs is already powerfully present in our society, and the war will only make them appear more self-evident and legitimate. Once you appreciate the logic of this dominant worldview, it is not so far a step to think that under some circumstances we can be societally sanctioned to kill others to get our way.

These same beliefs, increasingly internalized in daily life, have contributed to the widespread breakdown of loving relationships, the dissolution of solidarity in communities, and the instability in family life. Our loneliness and alienation increases as we experience a deeper and deeper "realization" that "this is how life really is." No wonder then that more and more people turn to drugs and alcohol, or to a life defined around their individual computers, protected from unregulated contact with others, or to communities with high walls, both figuratively and literally, built around them.

You may think that when I talk about the breakdown of love that I've gone far afield from talking about war. But

no—it's all directly and immediately connected. How we live our lives is a manifestation of an underlying flow of energy in the world—either the energy of love and caring for others, and trust that there is enough, that you are enough, and that there will be enough for all of us; or the energy of fear that manifests in a certainty that the "Other" will be hurtful, that there is not enough love or recognition or food or material well-being to go around, and that if we don't take care of ourselves first and foremost—and without regard to what hurt we may have to inflict on others in order to achieve that—then others will hurt us or even kill us, and laugh at our naiveté and stupidity.

Every act that we take in our lives, every perception of what is possible with others and for ourselves, is shaped by our larger assessment of the flow of this energy in the world and how it defines what is reality and what is fantasy. These perceptions in turn tell us what to think about how much we can trust others, whether we can pick up a hitchhiker or not, whether we can trust a stranger walking in our neighborhood or not, whether we can as a society "afford" to pay for health care for the uninsured or supply child care or quality education for our children.

The war is an expression in its most acute form of the alienation and "othering" of people that is intensifying in daily life, a manifestation of our isolation and inability to see the Unity of All Being, to recognize our mutual interdependence, and our fear of affirming love and hope.

Every ounce of Being mirrors the totality, and is shaped by the totality, so that our own personal alienation grows deeper through living in a world based on war, and our likelihood of choosing war increases through our own individual and societal alienation, loneliness, fear of love and hope, and cynical realism.

Much of what we've done in TIKKUN in the past seventeen years has been to chart the movement of social hope and the ways it gets undermined by fear, leading to the dissolution of the bonds of trust between people.

The triumph of the competitive marketplace and its ethos of narcissistic, self-indulgent materialism has been central to this, generating a worldview that everyone is out for themselves and that no one can really count on others. Yet there have been counter-tendencies, because human beings normally gravitate toward caring and concern for each other, and that has at times found expression in large-scale social movements (e.g., in the 1930s and again in the 1960s and 1970s) that articulated a vision of hope. Those visions were systematically challenged in the name of cynical realism, and the challengers often won the day because they could always refer back to our "common sense" about how people "really are" based on our daily experience in the competitive marketplace.

It may be most illuminating to think of history through the frame of seeing the ways that people become encouraged to move from moments of hope to what the society teaches

(continued on page 29)

Reflections on the Movement

Deborah Kory

I never imagined I would be part of an anti-war movement. I was born shortly after the Vietnam War ended, and it seemed to me that America's great struggles had already been fought and won. Americans had created unions to protect working folk, defeated Hitler, fought for civil rights, brought women's consciousness into a man's world, and ended an immoral war in Vietnam all before I breathed my first breath. It has taken awhile for new struggles to take shape—against globalization, ecological devastation, and now against the war—but in the meantime it seemed my generation's biggest challenge was to find meaning in our vapid, money- and fame-obsessed culture.

But all that has changed. We've only just begun to feel the weight of adulthood and we're suddenly face-to-face with mortality. Death is no longer a vague, intangible concept, but a violent reality that may be visited upon us here and now, and life on earth itself is no longer sustainable—the planet will begin to die in a generation or two if we don't put a check on our reckless gluttony, and it may sooner implode beneath our reckless wars. Fortunately, people around the world are beginning to face our collective predicament (many have been facing it for a long time), and there is a discernable ripple in the complacent to-and-fro that characterizes much of American life. A new peace movement is being born with all the urgency of Bush's war, and we bear an overwhelming responsibility for the future survival of the planet.

Many of us are happy to take on this responsibility, as there is a real joy and sense of meaning in collective action. Protests are often magical—the boundaries and formalities that separate us from each other in our "normal" lives fall away as we engage with each other more freely and authentically. Live music draws out and dissipates the pent-up frustration and anger that many of us bring with us—loosening the fixed quality of our outrage and transforming it into affirmation and joy, even as we attune ourselves to the world's suffering. In these moments, we embody the kind of love and mutual recognition that gives me hope for the movement and for humanity.

At the same time, I've noticed an unnerving undercurrent of anger and hostility in the anti-war movement. We have a great deal to be angry about, and it's not surprising,

given all of the hostility in the world today, that we would be negotiating with it in our own movement. But anger can be deeply counter-productive if it surfaces undistilled, as rage. I was recently on a panel entitled "How to Start an Anti-War Movement," in which another panelist framed all of her answers within the context of class warfare and racism, and yelled at the mostly white audience as if they were the main perpetrators of the world's ills. In many respects she was

right—many of us are complicit in the racism and economic systems that perpetrate so much misery worldwide—but her hostility and self-righteousness made me want to run and hide. I somewhat timidly offered that the movement will not *move* unless we recognize the legitimate fears that Americans have about the threat of

terror, and that we must not rely on anger and guilt, but on love and compassion to fuel our work.

Anti-Israel hostility tends to be a little more subtle and it poses a complex problem for Jews. At the January 18 anti-war rally in San Francisco, I felt well-represented by many of the speakers who spoke eloquently and passionately about their opposition to war. But I had a nagging feeling in my heart when I heard some speakers equate the war against Iraq with oppression of Palestinians, and the anti-war movement to the movement to free Palestine, without any mention of Israel or the violence being perpetrated against Israelis; when signs went by that read "it's not about oil, it's about Israel;" and particularly when I approached a table full of leaflets extolling the Palestinian Intifada and its use of violence for political means. Of course I am deeply sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinian people—I want to free Palestine—but I want the fundamental humanity of both Israelis and Palestinians, and the recognition of their *collective* suffering, to be central in our efforts to do so. For those of us at TIKKUN, being anti-war means not only working toward the cessation of war, but toward the cessation of violence of any kind. We cannot hope to promote peace if we hold fast to our tribalistic tendencies.

This is beginning to happen, as broader coalitions are being built with wider representation from progressive Jews on organizing committees (find out how you can take part in your local anti-war organizing committee, and check out United for Peace and Justice at www.unitedforpeace.org).

(continued on page 15)

There is a real joy and sense of meaning in collective action.

Deborah Kory is managing editor of TIKKUN.

compassionate listening, so that people can understand the suffering that each side has been going through. For the sake of future generations, both sides need to take painful steps toward genuine reconciliation. I think it can be argued that the creation of a Palestinian State can be part of the plan to ensure security for a democratic Israel. And I think it's our responsibility, and the responsibility of the world community, to take steps that would stop the killing. If we saw a brother assaulting another brother, we'd intervene to stop it, not take sides but try to save both brothers' lives. We should do that in the Middle East. It will take fortitude and imagination to create peace. I firmly believe that the approach TIKKUN has advocated, and that has been more fully articulated in the book *Healing Israel/Palestine* which TIKKUN Books published, represents a path toward resolution that I think we should follow.

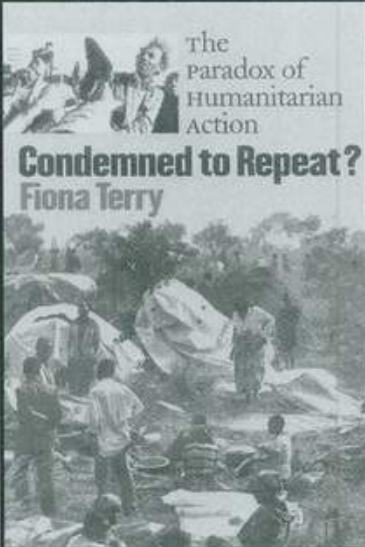
We must use our hearts and heads to move toward reconciliation and not let any group be separated from others or divided from their own humanity. We must find the common ground that will allow for all people to survive and prosper. We need to be ready at every moment to create a new world, and not be trapped by old ways of looking at reality.

TIKKUN: Now that is a beautiful summary of the heart of the TIKKUN message. One thing that has led many people to despair about getting involved in politics again is the way that past candidacies have mobilized people and then as soon as the election was over the energies had no further place for expression or direction. People who have been involved in that often feel misused and burnt out and unwilling to try again. So a campaign needs to be about more than winning—it needs to also be about creating an ongoing movement.

KUCINICH: Yes, that's exactly what I intend to do with my campaign. I hope people will visit www.Kucinich.us, because we will use that website as a way to begin the process of building an ongoing movement. It is not just about me. I feel that I can be a channel for energizing this movement. □

REFLECTIONS ON THE MOVEMENT (continued from page 11)

As we continue to learn and build our movement, we must be willing to engage in difficult, compassionate conversations and confront our own and others' prejudices. It is essential that we strive for a deeper understanding of the complexities facing us and that our message reflect this depth and complexity. If we are to have any impact on the long-term survival of the planet, we must constantly strive toward the highest values of humanity, and create within our movement a model for the vision we seek to make manifest in the world. In so doing, we create a sustainable, life-affirming, peaceful alternative to the fear, mistrust, and alienation that is running rampant among our nation's leaders. We speak truth to power more effectively when we speak with love. Let love re-invent us. □



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Fiona Terry

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AN INTERVIEW WITH

Congressman Dennis Kucinich

An American Vision

Congressman Dennis Kucinich is a candidate for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States. Kucinich is co-chair of the Progressive Caucus of the U.S. Congress, and he led the effort to have Democrats oppose the war in Iraq. He talked to TIKKUN in early February, shortly before announcing his candidacy.

TIKKUN: What is the worldview that you would bring into your role as an American leader?

KUCINICH: We live in a world in which dichotomous thinking has led to war. I try to look at the world holistically, to emphasize the ways that we are interconnected and interdependent, as an integrated whole. The job of an American leader is to bring about healing and reconciliation, by helping us overcome the divisions in our society between Blacks and Whites, rich and poor, us vs. other countries. If our world is going to survive, we are going to have to rise above these kinds of polarities, and to rise above all the conditions which restrict our definitions of Who We Really Are—so that we can free ourselves to become more than we are, and thereby through our own ascent elevate the human condition.

TIKKUN: What you are saying here is very close to the Core Vision of the Tikkun Community. We've insisted that the well-being of the United States depends on the well-being of everyone on the planet.

KUCINICH: It's important that we not separate ourselves from others. In order to confirm our historic mission as a society, it's imperative that we seek unifying principles—that is the essence of what being a truly united states involves.

TIKKUN: What do you mean by "our historic mission."

KUCINICH: Our nation was formed through the understanding of the unity of all people. Our sense of nationhood derives from our sense of what we hold in common: the idea of a right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness, which we hold in common not only in respect to our fellow countrymen and countrywomen, but as citizens of the world. These aspirations flourish everywhere, and our founders understood that. They didn't say "all Americans are created equal," but

rather "all men" (which for us means all men and women). In putting it that way they were expressing a universal sentiment which includes people from all over the world. America's vision is not just of a unity of states, but of the unity of individuals within these states and unity throughout the world.

We need to always be mindful of our historical roots and the ways that they were derived from the spiritual principle of One-ness.

TIKKUN: We've found a great deal of resistance among liberals and lefties to talking about spiritual principles, in part because they believe that doing so threatens to bring

religion back into the public sphere, and that there it will be right-wing religions that triumph. So they've fiercely adopted a kind of First Amendment fundamentalism, insisting that spiritual talk should not be part of public life.

KUCINICH: We need to respect the Founders' break with the Church of England and the significance that they gave to the First Amendment, which provided for guarantees of freedom of religion. And this must include free-

dom from religion if someone chooses not to believe.

But while the Founders wanted to provide religious freedom, this nation was also founded on profoundly spiritual values. We can take great comfort from our Founders' commitment to matters of the Spirit. They insisted on the self-evident truth of equality—and this was a spiritual principle. In the Declaration of Independence, the Founders recognized Nature's God, Divine Providence, and a Creator as the organizing principle in the universe. The Founders recognized Liberty, which is a spiritual principle, and Life which integrates with Spirit to find fullest expression.

The essence of our Constitution can be understood to be expressive of high principles, not only of law and ethics which subsume those principles, but of Spirit. Whether we look at the first motto of the United States, *E Pluribus Unum* (out of many, one), which is a spiritual principle, or in the latter motto "In God We Trust," we have to recognize the Founders were immersed in contemplation of a world beyond our experience, one of spirit, of mysticism,

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one which saw the potential of the country as unfolding in a multidimensional way, both through the work of our hands and the work of our hearts.

The Founders meant to separate Church and State, but I don't believe they ever meant to separate America from spiritual values.

TIKKUN: You have been one of the few Democrats to unequivocally critique the war in Iraq.

KUCINICH: It's a foundational principle of this country that we have the right to self-defense. In the Preamble to the Constitution, we say that "We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence...." It's fundamental that we have the right to defend ourselves, and that right is recognized for all nations by the UN Charter.

We need to distinguish between the right of a nation to defend itself and the right of any nation to assume the awful role of aggressor.

There is no question that a war upon the Iraqi people would be a war of aggression, a violation of the UN Charter, of the Geneva Convention, and of every moral principle this country has ever stood for.

It's reasonable for us to ask what Saddam Hussein stands for; it's even more important to ask, "what do we stand for as a Nation?"

The Iraq war may be an important transition in American history—from a period in which we were cooperating with the other nations of the world to affirm international law, to a period of unilateralism. It's up to the world community to address the challenges of disarmament, and America could lead by fulfilling the obligations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, abolishing all nuclear weapons, and working to implement the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention which call for the control and hopefully eventual elimination of biological and chemical weapons.

There are seventeen nations in this world today pursuing, developing or currently holding nuclear weapons. Twenty nations are doing so with biological weapons, twenty-six with respect to chemical weapons, and seventeen nations are developing missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. Does it occur to anyone that we are at a time in human history when we have the means of destroying our world? And yet within the capacity of our hearts we also have the means of healing our world. If there was ever a time when we need to fashion our swords into our ploughshares, this is it. If there was ever a time when America needed to lead the way to disarmament, this is it.

Does Saddam Hussein need to be disarmed? Of course. And so should every other nation.



TIKKUN: The argument we sometimes hear in response is that the circumstances are different in dealing with Saddam because he might give weapons of mass destruction to terrorist groups. In the post-September 11 climate in the United States, that concern resonates with many people.

KUCINICH: I support disarmament. But if we use war to disarm Iraq, we will create more terrorism.

If one nation proceeds unilaterally, it could easily encourage other nations to proceed unilaterally toward their own perceived security needs.

We should work with the world community to disarm all nations. Any nation

which possesses arms can be a threat to another nation and can spur an arms race. Any nation that expresses itself in a belligerent way must be brought to an accounting by the world community. But that can only be done if the countries involved in disciplining another country have themselves no ulterior motives and are acting with clean hands. Actions should not be taken for the purposes of empire, hegemony, or control of resources.

International terrorism presents a unique challenge because it operates without a specific territorial base. It is difficult to hold a particular country accountable for terrorist actions. Coordinated international police action is essential to systematically bring to justice all those engaged in acts of international terrorism.

Bombing Iraq will not diminish terrorism; it will create more terrorism. We have an obligation to challenge terrorists. We have to do so within the rules of international law, without impairing civil liberties. The U.S. has taken a serious turn against the interests of civil liberties with the passage of the Patriot Act, and the Administration continues to revise,

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through fiat, established criminal justice procedures. We have the right to defend ourselves as a nation, but we have to defend those human rights and constitutional protections that make the condition of nationhood something we celebrate. Terrorists win when they create conditions which lead our government to roll back constitutional freedoms.

TIKKUN: How do you account for the wimpy role of the Democrats in this? Its leadership has only called for moving more slowly and involving more countries, but has not challenged the war on principle.

KUCINICH: Yes, many speak as though the question is what kind of invasion, instead of questioning the thrust of the Administration's unilateral and preemptive doctrines. I have an understanding and compassion for my colleagues who are caught in the illogic of war. There is real fear about another attack. The Administration says, "Here is how we are going to deal with it: we are going to blow up Baghdad, invade the country, overturn the Saddam Hussein regime, occupy and rebuild Iraq." Many members of Congress say to themselves, "Let the Administration do it." This approval comes more from fear than from an understanding of the causal chain that brought terrorism to our shores. It lacks understanding of the relationship between the U.S. and Iraq over the course of the past twenty years. It lacks understanding of the consequences of trying to force the world community to join in an attack on Iraq. It also lacks a basis in reality, because Iraq was not responsible for al Qaeda's role in September 11 or the anthrax attack on our country. The Administration has not demonstrated that Iraq is an imminent threat to the United States.

Even so, 126 Democrats had the courage to vote against going to war.

TIKKUN: But even with the new leadership in 2003, when given the opportunity to address the nation in response to the State of the Union address—which President Bush used to mobilize support for war—again the Democrats failed the American people. Instead of giving voice to the principled opposition to the war which you, Congressman Kucinich, express, the Democrats presented a wimpy response whose only demurrer from the impending war was to ask that more time be given to inspectors and more allies be signed up for the invasion. Apparently some important Democrats feel that they might be politically vulnerable were they to take a clear stand.

KUCINICH: Yes, that's true. There are some Democrats who felt their constituencies would not accept a strong anti-war stand. So the Caucus did not take a unified, public stand. Members were told to vote their own conscience.

TIKKUN: But this has had the consequence of eliminating the possibility of a strong counter voice to the Administration's mis-education of the public about Iraq. The absence

of that voice contributes to people's belief that they have no alternative to war, and that belief in turn does make it harder for the Democrats to speak in a principled way.

KUCINICH: Yes, you are absolutely right. Yet there is a substantial group of Democrats who strongly oppose this war, and they represent tens of millions of Americans.

TIKKUN: Is this part of the reason you are running for the Democratic nomination for president?

KUCINICH: My candidacy is in response to the yearning of Americans for peace. For a nation which protects civil liberties.

For a country that is strong, but that doesn't want to be a policeman of the world. For a nation that will strengthen international law. My candidacy arises because Americans are aware that there has been a real transfer of wealth to the top. Americans who have worked their whole lives to try to secure a family, a home, are witnessing the destruction of our democracy.

Unemployment is rising. Too many Americans are losing their jobs and their homes. Too many families are breaking up. And this transfer of America's wealth from the many to the few is destructive of community.

America is at a transformational moment. We can form a more perfect Union, we can confirm our creative potential, and actualize our highest ideals in economics and in peacemaking. We can renew this country, we can restore the dream.

TIKKUN: We'd like to know your reactions to the positions that TIKKUN has taken on the Middle East—calling for an end to the blame game, recognizing that both sides have created the current reality and that both sides need to do repentance, and calling for the international community to impose a settlement that would minimally include an end to the Occupation and creation of an economically and politically viable Palestinian State, return of Israel to the pre-67 borders with minor border modifications so that Israel could incorporate the sections of Jerusalem with a Jewish majority, reparations for Palestinian refugees and also for Jews who fled Arab lands, recognition and peace with the Arab world, an end to terror on both sides, and admission of Israel and of the new Palestinian State into NATO or some other military arrangement that would provide military security for Israel as well as for Palestine.

KUCINICH: One of the many tragedies of the Administration's obsession with Iraq is that we've lost time and energy that could have been applied to the Middle East. I support the existence of the democratic State of Israel, for what it represents as a beacon of hope and as a bastion of democracy. I also support the creation of a Palestinian State.

I think that TIKKUN's approach is the key to the resolution of this conflict. The blame game has to end. There has to be, in the words of one significant movement,

I think that TIKKUN's approach is the key to the resolution of this conflict. The blame game has to end.

Sharon's Bittersweet Victory Sends Labor Soul Searching

Michael Daban

*Paranoia strikes deep
into your life it will creep
it starts when you're always afraid
you step out of line, the man come and take you away ...*
—From "For What its Worth," Buffalo Springfield, 1966

As anachronistic as it may seem, the words of this popular Sixties song accurately describe the current atmosphere in Israel, and partially explain both Sharon's victory and Labor's loss in the recent Israeli elections. Paranoia has indeed struck deep in Israel. The public is scared and fearful for the future. The current consensus is that Oslo has failed miserably, the Palestinians cannot be trusted, and Arafat is of course irrelevant: in sum, that the Israelis have no partner for peace. Whether this consensus is authentic or constructed by the media (as

has termed a "meme"—an idea that acts like a virus, propagating itself, taking on a life almost of its own. Ironically, instead of rescuing Barak and his party, this meme played a significant role in Labor's continued downfall.

The 2003 Elections: A snapshot of the results

Amid all the post-election talk of Labor's loss, it is useful to look at the actual results of the elections (the numbers in parentheses are the previous number of seats for that party). I have grouped the parties by where they fall on the Israeli political spectrum, which is marked not just by positions on the left, right, or center, but also along a continuum from secular to religious and Israeli to Arab (the term used in Israel to represent Palestinian Israelis). As a result, some

Israeli Election Results

LEFT	CENTER	RIGHT	ULTRA ORTHODOX	"ARAB" PARTIES
Labor 19 (26)	Shinui 15 (6)	Likud 38 (19)	Shas 11 (17)	Balad (Bishara) 3 (2)
Meretz 6 (10)		Israel B'aliyah (Sharansky) 2 (6)	Torah Judaism 5 (5)	Ra'am (Islamic Party) 2 (5)
Hadash/Ta'al 3 (3)		National Religious Party 6 (5)		
Am Ehad 3 (2)		Ikhud Leumi 7 (8)		
TOTAL: 31 (41)	TOTAL: 15 (6)	TOTAL: 53 (38)	TOTAL: 16 (22)	TOTAL: 5 (7)

Tel Aviv University researcher Daniel Dor has shown in his research), it has become increasingly difficult to breach.

The groundwork for this consensus was laid by Labor's former leader, Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and then underlined and re-enforced by two years of suicide bombings. Following the failure of the Camp David talks and the outbreak of the Al Aqsa Intifada in September 2000, Barak even up until today has chosen to place the blame solely, directly, and squarely on the Palestinian leader, absolving himself and the Labor party of any responsibility for what followed. His repeated mantras that "there is no partner for peace," that "we offered the Palestinians everything possible and still they refused to accept it," and that he had made a "generous offer," became what geneticist Richard Dawkins

parties fall into two categories. To simplify, I have placed them in just one, though their placement might be controversial. For example, unlike most analysts, I place the party Hadash/Ta'al on the left rather than among the Arab parties because it is a joint Jewish-Arab party, and the party Am Ehad on the left because it is essentially socialist in nature. Most analysts place this party in the center. Along with most analysts, I place Shinui in the center even though some analysts would claim that Shinui is a proto fascist party, whose campaign was based on extreme hatred toward the ultra-Orthodox and in support of the "middle class."

As can be seen by the results, there is a strong centripetal shift toward the center from both the left and the right of the political continuum. Shinui, in the center, managed to "catch" votes from Meretz, Labor, and Likud, while votes from Shas (somewhat right of Likud) went mostly to the Likud. Labor lost some of its votes to Likud as well, with Palestinian Israelis refraining from voting for Zionist parties as some have done in the past.

Dr. Michael Daban is an Israeli American political scientist. He writes political commentary together with Sam Bahour of Ramallah, and has founded a number of initiatives to foster cooperation among Israelis, Palestinians, and Arabs in the region.

In most regimes, a centripetal shift of this nature is usually indicative of a multi-party system composed of parties of similar ideological persuasion. Israel, however, has traditionally been considered a fragmented and polarized political system (hence the plurality of parties), composed of parties with wide ideological differences between them. It may be that Israel's parties are realigning toward the center, though the country will need to go through at least two more election cycles before this will become clear. It may just be that voter fatigue and low turnout skewed the results, or the overall dearth of clear and defined ideology and goals among the larger political parties that populate the spectrum. This election marked the lowest voter turnout in Israeli history, 68.5 percent, matched by an even lower turnout among Palestinian Israelis—62 percent. The overall feeling among the public was one of fatigue and disgust directed toward the political system as a whole and the parties in particular. Only two highly mobilized sectors, the settlers and the ultra-Orthodox (incidentally, sectors that are motivated by clear and defined ideologies, goals, and beliefs) showed high voter participation at approximately 76 percent.

Settler and ultra-Orthodox turnout, however, did not change the predominant swing toward the center. This election made clear that the general public is not interested in strengthening the small radical parties of the Left and Right during a time of crisis. Some of the smallest and most extreme parties, including those on the Right such as the revived fanatical Kahanist party, did not even pass the vote threshold in these elections. The fact that Israelis would prefer another national unity government and general consensus to fragmentation was also echoed by the fate of the immigrant parties, which were essentially wiped out by this vote. Interestingly enough, the change to the electoral system and the move to a single ballot did not seem to play a significant role in these elections, perhaps due to the atmosphere of crisis.

The fact that voters stayed away from small parties does not explain, however, why they stayed away from the Left. After all, Labor was the dominant party in Israel for years. The move toward the center was also a strong move away from the Left, with Labor losing seven seats and its sister-party Meretz losing four seats, or 40 percent of its previous total. This loss on the Left is even more difficult to understand when polls show that Israelis tend to favor Labor's positions, especially Labor's stand on dismantling the settlements and arriving at a peaceful two-state solution with the Palestinians.

Part of the backlash against Labor lies in the same move that carried votes to the center. The Israeli public may have been "punishing" Labor for forcing new, and what was seen as unnecessary, elections. Clearly, the public wanted to keep Sharon's unity government, in spite of the fact that Sharon, his sons, Likud ministers, and key party people are under police investigation for charges of corruption, bribery, and illegal campaign financing. Indeed, with the constant security threat and the fear of an upcoming war with Iraq, this is understandable.

More significantly, these were the first parliamentary elections to take place since 1999, a year marked by the failure of Camp David, followed by the outbreak of the Intifada and suicide bombings. This was essentially the first chance for the public to express its disappointment with the failure of Oslo, and it directed its rage against the party most closely associated with the accords. Add to this the irreparable damage caused by Barak and his release of the viral meme into the political discourse in Israel, and one begins to see that the defeat of Labor and the Left was almost inevitable.

Finally, the Labor election campaign itself was fairly anemic (as were most of the campaigns). It was based on two key elements: the refusal to join a unity government under any condition, and a personal campaign focusing on political neophyte Mitzna himself. The main campaign slogan was "We believe in you Mitzna, because only you can do it." The problem was that it was unclear exactly what Mitzna could do. How could the public be expected to "believe" in Mitzna if he was not offering anything concrete, or very different from Sharon? Labor failed to address the deteriorating economy, rising unemployment, and increasing poverty. Despite the fact that most Israelis agree with Labor's position on peace, neither Labor nor Meretz used the word "peace" at all in their respective campaigns. Peace, it would seem, is now a dirty word within the political discourse in Israel. In short, what Labor gave the public was a watered-down version of Likud's message, giving people reason to think "if there is no difference between Labor and Likud, I'll vote for the incumbent party, Likud." A political party can rouse people when it can do three things: simplify ideas, establish a claim to truth, and in the union of the two, demand a commitment to action. Labor failed to do so.

Sharon's Pyrrhic Victory

While Likud's victory was impressive—it doubled its seats from 19 to 38—its victory can only be described as Pyrrhic. The results have left Sharon in an extremely difficult situation in terms of coalition building. Sharon essentially has four options for forming a working government coalition, but only one of them is feasible:

- A wide national unity government with Labor and Am Ehad from the Left, Israel B'aliyah and the National Religious party from the Right, and Shas and Torah Judaism from the ultra-Orthodox, without the far right Ikhud Leumi, for a total of 84 seats. This option is Sharon's preference, though unlikely since Labor leader Amram Mitzna has publicly vowed and repeated his vow again and again throughout the Labor election campaign not to join a unity government.
- An "emergency" coalition (due to the threat of war) without Labor but with Likud, Shinui, Am Ehad, Israel B'aliyah, National Religious party and the ultra-Orthodox parties for a total of 80 seats. This option is considered unrealistic as Shinui's entire election campaign and party

platform was based on open hatred toward the ultra-Orthodox parties, though Shinui has noted that they would consider joining the coalition if a war breaks out.

- A right wing/ultra-Orthodox coalition including Likud, Ikhud Leumi, Israel B'aliyah, the National Religious party, and the ultra-Orthodox parties for a total of 69 seats. This option is also considered unrealistic since such a radical coalition will almost certainly bring pressure from the United States and Europe at a time when Israel is hoping to shore up its floundering economy with \$8 billion in U.S. aid. Also, the public is not interested in such an overtly anti-Palestinian coalition—polls show that a majority of the Israeli public still supports the idea of Palestinian statehood and is willing to dismantle settlements to reach an agreement with the Palestinians. Sharon himself has publicly and privately committed to Bush's "roadmap" which clearly calls for Palestinian statehood.
- A centrist coalition composed of Likud, Israel B'aliyah, Am Ehad, the National Religious party, and Shinui for a total of 64 seats. While this is a feasible option, it is extremely unstable and unlikely to last.

Sharon would prefer to join in a wide coalition with Labor for the same reasons he tried to maintain the national unity government before elections: by keeping his opposing political party under his government umbrella, and with the help of Shimon Peres, Sharon was granted a much-needed degree of legitimacy in both domestic and international politics. In return, Labor party cabinet members found political relevance by their participation in Sharon's government; if they had not joined with Sharon, their lack of an alternative national strategy and agenda would have consumed their few remaining political credits among Israeli voters. Following the election results, Sharon has been putting great pressure on Labor to join a unity government. The pressure has been direct, through the media and through key economic players, portraying Labor as "irresponsible" for not joining a coalition in times of crisis.

Certainly from Likud's point of view, the cohabitation of Likud and Labor seemed to be a match made in heaven. During the course of their coalition, Labor ministers did not lift a finger against the funding and expansion of the settlements, which took place at an alarming rate. Binyamin Ben Eliezer, as Defense Minister and Labor chair, did absolutely nothing to stop the settlers' violent actions against the Palestinian olive harvest (a crucial source of income for entire villages, especially in light of the horrid economic conditions within the Occupied Territories), or the fatal attacks of settlers against Palestinian farmers, nor did he restrain the IDF in its actions against the Palestinians. Even the exaggerated and widely reported removal of one of the illegal settler outposts (a strange choice of words, considering the fact that all of the settlements are illegal) was more of a public relations stunt than anything substantial, meant to toss sand into the eyes of the Israeli public and the world.

The Likud-Labor coalition was broken by Ben Eliezer himself, who left his position and forced elections in order to better compete in the Labor party primaries against his challenger Amram Mitzna. After Ben Eliezer lost the primaries, he spent the time during the election working hard to undermine Mitzna within the party, portraying him as a political greenhorn further to the left than the majority of the Labor constituency. Ben Eliezer and his supporters essentially forced dovish Labor MKs like Yossi Beilin and Yael Dayan out of the party and into Meretz, where they failed to be re-elected to the parliament. Mitzna responded to Ben Eliezer's maneuvering by pouring cold water into the nuptial bed by refusing to join a national unity government under any conditions.

Looking Forward

Mitzna can still make a difference. He must remain committed to his promise not to join a unity government under Sharon and instead work hard to rehabilitate the Labor party, and with it the entire Left. By refusing to join the coalition, Mitzna will force Sharon to form a narrow far-right government, which will expose him finally for what he really is, an empty and corrupt vessel, both morally and politically. Of course, Likud and others will claim that Labor is acting irresponsibly, placing partisan interests ahead of those of the state. These words will sound strange coming from a person who has shown in his two years as Prime Minister that he firmly believes that "l'état c'est moi." Why then should Mitzna and the Labor party provide Sharon with the ladder with which to get down? Better to remain in the opposition and provide him with the rope with which he can hang himself. If Mitzna is to maintain any credibility, any chance of providing a future for Israel as he claims to desire, then he must not join the coalition. There is also a distinct possibility that the Labor party will split into two separate entities, with one joining Sharon's coalition, and the other becoming the cornerstone of a vague initiative: the formation of a new "socialist democratic" party.

Labor's loss is also an opportunity for the parliamentary Left in Israel to regroup and to show leadership from the opposition benches. It is an opportunity for Labor to redefine itself, and to present a truly alternative political and social agenda. As it stands today, the Labor party is no more than a pale reflection of its former self, with little to distinguish it from Likud. In the opposition, however, Labor has a chance to serve as the focal point for the parliamentary Left. Labor will certainly find it easy to attack Sharon, who has not managed to provide security or peace, but has managed to send the Israeli economy to the intensive care unit. For example, they will be able to reveal Sharon's investment of at least 800 million U.S. dollars in the settlements for the 2003 fiscal year at the expense of a collapsing economy, the unemployed, and the disenfranchised. In the opposition, Labor

(continued on page 31)

Healing Through the Dark Emotions In an Age of Global Threat

Miriam Greenspan

For some thirty years as a psychotherapist, I've listened to painful stories. When people come for the "talking cure," they generally wear their pain as a badge of shame. They believe that they are suffering because of some core defect resulting from bad parenting they received, and that therapy will rid them of this defect and remove their bad feelings—hopefully forever. Conventional psychology is largely responsible for such ideas, which is why therapists always ask questions about how their patients' pain is connected to their families of origin but almost never ask: How is your suffering connected to the world?

After September 11th, this connection became obvious to Americans, even to psychologists. Our world, so full of beauty and wonder, is also a place of unthinkable terror, ecological devastation, and a baffling, overwhelming mass of ongoing collective sorrows. September 11 brought these unpalatable facts home. As a nation, we are still in a prolonged state of grief, not only for the monumental loss of American lives on September 11, but for our lost innocence. While President Bush has assured us that "we will not live in fear," his warmongering policies have only underscored the fact that we are living in fear. Despair about the military "winnability" of safety and freedom from terror nips at our national psyche like a snake. In this global context, the dark emotions of grief, fear, and despair are, and for the foreseeable future will be, unwelcome guests in our consciousness. We all suffer from these emotions, or from the ailments that stem from denying or numbing ourselves to them.

One by one by one, we in the psychotherapy profession see the common suffering of our age: the depressed and suicidal, chronically anxious, psychically numb, attention-deficient, relationally-impaired, multiply-addicted, spiritually

Miriam Greenspan is a psychotherapist, consultant, speaker, and pioneer in the field of feminist therapy based in Boston, MA. Her newest book is *Healing Through the Dark Emotions: The Wisdom of Grief, Fear and Despair* (Shambala).



*Therapists almost never ask:
How is your suffering connected
to the world?*

wounded men, women, and children who come to us for help and healing. In increasing numbers, at ever younger ages, we Americans are finding it impossible to sleep without Ambien, to work without Prozac, to live without alcohol, nicotine, or heroin, to be without our endless array of technotoys. Mood-altering drugs, once a type of medication largely confined to the closed halls of psychiatric inpatient units, are now household words: Who hasn't heard of Prozac? (Or isn't on it?) Words like "serotonin-deficiency" are now in the common lexicon, expressing our culture's reductive view of why we're so depressed.

Psychiatry diagnoses and treats these problems as though we are all little narcissistic bubble-selves floating around in space, with no relation to the social universe or earth we inhabit. Not one of the approximately 360 diagnoses of the DSM IV—the psychiatric bible of pathology—makes any connection between our emotional disturbances and the state of the world. What conventional psychiatry and psychology do instead is reduce human suffering to a plethora of categories of pathology, and document the steady escalation of these "mental disorders" in our time. These statistics tell us that some 20 million people in the United States suffer from depression, 100 million worldwide, and that each successive generation is more depressed than the one before. About 50 million people in the United States will be diagnosed with

one or more phobias. Approximately 45 million have severe anxiety disorders with names like panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, substance-induced anxiety disorder. Sleep disorders too are on the rise. Children at younger ages are being diagnosed in increasing numbers with mental disorders once reserved entirely for adults—bipolar disorder, depressive disorder, borderline personality disorder, and eating disorders, along with escalating disorders of learning and attention and alarming new diagnoses like oppositional defiance disorder and attachment disorder.

In my view, our inability, both individually and collectively, to mindfully tolerate our grief, fear, and despair—emotions that are continually triggered in an age of global threat—is a crucial source of what ails us. These are the emotions we most dread and that most urgently require our attention. Aborted or suppressed grief easily devolves into depression, anxiety, and addiction. Benumbed fear often turns into panic, phobias, irrational prejudice, and violence. Overwhelming or unconscious despair can lead to severe psychic numbing or express itself through destructive acts to oneself and others, including suicide and homicide. Sadly, these patterns play themselves out on the world stage as much as in the individual psyche. Our children, growing into a world in which the “normal” adult psychology of the older generation has traumatically endangered their world and their future, are carrying the burden of dark emotions that the adults in their world can barely name or tolerate.

If the bad news is that grief, fear, and despair are inevitable in the global environment we inhabit, the good news is that these emotions themselves offer us a means of individual and social transformation and healing. For more than twenty years, my work has focused on the healing power of the dark emotions. Most of what I know about this power I learned through my own personal odysseys in these realms. Being born and living for four years in a Displaced Person's Camp in Germany just after World War II gave me an early intimacy with the intense currents of grief and fear that circulated through the community of post-Holocaust Jewish refugees. From these beginnings, I learned that painful emotions are a power to be reckoned with, that they are transmitted inter-generationally, and that they tell a story the world needs to hear.

I started writing about the dark emotions in 1989, after my daughter Esther took a fall from her crib. Esther was born with a neuromotor disability for which medical science has no name. After her fall, I was warned by her orthopedist that falling again could cause Esther to become quadriplegic. I spent a long night looking straight into the face of my terror for my child's fragile life—and found that this fear, fully experienced in my body, had a trajectory, a movement that culminated in a state of unexpected, exuberant joy. In this moment, the idea for a book came to me, inspired and complete with chapter headings and title: *Healing Through the*

Dark Emotions. But the book was germinating for a long time before this. I date its beginnings to 1981, the year my first child was born and died. This grief was my harshest and most extraordinary teacher. It was a tornado that uprooted me and threw me down in a devastated landscape that mysteriously opened into a magical world where spirit was alive, even after death. It led me by the hand, like a child, and showed me that a great suffering can open the gate to a world charged with the sacred.

What my life has taught me, repeatedly, is that the heart heals itself when we know how to listen to it. In befriending our most dreaded emotions, we discover the heart's native intelligence. Each dark emotion has its own kind of wisdom, its own value and purpose, and its own alchemy. Each, in its own way, calls us to transformation. The alchemy of the dark emotions is a movement towards healing, harmony, and metamorphosis that happens when we know how to open to them, honor their wisdom and power, and use their energies wisely. In my own personal and professional experience, these alchemies move us from grief to gratitude, fear to joy, and despair to faith.

It's not the dark emotions themselves that hurt us but our fear of them, our belief that they're “negative,” and our inability to bear them mindfully. There are no “negative” emotions, only human emotions. But there are negative attitudes toward emotions, and negative consequences of emotions we can't tolerate. I call grief, fear, and despair “dark” not because they are unwholesome or pathological but because they tend to be shunned, silenced, or denied in patriarchal culture. “Emotion-phobia” is my term for this endemic, pervasive fear and devaluation of emotion in general and painful emotions in particular. Emotion-phobia dissociates us from the energies of emotions like grief, fear, and despair and tells us that they are untrustworthy, dangerous, and destructive. Like other traits our culture distrusts and devalues—vulnerability, for instance, or dependence—emotionality is associated with weakness, women, and children. Generally, we regard painful emotions as signs of psychological fragility, mental disorder, or spiritual defect. We suppress, intellectualize, judge, avoid, deny, or medicate them.

Emotion-phobia is reflected not only in individual attitudes towards uncomfortable emotional states but also in the ways that we think about and practice science and psychiatry. Our emotion-phobic culture is reinforced by psychiatric norms that cast almost all emotional pain in the pathology mold. In this context, it's hard, if not impossible, to see the value of the dark emotions, much less experience their alchemy.

Grief, fear, and despair are primary emotions, as fundamental to human existence as love, awe, joy, and hope. Emotional suffering doesn't mean we're sick. It means that we're alive; that we live in a damaged and damaging social environment; and that we're challenged to use our suffering for the purpose of transformation.

It is said that when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, God saw their sorrow and gave them the gift of tears. Grief arises because we are not alone, and what connects us to others and to the world also breaks our hearts. Grieving our losses allows us to heal and renew our spirits. Grief is a sacred, redemptive psycho-spiritual process that develops our empathy and compassion—when it's not inhibited by well-meaning friends, religious clerics with blandishments not to mourn because it's God's will, or psychiatric taboos that give us two months of grief time before declaring that we are suffering from a major mental disorder. Redemptive grief—by which I mean grief that has been honored and allowed to flow, mindfully, in its own unique manner—brings us to an awed sense of gratitude. When we fully grieve for what we've lost, we discover, as though for the first time, what we really have. We know our blessings—and we are grateful. This is grief's alchemy.

Fear is perhaps the most strongly stigmatized of the dark emotions, especially for men. Yet it is actually critical to our survival, both individually and as a species. Fear alerts us to protect life, extending beyond our instinct for self-preservation to our concern for the survival of others. Its call is an alarm that we ignore at our own peril. While we think of fear as paralyzing, it's actually energizing. The paralysis sets in when we afraid to experience fear in our bodies, and so deny or numb ourselves to it. Fear is the adrenaline surge of "fight or flight" which moves us to act. The trick is maintaining our awareness in the midst of this powerful emotion, allowing fear to move through us, and finding the right action—rather than trying to "kill" our fear through bold, aggressive moves (like destroying an "enemy"). In the alchemy of fear, we find the courage to experience our fear mindfully and to open to our vulnerability. We are then released into the joy of knowing that we can live with and use our fear wisely, that fear doesn't have to stop us from living fully.

The alchemy of despair may seem even more remote than that of fear. At face value, despair seems to be a "loser" emotion—an immediate threat to functioning and living well. Yet despair too has its uses. Arising as a response to something in ourselves or in the world that we cannot bear to accept, despair insists that we face into a dark truth from which we'd prefer to avert our gaze. It asks us to create meaning from unbearable pain, to radically transform the ways we think and act if we are to avert self-destruction. When we honor our despair, it delivers us to a more resilient faith in life. Having looked at the Medusa's head and not been turned to stone, we find a faith that is all the more unshakeable because it is not based on an avoidance of the dark. We discover that the darkness has its own light.

Again, our tolerance for this challenging emotion is only decreased by psychiatric assumptions of pathology. Psychiatry

loves to put arbitrary deadlines on emotions it pathologizes—timelines which, appearing in a diagnostic and statistical manual, attain the ring of "hard science." It is not normal to feel sad, dejected, or hopeless, say the experts, for more than two weeks at a time (regardless of what's going on in one's life or in the world). But anyone who's ever experienced despair knows that despair requires a great deal of patience. The darkest of the dark emotions, despair needs some spacious attention before it "lifts." Feeling this bad in a feel-good culture is trans-

gressive; it goes against the grain of a culture of denial. And yet Americans have one of the highest rates of depression in the world. In my view, depression is unalchemized, chronic despair. It's what happens when despair becomes chronically stuck in the body. Because we have such a low tolerance for despair, we tend to panic when we feel it, and this panic reaction, combined with our intense self-loathing for feeling so "weak," complicates and extends despair, turning it into chronic depression. This is not to say that depression is not a serious mental health problem, or that it has

nothing to do with serotonin. The problem is that the way we think about depression as a reified, pathological, strictly biochemical condition blinds us to despair as an honorable emotion and makes its alchemy unlikely.

In the Age of Prozac, the feel-good allure of the serotonin-boosters, like the soma of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, appears to make despair obsolete. Why not medicate what we can't tolerate? The answer is that despair, like grief and fear, carries vital information that we miss when we chemically obliterate it. Despair insists that we face our illusions and failures. It insists that we not turn away from the dark side of human nature and the seemingly insurmountable problems it creates. Despair challenges us to be present in the darkness, to open our hearts to the unbearable, and in so doing, it calls us to metamorphosis rather than "adjustment." When we open our hearts to global despair, we are called to go beyond the benumbed business as usual mindset, and to turn instead to creating a more humane world for the sake of our children and their children.

Each dark emotion has a gift, a sacred redemptive power which we discover when we come to it with openness, and when we know the art of attending, befriending, and consciously surrendering to it. These are the three basic skills I teach in my therapy practice and in my book. Attending to emotions doesn't mean noticing and distracting ourselves from them. It means cultivating a deep awareness of emotions as in-the-body energies, and of the thoughts that both trigger and subdue them. Befriending our dark emotions is an extension of this process, elongating our emotional attention spans and developing what psychologists call "affect tolerance." Finally, in surrender we don't give up our will, wallow in our pain, or become victims of our emotions. We



simply allow the energy of emotion to flow through the body to its end point, without venting or melodrama. Surrender, like attention and befriending, is a "staying with it" process, not a "getting away" process. The only way to authentically let go of an emotion is to let it be, and this requires a great deal of spiritual discipline.

We generally don't come to these skills intuitively because we have deeply internalized a "contain and manage" model of how to cope with emotions. We learn in our families, our schools, and in the culture as a whole that control is the best or only way to cope with intense feelings. In keeping with the patriarchal ethos of hierarchy, suppression, and fragmented consciousness, with patriarchy's fear of nature and the feminine, we try to keep those nasty feelings down before they overtake our reason. While this kind of control may be exactly what's needed in certain circumstances, it is also a culturally-sanctioned compulsion born of our emotion-phobic reactions to the flow of emotional energy in the body. If we are to receive the gifts of emotional alchemy, we need a more feminine model of "connection and flow" in which mindfulness, not control, is the key. When we know how to ride the energy of the dark emotions on the surfboard of awareness, emotional flow becomes transformational.

The loss of connection to nature in Western post-industrial society, the devastation of our environmental resources and the crippling effects of patriarchy are the largely overlooked global contexts that trigger and complicate the dark emotions in our time. These emotions are the conduit of our moral responsiveness to the world, carrying information our conscious minds would often rather deny or avoid. They are affective markers of our collective fate, and the unrecognized vehicles of an urgently needed worldwide social and spiritual transformation—the *tikkun olam* for which we fervently act and pray. If we ever needed the wisdom of the dark emotions, we need it now.

Yet, even as the dark emotions increasingly dominate our psyches, the wisdom they offer continues to elude us. This is obvious when we look around the globe. From our high school halls to the Pentagon, from the Middle East to Washington, D.C., we see not emotional alchemy but psychic numbing combined with violent acting out of intolerable emotions. In the Middle East, Israelis and Palestinians, two chronically grieving people, fight over the same piece of turf, creating collective traumas that destroy the possibilities of peaceful coexistence. Each suicide bomber, each incursion into Palestinian territory, makes it more and more difficult for these cousins in the human family to find a redemptive process of grief that would enlarge their respective points of view and lift them out of the national victim egos in which they are both tragically stuck. Intolerable grief, fear, and despair emerge as a proclivity to violence around the world, especially in spots where compulsive, ritualistic cycles of vengeance continually both reenact and produce more and more traumatized grief, fear and despair.

Huge mushroom clouds of unalchemized dark emotions afflict us in our time, transmitted transpersonally to all of us in some form. The "sensitives" among us (who tend to be women and children) are "carriers" of these emotions who hold dark emotional energy in their bodies, often unawares, putting them at risk for a host of mind/body ailments. Others become numb "bystanders" to dark emotions in themselves and others, masters of the dominant mode of emotional cut-off. This patriarchal style of dissociating from emotion is killing us—contributing to interpersonal impasses, violence both perpetrated and tolerated, moral failures to respond empathically to human suffering, and the eco-cidal destruction of the earth. A recent example is the crisis in the Catholic Church, which is really the exposed failure of a patriarchal institution to protect the victims of its own arrogant power; the failure of Church leaders to empathize with the victims rather than the perpetrators of abuse. If our leaders were more attuned to the empathic properties of their dark emotions, such "bystander" crimes would be a lot less likely. What's needed is a shift to a more feminine emotional style and meaning system, in which emotions are seen as powerful ways of knowing that guide us to develop empathy, nurturance, and care of others; a shift in which these qualities are no longer privatized or devalued as second-order business. Perhaps then emotions—dismissed, trivialized, and pathologized in patriarchy—would not lose their potential for redemptive healing and transformation.

We live in the world and the world lives in us. The dark emotions that our bodies carry are transpersonal energies housed in our flesh and rooted in our responses to the world—to the inevitable pain of being alive and being humanly connected to others. We see our private feelings through the lens of our separateness, but when we widen the lens, it becomes clear that everything we feel is experienced within a larger system of emotional ecology. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., we are all interconnected in an "inescapable web of mutuality." We can use the energy of our most dreaded emotions for the purpose of healing not only ourselves but this larger web. The call to healing is, in fact, a fundamental message of the dark emotions: because we all feel sorrow, fear, and despair, because these emotions are universal, we are all intervulnerable, for better and for worse. We feel together and heal together. In recognizing the profound ways that we are interconnected in our suffering, we come to understand healing in a larger sense than simply the amelioration of individual pain. We hear more vividly the cries of others in the human family, and of the earth itself for healing. We each have a particular gift or vision, skill or song to contribute to global healing. Individual healing, as I see it, has a lot to do with finding this gift and giving it to the world. When we can do this, no matter how small our gift may seem, we are made more whole. In this process, we break out of the prison of ego. We become fuller and more

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David, Bathsheba, Nathan, and War

Richard H. Lowery

In the spring of the year, when kings go to war, David mobilized Joab, his officers, and all Israel with him. They left the Ammonites in ruin and laid siege to Rabbah. David stayed behind in Jerusalem. At sunset one day, he got out of bed and took a stroll on the palace roof. From the roof, he saw a woman bathing. (2 Sam. 11:1–2)

With biting sarcasm, the biblical writer begins to narrate the tragic seduction of Israel's greatest political leader, King David. Enticed by his own power, David rides unprecedented success at home into armed conflict abroad. But victory in battle cannot finally mask the failure of moral and political leadership that led the nation to war.

The verses above introduce a long narrative that describes the unraveling of David's popular reign and charts the violent course that finally leads to the crowning of Solomon, David's unlikely successor.

The writer's deadpan assertion that spring is the time "when kings go to war" may be a simple statement of fact. But it also underlines the distinctly unnatural character of a political system that generates death and destruction at precisely the time Nature calls forth new life and hope.

We can't know for sure why David in this case sent his troops to fight on foreign soil. No enemy provocation is mentioned, no clear-and-present danger is defined. We're only told that this is the sort of thing kings typically do this time of year—perhaps a hint that David's war is motivated by economic interests and political prestige.

Though the rationale for war is unclear, these verses leave little doubt about how David's wartime conduct should be viewed. While the troops went out to battle, "David stayed behind in Jerusalem." Lest the reader miss the point, the writer continues: "At sunset one day, he got out of bed and took a stroll."

Trigger-happy with the lives of others, David loses little sleep over the risks they take on his behalf or the disastrous effects of the war he orders on the people of Ammon and Rabbah. In the comfort and safety of the Executive Mansion, the slayer of Goliath has become a "chicken-hawk,"

Richard H. Lowery is professor of Old Testament at Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, Oklahoma.



eager for war, but protected from its dangers and shielded from its consequences.

It is tempting to apply this ancient political critique narrowly against many of the politicians and pundits today who seem eager for war against Iraq. I am troubled, for example, that the president and many of the most enthusiastic cheerleaders of war in the White House, Congress, and right-wing media used social and political privilege to avoid combat in Vietnam, a war they otherwise supported. Today they beat the drums of war, but their children are not the ones who will risk their lives in the Persian Gulf, in the air over Iraq, or moving door-to-door in Baghdad. Poor and middle-class kids from small towns, farms, and inner cities—decent, patriotic Americans who took the best chance they have for a college education and a decent job—they are the ones who will pay the price for this rush to war, not the sons and daughters of White House advisors, senators, and TV personalities who promote military action.

The biblical story, however, suggests that something more fundamental is at stake than mere political hypocrisy. The narrative issues a deeper, broader moral challenge. David has lost respect for the inherent value of other human beings. Removed from the consequences of his call to arms, David is desensitized, untroubled by the violence he unleashes.

In the paragraphs that follow, David uses the power of his office to force a sexual encounter with Bathsheba, the woman he sees bathing. When she becomes pregnant, he attempts to cover up the assault, summoning her husband Uriah from battle and encouraging him to sleep with her.

Uriah's principled refusal to go home to his wife highlights David's shameful lack of empathy for those he puts at risk: "Israel and Judah are living in tents," Uriah says, "my lord's troops are camping in the field, and I should go to my own house to eat, drink, and lie with my wife? I swear on your life, I would not do such a thing!" (2 Sam. 11:11) His plan frustrated by Uriah's loyalty and solidarity with comrades-in-arms, David secretly orders his murder and quickly adds the widowed Bathsheba to the royal harem where she gives birth to David's son, hidden from public scrutiny. Uriah dies according to plan, abandoned by retreating comrades on a battlefield far away from David, his murder veiled by the fog of war.

David's violence is classified, cloaked in secrecy, hidden from public view. But the secret finally threatens to undo him. In fact, it sets into motion a series of events that nearly destroys David's own family and plunges the nation into civil war.

Today, we too face a moral danger from violence sanitized and hidden.

One of the chief lessons the current generation of American political and military leaders learned from Vietnam is that, in the absence of a clear-and-present threat to national security, popular support for war quickly erodes when American soldiers are killed and wounded in large numbers. This realization has had morally positive and negative consequences.

On the positive side, a culture of resistance to war has emerged in the Pentagon since Vietnam. So it is not really surprising that generals in active service and former generals in the Bush administration have shown less enthusiasm for another war against Iraq than the political leaders who never saw combat. The new Iraq war is especially troubling for Vietnam-era military brass, because it apparently will be a war of occupation. American casualties are likely to be higher, and our military presence in Iraq will last much longer than it did during Desert Storm. Political support will be harder to maintain over such a long haul.

A more ambiguous moral legacy of Vietnam, however, is the focus today on extremely violent high-tech weapons that can be launched with great accuracy far from the battlefield. We are now able to decimate enemy troops and their weapons, equipment, and strategic infrastructure, with relatively little risk to our own personnel. The bodies of enemy soldiers and unfortunate civilians collaterally damaged are obliterated, blown to pieces, burned beyond recognition in strikes launched by technicians at computer screens miles away. Where ground troops are required for close combat, as in the overthrow of the Taliban and the ongoing hunt for Osama bin Laden, we use local forces as surrogates where possible. The death toll among these local troops, as well as among civilians, may be very high. Such

casualties, though regretted, will be tolerated, as long as American troops suffer few losses.

The post-Vietnam obsession with the safety of American personnel and the swift, decisive completion of war once it is engaged is laudable. But the physical and emotional distance our weapons create between us and the people we destroy confronts us with the same moral threat David faced: The failure of empathy, the danger of being untroubled by the violence we unleash.

Shielding ourselves from the terrible consequences of war, we make it more palatable and more likely. We risk developing a taste for war and the threat of war. We risk becoming callous to its terrifying consequences for the real human beings on the receiving end of our deadly assaults.

David's casual use of military power and his physical and emotional distance from its consequences set him and his children on a violent course that nearly destroyed the nation. We—or perhaps our children—will also pay a high price for military force too easily used in Iraq and else-

where, for lack of empathy, for willful ignorance of the human consequences of war. Callous insensitivity to the suffering of others—even those who are our enemies for now—will come back to haunt us.

It seems unlikely that America's taste for high-tech warfare will soon fade. Chances are that technological advances will further remove us from the dangers and horrors of real-life battle. But we cannot afford to hide from the deadly effects of our unprecedented, unparalleled military power.

Iraqi civilians already pay a daily, deadly toll for Saddam Hussein's foolish, brutal, illegal invasion of Kuwait twelve years ago. Iraqi soldiers, politicians, and innocent civilians will pay a higher price still if war is renewed. The managers of war in the White House and Pentagon will try very hard to hide the human cost of it by controlling the flow of information. In spoon-fed press conferences and pool reports, they will highlight the efficiency and accuracy of our strikes. They will issue strict rules that limit media access to the war zone in an attempt to conceal the bloody devastation on the ground.

We must not sanction these efforts to shield the public from the gruesome reality of high-tech war.

In the biblical story, David tries to hide his violent abuse of power. But the court prophet Nathan exposes the truth, cleverly forcing David to empathize with the victims and acknowledge his role in their suffering.

We must raise up prophets like Nathan—journalists, scholars, relief workers, human-rights activists, people of faith and good will who have the courage and skill to tell stories from the receiving end of high-tech war, who confront

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*Callous insensitivity
to the suffering of
others—even those
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back to haunt us.*

Iraq, Israel, and the Jews

Stephen Zunes

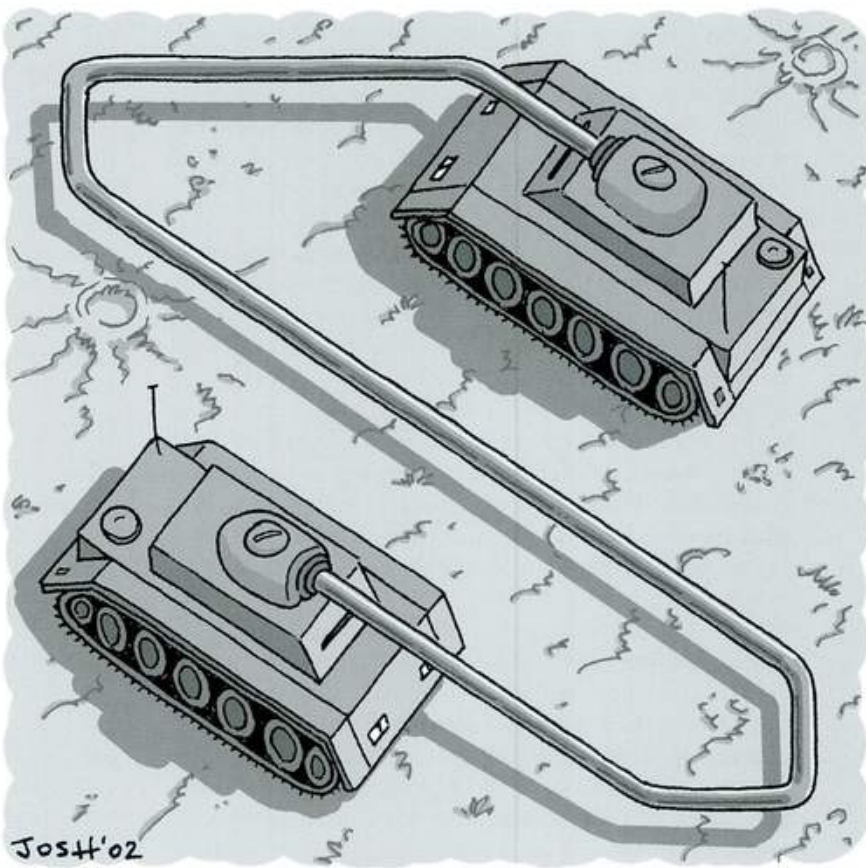
Over the past several months, I have been giving a series of talks and media interviews, speaking out in opposition of a U.S. invasion of Iraq and participating in a number of public debates. When the subject of why the United States would risk what could potentially be a humanitarian, environmental, economic, and political disaster when the arguments in support of going to war are so transparently weak, one theory comes up repeatedly: the Bush administration is taking this reckless initiative as a result of powerful Jewish interests.

Where does this perception of "powerful Jewish interests" pushing for a U.S. invasion of Iraq come from and is there any merit to it?

The Bush administration's rather ludicrous claim that Iraq is a serious security threat to the United States seems to reinforce this perception. Iraq has never had InterContinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) or other delivery systems capable of reaching the United States and the development of such technologies under the current strict embargo would be virtually impossible in the foreseeable future. Despite claims to the contrary from the administration, there is little evidence to suggest any ties between the secular Baathist regime and the Islamist al Qaeda movement. In addition, none of Iraq's Muslim neighbors have expressed any concern that today's Iraq poses any kind of threat. Indeed, all of them are on record opposing a unilateral U.S. invasion.

By contrast, Israel is the only country in the region to openly support a U.S. invasion. This fact, along with the historic hostility of the Iraqi government toward Israel and the Scud missile attacks against the country in 1991, leads to a widespread assumption that it is concern for Israel's security that is prompting the United States' determination to oust Saddam Hussein's regime through military force.

*Stephen Zunes is chair of the Peace & Justice Studies Program at the University of San Francisco. He is the author of the recently-released *Tinderbox: U.S. Middle East Policy and the Roots of Terrorism* <http://www.commoncouragepress.org>.*



This analysis is faulty, however. First of all, there are reasons to believe that Iraq may not have any more capability to attack Tel Aviv than it does to attack Washington. In late 1997, Richard Butler, head of the first UN inspections regime, reported that 817 of the 819 Soviet-supplied long-range missiles had been accounted for and destroyed. Ten to twenty Iraqi-made ballistic missiles remained unaccounted for, but these were of questionable caliber and had never been tested. During its last three years of operation, UNSCOM was unable to detect any evidence that Iraq had been further concealing prohibited weapons, even though the scope of inspections had expanded.

In case Iraq does have the ability to launch a missile attack, Israel is far more capable of defending itself than it was in 1991. Indeed, as a result of these attacks and the failure of the U.S. supplied Patriot missiles to provide protection, Israel has since developed the best regional missile defense system in the world.

IRAQ

Butler also reported that UNSCOM had made "significant progress" in tracking Iraq's chemical weapons program. Chief UNSCOM weapons inspector Scott Ritter estimates that at least 95 percent of the country's chemical weapons had been destroyed by late 1998, when President Bill Clinton ordered UNSCOM inspectors to withdraw before their mission was complete.

Biological weapons are easier to develop and conceal. However, Israeli military analyst Meir Stieglitz, writing in the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Achronot*, noted that "there is no such thing as a long-range Iraqi missile with an effective biological warhead. No one has found an Iraqi biological warhead. The chances of Iraq having succeeded in developing operative warheads without tests are zero."

It is highly doubtful that Iraq would be able to attack Israel with biological weapons by other means, either. For example, it is hard to imagine that an Iraqi aircraft carrying biological weapons, presumably some kind of drone, could somehow make it to Israel without being detected and shot down. Israel—as well as Iraq's immediate neighbors—have sophisticated anti-aircraft capability.

It was the sale of technology and raw materials from industrialized countries that made Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs possible in the 1980s, but such transfers have been banned since late 1990 and this embargo, according to most observers, has been strictly observed.

More fundamentally, if the United States were really concerned with Israel's safety, why did the U.S. government provide Iraq with key elements of its WMD capability during the 1980s—including the seed stock for its anthrax and many of the components for its chemical weapons program—when it clearly *did* have the capability of striking Israel? Similarly, Saddam Hussein has consistently made clear that he would not attack Israel unless attacked first. The 1991 missile attacks came only in direct response to the U.S.-led air strikes on Iraq. The United States knew at the time that an attack on Iraq would probably mean an attack on Israel, yet the senior Bush administration eschewed diplomatic efforts that could have led to an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait without war and went ahead with Operation Desert Storm.

A second assertion that purports to prove a critical Jewish role in pushing for an invasion of Iraq comes in the context of alleged Jewish influence on Capitol Hill in lobbying for congressional authorization for the use of force against Iraq without United Nations approval. This argument cites the sizable number of otherwise dovish Jewish members of Congress who voted in support of the war, as well as the influence of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), long considered one of the most powerful lobbying groups in Congress, in getting Congress to support an invasion.

While AIPAC undeniably has influenced congressional votes regarding Israeli-Palestinian concerns and other

issues, it has not played a major role in lobbying for support of the president's call for a U.S. invasion. More fundamentally, there are far more powerful interests with a stake in what happens in the Persian Gulf region than AIPAC. These include the oil companies, the arms industry, and other special interests whose lobbying influence and campaign contributions far surpass that of the much-vaunted "Jewish lobby" and its allied donors to congressional races. Indeed, U.S. interests in the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf have existed for many decades and even pre-dates the establishment of modern Israel.

It is noteworthy that in the authorization of force for the 1991 Gulf War, the majority of Jewish members of Congress voted *against* the war resolution, which is more than can be said for its non-Jewish members. In the more lopsided vote authorizing the use of force this past October, a majority of Jewish members of Congress did authorize the use of force, though proportionately less so than did non-Jewish members.

A third assertion alleging major Jewish influence in the push towards war involves the role of Jewish neo-conservatives like Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, and Richard Perle, who have been among the key architects of the policy of preemption and the strongest advocates for a U.S. invasion of Iraq. While it is true that a disproportionate number of Jews can be found among the strategic analysts pushing for this more aggressive U.S. foreign policy, it is also true that a disproportionate number of Jews can be found among liberal Democrats in Congress and Marxist intellectuals in universities who oppose it. In short, it is simply a reflection of the same cultural and historical phenomenon that has seen Jews come to prominence in intellectual and other influential sectors of societies throughout the Diaspora.

It should also be noted that these same neo-conservatives, while in the Reagan administration during the 1980s, were advocates of a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua and Cuba as well as a nuclear first strike—in a so-called "limited nuclear war"—against the Soviet Union. In short, they are hawks across the board, not just in regard to the Middle East.

Though the assertion that U.S. policy towards Iraq is largely a result of Jewish influence and/or out of concern for Israel's security is a gross exaggeration, it would also be wrong to dismiss the fact that Jewish supporters of the Israeli government are indeed among the more vocal backers of a U.S. invasion.

This therefore begs the question: Would a U.S. invasion of Iraq and the toppling of Saddam Hussein be good for Israel?

Even putting aside the possibility of an attack against Israel in retaliation, a U.S. invasion of Iraq would more likely hurt Israel's long-term security interests.

As is becoming increasingly apparent from strategic planning documents and reports from right-wing think tanks with close ties to the White House, a U.S. invasion

and occupation of Iraq is part of an effort to create a Pax Americana in the Middle East. Iraq is the only Arab country that combines significant oil reserves, a sizable population, and an adequate water supply to maintain an independent foreign and domestic policy. This, in effect, is what makes Iraq a threat to perceived American interests and why Saddam Hussein's desire to create a deterrent capability through the development of weapons of mass destruction is seen as intolerable. Should the United States end up effectively controlling Iraq, permanent military bases could then be established. An American vassal state would control the second largest oil reserves in the world and the United States would have enormous leverage over Iraq's immediate neighbors—Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey, among others.

Israel would be a junior partner in this endeavor.

Like other powers that have tried to control the Middle East, however, such efforts at hegemony will inevitably spawn their own resistance. With the United States itself on the other side of the globe, Israel may become an easier target by those resisting this hegemonic American effort in the heart of the Middle East. In other words, as a flip side of the current situation, where U.S. support for Israel has led to increased anti-Americanism in the Arab-Islamic world, Israeli support for an American invasion and occupation of Iraq will inevitably exacerbate anti-Israeli sentiments.

Using Israel to advance perceived American interests in the Middle East and beyond is nothing new. Israel has successfully prevented victories by radical nationalist movements in Lebanon and Jordan, as well as in Palestine. They have kept Syria, with its radical nationalist regime and one-time ally of the Soviet Union, in check. Their air force is predominant throughout the region. Israel's frequent wars have provided battlefield testing for American arms. They have been a conduit for U.S. arms to regimes and movements too unpopular in the United States for direct military assistance, such as apartheid South Africa, Iran's Islamic republic, Guatemala under its rightist juntas, and the Nicaraguan Contras. Israeli military advisors have assisted the Contras, the Salvadoran junta, and other movements and governments backed by the United States. The Mossad has cooperated with the CIA and other U.S. intelligence services in intelligence gathering and covert operations. Israel has missiles with ranges of thousands of miles and has cooperated with the U.S. military-industrial complex in research and development for new jet fighters, anti-missile defense systems, and even Star Wars technology. As one Israeli analyst described during the Iran-Contra scandal, "It's like Israel has become just another federal agency, one that's convenient to use when you want something done quietly."

Would a U.S. invasion of Iraq and the toppling of Saddam Hussein be good for Israel?

Rather than being a liability, the 1991 Gulf War proved Israel once again to be a strategic asset for the United States: Israeli developments in air-to-ground warfare were integrated into allied bombing against Iraqi missile sites and other targets; Israeli-designed conformal fuel tanks for F-15 fighter-bombers greatly enhanced their range; the Israeli-provided mine plows were utilized during the final assaults on Iraqi positions; Israeli mobile bridges were used by U.S. Marines; Israeli targeting systems and low-altitude warning devices were utilized by American helicopters; and Israel developed key components for the widely-used Tomahawk missiles.

One of the more unsettling aspects of this kind of strategic cooperation is how closely it corresponds with historic anti-Semitism. Throughout Europe in past centuries, the ruling class of a given country would, in return for granting limited religious and cultural autonomy, set up certain individuals in the Jewish community to become the visible agents of the oppressive social order, such as tax collectors and money lenders. When the population would threaten to rise up against the ruling class, the rulers could then blame the Jews, sending the wrath of an exploited people against convenient scapegoats, resulting in the pogroms and other notorious waves of repression which have taken place throughout the Jewish Diaspora over the centuries.

The idea behind Zionism was to break this cycle through the creation of a Jewish nation-state, where Jews would no longer be dependent on the ruling class of a given country. The tragic irony is that this cycle has been perpetuated by Western powers—initially Great Britain and France until 1967 and subsequently by the United States—to maintain their interests in the Middle East. Therefore, one finds autocratic Arab governments, Islamic extremists, and others blaming Israel, Zionism, or the Jews for their problems, rather than the United States or the broader exploitative global economic system and their own elites who benefit from and help perpetuate such a system.

The late respected Israeli intellectual Yeshayahu Leibowitz once observed, "The existence of the Jewish people of sixty to eighty generations ... was a heroic situation. We never got from the goyish world a cent. We supported ourselves. We maintained our own institutions. Now we have taken three million Jews, gathered them here and turned them over to be parasites—parasites of America. And in some sense we are even the mercenaries of America to fight the wars of what the ruling persons in America consider to be American interests."

This is an ironic fate for a country founded by Labor Zionists dedicated to the principle of non-alignment.

In the Israeli press, one can find comments like those in

Yediot Achronot which describe their country as “the Godfather’s messenger,” since Israel undertakes the “dirty work” of the Godfather, who “always tries to appear to be the owner of some large respectable business.” Israeli satirist B. Michael describes U.S. aid to Israel as a situation where “My master gives me food to eat and I bite those whom he tells me to bite. It’s called strategic cooperation.”

This explains why the United States has moved increasingly toward the Likud position regarding the occupation of the Palestinian territories. An Israel at war is far more likely to do the bidding of the United States than an Israel at peace. As former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger once noted, “Israel’s obstinacy serves our interests best.”

For Israel to further solidify its strategic relationship with the United States by supporting a U.S. invasion of Iraq will further isolate Israel, lessen the likelihood that Arab states will seek to normalize relations (at least willingly), encourage extremist attacks against Israel and Jews elsewhere, and will leave Israel vulnerable to the whims of U.S. foreign policy.

Even worse, it is not inconceivable that, should the United States be faced with an enormous backlash from the Arab-Islamic world as a result of its invasion of Iraq and its aftermath, Israel could suddenly find itself abandoned by its superpower patron.

The U.S. government may already be setting the stage for just such a frightening scenario: I have talked with a half dozen Arab foreign ministers and deputy foreign ministers over the past decade. I have asked each of them why their government was still so friendly with the United States, given U.S. policy towards the Palestinians, the Iraqis, and other Arabs. Every one has answered that U.S. officials had explained to them that the anti-Arab bias in U.S. foreign policy was not the fault of the U.S. government itself, but was the result of wealthy Jews who essentially ran U.S. foreign policy. In short, American officials are utilizing classic anti-Semitic scapegoating by blaming an alleged cabal of rich Jews behind the scenes for being responsible for a widely-perceived injustice as a means of deflecting attention away from those who are actually in positions of power.

It would not be unreasonable to fear that a similar scenario could take place on the home front as well:

In the likely event that, sooner or later, the American public realizes that a U.S. invasion of Iraq has been a disaster, they will demand accountability. This could be a great opportunity for progressives to demonstrate that this tragedy was a result of the undue influence of the oil companies, military contractors, right-wing ideologues, and excessive corporate influence over our government’s policy

initiatives. This could spur demands for badly-needed radical reforms in the political and economic system.

How might defenders of the status quo deal with this challenge? There is a very real possibility that many could rely on a time-honored tactic to divert attention from the real issues—and blame the Jews.

Over the past several months, I’ve been in a series of public debates with top strategic analysts from quasi-official strategic studies institutes over the advisability of a U.S. invasion of Iraq. While they always preface their

public remarks by saying that they are speaking only for themselves, they are very much clued in to the current perspectives of military leaders and top officials in the Defense Department and various intelligence agencies. On several occasions, in informal conversations afterwards, they came across as actually being far more in agreement with my argument that—even putting aside the

important moral and legal concerns—a U.S. invasion of Iraq was not only unnecessary, but would create a dangerous anti-American backlash and encourage extremist elements throughout the Middle East.

On at least three occasions, these analysts have said something like, “I couldn’t say this in front of the camera, but we’re doing this for Israel.” They would then go on to talk about the influence of the “pro-Israel lobby” and/or the “Zionists” within the administration that have pushed so hard for the invasion. There have been similar statements and even some published articles from retired military officers and other influential security analysts.

One can easily see a scenario where—under the scrutiny of congressional investigators and a media angered at an Iraqi debacle—such security analysts will testify that they had serious misgivings about a U.S. invasion of Iraq, but powerful Jewish interests successfully steered U.S. policy in a direction that proved to be a catastrophe.

Given that even some elements of the American Left have already bought into this exaggerated view of Jewish influence in U.S. policy toward Iraq, such an assertion may be difficult to successfully counter.

While such frightening scenarios are not likely, they certainly have many historic antecedents and are very much within the realm of possibility. It is therefore imperative that this attempt to divide these Semitic peoples from each other for the sake of what is essentially an imperialist war effort be challenged. Should Arab peoples witness ever-growing numbers of Jews in the United States, Israel, and elsewhere speaking out against a U.S. invasion of an Arab country, it could go a long way in healing the wounds that divide them and be a small but important step towards building a secure, peaceful, and prosperous Middle East. □

*American officials are
utilizing classic anti-Semitic
scapegoating by blaming an
alleged cabal of rich Jews
behind the scenes.*

The Triumph of Fear

(continued from page 10)

is a "more mature" and "realistic" view of a world in which we are alone and at risk.

There have been many political markers along the way: the undermining of the hopes of universal solidarity expressed in the original formation of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, undermined in part by a new American nationalism fueled by anti-Communist hysteria in the late 1940s and 1950s; the assassinations of President Kennedy and Senator Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr.; the infiltration and systematic disruption of the anti-war movement in the 1960s by the FBI and CIA; the false promises and raised hopes of the Clinton years which were

then dashed against the reality of Clintonian opportunism and slavish desire to serve the interests of global capital (though of course some good things were also accomplished); the failure of Al Gore to provide a vision that could inspire or transcend his wimpiness, to demand real power for the views that actually won majority support in 2000 (rather than abandoning those forces and burying himself in wounded pride); the failure of the Democratic leadership to provide a principled challenge to Bush's Iraq policy. You could probably add a lot more to this list of ways that hope has been undermined and people have given in to cynicism and despair.

But just as every moment that we choose despair we deepen the likelihood of a world of war, so every moment where we choose to affirm love and generosity and our mutual interconnectedness we increase the likelihood of a world of peace and justice.



II. The Anti-War Movement

Instead of letting the cynical realists define reality for us, let us define it for them.

Rational arguments against the war-apologists have their place, and we should continue to refine them and do our best to communicate them. And if the bombs are falling, and Iraqis are being massacred, Americans with a moral conscience should also be willing to act in powerful and non-violently disruptive ways to challenge this war. Civil disobedience is on the agenda.

Yet if you have followed our argument up till here, you will understand that the most important task for the anti-war movement is to project a new vision of how to create safety. We must talk directly and clearly about fear and about safety. The most effective thing we can do it to get every American to grapple with the following question: will

we be safer through more war and domination or more love and generosity?

Let our message be clear. There is only one way for America to be safe: let it be perceived as the leading force in the world for ending poverty and hunger and disease and the vast global inequalities of wealth; as the world's leading force for ecological sanity and repairing the damage done to our biosphere by the past 150 years of industrialization; and as the force that embodies a new bottom line of generosity and caring for others. If that is our message, we actually have a chance to turn this disastrous situation to something of long-term benefit to humanity.

We could start by talking about rejuvenating the United Nations, and re-imagining how it could be restructured to once again become the repository of the world's hopes. It would, of course, have to transcend the narrow individual

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rights focus of each particular nation protecting its own turf. It would need Nelson Mandela-type energy, Gorbachev energy, prophetic and utopian energy that it would proudly proclaim as central to its mission. Why not insist that the UN become the place to dream not merely of a world at peace, but a world of love, generosity, and caring for each other?

And while we are at it, why not also propose a way to lovingly embrace the trouble spots of the world instead of surrounding them with guns and threats and starving the populations of countries like Iraq with the fantasy that it will dislodge their powerful leaders? What if we were to surround them with love, generosity, and reassurances that the world really cares about them?

We've tried to coerce people into being good, being peaceful, and going along with our agendas. It hasn't worked. The realists brought us the war in Vietnam, and now they are bringing us the war in Iraq. So forget that realism. It doesn't work.

Instead, let us proclaim that this is the time when the world needs utopian realism—a strategy of insisting that this is now the moment to rebuild the world upon a new bottom line of love and caring, ethical, spiritual, and ecological sensitivity, and awe and wonder at the grandeur of creation. From this perspective, let us build a foreign policy aimed at showing how we can redistribute love, how the richest country in the history of the world can share its wealth and end global hunger and poverty, and can model a spirit of generosity and open-heartedness and genuine recognition of the Unity of All Being. For starters, let every citizen of the United States spend two years of their life in service to humanity, in a massive effort to rebuild the educational, informational, and economic infrastructure of the world—and let this service to humanity become the necessary requirement for entrance into any job or profession. And let the United States take the \$1.5 trillion in taxes President Bush is attempting to give back to the rich and use it instead to help develop the economic infrastructure of the third world.

The key to ending these kinds of wars (there will be more, even if Iraq is already fully demolished by the time you read this) is to build a vision of hope, such as I've described in the

last few paragraphs. And that is already happening on the streets, though not yet in the ideologies and the conscious self-understanding of those who are publicly saying "no" to war.

We are so glad to have seen the positive energies of the hundreds of thousands of people who have assembled in the streets of this country to challenge the war-makers. Their energy often embodies an infectious hopefulness that could change the dynamics and stop this and future wars.

If you haven't yet participated in one of these demonstrations, you owe it to yourself to become part of one. Many of them have been so life-affirming and hope-regenerating to the participants that they could play a serious role in helping us remember that "reality" as portrayed by the media and by the government is only "their reality," and that there are millions of people determined to shape another reality.

Unfortunately, the creative and lovingly anarchic energies brought by the demonstrators has not been matched by those who have rushed to position themselves as our leaders and spokespeople. They are often liberal or left-wing ideologues whose categories of understanding do not include love and generosity, or the flow of social energies from fear to hope. Too often, their language is only the flip side of the economic-reductionism and power orientation of those in the administration that they seek to challenge. No wonder, then, that they rarely are able to articulate a positive vision that can elevate and inspire those who are not already part of the anti-war movement (and that means most of the American people).

The demonstrations themselves should mirror the kind of world we hope to build. The organizers should encourage longer and more serious discussions that present a variety of different analyses and strategies (with conflicting perspectives, because we learn from that kind of open discussion). Rallies and demonstrations could be a real opportunity for all of us to discuss strategy together. It is possible—in the 1960s there were actually open mikes at some of our most effective demonstrations, where ordinary participants could get up and share their thinking with others. Of course, that sometimes opened the stage up to crackpots and police infiltrators who tried to incite us to violence, and to leftist "radicals" who would try to make us feel bad for being white or male or middle-class or otherwise privileged and therefore not suffering the way we ought to have been (in "real" solidarity with the wretched of the earth). We could also create small group discussions both at these events and at follow-up teach-ins in the churches, synagogues, mosques, and community centers nearby.

One of the most distressing elements of these demonstrations has been the presence of Israel-bashing and the suggestion that the war itself is being fought to protect Israeli interests. The coalition called A.N.S.W.E.R., though filled with decent and morally sensitive people, has been largely guided by a virulently anti-Israel group which uses its control

TIKKUN HAS MOVED!

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over the selection of speakers to ensure that these sentiments are woven into the fabric of their events in subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle ways. When I pointed out the difference between this and the kind of balanced critique that we at TIKKUN have been articulating, a critique that condemns Palestinian acts of terror against Israeli civilians, I was barred by A.N.S.W.E.R. from speaking at any of the large anti-war rallies in which they are part of the organizing coalition. I've been around long enough to not be surprised to find lefties mirroring the rigidity and fearfulness of the right-wingers—many of them have the same authoritarian personalities that can be found as well among the liberal centrists who fight wars of aggression in the name of tolerance and democracy. In a world filled with distortions, we can be sure to find some of those distortions in ourselves as well! So I've encouraged the Tikkun Community and my own synagogue, Beyt Tikkun, to participate actively in these demonstrations—because stopping the war is the number one moral priority—but at the same time to speak out against the Israel-bashing and the suppression of dissent within the movement itself.

How ironic, though, that this should happen to the very TIKKUN voices who are attacked by many sectors of the organized Jewish community because we are supposedly anti-Israel!

TIKKUN Magazine is doing what we can to keep alive the voice of Jewish liberalism at a time when it is almost

impossible to get any other major Jewish organization to publicly challenge the war-makers. Too many Jews have mistakenly bought the view that this war is good for Israel. But it is never good for the Jews, or anyone else, to be identified with repressive and immoral policies, no matter how much short term benefits might accrue.

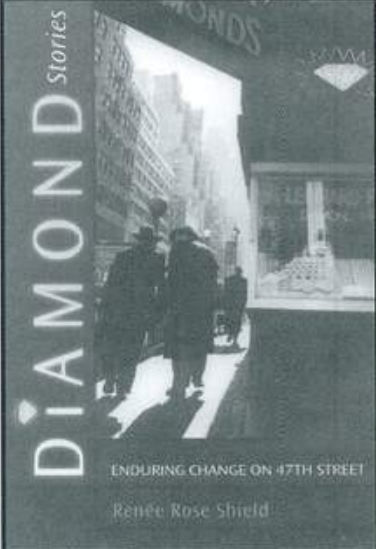
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We hope you'll become active with us, and come to the Tikkun Community Conference, June 1–4, where these ideas and strategies will be further developed—and where we will use the backdrop of a “Teach-In to Congress” to get our message of a progressive middle path, both on Israel/Palestine and on Iraq, to the American people. Please act now to register for the conference with us, at www.tikkun.org, and to get your room at the Hyatt Capitol Hill where the conference will take place (the Teach-In which will be in the Capitol itself). But till then, our hope is that you will help us create a local Tikkun community, and through that help us reshape the current discourse in America in ways I've described above. To do so, contact Marisa@tikkun.org or Robyn@tikkun.org. And, yes, we need plenty of volunteers and other kinds of help—at our office in Berkeley (we've just moved from San Francisco), at our conference in Washington, D.C., and in your home town. If you want to get active at this critical moment in our country's history, contact us now! □

SHARON'S BITTERSWEET VICTORY (continued from page 18)

will certainly be able to unmask Sharon's true intentions—his willingness to revoke Israel's obligation to the Oslo accord, to expand the illegal settlements, to engage in brutal treatment and humiliation of the Palestinian people, and to destroy the Palestinian Authority and with it any chance to reach a fair settlement with the Palestinians. They will be able to expose what Sharon means when he says that he is “ready for painful compromise”—that both the pain and the compromise, as far as Sharon is concerned, would be on the part of the Palestinians, not Israel. But most of all, from within the opposition Labor will be able to point to a clear program, together with its partners on the Left, that may just bring both Israel and the Palestinians closer to a better and brighter future.

Forty years ago, Daniel Bell, in his seminal *The End of Ideology*, wrote that “There is now, more than ever, some need for utopia, in the sense that men need—as they have always needed—some vision of their potential, some manner of fusing passion with intelligence. Yet the ladder to the City of Heaven can no longer be a “faith ladder,” but an empirical one: a utopia has to specify where one wants to go, how to get there, the costs of the enterprise, and some realization of, and justification for the determination of who is to pay.” In Israel today, these words are still very relevant and should be heeded, particularly by Amram Mitzna and the Labor party. □



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Oiloholics and the Burning World

Arthur Waskow

When my mind's eye reads one of our great papers, I see a full-page ad that's really there—invisible. It reads:

*They cook the books.
They sweat the workers.
They torch great forests.
They scorch the earth and befoul the oceans.
The baronial cousins of their pet monarchy paid to explode
the Twin Towers.
And now they want to burn Iraqi babies.
Who are they?
OIL.
But together we can stop them.
We can grow a world of justice and compassion.*

And behind the stark sentences is a full-color graphic: burning oil from a refinery smokestack.

We start out thinking of these afflictions as separate agonies. But like boils that erupt at separate places on the skin, they are fevered into being by one invisible short-circuited wiring in the body politic beneath. Through words and symbols of intensest heat, this medium melts the opaque surface to let us see: these plagues are one.

Some of us are outraged by the Enron robbery.

And some are outraged that an oil company (Unocal) contracts with the Burmese army for "security" that includes systematic rape and slave labor.

Some are outraged that burning the Amazon Forest fries our planet, not just a slew of high-fat hamburgers. (No emotionally warming word like "global warming." Global scorching. Frying.)

And some are outraged at buying Congressional votes to keep SUV's outside the rules for reducing gasoline use.

Some are outraged that one eddy-stream of the river of Big Oil went through Saudi pipelines to pay for mass murder by al Qaeda.

And some, by the far greater flow of Oil that went to pay for Halliburton, Exxon, and all those other corporations. When the corporations then burn cities to expand their control of Oil and Us, the ads to sell the burning call it "preemptive war."

But notice that for both sets of killers, U.S. or foreign, the money comes from Oil. These siblings may seem to hate

each other, but they nurse from the same addictive teat.

Only God-crazed Jeremiah could have prophesied that most of the deaths on September 11 would come from Oil. Flaming oil, the jet fuel that melted the Towers into falling.

If the shareholders who lost their life savings to piratical energy executives, and the union members who lost their jobs to Asian sweatshops, and the mothers whose babies are stricken by asthma, and the people who flinch when an airliner flies too near their office buildings because they can see themselves in a burning dive from fifty stories up, and the soldiers who were poisoned by something that happened in the last Gulf War—if we all got together, we could create a society that would not be addicted to Oil.

What is addiction? Turning a substance that is beneficial in small doses, into a constant ravenous need. Even when its pleasures lead to death. The most dangerous addictive substance on the planet is not heroin, or nicotine, or alcohol, but oil and gasoline.

We need a 12-step program for the whole society. First step: knowing we are addicted. Second: Looking toward a Higher Power—the power of the universe that welcomes change, attuning ourselves to make change happen. Third: knowing also who the Bigger Power is, who the drug dealers are, so as to free ourselves from their control.

As twelve-steppers we must begin to imagine the day-by-day details of a world not addicted to Oil. We must begin the day-by-day work of shaping a piece of that world here, a piece there.

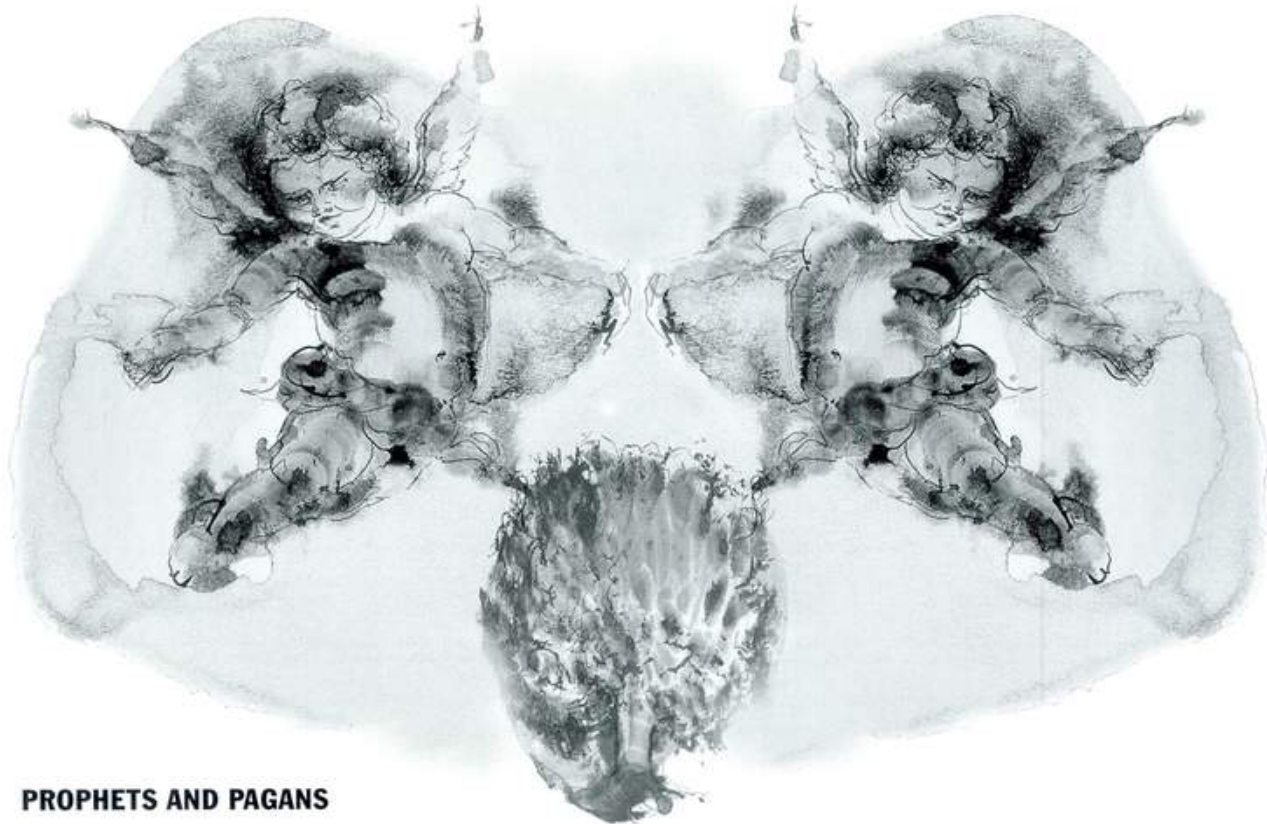
For example: If we declare SUV's not eco-kosher, how do we make sure the autoworkers of Detroit can find a job? How do we plan with care the transition to hybrid cars, to mass transit, to bikes? Where do we transfer the hundred billion dollars now locked into a military poised to control the oil fields from Iraq to Colombia? Could we declare those autoworkers and many others fed by oil the "veterans" of the Oil Age that has spanned the last half century, and send them to college through an "Oil Age veterans GI Bill"? Or—?

Oil is not the only out-of-control centralized power system which needs to be restored to democratic accountability. But it is the most immediately dangerous. And the very fact of its many grasping tentacles offers many accessible opportunities for transformation.

Day by day, one day at a time, one year at a time, one decade at a time.

Recovering oiloholics. □

Rabbi Arthur Waskow is director of The Shalom Center (www.shalomctr.org); author of Godwrestling—Round 2; and co-author with Phyllis Berman of A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven.



PROPHETS AND PAGANS

On the Erotic and the Ethical

Mordechai (Marc) Gafni

The Temple of the ancient Israelites is the original Hebrew expression of pagan consciousness. Now—as we will see later in this essay—the difference between Temple and pagan consciousness is very crucial. But it is a difference that is only important because of their profound similarity. Both the Temple and the pagan cults shared an intoxication with the feminine Goddess, symbol of sacred eros.

The relationship with the Goddess was not a hobby for the Israelites like modern religious affiliation often tends to be. It was an all-consuming desire to be on the inside, to feel the infinite fullness of reality in every moment and in every encounter—it was an attempt to fully experience eros. Because the ancients were so aware of the depth of reality, to live without being able to access the infinite in this erotic way was enormously painful. (For an example, read the story of the idolatrous King Menashe, as retold in the Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 92A.)

Mordechai (Marc) Gafni is the leader of Bayit Chadash, a spiritual center in Israel, author of several philosophical works including Soul Prints, and a writer and teacher at Oxford University. This essay is based on his forthcoming book, The Mystery of Love © Atria, Simon and Schuster, March 2003.

The prophets of the Temple period opposed paganism with all of their ethical fire and passion. For them, it was inconceivable that the ecstatic and primal Temple experience, religiously powerful and important as it might be, should become primary. When eros overrode ethos, the prophet exploded in divine rage. In moments of clash, the prophet taught that the ethical always needed to trump the erotic.

Modern Judaism has developed from the ethical teachings of the prophets. In the process, however, we have overlooked the erotic, present in the pagan consciousness of the Temple service. We have forgotten the Goddess, a vital presence in the life of ancient Israel. Hebrew liturgy reflects the virtually inconsolable longing of the Hebrew spirit for the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem. This longing is not a dream of proprietorship over this or that hill in Jerusalem. Indeed, ownership and holiness are mutually exclusive. Instead, it is a yearning to reclaim sacred eros as part of the fabric of our lives. And, in the way of the circle, our longing for eros is also a longing for ethos. All ethical breakdown emerges from a dearth of eros. When we are overwhelmed by an erotic vacuum, ethics collapse.

Both the vitality and metaphysics of a pagan eros were understood by Israeli mystic Abraham Kook to be essential to the reclaiming of a religious sensibility which reflected

PROPHETS AND PAGANS

both the depth and need of modernity. It is in large part for this pagan sensibility that we yearn when we speak of the dream of a re-built Temple.

To find our way back to eros and the feminine, we must yearn back and forward to the Hebrew mystical tradition, whose masters kept these ideas alive in the form of esoteric tradition, practice and lore.

Eros

In the kabbalistic tradition, as in Plato, the erotic is not a mere synonym for the sexual, but an expression of inner passion which sexuality models but does not begin to exhaust. In Hebrew myth and mysticism, eros has four faces. The first face of eros is being fully present on the inside, traversing the chasm that separates subject and object. To use the imagery of the Zohar, the magnum opus of Hebrew mysticism, eros is to be in the flow of "the river which swells forth from Eden," the fountain of life; when I am not in the flow of my own life, I am not living naturally. The opposite of eros is alienation, the feeling that you are an outsider with no safe place to call home.

Kabbalah scholar Yehuda Libes suggests that the word "zohar" is roughly synonymous with the Greek word "eros." The authors of the Zohar were not dry medieval scholastics; they were rather men of great passion and depth who believed that by entering the inside of the moment, the text, or the relationship, they could recreate and heal the world. Eros is aroused whenever we move so deeply into what we do, who we are with, or where we are, that its interiority stirs our heart and imagination. Shechinah, the Hebrew mystical term for the indwelling feminine presence of God, is no less than the erotic merged with the Holy. Shechinah is the radically profound experience of being on the inside.

The second face of eros is the "fullness of presence." This is not a distinct and different quality from the first but flows naturally and even overlaps with the erotic quality of being on the inside. And yet it is not quite the same. Of course, being on the inside requires the fullness of presence. But we can experience full presence even when we have not merged with the moment or crossed over to the inside. Full presence is about showing up. You can show up and be fully present in a conversation without necessarily losing yourself in the encounter's flow. Full presence at work can mean that you derive joy, satisfaction, and self worth from your vocation. It means you feel full and not empty.

To live erotically is to be fully present to each other's richness, complexity, and ultimate grandeur. It is to fully wait for the other to appear. The Shechinah, say the mystics, is presence waiting for us to be present. She is eros, standing outside of our window, waiting. Waiting for us to run out and behold, with wonder, her face.

The third face of eros is desire. Eros is the yearning force of being. I yearn, therefore I am. As long as I am on the outside, I can ignore my deepest desires and stifle my longing.

When I am on the inside, however, when I am fully present, I am able to access my yearning. For the Hebrew mystic, unlike his Buddhist or Greek cousins, desire and longing are sacred. To be cut off from the eros of yearning is to be left in the cold of non-existence. To yearn is to be aflame.

Depression is at its core the depression of desire. When we lose touch with our authentic desire, we become listless and apathetic. There is wonderful eros in desire. It is what connects us most powerfully with our own pulsating aliveness. Longing is a vital strand in the textured fabric of the erotic. It is of the essence of the Holy of Holies.

The fourth face of eros is the interconnectivity of being. Longing, desire, and tears remind us of the fourth strand in the erotic weave. They whisper to us that we are all interconnected. No human stands alone. The word "religion" traces its source to the Latin root *ligare* which, as we can hear in the word "ligament," is about connectivity. Religion's goal is to *re-ligare*—to reconnect us. Religion's original intention was to take us to that inside place where we could indeed experience the essential interconnectivity of all reality. All of existence is one great quilt of being and we are all patches in its magnificent intertextured pattern.

Eros is what allows us to move past the feeling of isolation and separation and experience ourselves as part of the quilt. To sunder our connection to eros is therefore to sin. Sin is but the illusion of separation. Sin is not evil; it is merely tragic. Not only do we lose the source of life's greatest pleasure, but we would undermine the building blocks of connection without which the world would ultimately collapse.

The Merging of Male and Female

One of the most obvious yet profound qualities that the sexual models for the erotic is the merging of the feminine and the masculine. The drive towards union between the female and the male is the essential underlying force that powers the universe. Although it is often expressed in the merging of man and woman, it is by no means limited to that expression. For the Hebrew mystics, the sexual union of man and woman both models and participates in the more primal union of Shechinah (the Divine Feminine) and Tiferet (the Divine Masculine). Whether understood as Yin and Yang, as in Taoist thought, or Shiva and Shakti in Hindu mythology, masculine and feminine are different faces of the greater union, the force of divinity that courses through the cosmos and beyond. The kabbalistic archetype of the integrated male-female are the two cherubs, one male and one female, present in the Holy of Holies in the ancient Temple. Described in the Book of Kings and unpacked in the Babylonian Talmud, these golden cherubs were twined in sexual embrace. For the kabbalists, their integration is the highest erotic expression of a healed world.

What is the difference between masculine and feminine?

The core cosmic intuition of Hebrew mystic Isaac Luria, later developed by mystics Isaac Chaver and Abraham Kook,

offers a deceptively simple paradigm. Men are lines, "yosher" or "kav" and women are circles, "iggulim." Or, more accurately, line is a masculine image and circle is a feminine expression. Every man and woman is a unique interpenetration of line and circle.

Let us look at the nature of a circle. Circles are characterized by suppleness, intimacy, egalitarian sensibility, connection, and communication. The feminine circle is defined by relatedness. It surrounds, embraces and envelopes. It is a symbol of intimacy, loyalty, and a capacity to forgive and renew. The circle moves round and round, in a constant flow of re-newal, re-mem-bering, and re-cognition. It always comes home again

Already it is clear to us that a circle is naturally erotic. In a circle, everyone can see each other. In Luria's language, everyone is face to face. There is intimacy in circle.

The masculine line is far more rigid than the circle. Judgment and distinction are natural line functions. With a line, there is a clear hierarchy. One is either higher on the line or lower. If people are moving in the same direction on a line, then they will not be face to face. Instead, they will be face-to-back or back-to-face. A line signals a clear lack of intimacy. A line is forward moving, goal-oriented, directed, and focused. It spends a lot more time looking ahead than looking around. The line's natural movement is to thrust forward.

Luria writes, "Every world of world and every detail of detail in every world of world is made up of these two principles, circles and lines." Lines and circles in various permutations and balances are the DNA of spiritual reality. It is the unique blending of their energies that gives contour, character, and depth to every unit of reality. It is a blending in which neither the circle nor the line ever disappears. Each is fully absorbed in the bliss of merging with other while never losing its own integrity.

Does the union of masculine and feminine mean that, after total integration, gender will dissolve as an issue? That a kind of transvestite existentialism is the kabbalistic dream of an evolved world? Well, yes ... and absolutely not.

There is a core paradigm in Hebrew mystical sources and many other traditions which provides a clear reality map for the integration of circle and line. It is a trinity of stages.

Simple (Before enlightenment: chop wood, carry water)

Complex (Enlightenment)

Simple (After enlightenment: chop wood, carry water)

The linchpin of the idea is that the third stage and the first, although externally similar, are really worlds apart. For stage three deeply integrates the new consciousness of stage two. So while the simplicity of stage one might be naïve, superficial, and even irresponsible, the simplicity of stage three is deep, wise, and responsible. In the reality map of eros, level one is



the natural eros of the circle. Level two is the line, which occasionally opposes and even overrides certain circle manifestations. Level three is the return to a higher eros, where circle and line interpenetrate, yielding a sensual symphony of flowing spirit and precise form, unimaginable in

the initial erotic offering of level one.

Lines and circles, the masculine and the feminine, are cosmic principles whose roots are in our souls. Neither New Age spirituality (circle) or the old religious Orthodoxies (lines) alone have within them the power to heal our souls and our planet. It is only a deeper erotic vision unpacked from both, the paradox of holding lines and circles together as one that can heal us.

*It is only a deeper
erotic vision that
can heal us.*

We need to fully embrace the truth of the line, then roundly challenge it with circle consciousness, only to re-embrace the line from a more supple and rounded place. Similarly, we need to rejoice in the circle, only to bisect it with the power of the line and then re-turn again to the circle. This is the trinity paradigm in which level two rejects

level one, only to be transcended and absorbed by level three, which is always an evolved version of level one. Circle, line, circle. Line, circle, line.

We begin in the middle—in the glory of the circle.

The Power of the Circle

Phallic line consciousness has proved impotent for so many of us. It has not given birth to the reality for which we dreamed. We have competed, failed, and succeeded. Yet we have found the process debilitating and the prize woefully insufficient. Even if we've "gotten" what we were always supposed to want, we have realized that it isn't enough.

On the most personal level, the rat race of line consciousness has failed us. The radical focus on our place in the hierarchy has exhausted us. For many years we have ignored Lily Tomlin's truism: "Even if you finish first, you are still a rat."

On the global level, line consciousness has failed us as well. We live on the edge of unprecedented ecological disaster. The imbalanced Genesis Chapter One ethics of "fill the earth and conquer" is not innocent in this. The ecological disaster is driven by corporations who take advantage of the core emptiness in the heart of the West, by feeding it with an obscene overabundance of goods and foods. Corporations driven by line consciousness form the crux of our world's economy. These corporations are sadly driven by basically only one desire: that of accumulating maximal power through maximal profit. Unhappily, the natural result of this posture is a virtual rape of the environment for the sake of climbing higher on the line's ladder. Tragically, it is the line consciousness of probably not more than 10,000

PROPHETS AND PAGANS

people (nice people) that is having this devastating impact on the world's environment.

The driving force behind the corporate ethos is fear of emptiness. When we lose the sense of the world being divine and full of meaning, we risk falling into the void—we “lose touch” with our own essential self-worth and value. So we learn a void-dance, doing everything we can to deny the lurking emptiness. In order to stifle those voices we work hard at producing and climbing in the line world. Somehow, the eros of productivity and competition give our lives a veneer of meaning, at least until a crisis when our vulnerability is exposed and we plummet into the void.

It is only by raising a new generation on the eros of the circle that we can hope to truly effect a transformation in the world. Only by unpacking and internalizing our erotic experiences of interconnectivity, interiority, and the fullness of being can we move towards healing and change. This is the call of circle consciousness. This is the ethos of redeemed paganism. This is Temple consciousness.

Temple Consciousness

The Jerusalem Temple is the place where the Shechinah dwells between the cherubs. The Shechinah is known in the kabbalistic sources as the great feminine. She is mother, daughter, and lover. She is the force that allows the human being to feel at home in the world. The Temple is the place of eros; it is the experience of being on the inside.

The biblical story is based on the line. In this account, the world is God's place. God's relationship to world is that of father, king, or even husband. In biblical myth, God creates world outside of Himself, even as he dwells in world. For the pagan and the Temple mystic, however, the world is not God's place; instead, God is the place of the world. To be in Temple consciousness is to be *in God*. Eros pure and simple.

This shift in consciousness is hidden within the folds of biblical myth text. The central biblical term which describes Temple consciousness is “*lifnei hashem*,” usually translated as “before God,” (as in “standing before God”). A closer reading, however, yields the hidden eros in the term. The word “*lifnei*” derives from the Hebrew word “*pnimi*” meaning “inside,” the first face of eros.

This same Hebrew word for “inside,” and “before” has a third meaning as well. The third meaning is “face,” “*panim*.” Face is the place where my insides are revealed. There are forty-five muscles in the face, most of them unnecessary for the biological functioning of the face. Their major purpose is to express emotional depth and nuance. They are the muscles of the soul. When I say, “I need to speak face to face,” I am in erotic need of an inside conversation.

All three English words, “face,” “inside,” and “before,” share the same Hebrew root. The essence then of the biblical Temple phrase “*lifnei Hashem*,” before God, is not a commandment to appear “before God” in the magistrate sense. It is an invitation to enter *the inside of God's face*.

To be on the inside of God is precisely the vision of the pagan circle.

It was paganism which understood well the primal human need to feel at home in the world. The erotic pagan imagination was able to uncover divinity in every nook and cranny of existence. For the pagan, there was an understanding that the Goddess is “on every hill and under every tree.” For the pagan, the hills were literally alive with the sound of music. Nature is the music of divinity undressed to the human ear. Every hill, brook, tree, and blade of grass was invested with its own divine muse.

In the ancient world the tree in particular, in all of its lush sensuality, was a primary manifestation of the erotic Goddess. The central symbol of much of the ancient pagan cult in biblical Canaan was the Ashera tree, symbol of the Goddess Ashera incarnate. Unadulterated paganism is the eros of level one circle consciousness.

It is clear from the biblical record itself that Ashera worship was the norm in ancient Judah and Israel. Occasionally, someone would intervene. King Josiah attempted the most radical reform, after finding a new book—very possibly the book of Deuteronomy—that explicitly prohibited having an Ashera tree in the precincts of the Temple. The discovery of this “new book” is the greatest indication that there were many Ashera trees in the temple. New texts only emerge to outlaw popular practice. Josiah's goal was to fully obliterate the Ashera goddess' presence. Only a few years after his death, however, the Ashera was back in the Temple once more.

No one could deny the people their goddess. A careful reading of the biblical sources reveals that of the 370 years which Solomon's temple stood in Jerusalem, for at least 236 of those years—two-thirds of the time—the statue of Ashera was present in the Temple. Her worship was not some underground cult, but part of what was understood to be the legitimate Hebrew spirit itself.

Ashera, who began as a foreign interloper, became, in Raphael Patai's phrase, a beloved “Hebrew Goddess.” She was worshipped openly and with great joy as part of the official religion by kings, the court, the priesthood and most of the people. She was opposed only by a few prophets crying against her and even then only at relatively long intervals. Indeed, the erotic passion for the Goddess was so essential to the people's spirit that when the great reformer Elijah challenged the pagan god Baal, Ashera's son, he pointedly avoided challenging Ashera. The text in Kings tell of 400 prophets of Ashera and 450 prophets of Baal who eat at the table of the Queen Jezebel, wife of Ahab. Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal but somehow doesn't touch the prophets of Ashera. The Ashera has become too much of a Hebrew Goddess to be challenged even by Elijah.

The pagan Goddess was not viewed by Solomon or the people as a compromise of the Hebrew spirit. On the contrary, she was experienced as an organic deepening of the

Hebrew spirit. In the pagan world, as we have noted, the Goddess erotically merged with her male counterpart. *Hieros gamos*—the marriage the God and Goddess. Ashera has divine intercourse with El, notably the very name of the Hebrew god! Her daughter, Astarte, copulates with Baal, her brother. This marriage of the gods—symbolizing the mythical merging of the primal masculine and feminine—brings blessing and joy to the world.

The Hebrew version of this *Heiros Gamos*—marriage of divine principles—was personified in the union of the biblical male God with the Goddess Ashera. We know from relatively recent archaeological excavations that many people served the Biblical male God image and the Ashera together. One of the most fascinating finds is that of Kuntillat Ajrud in the northeastern Sinai desert. Two storage jars were found, and one of them carried the inscription (in anthropologist Raphael Patai's translation) "Amarayhu says to my Lord ... may you be blessed by Yah-weh and his Ashera."

There is evidence that the worship of Ashera extended even into the Holy of Holies. Patai supports our intuition that the two cherubs intertwined in sexual union in the Holy of Holies are an evolved expression of the Hebrew-pagan marriage between the biblical Yah-weh and pagan Ashera. That is to say, the spirit of biblical text, which rejected some of the essential dimensions of paganism, nevertheless accepted the core feminine erotic principle that powered paganism and recognized the essential need to integrate it with the masculine principle. So Ashera was transmuted into the female cherub in erotic union with the male cherub. While the prophets rejected the Ashera they embraced the cherubs. Indeed, biblical prophecy taught that the space between the sexually entwined cherubs was the source of prophecy.

The erotic and pagan nature of the female cherub was clearly apparent to the wisdom masters of Babylon. They understood that the cherubs were the Hebrew embrace of the sacred moment in paganism and thought it essential to the Hebrew spirit. In a post-Temple world where survival depended on the Law, the wisdom masters were not willing or able to openly embrace the pagan moment in Temple consciousness. So, in a classical literary device, they placed in the mouths of foreign interlopers their profound perception of the cherubs as purified expressions of the pagan archetype. The Babylonian Talmud in Yoma 54b tells us that when the Temple was conquered and Nebuchadnezzar's army sees the cherubs, the Jewish religion was immediately cheapened in their eyes. "Said Reish Lakish: When the foreigners entered the temple and saw the cherubs sexually intertwined they took them out to the market place. Israel whose blessing is blessing and curse is curse—is this what they were engaged in?" A parallel text in the Midrash (Lamentations Raba, 9) is more explicit in relating the cherubs to paganism. The



Babylonians were sure that the Cherubs were pagan Gods and the Jews had laid claim to a more pure faith: "Ammonites and Moabites entered the holy of holies and found the two cherubs. They ... paraded them around the streets of Jerusalem ... did you not say that this nation does not worship idols? See what we have found. What they were serving."

The cherubs atop the ark went underground after the destruction of the Temples. However, they re-appear in public consciousness centuries later as the masculine and feminine expression of the divine in the kabbalistic books of the Bahir, the Zohar, and in virtually every subsequent kabbalistic text. This divine pair are called Malchut and Tiferet, Shechinah and Tiferet, and a host of other appellations. They reach their apex in kabbalistic consciousness in the mystical works of Isaac Luria and his one-time teacher, Moses Cordovero. In Isaac Luria's graphic and daring vision, the world is *not* formed by a forward-thrusting male movement which creates outside of itself. Quite the contrary—Divinity creates within itself a sacred void in the form of a circle. This is the creation not of the masculine God but of the Goddess, of the Shechinah! This is the Great Circle of Creation.

In Luria's vision, all of being is within the womb of the Goddess. Life is born not by expelling the baby, but by making room for offspring within the Goddess' eternal womb. Nature is not outside of the Goddess but instead is a daughter expression of the divine. Luria's teacher, Moses Cordovero, was even clearer about the identity of this Goddess. In a passing comment in one of his works he says explicitly, "*Malchut (Shechinah) is Ashera.*" Cordevero's statement emerges from a powerful and radical passage in the Zohar (Vol. 1, 49A) which suggests that the altar in the Temple itself was an Ashera tree!! The deep intention of the Zohar is not that this was an actual Ashera tree. Rather the Zohar is teaching that the Temple was deeply connected to the primal power of the sacred Ashera Goddess.

So we have come full circle. The Canaanite pagan Ashera has been reclaimed as a Hebrew Goddess. Primal circle consciousness has been rewoven into the rich fabric of a resurgent Hebrew myth.

Sod HaYichud

If the circle is so wonderful, why not live in circle consciousness and just jettison the jagged and cutting line once and for all? Why not simply return to the Goddess?

The answer is that the circle alone is not sufficient. Indeed, followers of both the biblical line and the mystical path have been quick to point out that the circle not integrated by the line not only lacks integrity, but is a primary ontological cause of evil. Master Nachman of Bratzlav writes that the source of evil in the world is the primal *chahal reik*, the empty void. The

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Spirituality and Law

Peter Gabel

Whenever we in the Tikkun Community talk about "a New Bottom Line" of love and caring, ethical and ecological sensitivity, and awe and wonder at the grandeur of creation, someone laughingly says, "yeah, try that with lawyers." Yet that is exactly what is being done in the ground-breaking work by Peter Gabel in the Project for Integrating Spirituality, Law, and Politics of the Tikkun Community. In what follows we present first a revised version of Gabel's keynote speech at the August 2002 retreat in which a group of lawyers from around the country who are building this alternative politics came together. Next we present a dialogue between Peter Gabel and Gary Friedman in which they explore the strengths and limits of "mediation" as a strategy for introducing a more explicit ethical focus into legal practice. We hope that people who are not lawyers will use this entire section as inspiration to begin this kind of critique and alternative-community building within their own professions. Let us know, because we'd like to be of assistance. community@tikkun.org

Every first-year law student in the United States reads the case of *Mills v. Wyman*. In brief, the facts of the case are these: in 1825, Levi Wyman, the twenty-five-year-old son of the man who became the defendant in the case, fell ill aboard a ship and was cared for by the Millses, a Hartford family with no prior relationship to Levi. After considerable time and expense and care bestowed by the Mills family, Levi died. The father promised to pay the Millses for their care and expenses but later broke his promise. Thus, *Mills v. Wyman*.

Our response to this young man's death might be to observe both its tragic nature and the generous impulse of the Mills' family. The law uses this case, however, to teach law students to set aside any meaningful connection they might want to make to Wyman or the Mills family and to think instead only about individualism, materialism, and self-interest. The law applied in this case is based on what

Peter Gabel is a professor of law and director of the Institute for Spirituality and Politics at New College of California. He is also the Associate Editor of TIKKUN.



in the field of contracts is called the "consideration doctrine," and the result can be summarized in the phrase, "You don't have to keep your promise unless it is made in exchange for payment."

Under this doctrine, for the promise to be enforceable a bargained-for benefit to the person making the promise is required. Since Mr. Wyman received his benefit (the care of his son) *before* he promised to pay for it, his promise is unenforceable, based on the notion that "past consideration is no consideration," as generally applied by courts interpreting the law in this country. Nor could the Millses argue that Mr. Wyman had been unjustly enriched (i.e., received services without paying for them). Since Levi was over the age of majority, the Millses, in assisting this person the law recognized to be an adult, had not performed an act leading to the imposition of a legal duty on the father, and therefore the father had not been unjustly enriched by services provided to his son.

In fact, everything about the case within traditional doctrine encourages the Millses not to care for the child; indeed, the inapplicability of the unjust enrichment concept because Levi was "too old" to remain someone for whom his father had a duty to care covertly conveys the message that upon reaching the age of majority a child is abruptly excommunicated from the world of family love and graduates into the world of strangers.

The use of the *Mills v. Wyman* case in the first-year law school curriculum demonstrates that the nature of the student learning process in law school involves an unconscious



indoctrination of students into a set of values that define community members as strangers existing at "arm's length" who are not bound to each other if their respective self-interests—understood only in the material sense—are not served. The method by which this indoctrination takes place is by suppressing the student's intuitive emotional/spiritual response to the deep reality of the human situation, such as that occurring in 1825 in Hartford, Connecticut. In place of an empathic expression of social concern, students learn that the correct legal response is a detached, unfeeling, analytical mode of rule application.

On the other hand, the use of this case in the first-year law school classroom reveals that students must be *taught* to disconnect their spiritual longings for a meaningful life from the workings of the larger society. In fact, our social desire for mutual recognition and affirmation is as essential to our very existence as our material needs for food and shelter. Although words like "spiritual" and "political" are today conceived to refer to aspects of reality that have nothing to do with each other, these aspects of our social existence are always connected. To successfully transform law and the larger society, we must understand and illuminate this spiritual-political connection.

We tend to think of the spiritual as referring to inner life and politics as referring to something more external, like struggles over the distribution of wealth and power. But this distinction is actually not accurate if we remember that we are all inherently social beings, that we do not exist apart from the interrelatedness that continually shapes us and our sense of what constitutes "reality." From this viewpoint, our spiritual longings for a sacred and meaningful life, for love and mutual recognition, for forgiveness and acceptance,

need to be manifested in the world around us that we create—that is, in the political world understood not as "what politicians do," but rather as the collective activity that we engage in communally and democratically to create the whole of our social life. The fact that both law and politics today are not considered to be "spiritual" activities or arenas reflects only the tragedy that these central ways of being together in public life have become de-spiritualized.

How does this de-spiritualization of the public sphere take place? In spite of our social/spiritual longing for community—a community in which we recognize one another as "I and Thou," in the words of Jewish theologian Martin Buber—our dilemma today is that we are all ensnared in a circle of collective denial of this very desire. That denial is further under-girded by a terror of humiliation that is a legacy of our culture's individualism and materialism.

The task of our generation is to help elevate the spiritual longings of our common humanity out of their current "private" location and into our public life so that we can see what we long for reflected back to us by "the world," rather than remaining pooled up in our isolated individual selves and families. The public culture, including legal culture, that denies our desire for mutual recognition and authentic social connection—a connection that would allow us to see each other as the source of each other's completion—must somehow be cracked open, but opened in a safe way, sensitive to our fear of revealing these deepest needs and longings to the very people (each other, and possibly ourselves) who have thus far failed to recognize them. It is only by thus linking the spiritual and the political that we can transform the world and allow the whole of our common humanity

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Tikkun Mediation Centers

Tikkun Mediation Centers are designed to embody a vision of mediation founded on spiritual and moral values, rather than upon the settlement model or other models currently present. These spiritual and moral values are akin to the values of the Tikkun Community, with which the centers will be affiliated. In this Tikkun-inspired model, mediation is considered successful if it:

1. Maximizes the ability of each participant to connect with each other in an authentic way.
2. Begins from the assumption that all human beings have the same spiritual/relational needs.
3. Maximizes each participant's ability to rise to his or her highest self.
4. Fosters the capacity of participants to achieve a state

of giving from their highest sense of compassion rather than from pressure or compulsion.

5. Assumes people are able to listen to each other with compassion.
6. Fosters an atmosphere where this set of values and approaches can take place.

A special training program for Tikkun mediators will be designed, based on the work of Gary Friedman's Center for Mediation in Law in Mill Valley, California. The first Tikkun Mediation Center will be founded in Northampton, Massachusetts by Dianna Stallone.

If you are interested in joining Dianna there, or in setting up your own Tikkun Mediation Center, please contact her at 413-584-2200.

When Law is the Elephant in the Room

A dialogue with Gary Friedman and Peter Gabel

Transforming the world from a place of alienation and materialism to one of generosity and loving connection may require a radical rethinking of the fundamental liberal emphasis on individual rights. If we take the usual liberal stance of defending individual rights, we risk encouraging the essentially materialist position that we must “look out for number one” at the expense of all others. Yet, if we turn aside from the search for individual rights, we risk abandoning the greatest social achievements of our society, achievements which were made through an appeal to rights—the women’s rights, civil rights and gay rights movements.

Nowhere does this tension between the values of separateness and connection come to the fore more prominently than in our attempts to reimagine law. It is the law itself which encodes the values of individualism and materialism. As we seek a new form of law that values connection to the Other,

TIKKUN: Gary, can you begin by telling us what you see as the role of law in mediation, and the role of law generally?

GARY: What we try to do in our understanding-based approach to mediation is to help parties come into a different relationship to law, a relationship that can actually help them to honor their impulses toward both autonomy and connection. Both impulses are authentic expressions of our common humanity, and the two are ultimately interdependent. Any approach that denies one in favor of the other distorts the human condition. Our goal as mediators is to recognize the tension between autonomy and connection and to live with it. Using law can be critical to helping parties find their own way to be in an authentic relationship to themselves and to each other.

Usually I find myself fending off challenges to our model of mediation from those wedded to the system of law who believe that the law is the only legitimate basis for people to make decisions in mediation. Here, the concern seems to be with including existing law at all in mediation. As you put it in your introduction, law can be readily seen as embodying an essentially materialist and alienating position that puts at risk the effort to build a world of generosity and loving connection. What concerns me is that labeling existing law in

what stance do we take towards current law?

This question is arising with urgency particularly among those who practice mediation as an alternate dispute resolution process to the more conventional court trial. Widely accepted now by many courts and lawyers, mediation—when done with spiritual and moral seriousness—can bring a sense of human connectedness to disputes and often create quicker and fairer resolutions for both parties. At the same time, however, mediation’s role as a legal tool that attempts to push past the law to human relations showcases the tensions inherent in any spiritually-based attempt to reconceive the law. In the dialogue that follows, Peter Gabel, the founder of the Project for Integrating Spirituality, Law, and Politics, and Gary Friedman, a Project member and the co-founder with Jack Himmelstein of the Center for Mediation in Law, discuss how much of our current adversarial rights-based legal system healing-centered mediators should acknowledge.

this way can make law “the problem” and thereby set up a false dichotomy. On the one hand, there is individualism alienation, and materialism (embodied by law) and on the other, generosity, mutual recognition, and loving connection (beyond our current system of law).

I think that viewing law and the adversary system in only these terms is too easy. It would be just as easy, and just as problematic, to divide the world into good and bad with the law the embodiment of the virtues of freedom and protection of human rights against a worldview that oppressively imposes collectivism and false mutuality. That experience and expression of “We’re right and you’re wrong” breaks the inherent connection between people and readily breeds conflict; and we work hard in mediation to overcome it. So while I appreciate the need to be sensitive to the dangers inherent in blindly following existing law (and its prevailing premises) as the ultimate authority, dismissing it as irrelevant can also prove harmful.

PETER: Here is the problem with that formulation from my point of view. Our aspiration in the Project for Integrating Spirituality, Law, and Politics, and the aspiration for all of the efforts we in the Tikkun Community are making to transform the professions in a more loving and



caring direction, is to come up with a fundamentally different paradigm from the one that exists. We are seeking a paradigm that can elicit a natural tendency toward mutual validation and recognition that is denied in the wider culture and that leads people to be withdrawn and separated and frightened from other persons.

GARY: And that we share as a goal.

PETER: The problem with your formulation is that having the law in the background as something the parties can turn to if they choose poses the danger of the law being a kind of brooding presence that is experienced by the parties as a kind of authoritative "thing" to which they can always turn if they don't like mediation.

GARY: I think the law can become a "thing"; I think connection can become a "thing." The law may well remain a brooding presence unless you can assist people to have a different relationship to the law, where they feel informed by and about the law rather than controlled by it. What I am most worried about, from the mediator's perspective, is the question of where the source of power comes from—whether it comes from the parties or from the mediator. I do not want the mediator to impose the law and its values, but I also do not support the mediator saying, "You are connected, this is who you are, this is the reality I am going to impose on you."

PETER: I want to come back to the issue of the role of the mediator. But as regards the role of law, your way of thinking implicitly treats the law as if it is something out there in the world with binding force. It is a hallucination to see the law as a thing. All the law actually is is the inherited set of the values of past generations that are defined by individualism, materialism (pursuit of monetary damages as the

primary goal), and rules that emphasize the rights of the individual as against other individuals who are seen as at arm's length, rather than as processes designed to foster empathy and compassion and to connect self and others. Since our aim is to fundamentally transform the world, we very much want mediation to be not simply something on the side that humanistic people can use, but rather insist that its promise is a fundamental alternative to detachment, separation, adversarial modes of relating. That's why an understanding-based approach to mediation, if it really wants to be transformative, needs to see law as an alternative set of values that I hope the mediator rejects. The promise of mediation is that the parties are approaching each other with the possibility of understanding each other and the mediator is there to be in support of that approach.

The Case of Jackie

GARY: Again it's a question of who imposes what on whom. One of the things I'm worried about, and I think you are worried about too, is the coercive power often inherent in the way law is used. I'm worried about the power of the mediator, the potential of the mediator imposing on the parties a worldview in which the world is only one of connection and not one of separateness, just as I am worried about his/her imposing a worldview of separateness and not connection. I think the tension between connection and separateness is a very valuable tension to keep alive as part of the mediation. Let's take an example—the case of Dance Innovation, which we used at the retreat.

A dancer/choreographer, Jackie, was fired from her job at a dance company after she had virtually completed an artistic work that the company then used in a dance production. Jackie wanted credit for her creation; she wanted to be paid for the remainder of her contract; and she wanted to be able to use the work herself for her own purposes, contrary to the wishes of the company. She comes to the mediation process with her attorney, who takes a strong stance for her, saying "Her tendency is to just go along with the way things are, to see herself as part of the dance community, and now that she has been fired, she may just lick her wounds and go off into the night. I don't want her to do that. I want her to be able to stand up for herself. I want her to be able to assert the protections of the law."

From my perspective, as a mediator, I want Jackie to be able to stand on her own, and be able to experience her separateness at the same time that she also reaches for her connection to the dance company and to the community of the dance world. What I'm worried about is that by looking at the world only as one of connection, she may lose herself. This is the critique of mediation that the National Organization of Women

Georgia Justice Project

The Georgia Justice Project, led by Doug Ammar, serves the poor and dispossessed residents of Atlanta. Every client who wants to be represented by the Georgia Justice Project (GJP) must sign a covenant to become members of the GJP community, attend counseling sessions, and/or work in GJP's landscaping business, in order to pull themselves out of their condition of poverty and powerlessness. In return, GJP makes its own sacred promise to provide care (legal and otherwise) as well as economic support for the client and his or her family, whether the client is convicted or acquitted.

To find out more about the Georgia Justice Project, go to: www.gjp.org, or call (404) 827-0027.

have offered—that women, focused on relationship, lose a sense of themselves and give up things, out of concern for the relationship, that they otherwise would feel entitled to have. As a mediator, I feel one important way to help people honor their impulse toward connection is to be able to help them stand for themselves, and from that base to reach toward each other. I think lawyers and law can help people do that. The world comes into a more realistic form when people come into connection with each other but also see themselves as separate within that connection.

PETER: The way that one achieves the greatest true sense of individuality is through connection. But we live in a world in which forms of connection are so distorted, so coercive, so enveloping—like the family or the nation or the workplace often is—that there's become a kind of radical emphasis on individualism, which is different from separateness as you use the term. The conception of separateness embodied in the law is about individualism and the materialism of the market. It is not the separateness that is the authentic kind of human individuality that you aspire to.

GARY: Let's take Jackie again. She has a copyright interest in the dance she created. We can look at that two ways. Jackie can stand on her property right interest and deny the opportunity and resources the dance company gave her to create this dance. But because the law recognizes her as an individual, that allows her to come into a relationship with the company where she can create a real connection based on her sense of self, rather than surrendering her sense of self for the good of the community. That is the thing we, both of us, worry about in terms of community.

PETER: Let me put my cards on the table. In the present society we live in, I'm much more worried about lack of connection than lack of separateness.

GARY: Me too. But I also worry about the loss of autonomy for the illusion of connection.

PETER: But are you saying that Jackie can always stand on her rights under copyright law and ignore all the virtues of her relationship to the dance community, and that is a good thing? That sounds to me like it's not a good thing.

GARY: It's not, but it's the worst thing for her to say, "What I think doesn't matter." That is a distorted view of connection.

PETER: Why not have the mediator take on, as a fundamental challenge and as a key part of his or her role, avoiding coercive forms of connection?

GARY: Ultimately, this question of connection is an impulse within people. Part of my goal is to help people, if they want, to honor that impulse. By denying them the opportunity to stand on their legal rights, that becomes an imposition by me, and that contradicts the fundamental ideal of mediation, which is about their choice.

Is Law the Enemy?

TIKKUN: Peter, Gary is saying that he can use law to support people's sense of self. You are calling for a kind of mediation that does this without reference to law. What would you reach out to as a way of supporting people's sense of their own self?

PETER: I believe that should be a matter relating to how mediation is conducted.

GARY: You describe the law as if it's just the enemy. But distorted connection can also be the enemy. Can't the law be valuable to some people to reach a sense of self and thus make a genuine connection, and if not the law, why not?

TIKKUN: Or what would the alternative be?

PETER: Our vision of understanding-based mediation should be that mediation itself is "the law" for the parallel universe we are trying to create. We are trying to create a new legal culture in which we help people achieve a non-coercive kind of resolution that emphasizes both the integrity of their individuality and a sense of their capacity to have empathy and compassion for one another.

GARY: Why can't the law be useful to help them realize a sense of their own personal integrity?

PETER: Because there is a social context here. Existing law and the adversary system is a gigantic monstrosity outside the room, and mediation is this tiny adjunct activity.

GARY: What is really interesting about this is when I started to mediate in 1976, I saw the law as the enemy, I saw lawyers as the enemy. I thought we had to create a real alternative for people, and to do that, we had to keep the law and lawyers out because they would take over. What I found was

Transforming Legal Education

In her classes at Suffolk University Law School in Boston, Cheryl Conner convenes students in a sacred circle, encouraging them to explore their inner life as they learn the law. Students explore deep dialogue, collective silence, and a range of contemplative and meditative techniques that transcend "thinking like a lawyer." Ms. Conner leads workshops and retreats for law students and lawyers around the country, providing containers for reflection, renewal, and re-commitment to service and transformation. This holistic approach is also reflected in her work for non-profit corporations and foundations interested in integrating a holistic approach to social justice.

For more information, contact Cheryl L. Conner, M.A., J.D., by email at clccounselor@aol.com, or by phone at (617) 332-2269.



that by keeping law out, it made it more powerful. It was so powerful it couldn't even be discussed in mediation, it couldn't even be considered as a factor to help people find their own sense of justice or fairness. Ultimately, I felt that was as coercive as having the law in the room and shoving it down people's throats. If there is a way in which we can have the law be part of this discussion that doesn't take over from people's own sense of connection, then the law can be valuable as a stepping-stone on which people can build their connection.

PETER: I think it's a good thing to talk about the law, including the values reflected in the law.

GARY: Right.

PETER: Our project, and the project of the Tikkun Community, is to foster connection in an authentic way, not a coercive or false way. To that extent, what I aspire to is that mediation become the law, that it conceive of itself as a parallel legal culture, as Restorative Justice is in criminal law. It is a culture of dispute resolution that we are trying to make, in an appropriate way, binding on each other. Including within mediation as law in its own right your insistence on separateness and connection is fine with me—I embrace it. Where I object is in associating a valid separateness to existing law, which is overwhelmingly associated with the competitive individualism of the free market and not with an ideal of separateness that also represents recognition of the Other.

Neighborhood Justice Circles

Assistant District Attorney David Lerman serves as the Restorative Justice Coordinator for the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office. He directs the Community Conferencing Program in which the victim, offender, and community members meet with a volunteer facilitator to discuss the facts and impact of a crime. The participants also agree upon what has to happen to repair the harm. Conferencing provides victims a greater voice in the justice process and allows offenders to hear the real impact of their action, through encounters which can lead to genuine apologies and even forgiveness by victims. Often, community members also participate to give voice to broader community concerns, and to provide support to both victims and offenders.

Lerman has also collaborated with groups in communities affected by crime to develop peacemaking circle groups. Circle process creates the opportunity for all participants to recognize their mutual interdependence in the quest to live in a healthy and safe community. Please contact: lerman.david@mail.da.state.wi.us for further information.

GARY: To take the case of Jackie, in an ideal mediation, would you have her remain ignorant of her legal rights, thereby running the risk of entering into an agreement with the company in which she might lose herself, or would you agree it might make sense to bring the law into that mediation as long as she has the sense that the law need not be any more or less important than she wants it to be?

Should the Mediator Be Neutral?

PETER: This is where the question of the neutrality of the mediator comes in, the role of the mediator that we alluded to earlier. The mediator ought to see his or her work as part of the work going on all over the world, as an attempt to create a new legal culture.

GARY: This is where I think there is a real danger. The danger is that the mediator becomes the law.

PETER: ... Let me finish. What I was objecting to was your suggestion that Jackie can choose the law if she wants to. I would like the mediator to present the mediation as a new and developing kind of law in which she would have the right to appeal to existing law, but the mediator has as the purpose of his or her work the creation of a culture in which that appeal is not made, in which a system that is founded on mutual mistrust is rejected, and yet the liberal ideal of the integrity of the individual is incorporated in the mediation.

GARY: Where we differ, and I think it is fundamental—

PETER: Let's not make it fundamental, there are too few of us—

GARY: That's true. We do want the same thing. But what I worry about is that the mediator not become a new kind of authority substituting his or her values and imposing them on the parties, even if these are the values of mutual connection and relationship. I don't want to lay a trip on the parties, "Don't you see, law doesn't matter, it's all about connection, this is the new authority." For me, what is fundamental is the parties' choice, their own impulse toward connectedness.

PETER: Your concern is that there not be a coercive connection forced on the parties by the mediator. I agree. But the mediator is not being neutral by maintaining a neutral stance in a non-neutral world, where there is a huge authoritarian legal system backed by force in the background, based on values we don't agree with. So, from my point of view, the achievement of non-coercively fostering connection must involve some way of "being present" on the part of the mediator that overcomes those background conditions.

GARY: I agree with that.

PETER: If you agree with that, you are saying the mediator is not neutral, but is contesting the wider social context of alienation, actively taking steps to overcome the participants' fear so they can actually trust each other.

GARY: I would say the job of the mediator is to create room in the room and support the *authentic* impulse the parties have toward mutual connection, and I'm not neutral about that. But I can't impose that view, and I would not want it to be at the cost of their experience of their own autonomy as well. I have to recognize the reality that the parties may be in a very different place where they may not be able to or want to honor that connection, and I need to be able to respect that choice to not honor their connection and rely instead on law, even if that is very disappointing to me personally.

PETER: I don't want to respect the parties' choice to be alienated and paranoid about the other person. I don't want to deny that they can do it if they insist, but I don't want to be in the place where I say it is OK for them to do so. This brings us to the issue of how we can create the importance of connection in the room. You brought up one component, which is the importance of mediator's being attuned to listening for the moment when it becomes possible for people to understand each other.

How Mediators Can Foster Connection

GARY: The mediator needs to say what his or her idea of mediation is and be transparent. The transparency of the mediator is critical to the sense of the parties' owning the process, that the process doesn't belong to the mediator but belongs to them. If the mediator can make explicit his or her own values, it gives a basis for a conversation between the parties and the mediator.

PETER: The mediator is not using his or her authority in doing that, but establishing the legitimacy of human trust, and even of the fact that we want to trust each other.

GARY: We may need to be able to do that to legitimate the distrust that is there, to make that reality explicit.

PETER: Acknowledging that distrust is there is much better, to me, than saying you can go use the law if you want to. In the process of establishing mutual understanding and trust, we have emphasized the importance of the mediator's own presence and transparency. The next question is whether there are other things you have tried. The existing legal culture is dry, monotonous, de-spiritualized, disconnected from intuition, empathy, and emotion. Is there a way that the setting of mediation itself can use spiritual techniques to change this atmosphere?

GARY: Absolutely. Creating an environment that is not intimidating to people is very important. People must feel this is a comfortable, non-hierarchical environment where the mediator sits in a chair with the parties and is not separated from them. So even this seating arrangement symbolizes the equality of relationship between the parties.

PETER: Current law is based on an adversary system, in

which each party exaggerates the validity of his or her own position and demeans the Other. Mistrust is at the core of the rules of evidence. In the way you do mediation, a key thing is how the parties hear the story of the other. Is there a way you facilitate the presentation of the narrative that emphasizes the dimensions of the mutuality of the situation?

GARY: First, for me, I must not operate from a view of who is right and who is wrong. I hold both parties' views as being their realities, and there is room in the world for those views to coexist and not contradict each other. That is critical for the parties to see. It is a transformative moment in mediation when the parties understand that they can each have a view and they can understand the other person's view, and that both can coexist—that they can understand another's view without agreeing with it. I want to help the parties reach that place.

PETER: The mediator might serve food or offer the equivalent of prayer that isn't prayer, like an elevating, hopeful statement. In traditional legal culture there are all kinds of forms of sanctification that create an unhealthy form of deference to authority, like robes, the architecture of the courtroom, portraits of the Founding Fathers—this is part of what we are trying to overcome.

GARY: Mediators will have various things on their walls that will represent spiritually significant aspirations. For me, the key is to try not to impose my views on the parties. I want to honor their spiritual traditions if they want. I want to bring my own spiritual impulses in the room. But I don't have any Buddhist statues in the room, even though I find Buddhism useful to my own work. I don't want people to have to deal with that.

If we really are going to get technical, I think light is very important. I'm hoping to bring out the best in people. Light helps that, particularly daylight, and being in a room where there is a sense of freedom.

TIKKUN: Not the fluorescent light in the basement.

GARY: Right. Or being cut off from the world. Windows are important, so people don't feel trapped and separated from the world. To go back to our previous discussion, I think bringing up law does that too, if it can be brought up with an attitude of understanding rather than power; it's one of those things like air and light that is in the world.

Realism vs. Utopianism

PETER: Air and light are a lot nicer. I want to continue this struggle with you about the role of law, because I want to maintain a utopian rather than a realistic stance. Realism—particularly the belief in the inevitability of the status quo—is the enemy.

GARY: People often say, "Let's just be realistic," and that



just means they are going to deny all their connections. But I also think it is equally a problem to pretend that law is not just a piece of reality. It doesn't have to be a big deal.

PETER: You have to make it light.

GARY: Len Riskin, who is a mediator, has said, we can use the light of the law. We have a choice of how we want to use it, so it doesn't become the elephant in the room. Many mediators want to keep the law out because it will become an overpowering elephant. I want to empower people to cut it down to their size.

For example, when there are lawyers in the room, I prefer that the law is talked about first. Because if the law doesn't get talked about, it hovers there. If we can treat it as

one piece of reality, go through it, and then turn to the experience of the parties, they can feel more supported having set aside the legal reality. You can also get an agreement between the lawyers (with their clients' approval) for them to talk about the law not just in terms of the risks of their case, so it becomes a much more collaborative kind of discussion. This can lessen the adversariness about the law.

PETER: I don't think the law exists. We're talking about a hallucination, a set of beliefs that are backed by force but that are not really "there" in the sense that you refer to "the law."

GARY: We create in the room whatever hallucination the parties will choose to be the reality from which they operate.

PETER: I like that. □

SPIRITUALITY AND LAW (continued from page 39)

and inherent goodness to become visible to each of us who is today toiling in isolation.

Law is immensely important in this process of creating a new political sphere. If law is currently the most public arena where our social needs for connection are denied, it also has the potential to become a highly visible public arena of social healing, as law and justice can be connected in a way that might help to realize Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of justice as "Love correcting that which revolts against love." This work has already begun in the legal world through work done by those advocating Restorative Justice, understanding-based mediation, the introduction of spiritual elements into private practice, and the efforts to transform the education of the next generation of lawyers in a spiritual and moral direction. Our challenge is to tie these projects into one over-arching vision of spirit-law-politics.

We can begin this transformative process by encouraging lawyers to ask different questions. In the case of *Mills v. Wyman*, we should ask what community response would encourage the loving impulse that the Millses actually exhibited toward the child of another, a young man not known to them. Instead of dwelling on rule-based questions relating to the techno-legal doctrine of "consideration" and what would be sufficient to establish an enforceable legal contract, we can be guided by an entirely different vision of a community-based restorative process of reconciliation. In such a process we would ask, why didn't the father keep his promise to reward those who open-heartedly attempted to assist his ill son? Might the father have been overwhelmed by tragedy at his son's premature death? Might he have acted this out through anger at the Millses for failing to save him? And why did the Millses choose to bring a lawsuit at all? Was it really to recoup their expenses, which they almost certainly had never anticipated getting back since they didn't know the Wymans and, at the time they

extended the aid, no promise had been made to them to pay these expenses? Might the Millses have brought this case because they were so hurt that the father, after initially recognizing the goodness of their efforts, ultimately had acted in a way that appeared to show a lack of gratitude for their acts of loving-kindness?

Our society would be richer if our law schools were willing to introduce this broader range of human values into the discussion of these human dramas. Our law practice would become more connected with real human spiritual needs for connectedness if the question of what a truly just response might be were made more of an open question than it is in the current indoctrination process. At a minimum, the *Mills v. Wyman* case demonstrates the importance of bringing out the value laden and non-neutral assumptions in both the substantive doctrine and method of analysis (or way of looking) applied in the existing educational process. As a first step, lawyers must begin to reveal the systematic way that the spiritual/political dimensions of law cases are, consciously or unconsciously, shut out of the learning process.

In a larger sense, all of these efforts to re-imagine law are attempts to overcome the enormously painful consequences of a socially alienated world. This alienation, separating self and other and suffusing life with paranoia toward the Other, existential isolation, and cynicism or despair about our own highest longings, is today reinforced by an adversarial, individualistic, and materialist legal culture that in effect equates alienation and justice. By tying together all of our distinctive efforts in our respective localities and types of work within a dis-alienating vision of a new spiritual politics, we have a real contribution to make in changing the world as a whole and law as a whole, beyond our particular and important work in different contexts with particular clients or in particular fields of law and legal education. □

Healing in Community

Deena Metzger

Ever since my experience with breast cancer in the seventies I have been living by the dictum that we heal life and then life heals us. In 1977, when this idea first came to me, it had a relatively simple application. A life-threatening disease forces you to scrutinize your life, heart and soul. It isn't only the idea of time running out that inspires people who are ill to change jobs or vocations, leave or enter relationships, or sell the city apartment for the move to the country, it is the recognition that there is a mysterious relationship between right living and healing. Right living, however it manifests for an individual, changes the odds: the deepening of your sense of joy, purpose, or meaning seems to extend life, whether it literally does or not. Beginning from my own experience with breast cancer, and later through the work I have done as a healer and medicine woman, I have found that coming alive is sometimes the true medicine for affliction.

I was diagnosed with breast cancer when I was forty. I immediately saw cancer's imperialistic qualities. A story too long to tell here led me to see that cancer can develop out of silence, out of being silenced. So I considered its relationship to fascism. Then I examined the ways cancer warred against my body. I was forced to pick up the sword, surgery, but refused the modern lethal weapons that endanger the entire planet—the bomb and chemical warfare—that is, radiation and chemotherapy. I needed to find a healing path that would not endanger the world. I could not forswear modern warfare and tolerate it in my body. Accordingly, the healing path I chose had to be anti-imperialistic and anti-fascist, personally and globally. Finally I asked environmental questions: what effects do the manufacture, use, and disposal of medicines and treatments have upon the natural world? Again, I couldn't choose my own health while endangering other beings. What was good for me had to be good for everyone. Then, I changed my life. Drastically. I stopped teaching in public institutions so that I could work with integrity. I moved to a small house in a rural area. I was lucky. I survived.

Deena Metzger is a novelist and the author of Tree: Essays and Pieces (North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, 1997) and Entering the Ghost River: Meditations on the Theory and Practice of Healing (Hand to Hand, Los Angeles, 2002).

*No one could be
healed individually
without extending
healing to others.*

People who chose right-living as a way to heal themselves rarely indulge in the kind of hedonism or narcissism that one might expect. The changes that I have witnessed have been, dare I say, "wholesome." People who undertook this path began to opt for simpler lives rather than luxurious ones, for intimacy rather than adventure, for meaning rather than excitement. And so the healing of their lives had a beneficial effect on those around them. They found that in healing their individual life they could not but positively affect their families and their kin-net, their communities.

Then something else began to occur. As a culture, we began to learn to extend healing and kindness to each other, first with cancer—breast cancer, in particular—and later with AIDS when that disease became epidemic. People began to cultivate communities to care for each other. Many caregivers testified that the year or years they spent caring for their loved one was the most important time in their lives. First illness called forth the essential scrutiny of one's life, a critique that extended to the culture and the society. Then it called forth a healing culture, communities of caring which were, until that time, unlikely in the urban frenzy that characterized most everyone's existence.

As a corollary to these changes, the communities afflicted by these diseases began to study the relationship between our society's assault on the environment, its amoral economic and commercial development, and the illnesses that people were suffering. In the process, a connection between personal illness and public welfare developed. People began to realize that the lives they were living were killing them and others; they turned their attention to the devastation of the natural world, to the increasing toxicity that saturates every aspect of daily life. Despite our culture's inclination to privatize illness, we gradually came to see that individuals were suffering a common jeopardy. A friend and colleague of mine, a psychologist, commented that she despaired in her work because no sooner was a patient healed than the patient re-entered the fray of daily life and was immediately undone or contaminated again. In order to heal herself, the patient had to heal the circumstances in which she was living, whatever they might be—her family, her place of employment, the land. No one could be healed individually without extending healing to others.

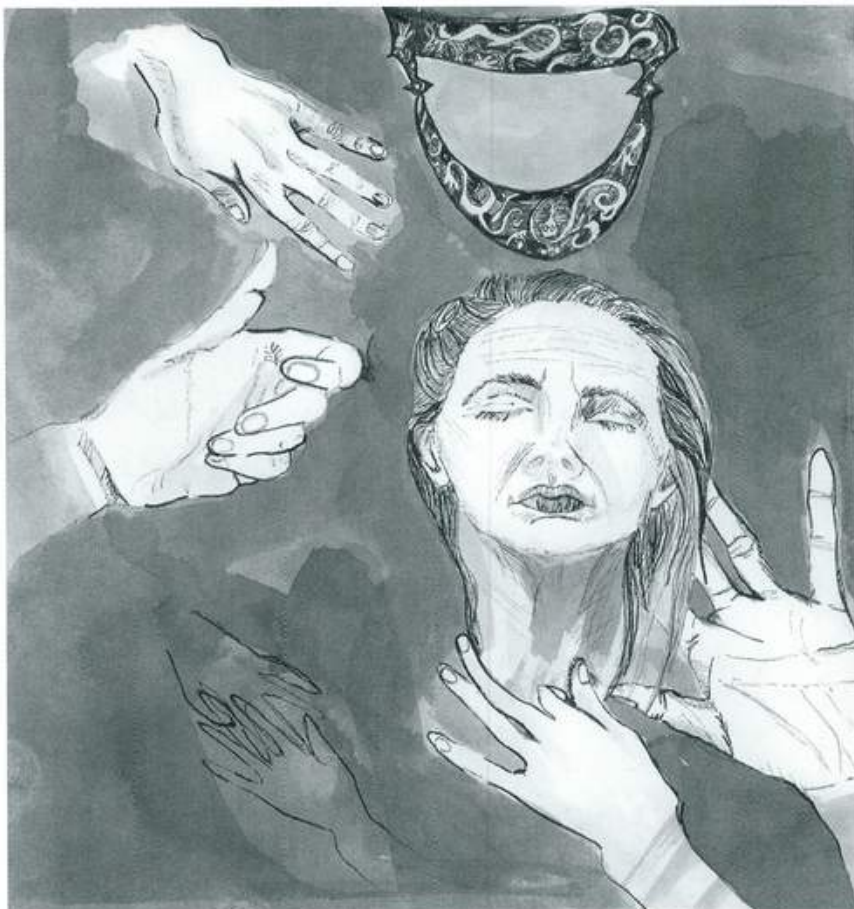
People began to think differently about illness. We no longer focused only on curing the physical body. Confronting illness began to be seen as a profound journey through which the healing of our own soul and the healing of the soul of the community were intertwined. Physical healing is not always possible but the expansion of the heart and the gathering of wisdom seem valuable in themselves, seem also to affect the physical condition, whether through extending one's life or easing suffering. Healing the soul, contributing to the welfare of the community, we found, had a profound affect on the well-being of the individual.

These are simple ways of speaking about healing and the relationship between individual and community healing. But now, so many years later, something else is becoming visible, subtler and perhaps more profound. A few weeks ago, a woman called me for healing. She said she was depressed. Sometimes suicidal. She wanted a miracle cure. I asked her what she was offering for healing. I was not speaking of a fee. I was speaking of the reciprocity that is at the core of spiritual and wisdom traditions. Before you ask the Divine for a favor, you make an offering as a common courtesy. One person may offer sage or cornmeal, another snuff, while another may give charity.

But I was thinking of yet another kind of offering, one that is exacting and effortful. The intent and devotion of such an offering may be expressed by Jews through saying *beenayni* (I am here), or by pledging *dvaykut* (I bind myself to You). The offering we must make to experience full healing is also the very core of healing or prayer. Sometimes the offering is our life. Not that we offer to give up our life, but that we offer to devote it entirely to Divinity. Making such an offering of ourselves changes the nature of the individual. It also creates the ground where healing or response can occur. One can say that it is the offering and not the response that heals.

The individual who is ill or afflicted often feels incapable of giving anything. But that is the point of this work: incapable or not, an offering needs to be made and the effort and discipline of making it, despite the circumstances, transforms the situation. Suddenly, we are someone else—the one who makes the offering. Everything has changed.

Soon we learn that praying for healing is not exactly the right prayer. The right prayer is more likely to be: Please show me the way of healing. Show me the healing path. Now we are closer to the possibility of healing. Healing becoming a way of life, not a single event. A way of life that affects others. And what might the healing path be? A path in alignment with Spirit. Rather than asking the Divine to extend a boon to us, we find ourselves asking to live accord-



ing to Divine precepts that are beneficial for the whole, in such a way that benefits all beings. This turns out to be the way of our healing. We have started to heal our lives so that our lives can heal us.

An old friend calls. Her life has fallen apart. She does not know whether her suffering comes from not using her gifts the way she dreamed or whether she simply can no longer bear the wretchedness of the world. Everything that was beautiful and hopeful has turned to dust. I remember that among her many gifts, all of which seem useless to her now, she has a beautiful voice. I do not listen very long to the litany of her grief. Instead, I ask her, exhausted though she is, to jump on a plane and come to Los Angeles. "We can teach you how to heal others with the beauty of your voice." Surprisingly she comes. She spends the entire day praying and then making an offering to others. When she leaves, she is still aware of the unbearable suffering that is around her, yet now she is enlivened and can feel the presence of Spirit.

The healing path does not save us from suffering. But it shows a way of carrying what is otherwise insupportable.

In the last year I have been anguished by the policies of the Bush administration. The unelected president is speaking of "the axis of evil" and bombing the innocent people of Afghanistan and Iraq. Muslims in this country are being terrorized while in Israel the IDF has invaded Jenin and there are rumors of atrocities.

I am a Jewish woman. I studied the Holocaust for ten years. I made a pilgrimage to the death camps. I wrote a novel, *The Other Hand*, about the Holocaust and the

Bomb. I am Jewish and I cannot bear what is happening in Israel. Like my friend, I suddenly feel the world is too full of suffering. I look for a healing path.

I begin by donning a *kaffiyeh* (scarf) in solidarity with the Palestinian people. I cannot support these wars. There has to be a way of peace and reconciliation, a way of living on the land that honors all the beings of the land. Even if I do not know the way yet, still I am determined to stand there and insist we search it out. I cannot bear the way of making enemies. But the act of putting on a *kaffiyeh* creates antagonism around me. Bitterness. Accusations. Fear. Anger. This peacemaking gesture arouses ire in the community. Not peace, but war.

Sometime afterwards I become ill. Esophageal spasms and ulcerations. I begin to suffer pain and weakness in my spine. Simultaneously, I am devoured and broken down. The medical approach brings relief and then it doesn't. I begin to experience side effects. Something else is required. I scrutinize myself. I turn to the healers in my community, my students, friends and colleagues. Against my inclinations, I allow the boundaries between us to disappear. Healer and healed become equals in a healing community. We return healing to the center of the community where it belongs. The reality of affliction calls us into different relationships with each other and calls forth new skills and abilities. Spontaneously, we treat each other with extraordinary gentleness in reverse proportion to the violence being enacted in our names. This circle of healing will become important for my own healing.

I also consult another healer, Elliot Cowan, who is Jewish and from New York like myself, and affiliated, also, with another tribal healing tradition. I convey what I understand of my condition. He asks what I have been dreaming. I tell him:

I was on the subway. It was dark in the train station and murky. The station is Gravesend Bay. I've gone too far. I must go back though I fear the men in the station. They are dressed the way my father and his friends dressed in the Thirties. Woolen caps, small peaks. Wool tweed jackets. *Arbeitering*. The way a poor writer like my father might dress before World War II. A man looks me in the eye. Somehow, I know his name: Yankel Peretz. Isaac Peretz was the poet my father loved best.

Cowan says, "These Jewish ancestors are concerned that you are forgetting them. You have not been skillful. You wanted to act peaceably, but you created disharmony. And so you are being torn apart."

He advises me to do a peace ritual of reconciliation that will bring peace to all. He stares at me knowingly and says, "You know how to do this."

A friend dreams that I am of a tribe called Brooklyn Indigenous. She dreams that my ancestors are afraid that I

will forget them. An African medicine man does a ceremony to dispel the anxiety between my people and myself.

I say prayers. I do the rituals. I wear a *tallit* and use the *kaffiyeh* as my altar cloth. I make offerings. The first offering is the willingness to listen. The second is that I will learn and practice peaceableness wherever I go. Thirdly, I create a text that invokes the Holy Letters as peacemakers. I speak with an Arab scholar about writing a parallel text in Arabic to my text of the Holy Letters as peacemakers.

Entering the Ghost River: Meditation on the Theory and Practice of Healing, is the book I am writing

about healing and peacemaking. As the text develops, I see that they are the same. The text of the Holy Letters becomes part of the book. The Holy Letter that holds this connection is Samech, round like an "O." I place Samech on each page to invoke peace and healing for the community.

I place Samech on each page to remind us that we are all part of the endless circle: Jews, Muslims, Israelis, Palestinians, Iraqis, Americans, all of us, one.

I write these words: *Samech*—The circle. The sacred circle. Everyone and everything is within and necessary for the circle's completion. No one and no thing are above another.... We search out the stories of peacemaking. We are all, in our different ways and languages, the servants of the sacred and the endless cycle of life. Samech verifies the completeness that we feel when we are dancing with each other. The endless cycle. The ways and shapes of Divinity entering the world and Creation rising toward Spirit. Samech is the shape of the future.

So, at the moment when the IDF entered Jenin, I began, as a counter measure, to think about the Holy Letters as agents, as angels of peacemaking: "In the ancient tradition of Kabbalah, the quality and spiritual energy of the Holy Letters can be invoked for the sake of Creation. To do this with a pure heart, is to humbly pray that a door be opened so that the Divine can enter and suffuse the world." As I enter into this ritual work, my body is restored. I rely less and less on medical treatments and prescriptions. I try to be peaceable in my heart and soul. I pray for a vision of the healing path. I study what it really means to be a peacemaker. I look for the ways of peacemaking in every tradition. I pray for the world and offer myself to it. Slowly, I am healing. Call it a miracle.

In my mind, there is a direct relationship between the healing of my body and the healing of the world. Where healing and peacemaking are one, they are the bridge between individual healing and the healing of the community. I do not ask for my healing without committing entirely to the healing of the other as the small possibilities of the healing of the world are sacred gifts extended to me as well. The world's body. My body. The same. This is the very nature of healing. □

I am Jewish and I cannot bear what is happening in Israel.

God's Bride on Pesach

Kim Chernin

*How strange, god's
bride lives
in a cup
of Pesach wine.
Not visible
perhaps,
in the first
sip, to be known
at the breaking
of bread
by thoughts
turning in ways you
would not
anticipate. This
bitter herb: meant
for those who seek
Him/Who
never can
be known, they
say, by sight or
sense and so they
give up on the world. This
world, where
every cry of a green
newborn asks
us urgently no
longer to seek
Her/Who
has al-
ways abundantly
here been given.*



What does the Goddess have to do with Passover? A great deal, if you take the trouble to follow hints and fill in missing pieces. A little scholarship helps too and perhaps even the sudden appearance of the Goddess.

The first time I met Her she did not look Jewish. On the other hand, how should a Jewish Goddess look? Mine was dancing. She had huge breasts that were lifting and flopping. She picked up her knees, stretched out her arms, and

bent from the torso in a ponderous dance that was both sacred and ridiculous and seemed to be taking place simultaneously at the center of my head, in my sinews and veins, in the room around me, and nowhere at all.

Although I had never met a Goddess before, I had no doubt about her identity as she danced and disappeared and grew back into visibility again. I was wide awake, sitting at my desk. I felt that new life would grow from her, that I myself, egged on by her image, would soon learn to perform this heavy, fleet-footed dance. Wherever she stepped and whatever she touched quickened and flowered; there was water where before there had been only rock. I was in the most extreme state of tranquility I had ever experienced, while at

*Kim Chernin is a spiritual counselor and the author of fourteen books. Her classic memoir, *In My Mother's House*, will be republished with new material in Spring 2003, by MacAdam/Cage.*

the same time I felt that my mind was moving fast around this still point of urgency where the Goddess was dancing. I was puzzled. If there was a Goddess, why hadn't I met her before? Could there be a Jewish Goddess? And if there were, why didn't she too have ceremonies and celebrations?

Or, maybe she did?

Jewish teaching tells us that God is invisible, all-knowing, omnipresent, unknowable. Pure spirit. A God without a body. This should imply that God is neither male nor female, neither old man with long hair dwelling in heaven nor big-breasted Goddess dancing. Yet somehow, in spite of the prophets' insistence upon the one God of whom there can be no likeness, we take it for granted that God is masculine.

A young man interested in spiritual questions told me a long time ago that God must be masculine because the two earliest names for God, El and Yahweh, are gendered masculine in Hebrew. Yet why, I argued even then, could we not also have God-names that are gendered feminine, or names of indeterminate gender? Why not a voluptuous Goddess with black, tangled hair? A deity of this nature would probably like women who argue on Her behalf, even before they come to know her. Maybe She showed up in my life to remind me of the possibility of naming and renaming the divine? To help me locate aspects of the divine that are missing when God is only a He? To make sure I found appropriate celebrations and ceremonies for her? Maybe that is why She came charging out of her exile, naked and dancing.

What is in exile seeks to return. The excluded comes back. The forgotten recalls itself. It is, truly, a question of traces, a hint here and there. No seeker after knowledge ever goes hungry. Where efforts have been made to efface, exile, or dismiss something that was once known, knowledge is likely to come in unconventional ways—showing up suddenly as a figure dancing, as stories told from one to another over a meal.

Shortly after I met my Goddess, I was introduced to a *Falasha* (Ethiopian Jew) at the home of a friend on Shabbat. Ruth's people were now regarded as the remnants of the Lost Tribe of Daniel, which had vanished from Jewish history 2,700 years earlier. Their tradition had been developed directly from the Old Testament, prior to the Mishnah and the Talmud. Ruth told us that in *Falasha* texts the Sabbath is personified as the daughter of God, a divine princess who intercedes with God on behalf of humankind, saves sinners from the torments of life after death, judges the souls of the just, and is called by God himself beloved, exquisite, guardian, radiant, revered. She is God's compassionate, female aspect, before whom, the *Falasha* say, even the angels tremble. According to *Falasha* tradition, her very name, Sabbath, means: "I only am God."

I soon discovered that the kabbalistic tradition offers a similar interpretation of the Sabbath instructing us to prepare for the Sabbath queen with embroidered cushions, covers, and festive garments, and a house full of lighted can-

dles, as if we were receiving a bride. A student of Kabbalah I met explained to me that *Lecha Dodi* (Oh Come My Beloved), a prayer we still sing in the synagogue on Sabbath evenings, had been written by the sixteenth century kabbalists from Safed. They went out from the fields surrounding the town to receive the Sabbath, once again understood as God's bride, or, as we would say, His feminine aspect, with whom He, as bridegroom, was to be united.

How far back did this tradition run? Were there other places in the tradition where she could be discovered? I started reading, and was able to follow these traces right back to the sacred pages of the Old Testament.

This is what I have learned:

Our Bible was compiled by editors profoundly committed to monotheism who did their best to eliminate all descriptions of Canaanite goddess worship. Nevertheless, they named three Canaanite goddesses: Asherah, Astarte, and Anath. They likewise make us aware, through their repeated references to abominations, of the popular religious tendencies they were attempting to eliminate. The worship of *Asherahs*, carved wooden figurines that depict a woman with large breasts, is one abomination, as is the burning of incense beneath leafy trees on the high places, where the Goddess was worshipped. In these nude female figures and figurines, found everywhere in archeological digs throughout Israel, and dating from every period of the Hebrew presence in Israel, we meet the fertile, fully embodied, large breasted Goddess, similar indeed to the one who appeared to me.

Less well-known is the persistent, dedicated, stiff-necked devotion that was shown to the Goddess throughout the biblical period, and by our own people (as Raphael Patai demonstrated back in 1961 in his book, *The Hebrew Goddess*). If our Bible sides with the Prophets, Judges, and Kings in their struggle to suppress Goddess worship, that may mean it is still necessary, thousands of generations later, to revisit our sacred texts and no longer unthinkingly side with the Prophets. The Goddesses are our history, and yet we scarcely know them; they are our past, yet they have been almost entirely erased and excluded from our story. No wonder they have to show up abruptly, swinging their breasts, dancing naked.

It is, of course, impossible to eliminate essential aspects of the divine. The learned men, our rabbis, piecing together the Old Testament, selecting, excising, transcribing, took great pains to keep traces of the Goddess religion from its pages. Traces remained. How could they not? The Goddess, the feminine, is an inevitable aspect of divinity, as real, as present in our imagination or perception as we allow Her to be.

In evolving the Talmud, the rabbis were careful to avoid making God appear too anthropomorphic, since God was, by definition, beyond the reach of the senses. Consequently, they began to correct older biblical statements that described

(continued on page 58)

On the Erotic and the Ethical

(continued from page 37)

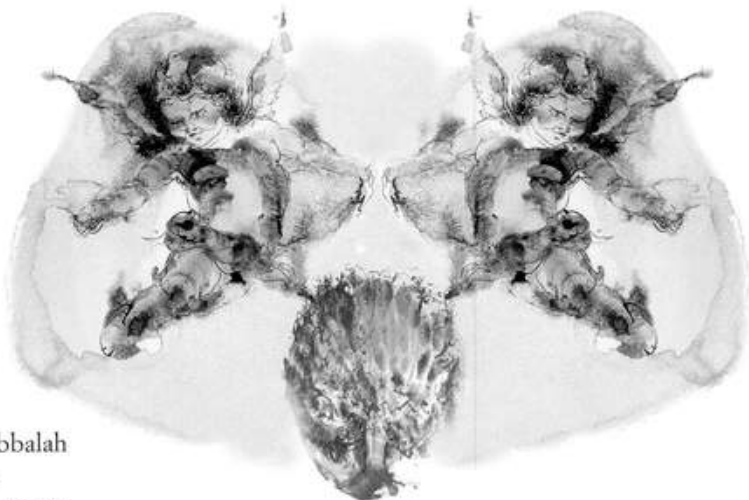
chalal reik is a circle image drawn from Lurianic Kabbalah which has not yet been penetrated by the *kav*, the line.

We are used to viewing the source of evil as being somehow external to man. Both capitalists and communists of the last century insisted that market conditions and economic opportunity were the prime cause for evil. Others blame evil on parents, schools, television violence or handguns. Many varieties of religion have long spoken about a Satan or tempter force that moves men to "the dark side." The common denominator is the location of evil somewhere outside the human being. If that is true, then we only have to fix that external system and everything will be okay. Economic reform, social engineering, gun control, parent education, school reform, are all potential messiahs.

While all those may be good things, the core premise of Hebrew myth is that none of them will prevent evil. Biblical mysticism has an entirely different view of the human being. Evil comes from the failure to integrate the feminine circle and masculine line. This is called in Kabbalah *Sod HaYichud*, the secret of the union. More accurately it means the secret of the integration which is no more and no less than the secret of the cherubs. This is our life's work: to achieve full eros through the deep integration of our circles and lines. Or to say it differently, we need to move from the eros of the first level circle, which is pre-line, to the eros of the third level circle, which is transline. To confuse the two would be to fall prey to the pre/trans fallacy which so often marks contemporary New Age philosophies. To know how to move to third level circle eros we must expose the shadow of the first level pagan circle from the perspective of the prophetic line.

The Closed Circle and History

Intellectual historian Yehezkel Kaufman is correct in reminding us that the opposition to paganism—the opposition to pure circle consciousness—may well be the singularly most important theme of the entire Hebrew biblical project. The prophets exposed the two great shadows of pagan circle thinking. The first shadow stems precisely from its circle nature! The pagan myth believed as an absolute given of reality in the great wheel of Being. Mircea Eliade's great work *The Myth of Eternal Return* is probably the best modern statement of this powerful cyclical motif which is shot through all pagan reality maps. The problem with the cycle, however, as Buddha already pointed out, is that it is a trap. The circle is by very definition not open, but closed. There is no way out. It is to



this circle consciousness that the wisdom masters referred when they said, "Until the Exodus no slave had ever succeeded in leaving Egypt." In the pagan circle consciousness of Egypt, no one could ever leave his or her place. You were born into your circle and destined to go round and round within it.

In contrast to the stasis of the circle, the line of evolution—beginning with the gradual unfolding of creation from simple to complex in the Genesis creation story—is essential to the biblical spirit. Biblical myth in the story of the Exodus introduces line consciousness into the mind and heart stream of the world. It is the creation of the very ideas of history, progress, and therefore hope. Love desires growth, healing, and transformation. For the circle to exist without being bisected by the line would be the greatest failure of love.

In biblical myth consciousness the story of the Exodus is the story of the *second* great escape from the tyranny of the circle. The *first* great escape is the story of the first Hebrew, Abraham. In fact, it is precisely Abraham's ability to make the great escape from the circle that makes him the first Hebrew, for the very word "Hebrew" (*Ivri*) means the "one who crossed over." The line consciousness of Abraham introduces to the world the notion of journey. The clear implication, against virtually all of pagan thought, is that you can actually go someplace. Line consciousness is history. The idea of a plot, suspense, and ultimate resolution introduced by the Hebrews and so engrained in us today was unknown to the circle consciousness of the pagan.

In Hebrew, there is no word for "history"; instead, the word is *zachor*—remember. Not accidentally, *zachor* in Hebrew has a second meaning: the masculine. His-story is a function of line consciousness, the masculine thrusting-forward property of the spirit. It is biblical mysticism that gives birth to the notion of *tikkun olam*, "the world's fixing"—which a very close reading of Isaac Luria's works reveals to mean the evolving and healing of all consciousness—human and divine. It is only when the journey to God is over that the journey in God begins.

What we are talking about is much more than the evolution of humankind. It was the kabbalists who introduced the idea of an evolving divine consciousness. The unfolding of divine consciousness is not a purely intra-divine process.

PROPHETS AND PAGANS

The great privilege of being a human being is that we participate in the evolution and healing of God. The Zohar, in Vol 1 Genesis 4A, even imagines the human being as a creator of God. It is the evolution of the human spirit that catalyzes the evolution of God. As biblical mystic Zecharia says, "On that day [in the future] God will be one and his name will be one." When God and man meet in an evolutionary embrace, redemption is achieved. In the words of Nikos Kazantzakis, "We are the saviors of God."

This is the great messianic idea, the climax of all history and evolution. "Messiah" in biblical mysticism is more than a person. It is a destination which we arrive at after the long and often arduous journey. It is the hope and the vision of a better tomorrow. It is the possibility of possibility.

Until this shaft of the line cut across human consciousness, human existence was fundamentally determined. All that happened was thought to be revealed in the astrological wisdom of the stars in their heavenly cycles, or in the guts of animals when you killed them. The key was that there was "nothing new under the sun."

The freedom implied in line consciousness means not only that a slave people can throw off the shackles of the oppressor. It also means that each of us can throw off the shackles of our own personal taskmasters. There is no greater slave master than the idea that yesterday determines today. This is precisely the shadow of circle consciousness. The line sets us free. It pierces the circular bubble, shattering the "realities" that want to hold us back and keep us down.

God and Nature

We now come to the second great shadow of pagan circle consciousness. The pagan insisted that divinity was in trees and in all of nature. But the essential biblical idea is that God is *also beyond* nature. God is the creator of nature and therefore not trapped within it. Biblical myth therefore opens with the Genesis story, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The powerful and revolutionary implication is that *God is not merely nature*. Unlike the Greek, Roman, pagan, or Buddhist pantheons, biblical myth insists on a God who is both within and infinitely beyond the circle, radically immanent as well as transcendent.

When we say that God is infinitely beyond trees, we are also saying that if you can connect to God, God can free you from the ensnaring web of nature. The notion that a human being is created in the image of God means for the Hebrew mystic that a person has it within them to reach beyond the natural to the moral.

The reason this is so critical is because in biblical consciousness, the loving God's primary demand is ethical behavior. The single most important expression of love—and the most important principle of Hebrew ethics—is how we treat each other, not how we think about each other. Sixteenth-century master Aron of Barcelona wrote, "A person is formed by their actions." Treat a person lovingly and

you will love them in the end. Love a person passionately and treat them unethically and you will be alienated from them in the end. Paradoxically, there is no eros without ethics.

Ethical behavior always requires that we be able to act against our primal instinctive natures. We must be able to step out of the level one pagan circle and become response-able for actions, able to respond to and control our instinctive nature. *If we were part of nature, then clearly we could not be expected to ever control or direct our nature*. We are both part of nature, and parting from nature. It is only because of this paradox that we are capable of self-control. Of course, it is *giving up* control which is essential in the classic frameworks of circle consciousness. Sex and emotionally vulnerable relationships are two good examples. Giving up control, however, is only possible in the context of a safe environment created by people who can be trusted to exercise self-control. The circle integrates with the line to foster the integrity of higher eros, a level three circle.

Circle consciousness claims that people are naturally the best that they can be. The problem, argues the circle, is not goodness but alienation, and in circle consciousness the greatest evil is to be cut off, distant, disenchanted, out of the circle. Line consciousness disagrees with the circle and says that people are potentially good but not naturally good. In biblical myth people are born innocent, but they are not born good. The most important act of love, according to the Hebrew gospel, is to develop a training system for goodness. For biblical myth the belief that people are naturally the best that they can be is not only wrong but destructive. If people were naturally good, then evil would be the result of some set of external forces. Here we return to the idea of Sod HaYichud, the secret of union. Biblical myth, then as now, says no to this thinking. Hebrew gospel teaches that only the control and refinement of our internal nature, the integration of line with circle, can bring the good.

There is, however, a second critical reason why the line-driven ethical prophet does not experience God as being exclusively in nature. If God were in nature and not beyond Nature, then Nature would be our source of ethics. It is clear though that, for all of her splendor in reflecting a pale cast of divine beauty, nature is amoral. The law of nature is nearly always that the strong kill the weak. Social services, hospitals, help for the disabled are all profoundly "unnatural," at least according to the law of nature in the non-human world. In fact, the hospital is a direct corollary of line and not (first level) circle consciousness. The morality of the line insists that those higher on the line—that is to say stronger and with more means—take care of those lower on the line. This is the faith and God experience of the prophets.

The Prophet & the Pagan

Let's frame the clash between circle and line in the most striking possible terms.

The prophet, the hero of the Hebrew bible, represents

ethics, the line. The pagan, hero of the ancient world into which biblical thought was born, represents eros, the circle. The clash between the prophet and the pagan—the circle and the line—is in the end the clash between the erotic and the ethical. (That is to say, between first level circle eros and second level line ethics.)

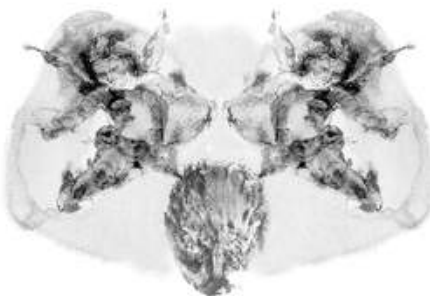
Having said that, I want to make a radical claim—which, as is often the case, is patently obvious once you see it. On the essential interpretation of reality, the prophet actually was closer to circle consciousness than to line consciousness. *The difference was that the pagan was a first stage circle archetype and the prophet a third stage circle archetype.*

The prophet's line expression is a necessary corrective response to the pagan consciousness that dominated the world at the time. The prophet saw his role to be overturning a pagan ethic which was bound up with so much cruelty. For example, built into the pagan ritual are demands for parents to burn their children as a sacrifice to the gods. "They have set their pagan abominations in my house ... to burn their sons and daughters in fire." (Jeremiah 7:30, 31) The burning of children was not the exception in pagan worship. Rather it was the model of the pagan idea that erotic abandonment to the God must, by its very definition, overrun all intuitive human ethical boundaries.

In the picture of the prophet as a social reformer, it is, however, too easy to lose sight that, at core, he was an erotic mystic. The prophet is actually the archetype of the feminine. The "most beautiful among women," according to King Solomon, are the prophets. The phrase is drawn from Canticles, King Solomon's love song to the erotic Shechinah, whose deep essence is modeled, but never exhausted, by the sexual.

Yes, the prophet insisted that nature was not all of God, yet he experienced with all his being that God was all of nature. Even as he decried the pagan claim that identified God with the Ashera tree, he knew and rejoiced in the truth that God was fully present and accessible "on every hill and under every tree." God was not only reflected in nature as the external creator. God was fully present in nature—in the words of the later mystics, *mamash*, meaning literally—"actually," for real, not just in metaphor or symbol. The words of later Hebrew mystics capture accurately prophetic consciousness. Schneur Zalman of Liadi writes that "Trees and stones are *mamash* divine." Nachman of Bratzlav told his disciples that "Every blade of grass has its own (divine) song."

It is critical to understand that God is paradoxically within and beyond. Dennis Prager, generally a brilliant polemicist for the core intuitions of biblical religion, dismisses any possibility of a mainstream Jewish position which embraces pantheism in his "Is God in Trees." However the overwhelming majority of classical Jewish thinkers in the past 500 years have categorically refused to



choose between pantheism and monotheism. To give but one example, Abraham Kook consistently and intentionally embraces a paradoxical dialectic between pantheism and monotheism throughout his writings, so much so that in his letters he refuses to term

Judaism as monotheistic (Orot Hakodesh Vol. 3 pp. 399).

The goal of the prophet is integration. The erotic and ethical, the line and circle, must merge. This is the secret of the cherubs and the model of the sexual.

What the prophet and the pagan respectively incarnate, however, is made manifest when the erotic and the ethical clash. An oft-quoted line from Jung, modern heir to the pagan myth tradition, is the best summation I have ever heard of the pagan position: "I'd rather be whole than good." For the pagan, the alienation from divinity is so palpable and painful that it must be overcome at all costs, even if ethics are the price. This is where the balanced scales start precariously to slip. It was Jung who was sadly seduced by the pagan Goddess Ashera into a flirtation with Nazism, that menacing shadow of eros which horrifically darkened our world just a few short decades ago.

The prophet always responds, "I'd like to be whole. Indeed I yearn to be whole. But if I have to choose, I'd rather be good than whole." It is for this reason that the prophet is the great critic of the pagan consciousness intrinsic to the Temple experience. The erotic fulfillment of the Temple experience was all too often a replacement for the kind of direct ethical action which could heal the world. It is the widow and the orphan, the vulnerable and the dispossessed, who must be the primary concern of the homo religious, according to the prophets. Thus Isaiah declaims:

I do not want your multitude of sacrifices
I delight not in the blood of bullocks or goats or rams.
Do not come to seek my face ...
as you trample my courts of justice ...
your hands are full of blood ...
wash yourselves, make yourselves clean ...
cease your evil doings ... seek fair judgment,
argue the case of the widow and the orphan ...
Zion will be redeemed
by justice and ... integrity.

For Isaiah, the ecstatic pagan service of the Temple, with its blood sacrifices, has led Israelites to forget the ethical imperative to feed the hungry and clothe the poor. Isaiah refuses to allow eros to trump ethos.

Rebuilding Temple Consciousness

In my spiritual community of Bayit Chadash in the hills around Israel's Sea of Galilee, we are committed to reclaiming the spark of sacred paganism. We return to the pagan when we practice deep ecology, because for the

pagan "Love your mother" means not only your human biological mother, but mother earth who nurtures you, balances you, and grounds you in her embrace. We reclaim the pagan in meditation, ecstatic service and passionate love of the Shechinah in all of her myriad manifestations. It is in large part for this pagan sensibility that we yearn when we speak of the dream of a re-built Temple.

The Temple in its ideal state was supposed to manifest the third stage circle moment in Hebrew consciousness. What the prophets realized, however, was that the people had not incorporated second stage line consciousness. The erotic was overrunning the ethical. In principle, however, the Temple was meant to be a balance between line and circle, erotic and ethical.

Only a short distance from the seat of eros—the holy of holies with her sexually intertwined cherubs—was the *lishkat hagazit*, the room of hewn stone. This was the Chamber of Justice whose passionate concern was the ethical—the creation of a just society. On the face of it, its sensibilities seem far removed from the erotic motifs of the sensual and the sacred that permeated the Temple's aura. What, after all, do ethics and eros have to do with each other?

The answer is—everything. In the short run we can train people through behaviorist ritual, social engineering, and a good deal of guilt to behave ethically. However, in the final analysis, non-erotic ethics will always collapse under the weight of contracts and contacts it cannot fulfill. The Room of Hewn Stone must necessarily be housed in the eroticized temple in order for its ethics to truly thrive.

In the end all ethical failure is a violation of eros—your own or someone else's. Ethics without eros cannot hold. Ethics which are not rooted in eros ultimately fall ... apart. We yearn for eros. By exiling God from nature and secularizing the sexual, we condemn ourselves to emptiness and vacuity. Ethical collapse always occurs when we are overwhelmed by our emptiness. *The failure of ethics is always rooted in a failure of eros.* When we talk only about a God giving rules that run counter to our nature, the rules cannot hold. The eros of our nature will always overrun them. But if we come to understand that ethics is an erotic expression of our deeper divinity, we are truly moved to the ethical. For at that point we realize that the ethical is an expression of our deepest selves, a response to the call of our own voice. Ethics, to be compelling and powerful, must be an expression of our erotic divine nature and not a contradiction to it. So when the prophets insist that God and the God within us is beyond nature, and can therefore act ethically against nature, they are referring only to our first nature, not to our deeper second nature. *Our* deeper nature is God.

At the same time that ethics cannot live without eros, eros cannot live without ethics. The erotic dies without the ethical. The circle cannot survive without the line.

The prophet in us needs to reclaim holy paganism.

Circle consciousness rejects the non-bi-sected circle not only as ethically flawed but as ontologically inadequate and existentially unsatisfying.

Humanity is life become aware of itself. It is this very self-awareness that moves us from the harmony of the natural to the tension of the confronted. We are at once part of nature, subject to her laws, even as we are free, confronting, controlling, and healing nature. The human being is the only creature in nature whose very existence poses a problem to itself. It is a problem from which we

cannot escape. Living our merely natural circle life is both impossible and boring to us. It is this sense of boredom, even ennui, which makes us feel alienated, evicted from paradise. We are moved both by reason and soul to struggle endlessly not only with questions of the *techné*, of how and what, but also with the mysterious why and ultimately we long to see the Who!

The divinity of humanity—that which makes us not only within but also beyond nature—is precisely what assures that nature alone will not ful-fill. Line consciousness suggests that a non-accomplished person can never be satisfied. We require for our psychic-spiritual wholeness the pursuit of a goal. Meditation is insufficient for bliss. But not just any goal will do.

The goal must be an ethical one; an ambition that promises the greater good. Without such an objective, we ultimately get lost in our ennui and overwhelmed by our emptiness. The circle is incapable of captivating us by herself.

Eros always needs to in-corporate ethics. What this points to is that the good is not only an ethical need, it is an erotic need as well. At the same time, all ethical collapse is caused by un-ful-filled eros.

The modern mystic who understood this best was Abraham Kook.

Morality not guided by the sacred is not deep,
and does not enter into the inwardness of the soul; ...
Such a weak morality
does not have the power to guide ...
the polis, the human community,
to penetrate to the depth of the soul
and to transform the heart
of universal man and of individual man
from stone to flesh.
There is no alternative plan for humanity
other than that it be guided by the erotic morality....

It is the same Kook who refused to term Judaism a monotheistic religion, believing as he did that strains of purified pagan pantheism were essential to the essence of Hebrew religion. The prophet in us needs to reclaim holy paganism. The pagan within must be open to hearing the call of the prophet. When the prophet and pagan meet, the Temple of the heart will be rebuilt. □

Awakening to the Day

Michael Strassfeld

Dawning

"Only that day dawns to which we are awake."—Thoreau

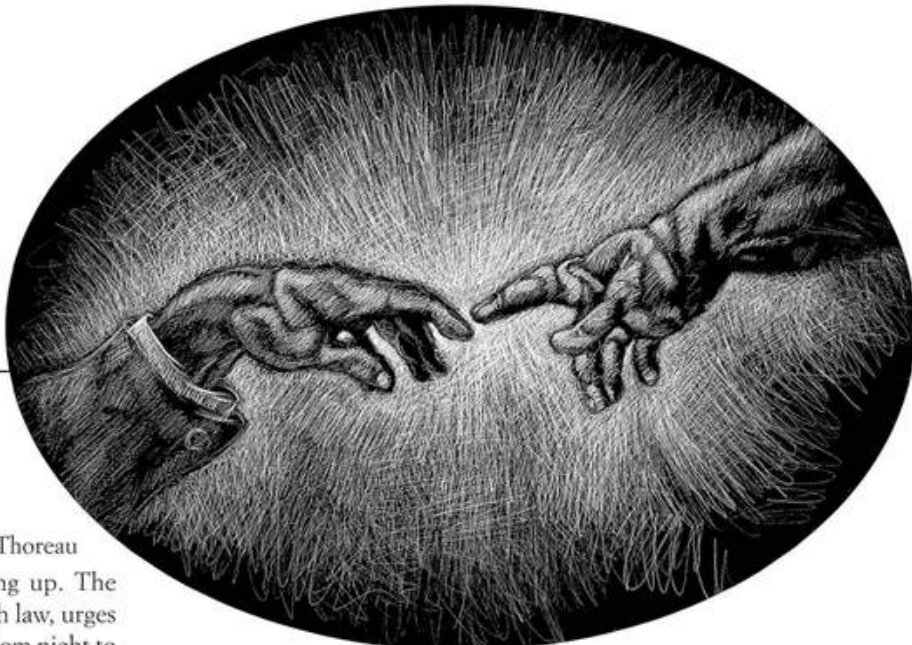
We begin each day with the act of waking up. The *Shulchan Arukh*, the classic code of Jewish law, urges us to arise at dawn, at the moment of transition from night to day. Sunrise is a clear reminder that this transition from sleep to awareness is repeated every day and yet never exactly the same. Though we have substituted the face of the clock for the face of the sun, we can still rise to greet the dawn of our new day whenever we actually get up. For humans, the new day means life and consciousness. By opening our eyes each morning, we become awake to the world and to our being.

What follows are a number of suggested rituals for awakening to the day, some traditional and some contemporary. They are suggestions for practice. You may use these to create your own ritual or liturgy, or you may simply set aside time for silent reflection and meditation. Make your own choices but understand that how you start the day can make a difference.

Getting up right

Even as we struggle to awaken and shake off the vestiges of sleep, we begin to engage the new day. Our mind goes to our "to do" list while we engage in the mundane tasks of the morning. As we shower, dress, make coffee, and prepare lunch, we may be thinking of the many things we need to do at work, the errands we need to accomplish, and the problems and challenges ahead. Nevertheless, we can orient our day and thus have an impact on its quality by taking a brief moment for reflection. We can create a spiritual "to do" list. To whom do we want to be sure to express love, caring, warmth, friendship, or just appreciation on this day? How can we be slightly more conscious in our behavior toward others? To what spiritual place can we be a little closer at the end of this day? This spiritual reckoning requires just a moment—as we wash our hands, or take a shower, as we put all the things we need for the day in our briefcase. Find a moment that seems right for you and create

Michael Strassfeld is the rabbi for the Society for the Advancement of Judaism and co-author of the Jewish Catalogs. This essay is based on his most recent book, *A Book of Life: Embracing Judaism as a Spiritual Practice*, available from Schocken Books, 2002.



a daily ritual. Here is one ritual possibility, from the *Kitzur Shnei Luchot ha-Brit*:

To use this spiritual time to renew your faith, try not to involve yourself in any worldly activity or speech when you get out of bed; just go to the bathroom, wash, then meditate, thinking of the Creator of the world with full concentration—that God is One, Single, and Unique. Or look through your window at the sky and the earth and recall the verse, "Lift up your eyes on high and see—who created all this?" (Isa. 40:26), and think that God created it all out of absolute nothingness. And think, "How many are Your works, O Lord, with wisdom have You made them all; the earth is full of Your creations." (Ps. 104:24). Think of how great God's works are, in the creation of the heaven and the earth and all that is in them—inanimate and animate—plants, animals, humans, creatures great and wonderful. "God created the ocean and all that is in it, the awesome whales, God formed the mountains and created winds and fire."

Another awakening ritual is the *Modeh Ani*, a prayer said right upon waking:

Modeh Ani Prayer

Modeh ani lefanekha melekh chai ve-kayam she-chazarta bi nishmati be-chemlah, rabbah amunatecha.

"I give thanks to You, Source of life and existence, that you have once again placed my soul within me, great is your faith (in me)."

Alternatively:

"As the sun rises to reawaken the world, let wonder and possibility be the blessing of my life this day renewed."

The *Modeh Ani* prayer reflects a belief that God renews creation daily. We too are seen as a *beriah chadashah*, "a new creation." There is a traditional belief that the soul leaves the body during sleep and "checks in with the home office" up in heaven. This prayer is, then, an expression of gratitude to God for literally returning our soul to us each morning. Traditionally, too, sleep was seen as analogous to death and

JUDAISM

therefore we are thankful to be alive for a new day.

The Hasidic master, the Apter Rebbe, when asked why he had not begun the morning service even though it was already noon, replied: "I woke up this morning and began to praise God, saying, 'I offer my thanks before You (*modeh ani*); but immediately I began to wonder: Who am I? And who is the You before Whom I am I? I'm still pondering this, and haven't been able to go onward.'"

Washing the Hands

Water is a symbol of life, since it nourishes all living things. It is also a symbol of birth since it reminds us of the fluids that accompany birth. It is used as a means of symbolic cleansing in a variety of settings. It is a traditional Jewish practice to wash our hands upon awakening by first taking a cup of water in one hand and pouring it over the

other hand, then switching hands and repeating the process. (Some people do this three times for each hand.) Ritually anointing our hands is both a symbol of the renewal of creation as well as a spiritual cleansing in preparation for the work of the new day.

In addition to the traditional prayer, we may add a *kavanah*, a word or concept, a poem or meditation, or even a chant, to "direct" our attention to the extraordinary holiness of an ordinary moment. The word, *kavanah*, has the inner meaning of "direction" or "intention," but a better translation of *kavanah* for English speakers is "a focus."

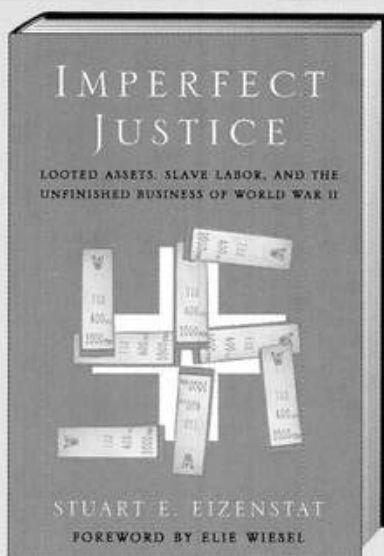
Kavanah for Washing the Hands

Water flows over these hands

May I use them skillfully

as I construct and shape this day [*based on a prayer by Thich Nhat Hanh*]

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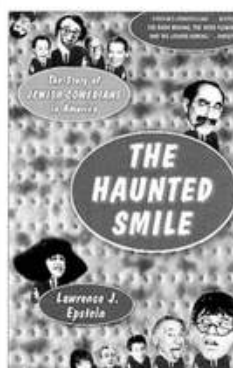
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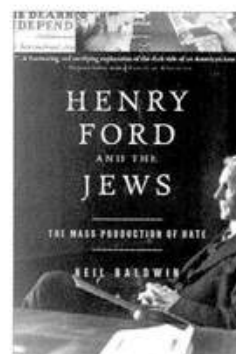


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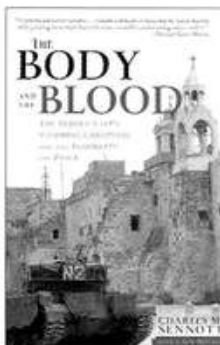
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Or:

Ve-yebi noam Adonai elobeinu aleinu, u-ma'aseh yadainu konenab aleinu, u-ma'aseh yadainu konenaibu.

"May the favor of Adonai our God be upon us, let the work of our hands prosper, O prosper the work of our hands!" [Ps. 90:17].

Prayer for Washing the Hands

While slowly drying your hands, recite the *berakhab*/blessing:

Barukh atab Adonai elobeinu melekh ba-olam asher kidshanu be-mitzvotav ve-tzivanu al netilat yadayim.

"Praised are You, Eternal One, our God, presence of the world who has sanctified us through the commandments and commanded us concerning the washing of hands."

Attitudes toward the body

All of our morning preparations can lead to a more conscious sense of self and of our bodies. Washing, putting on makeup, shaving, brushing our hair, putting on deodorant, and brushing our teeth are all ways to connect with our body, and with our desire to make our exterior reflect the beauty of our soul. All of these activities are expressions of caring for our selves. They are also expressions of concern about how others will view us. In that sense, they are preparations for leaving home and journeying out into the world.

The hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo once wrote, "The body is the soul's house. Shouldn't we therefore take care of our house so that it doesn't fall into ruin?" [*The Worse Attacks the Better*, section 10].

While traditional Judaism believes in a soul that survives beyond death, the body is not seen as the enemy of spirituality or even as something that weighs down the spirit. The body is the vessel that contains the soul; it is also the vehicle that creates opportunities to serve God and to effect *tikkun olam*, the repair of the world. For Judaism, all of life is part of God's world—a corollary of monotheism, since there is only One God who created everything in the universe. This is true of even the most mundane and seemingly base activities. Thus, there is a blessing to be recited after going to the bathroom in the morning. (Traditionally, the blessing is said after each visit to the bathroom). The blessing expresses an appreciation for the workings of the human body and the delicate balance that maintains it, something we often take for granted.

Prayer for Bodily Functions

Barukh atab Adonai elobeinu melekh ba-olam asher yatzar et ba'adam bechochmah uvara vo nekavim nekavim chalulim chalulim. Galuvi veyadu'a lifnei khisei khevodekha she'im yipate'ach echad mehem o yisatem echad mehem i efshar lehitkayem vela'amod lefanekha. Barukh atab Adonei rofey khol basar umafti la'asot.

Praised are You, Eternal One, our God, presence of the universe, who has formed a human with wisdom, and

created in her openings and vessels. It is well known before Your glorious throne, that if one of these is opened or if one is closed that it would be impossible to exist. Praised are You, who heals all creatures in a wondrous fashion.

Judaism's concern with care of our bodies is also reflected in issues of physical appearance and well-being. Societal standards determine what constitutes modest attire, and many of the specific statements in our tradition no longer seem applicable. In broad terms, however, the tradition attempts to maintain an appreciation for the beauty of the body and its sensuality while consistently reminding us that we are more than just bodies. It is true that each of us is created in the Divine image and it is natural for us to want to be attractive to others and to be noticed by those around us.

Unlike secular society, Judaism does not have an idealized model of beauty. In all our diversity, fat and thin, tall and short, we are all equally God's creations. As the vessel that holds our soul, Judaism seeks most of all to have our outside selves be a reflection of our inner beings. Our inner beauty is what counts and it is always reflected on the outside. The important thing is to focus on who we are and how we live rather than how we look. Indirectly, Judaism addresses those who may be dissatisfied with their outward body by pointing out that all individuals differ. For example, in the compilation of Jewish teaching known as the Talmud we read:

Therefore people were created unique, in order to proclaim the greatness of the Holy One. For if a person strikes many coins from one mold, they are all exactly alike. But though the King of kings, the Holy One, has fashioned every person in the stamp of the first human, not a single one of them is exactly like another. [Talmud, Sanhedrin 37a]

This is not to deny that our body image is important or that it may often be a conflicted part of our self-image. Nor does it mean that clothes don't make a difference in how we feel about ourselves or how others feel about us. Nor does Judaism's focus on inner beauty release us from our obligation to care for our bodies. This is especially true with regard to health issues, such as eating the right foods, losing excess weight, and regular exercise. In fact, the tradition regards the body as a precious gift to us from God, as we learn in this talmudic discussion of the great rabbinic master Hillel:

"He who does good to his own person is a person of piety" (Prov. 11:17). Such a one was Hillel the Elder. After taking leave of his disciples, he proceeded to walk along with them. His disciples asked him, "Master, where are you going?" He answered, "To perform a precept." "What precept?" "To bathe in the bathhouse." "But is this a precept?" "It is indeed. King's statues set up in theaters and circuses are scoured and washed down by the official specially

appointed to look after them who receives a salary for the work. More, he is esteemed as one of the notables of the empire. How much more am I required to scour and wash myself, who have been created in God's image and likeness, as it is written: "In the image of God, God made people." (Gen. 9:6)! [Lev. R. 34:3]

So doing good to one's self should not be regarded as being "self-indulgent," but rather as being pious, for we are created in the Divine image. Almost paradoxically, Judaism asks us to accept and appreciate ourselves as creatures of the Creator and yet calls on us to strive to improve ourselves. As we go through our morning ministrations, we can meditate on this paradox.

Kavanah for Bodily Appearance

When you dress or otherwise do something to improve your appearance, putting on nice clothes or ornaments, your intention should be holy and for the sake of heaven—to beautify and adorn the Divine Image.... [Noam Elimelekh]

Spiritual Awareness

It is of course not just waking up to the day that offers opportunities for spiritual awareness. All our daily

activities, eating, speech, work and relationships can reflect Judaism's call to be spiritually awake to the challenges and opportunities of the ordinary. This emphasis on awareness can be found if we return once again to the classic code of Jewish law, the Shulchan Arukh. The book opens by stating: One should strengthen oneself like a lion to get up in the morning for the service of the Creator ... *Shivitti Adonai le-negdi tamid*—"I have placed God before me always" (Ps. 16:8).

The goal of life as stated by this classic code of Jewish law is not just to observe the minutiae of Jewish ritual and law. It is to fulfill the precept "to place God before us at all times." We are called to walk through life with an ever-aware consciousness of the presence of the Holy One always. We are to do so as we eat, do business, and interact with people—in other words, when we are engaged in all of the "mundane" activities of daily life. With that consciousness, we will respond to others in a caring, compassionate and thus holy manner. For the Shulchan Arukh, awareness is the goal of life. The prophet Micah says: "What does God ask of you? To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly before God." It is that difficult and that simple. □

GOD'S BRIDE ON PESACH (continued from page 50)

God as dwelling among the children of Israel. They invented circumlocutions, they imagined intermediaries, they created nouns. For example (and for confirmation just read Gershom Scholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*), "Let them make me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them" became "Let them make before me a Sanctuary that I may let My Shechinah dwell among them." Originally, it seems, it did not trouble the rabbis that the noun, Shechinah (divine presence), indicating this perceivable aspect of the deity, took a feminine ending. Through the concept of the Shechinah, the excised and forbidden Goddess mysteriously made her way back into Jewish lore, into the Talmud itself, through the intercession of grammar.

As Shechinah, the Goddess comes with us into exile, comforts the ill and infirm, is present to those in need. In this ancient, almost-lost, conception of Her, She watches over sinners who repent, walks beside those who are broken-hearted, is the divine principle of compassion who intercedes with God on our behalf. She's ours, if we wish to reclaim her; she will dwell with us if we dare to venture outside the boundaries of the tradition we have been given. We can know her again as the Sabbath bride of the Falashas, or as the sixteenth-century Sabbath Queen evoked by the kabbalists. How many old, rich, forgotten meanings return to us with Her. As contemporary women, looking for ways to acknowledge her, gathering to form a women's Seder, we may see her as Earth itself, a deity of fruitfulness. We may remember that the earth is our mother, pregnant with abundance. With this imagery the female body returns to a revered place in Jewish life. The senses become a source of

celebration, for it is indeed possible to behold Her who is not beyond perception.

Now, some twenty-five years after I first met Her, I easily sense her presence at the Seder, way back behind the learned teachings and the familiar stories and the commentaries on the stories. Indeed, She has her ceremonies and celebrations when we learn to look for her in even the most traditional places. I've glimpsed Her in the Passover season itself, which marks the time of the early harvest in Israel. She is there in the Omer, the sheaf of barley offered on the second day of the Passover. Present, if unrecognized, She lives in the cup of Pesach wine, just waiting to deliver her intoxicating stories. She is the wine, She is the herbs and the green of the field; She is the wheat, rye, oats, barley, and spelt from which the matzah can be made. She is the story behind her oldest story, the fertility and redemption our festive meals invoke.

I've caught glimpses of Her sitting comfortably in Elijah's place, sipping at his glass of wine. By the time he shows up the glass is full again. I've seen them wrangle when Elijah comes to claim his chair. These two have an old argument. It breaks out while the rest of us make our way through the Haggadah. She's never forgiven him for dragging the prophets of Baal down from Mount Carmel and killing them in the River Kishon when they lost the rain-making competition. He points out that no one lay a hand on the prophets of Asherah. By the end of the Seder, whoever tips back in the chair or glances over a shoulder can see her with her hair set free, dancing about in the nude, around the Seder table, around and around to sprinkle the entire company with ferment and wine. □

AN INTERVIEW WITH Steve Earle

Michael Bader and Margot Duxler

Steve Earle is hard to pin down. He was dubbed the “savior of country music” and the “hillbilly Bruce Springsteen” when his first album, *Guitar Town*, was released in 1986—but he’s equally at home in the worlds of bluegrass, Celtic music, and rock and roll. He recently published a book of short stories, *Dog-House Roses*, wrote and produced a play in Nashville about Karla Faye Tucker, the first woman executed in Texas since 1863, acted in three episodes of HBO’s “The Wire,” and he works tirelessly as an activist fighting the death penalty and landmines. He can quote from *Das Kapital* and tell you about the politics of the Church during the Crusades, but as recently as seven years ago he was scoring Dilaudid in Black neighborhoods of South Nashville, and doing time in the county lock-up and a rehab center. His songs range from searing populist critiques to soul-wrenching ballads of grief, longing, and love (“chick songs,” he calls them).

Steve Earle was recently embroiled in a controversy involving his new album, *Jersusalem*—his most explicitly political album to date—because it contained a song called “John Walker’s Blues.” In the song, Earle imagines the world from John Walker Lindh’s point of view: “I’m just an American boy, raised on MTV, And I’ve seen all those kids in the soda pop ads, But none of them looked like me, So I started looking around for a light out of the dim, And the first thing I heard that made sense was the word, Of Mohammed, peace be upon him.” Earle’s Lindh believes that jihād and

martyrdom will bring him closer to God and the song’s chorus has Earle chanting from the Koran. Right-wing newspapers and country music stations condemned Earle for being un-American and urged a boycott of the album.

Although Earle has never weighed in on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the title song on his new album is one of the most moving and beautiful pleas for peace in the Middle East ever recorded.

*I woke up this mornin’ and none of the news was good
Death machines were rumblin’ ‘cross the ground where
Jesus stood
And the man on my TV told me that it had always been
that way
And there was nothin’ anyone could do or say*

*And I almost listened to him
Yeah, I almost lost my mind
Then I regained my senses again
And looked into my heart to find*

*That I believe that one fine day all the children of Abraham
Will lay down their swords forever in Jerusalem*

Steve Earle was interviewed last fall by TIKKUN.

TIKKUN: When your song “John Walker’s Blues” came out, the Right attacked you for “sympathizing with the enemy.” Your attempt to empathize with Lindh as the Other is, indeed, radical in today’s political environment. Would you agree?

EARLE: I think empathy is exactly what it is and that empathy is definitely endangered in this climate. Instead, retribution is at a premium. The songs I’ve written about the death penalty and John Walker have one thing in common: I’m trying to humanize people that others are trying to

demonize, or at least dehumanize. The notion of empathy versus retribution comes up over and over around the death penalty. I’m a death penalty abolitionist from a moral spiritual place. If the government kills someone that’s me killing someone because I still accept the premise that this is a democracy, and I object to the damage it does to my spirit.

I think that you have to forgo retribution to arrive at justice. The only thing our criminal justice system should be doing is physically protecting us from people who are violent at the moment and trying to figure out how to fix those people. If you’ve ever spent any time in death row, the thing they’re trying to do is dehumanize these guys cause they’re going to kill them. It’s cruel, but the guards don’t dehumanize the inmates to be mean—they do it because they have to get them out of the cell when it’s time, and no



Michael Bader is a psychoanalyst and author of *Arousal: The Secret Logic of Sexual Fantasies* (St. Martin’s Press). Margot Duxler is a psychologist and author of *Seduction: A Portrait of Anaïs Nin* (Edgewood Books). Both are in private practice in San Francisco.

INTERVIEW

matter how loud they scream, no matter how hard they fight, the guards have to get them from point A to point B in order to kill them. They have to start thinking of them as less than human or they won't survive. The day I left after witnessing the execution of Jonathan Robles, I left with an amazing amount of empathy for the people who had to participate in that execution.

TIKKUN: At TIKKUN, we think that scapegoating in this particularly punitive way provides an illusory sense of "we," of community, that there's an "us" as opposed to a "them," which is powerfully attractive to people because we are so isolated and alienated from each other. We argue that fundamentalist movements capitalize on this sense of alienation, creating communities to alleviate the alienation, by among other things, uniting them around a common enemy.

EARLE: I grew up in the late sixties around coffee houses during the anti-war movement, and I didn't know anyone who believed that one person killed John Kennedy. Sometimes the "us" versus "them" mentality might have some truth to it! But it's really dangerous to think that way. As soon as I got rid of the idea of "us" versus "them," it freed me up. Like with the death penalty, it's not *them* that's killing—I am killing too. It's a spiritual thing and it's freeing.

TIKKUN: It frees you up to have compassion for yourself and them.

EARLE: Absolutely ... I'm a recovering addict, so that's absolutely essential to my recovery. I'm not a Jew and I'm not a Christian and I'm not a Muslim. My spiritual system is really retarded. I believe there's a God and it ain't me and that's as far as I've gotten. Twelve Step programs require that you come to believe that there's something greater than you. You don't have to commit to all of it completely but you have to admit that a miracle is possible. I don't believe in accidents—I guess there's something spiritual about that. For example, I don't believe we've come back to Jerusalem over and over and over again as a race by accident. I think we come back because we missed something, and we're going to keep going back to it until we get it right.

TIKKUN: Missed what?

EARLE: Well, the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Western Wall are on one piece of real estate, and Muslims who controlled Jerusalem for the lion's share of the time in our recorded history never interfered with Jewish pilgrims or Christian pilgrims. Whether it's the Crusades or jihād, the dying and bleeding is done by the true zealots, but the strings are really pulled by someone with another agenda. It was screwing up the Vatican's agenda for all these petty kingships to be killing each other, so they sent them off to win back the Holy Land from the infidels. It was interesting that people freaked out when in my John Walker song I have him refer to the United States as infidels, because *we* called *them* infidels all those years. It's an English word, not Arabic.

TIKKUN: One of the things we liked about that song is that you have Walker searching for meaning—he's disillusioned by contemporary culture but finds meaning in fundamentalist Islam. It's obviously an attempt to describe things from Walker's internal point of view, but you caught a lot of flack for it.

EARLE: No one intelligent has really questioned my right to write about this. I got a one star review in the *New York Post* which I think is a benchmark for my career. If I'm not pissing those people off, then I'm not doing my job.

But what they reacted to is the fact that I'm sympathetic.... I'm singing an Islamic declaration of faith in Arabic. And I'm saying that Walker invokes the name and tradition of Jesus. One of the things I learned is that every devout Muslim, every single time he prays, says Jesus, Peace be upon Him. I didn't know that ... he's the last prophet before Mohammed.

But what's scary is not their reaction, it's the fact that people like Paula Zahn were going through the headlines and reacting to it without ever hearing the song. When I came back from Ireland for the record release and encountered this controversy, I went on *The Today Show*, Greta Van Susteren's show on Fox, and CNN. Its' frightening, by the way, that we live in a society where we need a right wing alternative to CNN. And it's frightening that what decides what we see on the news is based on selling beer. Take something like Tobey Keith's [a mainstream country singer] September 11th song at the opposite end of the spectrum. It doesn't have a political viewpoint at all.

TIKKUN: This issue must have come up around your opposition to the death penalty, particularly because of your experience witnessing the execution of Jonathan Nobles (Note: Earle wrote about this experience in an article in TIKKUN September/October 2000.)

EARLE: This is, again, about empathy. For example, we do and should pay a lot of attention to victims' family members because we'll never get rid of the death penalty by ignoring that phenomenon—having someone they love violently ripped out of their lives. But in a sense, we all became victims' family members after September 11th. We have to have empathy for each other. That's why I'm not real hard on artists who haven't come out as hard as I have. It's not that I think they're afraid of the government or even of their records not being played, but perhaps genuinely afraid of hurting or offending the families of the people who died.

TIKKUN: How conscious are you about your political role as an artist and songwriter when you sit down to write a song?

EARLE: I'm not a political songwriter. Woody Guthrie wasn't a political songwriter either. He was a songwriter who lived in very political times. Pete Seeger put out the idea that all songs are political, that a lullaby is political to a baby. However, Pete doesn't see himself as a political song-

writer. He wrote children's songs and English lyrics to the song *Guantanamo* which he probably did for political reasons but it's not a political song. Then there's the John Reed model. John Reed definitely was an artist, a great journalist, sending dispatches from his travels with Pancho Villa. And then he got so involved with writing for the newspaper, *The Masses*, and with the Party that he went to Russia to represent the American Communist Party at the Comintern. There's a line you can step across where you wade off into being a politician, where you're suddenly less effective than you were as an artist.

I don't think my songs are propaganda.... I have an agenda, but I fully realize that my agenda isn't the only agenda. I always entertain the possibility that I could be wrong and I try to leave other people some room. I also realize how ineffective I get when I'm preaching.

My last album, *Transcendental Blues*, was nearly all chick songs, and they were very relevant to me at the time. But

with *Jerusalem*, I don't know what else I would have been able to write. It's important not to avoid issues if they're there and you're capable of dealing with them. I was taught not to exclude issues from my songs. I started writing songs in 1969, 1970, the war was going on and that's what everybody did.... I just didn't know any better.

TIKKUN: And sometimes politics are not always conscious and deliberate, but preconscious and more about feeling something....

EARLE: Understanding it intellectually and experiencing it emotionally and spiritually are two different things.

TIKKUN: That's the difference between preaching and storytelling. Storytelling tells a greater truth, allows an experiential identification, allows you to be in the other person's shoes.

EARLE: It allows a process, room for a process. When I was shootin' dope and someone would come and tell me "If you keep doin' this you're going to die," I was like, "duh," but that wasn't going to get me any closer to stopping. I knew I was dying for years and I couldn't stop. Something had to happen to me. I went to jail and it didn't even happen in jail—it happened later in a treatment center. People just don't come to stuff until they're ready to. And I really think that they come to stuff on a spiritual level when they're ready to. The disease I have, it's emotional, it's physical, and it's also spiritual. And that's what makes or breaks whether you stay clean. My sponsor's always saying that there will come a day when the only thing that will keep you from using drugs again is the condition of your own spirituality. That scared the living *fuck* out of me the first time I heard it, because my program was mechanical, it was make meetings and call my sponsor and if you do those things you won't pick up—but after a certain point you stop recovering.

*My spiritual system is
really retarded. I believe
there's a God and it
ain't me and that's as
far as I've gotten.*

TIKKUN: Some people in recovery have a hard time relating to God, having a spiritual sensibility. Do you?

EARLE: A lot of people who have gone into the program had really bad experiences with the religion they were raised in, so the recovery movement differentiates between religion and spirituality. Religion is a group of people who agree what God is and their group relationship with God, while spirituality is one person's one-on-one relationship with God. So that you can have spirituality within a religious structure, but lots of people have a religious structure without spirituality.

TIKKUN: Maybe one of the reasons that lullabies are political is that the longing for understanding and connectedness in our culture is potentially a radical striving because so much in the market economy based society pulls people apart and makes them feel impoverished.

EARLE: The market will never take care of everyone. I've always felt that.

Look at what's happening in the music industry. It's a hard time for singer/songwriters right now. I sell a couple hundred thousand records but it's still true that it's a bad time to get played on the radio if you're in that category. I'm played mostly on public radio stations. I'd like to see public radio play more music—it's becoming the only place that adults can find music that they like, because it's not run by corporations. Corporate record labels are choosing to *not* make worthwhile records because they can't afford to. They have to protect the stock price. Every three months they have to report to the stockholders, so they have to go with what's going to return the most money the fastest because it's not about a profit, it's about profit-margins. Corporations have always been a bad way to fund art for that very reason. You can't sign a young artist and develop them because three months later you're going to have to answer to the stockholders. I'm kind of a company guy when it comes to Artemis Records and Danny Goldberg [CEO and former publisher of TIKKUN] because Artemis is a really bold experiment, trying to hang on without a public stock offering. He's going from one medium size hit to another medium size hit. It's a draw. You're dealing with investment bankers, private investors, rather than a public stock offering where they don't really care what you're selling, they just want to see the price of the stock.

TIKKUN: TIKKUN is interested in how to build a social movement and, as you know, the Left can fetishize and one dimensionalize and treat people as things as much as the Right.

EARLE: Absolutely.

TIKKUN: We think that unless we can mobilize what you call the Heartland, white middle-class voters and citizens, to get animated, then the movement is always marginalized

and the outgroups become increasingly vulnerable to all sorts of right-wing attacks—in part because there's no political base to protect them. Liberals and leftists who pitch their message on the basis of social justice and economic equality often end up with a message that falls on deaf ears because it has the by product of making people feel guilty about what they *do* have. A white middle-class guy working in St. Paul has relational needs, spiritual needs that aren't being met in the culture, and the Left doesn't address those needs. The Right, on the other hand, offers communities and churches that speak to these real needs that people have (albeit in ways that often demean others). The Left doesn't have an analysis that is as sharp in some ways as the Right.

EARLE: Those are tough questions. I'm an unapologetic socialist. I don't think there's any excuse for anybody to go hungry in the richest country in the world. There's plenty in the world for not one single solitary soul to go without medicine, medical treatment, enough to eat, and a roof over their head. But Karl Marx's biggest mistake was failing to realize that you'll never make a people's revolution by advocating anything that separates *poor people from their spirituality*. It gets back to the difference between spirituality and religion. For better or worse, the Christian Right *is* religious, and it *is* political, but their religion and politics outweighs the spirituality in their message.

We're no longer the most powerful country in the world, but we're behaving as if we're going to be. We behave politically the same way we behave with the environment. We don't care about our grandchildren. Our grandchildren are going to have to live in a world stepping over all the shit we left behind politically.

One of these days we're going to cease to exist. They're going to be sifting through all this stuff after we're gone, like the Romans, and if we're remembered for anything, maybe it'll be jazz, maybe rock-n-roll, maybe our Constitution. This is not a country that was created out of revolution of "the people," it was created out of a revolution of rich farmers who didn't want to pay their taxes ... and we're still basically at heart rich farmers who don't want to pay our taxes. But those rich farmers created something that was more than they intended it to be, bigger than they were, and whenever I see that happen, I think there's a spiritual phenomenon. I don't believe in accidents and our Constitution is something that people are going to dust off and even if all of this collapses, somebody is going to run across the fact that we had it, and realize what it is, and pick it up and run with it.... If we're remembered for anything good, it'll be that. And separation of church and state doesn't mean that you can't or shouldn't be spiritual. That's one thing I think about

*If we're remembered
for anything, maybe
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rock-n-roll, maybe
our Constitution.*

TIKKUN. During the time that Danny and Victor were its publishers, I was exposed to it and then I started subscribing. It was for TIKKUN that I wrote the piece about witnessing the execution of Jonathan Nobles.

TIKKUN: Your song "Jerusalem" is quite a beautiful prayer of hope, and yet looking at the situation there and in the Islamic world in general, it seems like a pipe dream, doesn't it?

EARLE: If I hear one more elected official or one more journalist say that Islam hates us because we're free, I'll blow up. If they hate us, they hate us for political reasons, for the things that we've done politically. They hate us because we support and have propped up the House of Saud who couldn't rule Saudi Arabia without us, and because we support Israel, whose government is being very, very brutal toward the Palestinians. The Palestinians live there, it's their home and no one's going to back down. That's what Jerusalem the

song is about. We *have* to get it right. I ended up pulling this optimism out of nowhere, in a situation that most people felt to be hopeless because they don't want to deal with it. My optimism comes out of nothing except if we don't get the Middle East right, we're fucked. We're coming back to it over and over again for a reason and if we don't get it right, we'll cease to exist. □

DAVID, BATHSHEBA, NATHAN, AND WAR (from page 24)

us with the horror of it, the steep human costs of it, who courageously expose the bloody truth of our bloodless technologies, the physical and emotional toll it takes on our "enemies" and our own soldiers, and the moral and spiritual toll it takes on us all.

This spring, we face a war that few of the world's people understand and few support. Through an unlikely convergence of historical accident and hardball politics, George W. Bush alone will decide whether it is engaged. He, like David, will bear a special moral burden for the war he orders.

But, unlike David, George W. Bush is not a king. And despite the weakness of political opposition to him, despite the imperial tone set by this administration and its sycophants, America is not a monarchy. As citizens of this democratic republic, we too bear a moral burden for war fought in our name. With our voices, our bodies, our money, and our prayers, we who oppose this war must actively resist it.

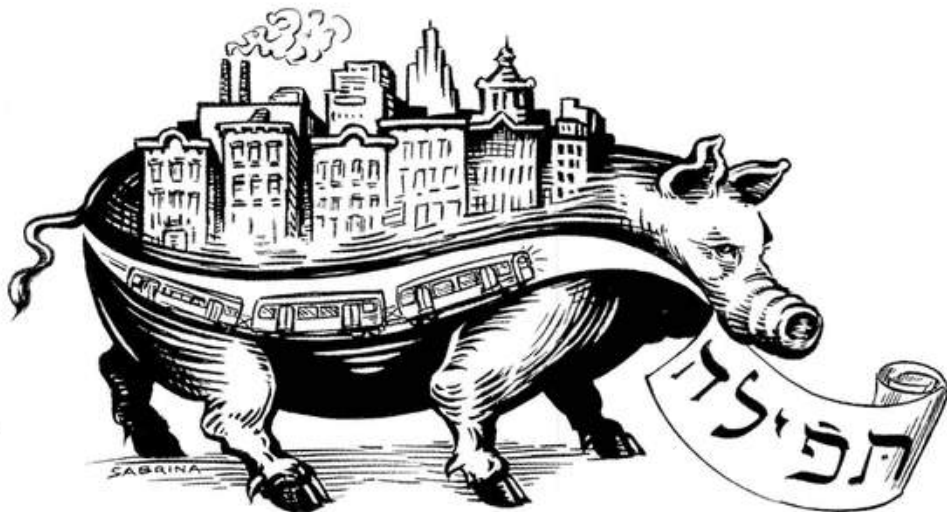
And if war comes, we must tell the truth about it.

We must resist the coming campaign to distance the public from the gruesome reality of the high-tech violence we unleash. For the sake of our own humanity, we must face the truth of war and grieve the part we play in destroying sacred life, other human beings who bear the image of God. □

Moyshe-Leyb Halpern

A Modernist
Yiddish Poet in New York

Julian Levinson



This is the first in a series of articles dedicated to key Yiddish poets. These are writers who have remained unfamiliar to many readers, not only because poetry is inherently difficult to translate, but because of the lingering bias that Yiddish is a language of humor rather than serious art. As we sift through the multiple meanings of Jewish culture and identity, however, there are good reasons to pay particular attention to these poets today.

To be a Yiddish poet, it must be remembered, is to enter a curiously ambiguous position between tradition and private experience. All of these poets were, in one way or another, on the run from traditional Judaism, lured by the call of literature rather than Torah. Yet they refused to abandon the language of their youth, even though many had wandered far from home and were more than competent in other languages. The decision to write in Yiddish was fraught with some peril for anybody wishing to be wholly modern. After all, Yiddish carried along with it powerful associations from the Jewish past. What we discover in their writing, then, is an urgent striving to articulate idiosyncratic personal visions without erasing or forgetting the collective experience of East European Jews. In the best of their writing, they demonstrate that the borders surrounding "Jewish culture" can be redrawn to admit the radically new without reducing it to the already-known. Reading these poets today, we are reminded that we are not the first generation to experience Jewishness as an overwhelming question rather than a fixed set of responses to the world. We are also reminded that a question need not demand a quick and ready solution, but—if experienced in its entirety—can push through to a genuinely new awareness of ourselves and our world.

From the turn of the century through the 1930s—the period in American Jewish history associated with pushcart entrepreneurs and labor unionists—there appeared in New York City a great number of ambitious, energetic, and restlessly innovative Yiddish poets. Among the notable figures were Mani Leib, Moyshe-Leyb Halpern, Celia Dropkin, H. Leivick,

Anna Margolin, A. Leyeles, and Jacob Glatstein. Gathering in coffee shops in Manhattan and the Bronx and publishing in tiny literary journals, they brought Yiddish poetry to a level of achievement unparalleled, perhaps, in the history of Yiddish literature.

There are several ways to explain this surge of literary creativity. On one hand there were sociological factors unique to Jewish life in America. The

massive influx of new immigrants had made New York by 1910 the most populous and diverse Jewish community in the world. Jews from regions as far-flung as Bessarabia and Lithuania suddenly found themselves living in the very same neighborhoods. This concentration of Yiddish speakers assured the writers an audience and encouraged the sharing of viewpoints, experiences, and literary influences. On the other hand, there were trends in the broader cultural scene that inspired Yiddish writers. These were years of heady experimentation in the culture at large, a period known as the moment of High Modernism. Individual expression was given free rein in all of the arts; traditional forms became the playthings for a newly insurgent avant-garde. Numbered amongst the new movements were the Harlem Renaissance, the "Lost Generation," Italian and Russian Futurism, Imagism, and Cubism. Yiddish writers, too, responded to this moment of cultural innovation. Within a remarkably short span of time they cycled through a variety of literary schools and trends, ranging from neo-romanticism to imagism to surrealism.

But why was poetry the most vital literary form for American Yiddish writers rather than, say, the novel or drama? Here we must consider the peculiar set of challenges facing Jewish immigrant writers. Even as they found themselves in highly concentrated

(continued on page 66)

Julian Levinson is a professor of American Jewish studies and English literature at the University of Michigan. He is currently working on a book about the ways Jewish writers in America have defined themselves in relation to Judaism and the Jewish past.

(continued from page 63)

Jewish neighborhoods, these writers could not avoid a sense of isolation from America as a whole. Their language set them apart, as did their cultural background, their memories of the Old Country, and their sense of belonging to an international Jewish community more than a national American one. Even more to the point, perhaps, they were stranded somewhere between the East European shtetl and an America that already seemed a land of false promises. Such an experience made writers more attuned to their own yearnings, confusions, and fantasies. The inner mind became a waystation, so to speak, between more stable communal structures. An important literary journal published from 1921 to 1940 was in fact called *In Zikh (Inside the Self)*, as if the world outside the self was no longer of particular interest. So whereas the previous generation of Yiddish writers featured masters of prose fiction—the classic triad of Mendele, I.L. Peretz, and Sholem Aleichem—the new generations included poets of great sensitivity, introspection, and individuality. Yiddish prose flourished in more or less intact Jewish communities in Eastern Europe; poetry flourished in the confusion and disarray of New York.

Perhaps the most idiosyncratic (and certainly the most notorious) of the new young poets was Moyshe-Leyb Halpern. Born in the Galitzian shtetl of Zlochev in 1886, he attended a traditional *cheder* (Hebrew school) and was sent by his parents to Vienna at the age of thirteen to learn sign painting. In Vienna he moved in modernist circles and published his first poems in German. On his return to his hometown, he was inspired by the local poets to dedicate himself to Yiddish literature, which was then gaining prestige among socialists and Yiddishists as the authentic voice of the Jewish diaspora. Finally, to avoid the draft, Halpern moved to America in 1908, where he associated with a group of poets known as *Di Yunge* ("The Young

Ones"). But while other members of this group reached toward the purity of beauty, embracing the notion of art for art's sake, Halpern sought to open his poems to the brutal realities of poverty and psychological pain. His ideal was an anti-aesthetic poetry, a style that would speak directly to the reader and pierce the illusions of art. As he once wrote in a mock invocation to God: "O

*For us Halpern's
poetry offers a close-up
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into the maelstrom of
New York.*

helf mir, Got, / Az eklen zol fun mayne reyd, / Vi fun a toytter katz in mist ("Oh, help me, God, / Let my speech be disgusting / As a dead cat rotting in garbage." Trans. Kathryn Hellerstein.)

In 1922, Halpern was hired by the newly-formed Communist daily *The Freiheit* as a contributing editor. Sympathetic to the paper's criticisms of capitalist society, he wrote poems that cried out against the degrading conditions of modern life. As for his colleagues' political solutions, he was somewhat more skeptical. Though he went on speaking tours throughout the Northeast and Midwest, billed as *der groyser proletarisher dikhter* ("the great proletarian writer"), Halpern ultimately found more solace in poetry itself than in plans for revolution. Eventually he left the newspaper, after being criticized for the obscurity of his poetry and the coarseness of his language.

For us Halpern's poetry offers a close-up of the Jewish immigrant free falling into the maelstrom of New York. The poem on pages 62 and 63, "In the Subway," was first published in *The Freiheit* in 1923 and reprinted in Halpern's 1924 collection *The Golden Peacock*; it appears here in English

translation for the first time. The poem focuses on a figure in extremis, searching for moorings in the turbulence of modern life. While traveling in a New York subway (a popular motif among the New York Yiddish poets), the poet studies his fellow passenger, whose foreignness brings on an internal crisis. Memories of home fail to provide an antidote: returning in his mind to the shtetl of his youth, he encounters his father inexplicably bidding him farewell. The poem's middle section unravels a surrealistic meditation on cultural and personal loss and on the corrupting effects of American life. The most surprising moment comes midway through the final stanza, when the poet compares the prayer he utters to Jesus on the cross. References to Jesus were not uncommon in Yiddish poetry of the time, but Halpern's image is particularly jolting. At a moment of ostensible Jewish piety, we discover a heretical image, as if the poet were imagining some new hybrid identity beyond the polarities of Jew and Christian. Finally, the poem concludes with a mournful (and certainly not beatific) vision of lonely souls retreating into solitude. □

Further Reading

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Howe, Irving, and Greenberg, Eliezer, eds. *A Treasury of Yiddish Poetry*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972.

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In the Subway

Daybreak.
 Worn out from a night with wine
 And womanly beauty,
 I travel homeward.
 While he, as if molded
 From dirty clay and typhus-stained yellowness,
 Travels the world, giving of his labor.
 We sway, the two of us
 In this house of iron,
 Which carries us on tiny wheels,
 Miles upon miles through the ground, a bleak portal
 Beneath stones and earth.
 We look at each other,
 I—my eyes glazed over with sleep, through glasses,
 And he—with tiny slits where eyes should be,
 They evoke for me a bathhouse for women
 Where once I stole (through the tiniest crack)
 A peak inside.

We sway like this, the two of us.
 I see him (as on a movie screen)
 Yanking a horse from its stall,
 Putting on a harness.
 And riding above
 An overfilled wagon,
 I see a hunchbacked little man, sitting.
 I ask him through the window:
 —Dear father.
 Where are you traveling, in this rain, at break of day?
 He answers me: To the fair, my son.
 To the fair.
 I listen as the wheels begin to creak and rattle,
 I am shouting, my nose pressed against the glass:
 Go in peace, dear father.
 He answers: Be well, my son.
 His voice is muffled, as by a wall in the rain.
 It seems my father is disguised
 As a bear.
 And I growl: Grrrrrrrr!

We sway like this, the two of us,
 He—the village with horse and stall,
 And I—the town near the village
 With a shul, a bath, and a tiny hammer
 Which calls on shutters at break of day
 Announcing the time to serve God.
 He looks over my shoes,
 Regretting, perhaps, the calf
 He once sold
 To buy his way here.

(no stanza break)

I look over the tiny bag
 He clutches in his lap.
 I hear my own voice
 Praying faster and faster
 So I may eat the wild strawberries with cream
 Which stand waiting for me.
 I glimpse a piece of pig's-meat
 Crawling out of his bag
 Crawling into my Shema Yisroel, as I recite,
 And also a slice of cheese, which stinks,
 And a stale piece of bread.
 They rouse—as from a nightmare,
 The Shmoneh Esrey
 Which cowers in a corner and weeps.
 The pig's-meat tilts wildly
 Shouting into the prayers a song
 Which I heard during a visit to the opera—
 My prayers stretch apart
 Like Jesus on the cross
 And they begin their great lament: "My Lord, my Lord,
 why..."
 Into their hands they take
 The bread and the stinking cheese.
 And all let out a howl in a chorus of hoarse voices
 Like a pair of drunken peasants
 Singing the Marseillaise and other songs of land and kin—
 I realize that my veins are bursting.
 A hand as hard and cold as iron
 Hurls me upon a roof, where I stagger.
 I listen below
 As the bread, the cheese,
 My Shema Yisroel, the pig's-meat,
 And the Shmoneh Esrey
 All make a big commotion, hunting down a ladder
 So I can return to the world below—
 But no such ladder is found.
 I laugh from these heights
 Until my tongue falls from my mouth in terror.
 They think I've become a ghost
 Doing devilish tricks like a circus clown
 And each one down below is just as fearful
 As I above
 Between earth and clouds.
 They squeeze themselves into corners,
 Each alone, and they cry
 Like me, up here,
 Between earth and clouds.

—Moyshe-Leyb Halpern
 (Translated by Julian Levinson)

In Sobvey

(Note: Yiddish is written in Hebrew characters. What follows is the poem transliterated into Latin script.)

Fartog.
Ikh, a mider fun a nakht mit vayn
Un vayber-sheynkeyt
For aheym.
Un er, tsunoyfgemisht
Fun koytik leym mit tifus-gelkeyt
Fort di velt bazorgn mit zayn pratse.
Shoklen mir zikh beyde
In dem hoyz dem ayzernem,
Vos flit mit undz af redlekh
Durkh dem maynlangn lokh, dem vistn,
Unter shteyn un erd.
Kukn mir zikh on,
Ikh—mit oygn shlof-farkholemt durkh briln,
Un er—mit shpares tzvey azoy in zayn punim,
Vos moln oys far mir a bod a vayberish,
Vuhin ikh hob amol
Farganevet (durkh a lekhl bloyz)
Arayngkekukt.

Shoklen mir zikh beyde ot-azoy.
Ze ikh im (vi af a kino-layvnt)
A ferd aroysshlepn fun shtal
Un aynshpanen.
Ze ikh in der hoykh
Af ot-dem fuln ongepaktn vogn
An ayngehoykert mentshl zitsn.
Freg ikh durkh fentster:
—Tatele,
Vu forstu in a regn ot aza fartog?
Entfert er mir: Af yarid, mayn zundl,
Af yarid, mayn zundl.
Her ikh vi di reder skripen shoyen,
Shray ikh mitn nezl tsugeprest tsum shoyb
For gezunt, mayn tatele
Entfert er mir: Zay gezunt, mayn zundl.
Klingt zayn kol vi durkh a vant in regn.
Dakht zikh mir, az far a berele farshtelt
Hot zikh mayn tatele.
Makh ikh: Boo-Boo-Hoo.

Shoklen mir zikh beyde ot-azoy,
Er—dos dorf mit ferd un shtal,
Un ikh—dos shtetl lebn dorf
Mit shul un bod un mit a hamerl
Vos ruft tsu dinen got fartog
In ale lodns.
Bakukt er mayne shikh,
Batroyert er dabay dos kelbl efsher,
Vos r'hot amol farkoyft—

(no stanza break)

Aher tsu kumen.
Bakuk ikh af zayn shoys
Dos pekl, vos er halt.
Her ikh, vi ikh daven gikh un gikher
Tsu konen oyfesn di pozshimkes mit smetene,
Vos vartn shoyen af mir.
Dakht zikh mir a shtikl khazir-fleysh
Fun pekl zayns krikht aroys
Un krikht arayn in mayn shema yisroel, vos ikh zog
Shtupt zikh oykh arayn
A shtikl kez, vos shtinkt,
Ineynem mit a shtikl broyt a hartn.
Vekn zey vi fun a beyzn kholem af
Di shimen-esrey oykh
Farshart zi in a vinkl zikh un veynt.
Boygt zikh tsu dos khazir-fleysh
Un shrayt arayn in oyer ir a lid
Vos ikh hob in der opere gehert amol
Tsit zikh der shema-yisroel oys
Vi yezus afn tselem
Un heybt on yomern zayn eli, eli.
Nemen zikh baym hant
Dos broyt ineynem mitn kez vos shtinkt
Un reven heyzerik, vi goyim tsvey batrunkene,
Di marselieze un nokh epes azoyne lider—
Dakht zikh mir, az ale odern
In mir tshespringen.
Vilt zikh mir antloyfn—
Oysbahalt zikh vu ergets—
Shlaydert mikh a hant a harte, vi fun ayzn,
Af a dakh aroyf a shvindldikn hoykh.
Her ikh, vi dos broyt mit kez
Un der shema-yisroel un dos khazir-fleysh
Ineynem mit der shimen-esrey unt
Makhn a gevald men zol a leyter brengen,
Ikh zol tsurik aropgeyn
Iz nishto aza min leyter.
Lakh ikh fun der hoykh arunter,
Biz se hengt aroys di tsung bay mir fun pakhed.
Meynen zey, ikh bin a shed gevorn,
Vos vayzt zey gehenem-kuntsn vi a kloun in tsirk.
Shrekn zey zikh unt itlekher
Azoy vi ikh do oybn
Tsvishn erd un volkns.
Tsesharn zey zikh in di vinklen unt
Itlekher far zikh un veynen,
Azoy vi ikh do oybn,
Tsvishn erd un volkns.—

—Moyshe-Leyb Halpern

In the Spirit of Hermes

Reflections on the Work of Jorge N. Ferrer

Jeffrey J. Kripal

- *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory: A Participatory Vision of Human Spirituality*, by Jorge Ferrer. SUNY, 2002.

Occasionally a book appears that signals an important turn in the road of a particular method. More often than not, such a turn is not immediately recognized by those on the road. Indeed, even if they do recognize it, they will often passionately, perhaps even violently, resist it. Paradigm shifts, as we have come to call them, seldom happen without a good deal of stress and suffering, and human beings are notoriously bad at dealing with deep structural change, particularly when that change involves their deepest religious and ontological commitments. Any radical challenge, in other words, is just that: *radical*, "to the root." And who wants to be uprooted?

I certainly possess no developed pre-cognitive abilities, but as a deeply interested albeit somewhat distant and random reader of transpersonal literature, I cannot help but think that Jorge Ferrer's recent book, *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory: A Participatory Vision of Human Spirituality* (SUNY, 2002) is a good candidate for signaling—if not actually helping effect—just such a radical "turn" in transpersonal theory, that broad range of contemporary writing that seeks to synthesize modern psychology and traditional mystical

literature through an affirmation of the theoretical importance of those human experiences that lie beyond the realm of the conscious ego or person.

I write here under the sign of Hermes, that mercurial (occasionally phallic) figure of Greek and Roman mythology, Western hermeticism, alchemy, and esotericism who does not appear in Ferrer's writing as such but who is central to my own thought as the largely unacknowledged patron of hermeneutics, that "Hermes process" or practice that mystically fuses horizons of the past and present in order to envision new futures of religious meaning and human flourishing. Constructed anew within the contemporary practice of hermeneutics, Hermes can teach us that, although we certainly cannot live according to our religious pasts (as premodern totalizing systems, they are all far too intolerant and violent for that), neither can we live without them: only intelligent, radically critical, and deeply committed fusions of our pasts and presents can offer us any real and lasting hope.

Jorge Ferrer takes us a very long way down this hermeneutical road without exactly calling it that. In what follows I want to show how he does this, why I think his thought is so important, and where I think we can further extend, deepen, and radicalize it.

The Deconstruction

Ferrer's book is simply structured around the two movements of

deconstruction and reconstruction, because he believes that any adequate future spiritualities (and the plural is significant) can arise only after *all* previous forms of spirituality have passed through the apophatic fires of modern and postmodern thought. Ferrer is neither exactly a modern nor, much less, a postmodern in his thinking, but he is clear that both forms of consciousness must be met and struggled with on their own terms before any real transpersonal progress can be made. Ferrer's book is based on a triple critique of contemporary spiritualities that revolves around three central pillars of modern transpersonal theory: experientialism, empiricism, and perennialism.

Experientialism refers to that tendency in modern religious thought to locate meaning and authority in the subjective experiences of individuals, a conviction perhaps most commonly heard today in the phrase "I am spiritual but not religious." Ferrer, as we will soon see, thinks that, ontologically speaking, we are far more intimately and creatively involved with both tradition and the "outside" world than this modern individualism assumes.

Empiricism is that related move designed to establish subjective religious experience as somehow scientific, that is, as replicable, verifiable, and falsifiable. Hence, we often hear about the "science of yoga" or the innumerable psychological and physiological studies of meditation that have scientifically established its many remarkable benefits. Much of this, of course, is quite legitimate in its own right and often utterly fascinating, but

Jeffrey J. Kripal is the Lynette S. Autry Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Rice University. His most recent book is *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom: Eroticism and Reflexivity in the Study of Mysticism* (Chicago, 2001).

BOOK REVIEW

Ferrer worries out loud about the deeper, underlying logic of the move, the logic that relies on empiricist standards to grant a human experience the status of truth or reality.

By the middle of the twentieth century, this psychologized, often scientific discourse had developed into a well-formed, more or less conscious essentialism that saw as its goal the recovery of a *perennialism* or perennial philosophy (*philosophia perennis*), the position that all “true” or “genuine” mystics have always (perennially) arrived at the same set of metaphysical truths. Interestingly, perennialism usually has been expressed in abstract monistic or nondual terms that are nevertheless distinctly indebted to a very, very small number of religious traditions, with some form of Sufism, Advaita Vedanta, or (mostly Mahayana or Vajrayana) Buddhism the most commonly cited.

Ferrer believes that experientialism, inner empiricism and perennialism are all intimately connected to what he calls the Cartesian ego and its attending subject-object dualisms, that is, to the epistemological foundations of modernity itself. They all work out of what Ferrer calls the “Myth of the Given” that sees reality as something objective “out there” that can be accessed by any suitably equipped knower. Experientialism, empiricism, and perennialism, in other words, for whatever else they are, are fundamental products of a reified sense of self that is locked into a radically and ultimately false dualistic epistemology. As such, they ironically prescribe the metaphysical cause of modern spiritual malaise (that is, a kind of disenchanting dualism) for its cure. In the process, they fail almost completely to take seriously the often irreconcilable differences that exist between the different contemplative traditions and their stated (and quite often intolerant) ontological goals.

One of my favorite parts of the book is a simple thought experiment Ferrer proposes. A hypothetical Theravada

Buddhist meditator reports experiences either of an indestructible, eternal Self (the goal of Advaita Vedanta) or the dynamic presence of a good and loving God (the goal of theistic contemplation):

Will these “experiential data” be taken as falsifying or refuting the Buddhist doctrine of no-self (*anatman*)? Will the teacher even consider that doctrine’s potential fallibility? Hardly so. As any Buddhist practitioner well knows, these data will be regarded as an obvious sign of delusion, wrong view, attachment to permanent existence, or even of egoic resistance. And you will probably be told by your teacher, with more or less gentleness, to go back to your meditation cushion and keep practicing until you overcome delusion and see “things as they really are,” that is, marked by no-self and impermanence as the Theravada canons maintain.

It is, in other words, quite naïve to suppose that a particular religious worldview can ever be proven wrong by the “direct” spiritual experiences produced by that very worldview. Generally speaking, religious systems simply will not allow any competing experiences, however profound or deeply felt, to challenge the authority of the tradition, and the experiences that they produce tend strongly to support the system that produced them.

Ferrer also points out—again quite correctly—that experientialism, empiricism and perennialism all are hopelessly ahistorical moves and as such operate out of an impoverished perspective on the history of religions. Ferrer notes, for example, that such scholars as Wilhelm Halbfass and Robert Sharf have eloquently argued that premodern forms of Hinduism and Buddhism generally knew no such radical emphasis on “personal experience” as the ultimate arbiter of religious truth. Quite the contrary, both broad traditions favored scriptural authority and tradition over personal experience, did not hesitate to attack (often quite violently) competing

interpretations of scriptural authorities, and did not in fact turn to the discourse of personal experience as it stands now until their colonial contact with the West in the modern period. “Personal experience,” in other words, is a quintessentially Western and modern move, more reflective of Western individualism and, eventually, democratic forms of social practice than anything we find in the Asian traditions.

Finally, experientialism, inner empiricism, and perennialism are often quite naïve about what constitutes the scientific method and religious practice. After a sophisticated review of the philosophy of science, Ferrer points out that “in any contemplative community, no single spiritual experience will count as falsifying evidence against the sacred knowledge of their tradition ... what in one tradition is seen as a crucial spiritual insight, in another can be regarded as the most deceptive of delusions.” It thus seems clear that “spiritual claims can be corroborated, but not falsified. And the validity of this corroboration is not universal or absolute (as it is traditionally claimed) but contextual and relative.” I can only applaud such an observation and radicalize it further. Spiritual experiences, after all, are not technically replicable either, at least in the precise sense that the scientific method demands, that is, in the sense of controlling all but one tested variable. How could such a thing ever be possible with something as delicate and idiosyncratic as human religious experience? Every human being, after all, is the expression of literally *billions* of historical, psychological, physiological, cellular, and genetic events, none of which are exactly the same in any two people; indeed, even two identical twins (that is, clones) are irreducibly different by virtue of their individual life experiences. How, then, could we ever know which of these billions of ever-changing variables (from DNA to religious belief to this morning’s news) contributed to, much less determined, the event of a religious experience?

Clearly, we are not in the limited realm of the natural sciences here.

The Reconstruction

Following in a long line of hermeneutical thinkers, from Wilhelm Dilthey to Hans-Georg Gadamer, Ferrer argues that the assimilation of all human knowledge and experience to the standards of validity of the hard sciences is a tragedy and, ultimately, a dysfunctional epistemological move. On a humorous note, I am reminded here of something I witnessed in graduate school that annoyed me to no end. It was a T-shirt that bore the caption "Harvard: The University of Chicago of the East" (I'll leave it to my readers to figure out where I saw it). What ruffled me so was what I would call its ideological dysfunctionism: in its very attempt to establish Chicago over Harvard, it suggested in fact the exact opposite, namely, that Harvard was the perceived gold standard of research universities. We are in a very similar position, I think, with phrases like the "science of religious experience." The intentions are no doubt good ones and the pay-offs real, but the message is, at best, a double, if not self-defeating, one.

It is much better, Ferrer suggests, to recognize that religious traditions are more fruitfully approached and understood with a set of methods more attuned to their internal dynamics and nature. Accordingly, Ferrer, quoting Hendrik Vroom, suggests that religions are not verifiable or falsifiable sets of data but "living hermeneutic processes." In Ferrer's own words, "Most artistic, social, and spiritual endeavors are aimed not so much at describing human nature and the world, but at engaging them in creative, participatory and transformative ways, and therefore have different goals, methods, and standards of validity." In Gadamerian terms, truth in the humanities is not so much a correspondence with ahistorical facts but "an event of self-disclosure of Being," an ontological happening "in the locus

of human historical existence."

Which is not to say that they are only about the human. Indeed, central to Ferrer's hermeneutical turn in the transpersonal road is what he calls the Mystery of Being and something he calls "participatory events," the latter which he defines as "*emergences of transpersonal being that can occur not only in the locus of an individual, but also in a relationship, a community, a collective identity or a place.*" Such events can and do elicit "personal experiences" in individuals who participate in them, but such events cannot be reduced to human subjectivity or be understood as localized solely within a human being. Not unlike a party (Ferrer's own lovely analogy) in which a collection of seeming individuals suddenly find themselves coalescing into a larger happy something, participatory events emerge within relational, intimate, and often celebratory contexts that are literally "transpersonal" (that is, beyond the person) and radically interpretive. Being reveals itself in and as the human, understood here not as a disembodied or dissociated spirit or soul but as a fully embodied, integral human being in all his or her emotional, intellectual, sexual, and social dimensions. In itself, Being exists as a "dynamic and indeterminate spiritual power" or Mystery that awaits human interaction for it to be expressed. Being is literally interpreted into being. And, of course, the beer helps.

One of the most powerful and positive consequences of this model is its ability to account for and appreciate what Gadamer called "historical prejudice" and what Ferrer calls mediation, that is, those specific historical forms of consciousness and "bias" that allow different human beings to see very different truths in the same set of traditional practices or texts. In Ferrer's words, "*mediation is transformed from being an obstacle into the very means that enable us to directly participate in the self-disclosure of the world.*" It is indeed excessively odd

why a modern writer's perspective is so often dismissed or even demonized as "relative" or "Western" or whatever, as if the curves and shapes of our mental lenses could only distort and blind. Are not lenses also curved to enable sight, to focus, magnify, and grant new vision? Who is to say that our modern perspectives, those unique curves and shapes of the Western mind, do not also see something more and further? Clearly, they do not see everything, but this does not mean that they see nothing.

Radicalizing the Reconstruction

Ferrer's participatory vision and its turn from subjective "experience" to processual "event" possesses some fairly radical political implications. Within it, a perennialist hierarchical monarchy (the "rule of the One" through the "great chain of Being") that locates all real truth in the feudal past (or, at the very least, in some present hierarchical culture) has been superseded by a quite radical participatory democracy in which the Real reveals itself not in the Great Man, Perfect Saint or God-King (or the Perennialist Scholar) but in radical relation and the sacred present. Consequently, the religious life is not about returning to some golden age of scripture or metaphysical absolute; it is about co-creating new revelations in the present, always, of course, in critical interaction with the past. Such a practice is dynamic, uncertain, and yet hopeful—a *tikkun*-like theurgical healing of the world and of God.

It will come to no reader's surprise at this point in the essay that I find Ferrer's project to be immensely positive. I certainly have my reservations and criticisms, but they all boil down to "wanting more": that is, I would only want to radicalize the participatory vision further by pushing it beyond what I would call its lingering moral perennialism. As I have argued at some length elsewhere, it is a peculiar feature of the modern discourse on

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mysticism that even writers who reject an ontological perennialism ("All true mystics are experiencing the same metaphysical truth") often slip back into an assumption, either implied or explicitly stated, that the mystical traditions are somehow essentially moral ("All true mysticism makes human beings better people"). Ferrer rejects ontological perennialism (again, Being is a dynamic, indeterminate power or Mystery, not an objective ontological structure), but he too ultimately adopts a very positive assessment of the traditions' ethical status, suggesting in effect that the religions have been more successful in finding common moral ground than doctrinal or metaphysical agreement, and that most traditions have called for (if never faithfully or fully enacted) a transcendence of dualistic self-centeredness or narcissism. It is here that I must become suspicious.

Though Ferrer himself is refreshingly free of this particular logic (it is really more of a rhetoric), it is quite easy and quite common in the transpersonal literature to argue for the essential moral nature of mystical experience by being very careful about whom one bestows the (quite modern) title "mystic." It is an entirely circular argument, of course: One simply declares (because one believes) that mysticism is moral, then one lists from literally tens of thousands (millions?) of possible recorded cases a few, maybe a few dozen, exemplars who happen to fit one's moral standards (or better, whose historical description is sketchy enough to hide any and all evidence that would frustrate those standards), and, voilà, one has "proven" that mysticism is indeed moral. Any charismatic figure or saint that violates one's norms—and there will always be a very large, loudly screaming crowd here—one simply labels "not really a mystic" or conveniently ignores altogether. Put differently, it is the constructed category of "mysticism" itself that mutually constructs a "moral mysticism," not the historical evidence,

which is always and everywhere immeasurably more ambivalent.

Ferrer, as is evident in such moments as his thought experiment with the Theravada retreat, sees right through most of this. He knows perfectly well that perennialism simply does not correspond to the historical data. What he does not perhaps see so clearly is that a moral perennialism sneaks through the back door of his own conclusions. Thus, whereas he rightly rejects all talk of a "common core," he can nevertheless speak of a common "Ocean of Emancipation" that all the contemplative traditions approach from their different ontological shores. Happily, there is also much to counter this moral perennialism. He proposes, for example, as a basic criterion by which we should judge the traditions, the moral ability to transcend egoic subjectivity and narcissistic preoccupation with the self for the sake of a larger participation with the Mystery of Being, the world, and other human beings. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, he proposes a second crucial criterion by which we might evaluate the mystical forms of the past, something he calls the dissociation test. With this latter criterion, Ferrer argues that we must realize that our goal can never be simply the recovery or reproduction of some past sense of the sacred, for "we cannot ignore that most religious traditions are still beset not only by intolerant exclusivist and absolutist tendencies, but also by patriarchy, authoritarianism, dogmatism, conservatism, transcendentalism, body-denial, sexual repression, and hierarchical institutions." Put simply, the contemplative traditions of the past have too often functioned as elaborate and sacralized techniques for dissociating consciousness.

Once again, I think this is exactly where we need to be, with a privileging of the ethical over the mystical and an insistence on human wholeness as human holiness. I would only want to further radicalize Ferrer's vision by underscoring how hermeneutical it is,

that is, how it functions as a creative re-visioning and reforming of the past instead of as a simple reproduction of or fundamentalist fantasy about some nonexistent golden age. Put differently, in my view, *there is no shared Ocean of Emancipation in the history of religions*. Indeed, from many of our own modern perspectives, the waters of the past are barely potable, as what most of the contemplative traditions have meant by "emancipation" or "salvation" is not at all what we would like to imply by those terms today. It is, after all, frightfully easy to be emancipated from "the world" or to become one with a deity or ontological absolute and leave all the world's grossly unjust social structures and practices (racism, gender injustice, homophobia, religious bigotry, colonialism, caste, class division, environmental degradation, etc.) comfortably in place.

Metaphysically speaking, how exactly is one to work for human rights or the integrity of historical individuals when one believes that individuals are fundamentally parts of a greater Whole or, more radically, do not in fact exist in any independent fashion? Monism or nondualism (call it what you like) might be convincing ontology, but it's often a disastrous political philosophy. Not that Western monotheism is necessarily any better. God only knows how many human beings have been subtly or brutally denied their individual cultures, bodies, and deepest desires, not to mention their very lives, "for the one God." Once again, oneness can be a terrible thing.

Certainly we can and should work toward a moral mysticism or spirituality of resistance today, but we can do this successfully only after we realize that this is our present participatory task, not some accomplishment we can find in our pasts. It is here, in what we might call the future of the past, that I find Ferrer's participatory vision to be of immense value and real hope. Perhaps this is because it is also only in this same future of the past that I can bear to live at all anymore. □

The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism

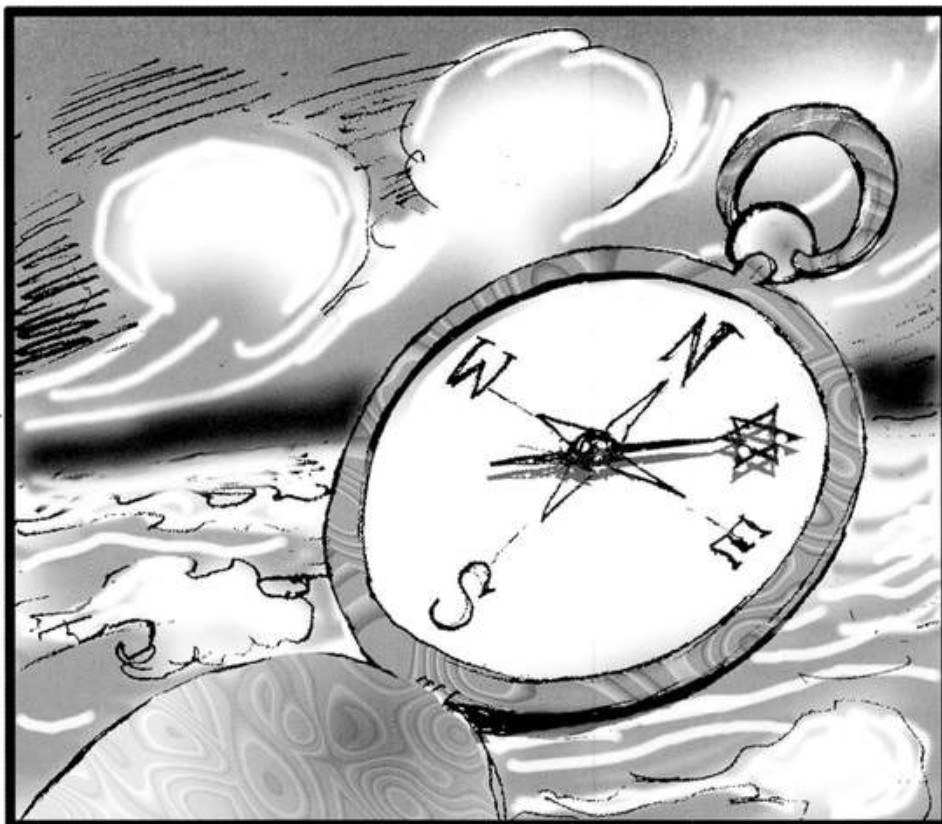
Paul Buble

■ *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America*, by Michael E. Staub. Columbia University Press, 2002.

Jewish liberalism and its history is a familiar subject, but this book by Michael Staub offers a great deal of new insight and information; indeed, it is arguably the best treatment of the rightward drift of the Jewish mainstream from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. As such, it is likely either to be ignored as an embarrassment, or attacked by the familiar chorus in *Commentary*, the *New Criterion*, the *New Republic*, and so on. The rest of us need to read it carefully and spread the word.

Staub reminds us of an old conflict that has raged within the Jewish community since the crisis of *shtetl* life a century and a generation ago. As is (or was, at one time) well known, the expansion of markets and the appeal of the city, quite as much as intensifying anti-Semitism, destroyed age-old occupations and unsettled the accompanying traditions of deference. Amidst proletarianization and secularism, ordinary Jews rebelled against the venerable rule of the wealthy classes and the rabbis who supported their logic of power. This rebellion gained coherence

Paul Buble's most recent book is *Insurgent Images: the Agitprop Murals of Mike Alewitz* (Monthly Review Press).



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through the spread of socialism and secular Yiddishkayt, a trend resisted alike by Hebraists and by Westernizers seeking avenues of assimilation as upward mobility. The struggle continued for generations, with the majority of American Jews pulled in both (or rather, all three) directions.

Then came the Holocaust, the Cold War and accelerated upward mobility. And here Staub begins, after a telling anecdote about the firing of Columbia's Rabbi A. Bruce Goldman by the Jewish Advisory Board in 1970 for the crime of opposing the war in Vietnam. The board's spokesman, insisting that the rabbi had "abandoned his co-religionists" by joining the peace movement, used the same fundamental arguments in favor of the dominant ideology as could be heard in apartheid South Africa, the segregated American south, or, in modified form, in the recent

demand for Jewish support for an endless global war. TIKKUN readers have heard them all.

But the murky past contains a great deal more that demands investigation. The history of Jewish liberalism is particularly confusing and contradictory because of the widely-held desire by Jewish neo-liberals to insist upon the integrity of their liberalism while simultaneously celebrating the benefits of privilege. From the onset of the Cold War and the upward climb of Jewish academics, prestigious former socialists and others concluded that meritocracy worked quite adequately in the United States—at least for them—and that further vigorous appeals to "share the wealth" were either suspiciously communistic or had become a harmful encouragement to various failed cultures of the indigent and downright lazy, most especially the culture of

African Americans. Yet Jewish meritocrats found it harder than many others to simply turn from liberalism to a privilege-based conservatism. The determined quest for social justice and a cooperative (socialistic) solution to the dilemmas of the age had given rise to at least one Jewish radical in most families, and the Jewish family's acceptance of such heretics is more common than in other groups. In other words, it has been and is more difficult among Jews to demonize these rebels, and even blandly apolitical relatives may express (or simply feel, and lack the courage to express) a certain sympathy. The collective memory of woe and communality, in other words, has not yet entirely vanquished or particularized into pure ethnocentrism. Conservatives and rightward-leaning liberals consider this their cross to bear, so to speak.

The glaring contrast between theory and reality in the voices of mainstream "Jewish liberals" highlights of the other extreme, a series of courageous projects by the precursors to TIKKUN intended to revive the theme of redemption within a revived liberal mainstream. Somewhere in between these contrary impulses, the mixture of ordinary human strengths and failings, special and unspecial Jewish fears and aspirations can be found in every complexity, often tearing at the conscience of those who knew (and were taught by their parents) that they should act better toward suffering humanity, but did not.

Everything comes out in the wash, however, and Jewish neo-liberals in particular reveal a particularly racist strain as the civil-rights movement gains momentum in the 1950s. In 1958, the American Jewish Congress, the more liberal of the two major Jewish organizations then operating, held its first convention in the South and invited Martin Luther King Jr. to speak. This gesture raised several sensitive points, because the most outspoken Jewish anti-racist activists had for a generation or more belonged to the Left. Yet these activists had recently seen their work

creating community-based integrated unions among tobacco and steelworkers destroyed in the South with the distinct encouragement of the AFL-CIO, which also attacked their anti-lynching and anti-capital punishment campaigns as mere communist propaganda. Meanwhile, Southern Jews, by a large majority, had chosen to remain silent, and even some of those who spoke out

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also had a way of casting suspicions on their intentions: Harry Golden, respected editor of the *Carolina Israelite*, also happened to be an FBI informer. The more conservative American Jewish Committee actually warned that a pro-integration stand by Jewish institutions might endanger Jewish southerners. King finessed such points by alluding to a common history of suffering. Unfortunately, this was not and has never been enough for a heartfelt, sustained alliance.

Looking further back to the later 1940s, Staub notes how leading Jewish periodicals had for years urged the analogy of fascism and American racism, twin evils to be jointly overcome. He carefully analyzes how quickly they dropped that analogy, turning the logic upon its head, as the civil-rights movement began in earnest. If racism was an incidental and vanishing problem, as they increasingly insisted, then harping on the point constituted a sort of totalitarian logic. If Fascism=Communism and the Com-

munists (or former Communists, a far larger group) attacked racism, colonialism and neocolonialism, the proper Jewish Americanism demanded repudiation of all the charges.

Staub finds some of his richest evidence for this logic, not surprisingly, in the pages of *Commentary*. Here (non-Jewish) writers like James Rorty and editors like Irving Kristol—perhaps it is not too much to remind the reader that both were major players among the CIA's pet intellectuals of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom—regularly portrayed racism as an isolated phenomenon, and continuing controversy over racism a mere sensationalistic manipulation of facts. If it really did exist, then as Dr. Israel Goldstein (rabbi and president of the AJ Congress) explained in 1956, such racism is anyway "not a problem for Jews [because] we have enough of our own headaches." The matter seemed to be closed, at least on the institutional level.

But of course the problem was not going to go away, either from America or from the Jewish conscience. Thousands of Jewish progressives, from Old Left veterans to the college-age youngsters of the "Silent Generation," boldly defied this logic, taking up the causes of civil rights and what we now call sustainable development for peoples marching beyond the bounds of neocolonialism. As the Cold War eased, what Staub describes as "prophetic Judaism" began to gain a real credence, encouraging new generations of religious leaders to take positions and to take risks. (On this issue, we urgently wish for more grassroots studies based in oral histories: who were the rabbis risking their careers, in any part of the country, to preach active anti-racism to their flocks and especially their youngsters? How many of them suffered an informal blacklist for decades after? Staub has made an important beginning, but the subject is enormously important.)

Ironically—but not surprisingly for TIKKUN readers—it may have been the

liberal secularists who turned the most eloquently sour. In a few strokes, Staub has pinpointed one especially characteristic intellectual: Marie Syrkin, editor of the Labor Zionist *Jewish Frontier*. Labor Zionism, with its roots in the Yiddish Socialist movement, had been less blue collar in the United States than anywhere else in the world and also less socialistic, but its intellectuals had a higher standing than one would imagine from the outside, and its connections with the Jewish-led unions had far-flung implications for American social movements at large. *Jewish Frontier* might, then, be treated as a sort of "swing vote."

Syrkin the editorialist struck hard, in 1960, at Jewish youngsters joining the Northern picket lines against Woolworth's policies of discrimination in the chain's Southern stores. If they wanted to do something, she insisted, they should go south—but not make trouble in their own neighborhoods. By 1964, there was real trouble in the same neighborhoods, and Syrkin argued that the source of that trouble was school integration and the demands for more integration. The presence of more than a few African American children had turned out to be bad for other and specifically Jewish children. The integration of neighborhoods, let alone affirmative action, was surely bound to bring similar woes and worse. Syrkin described herself as a liberal (no longer a socialist), but one who obviously found egalitarianism wanting. The hero of Joseph Heller's *Good As Gold*, morally corrupted by a rising sense of prestige and potential power, put the issue more humorously: he rejects on principle discrimination against anyone in summer resorts, knowing that Jews like him had earlier been forbidden from so many of them; but if he saw now more than a few nonwhite faces, he would immediately head for another resort. So, presumably, would Marie Syrkin.

Something very similar happened within the labor movement, most

noticeably in its historic Jewish sectors. The needle trades unions and especially the ILGWU, built by generations of idealists, had become stolid bureaucratic institutions firmly committed to the perpetuation of existing leaderships. This translated, most pathetically, into Jewish officers (frequently the relatives of other Jewish officers) negotiating indifferently for workforces increasingly Black and Puerto Rican. These functionaries were formally committed to all sort of liberal causes—but utterly outraged (David Dubinsky was especially vivid on this point) that nonwhites should want to break into their well-oiled leadership machine. Their hearts belonged to AFL-CIO president George Meany, the former plumber whose building trades background rested upon limitation of union membership, and whose own home locals determinedly continued to exclude nonwhites. Challengers from the Left, on these racial points and others, were seen as interlopers, limousine liberals, enemies of labor or radical leftists who could not understand proper unionism and who conspired to undermine it.

The Vietnam War is often seen as the trigger, and the Six Day War as the bullet shot into the heart of Jewish liberalism. There is a good deal of truth in this view. No U.S. population (with the exception of African Americans) was so opposed to the War as the Jews; no leadership more adamantly opposed to the anti-war sentiment of its own people than the top Jewish leadership. Liberal intellectuals and institutional administrators who belatedly came to conclude that the war had been a mistake nevertheless remained, in very large numbers, convinced that the peace movement, especially on the campus, was vastly worse than the U.S. presence in Vietnam. Arguably the most beloved figure in Jewish American life, Martin Luther King, Jr., was thus widely if quietly viewed after his criticism of the war—America, he warned, had become the "most violent" country in the world—

"It is possible and even necessary to be critical of the policies of one's government without being considered a traitor."

—Daniel Barenboim



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as an ingrate who probably needed to be replaced. No less than the ADL, at the pinnacle of Jewish institutional authority, sent spies into King's office to round up evidence intended to be used by the FBI for just this purpose.

Staub properly insists that the rip in the roots of Jewish liberalism is deeper and more dangerous, under-way long before "Black Power" had been coined, and in circles usually viewed as savants of liberalism. No one has probed journals like *Judaism*, *Conservative Judaism*, *Tradition*, *Jewish Social Studies* and others even less remembered so carefully on burning social issues, nor has anyone returned to better-known publications like *Commentary* and *Midstream* with such insight. We might be shocked to read that Leslie Fiedler considered Black people—in contrast to the people of logos, i.e., Jews—to be haplessly and perhaps happily living "in the world of sub-literacy, unrationalized impulse and free fantasy." Perhaps the cleaning ladies of Fiedler's friends in the business-law or stock-investment worlds seemed unable to grasp how washing windows contributed to the achievements of civilization, as black minimum-wage workers in Jewish institutions inexplicably wanted more money. Who could deal with irrationality like that?

In the pages of such Jewish centrist institutional magazines, African Americans were almost always viewed, in any case, as mainly responsible for their own suffering. By contrast to Jewish nationalists (the phrase hardly gained currency, but the idea flourished), they were viewed as utterly crazed if they hinted, in the early 1960s, at a certain nationalism of their own. Major Jewish organizations sent delegations to the 1965 March on Montgomery, and hundreds of Jewish idealists took up the call. But by no means did all the Jewish marchers, let alone the institutions that took credit for sending people and money, believe that equality should go further than integrated public accommodations and open housing for those

who could afford it. Indeed, one powerful point of the institutions taking part was to underline the very limits of egalitarianism: how could anyone be so ungrateful as to demand still more from their benevolent, loving allies?

Liberal and post-liberal rage built up steadily for the next few years. The pages of *Commentary* magazine offer ample cases in point, even more clearly with a look back upon the tumultuous Sixties. A 1971 symposium by Walter Laqueur, Nathan Glazer, Robert Alter, and Norman Podhoretz repeated the familiar libels of Jewish peacenik youngsters' immaturity, irresponsibility, self-hatred, and wickedness, and added another: an especial hatred for the theology of Arthur Waskow, whose efforts to make theology relevant epitomized something worse than godlessness.

Staub reaches beyond these somewhat familiar intellectual scenes to the sidelines, fleshing out the evolution of debate and discussion. Psychohistorians Stanley Rothman and S. Robert Lichter, in their widely reviewed *Roots of Radicalism*, laid out in 1981 the argument brewing in the Jewish world for decades. Young Jewish males became revolutionaries because they were sexually insecure, perhaps even borderline homosexuals. Who was really to blame? Their mothers, naturally. Back in 1968 Dr. Morris Mandel had already provided the solution: *How to be Married—and Happy*. This psychiatrist-columnist for the *Jewish Press* found that men had been dangerously weakened by overpowering Jewish women. What happy and productive homes Jews could have if only wives would quit nagging! Gertude Himmelfarb, Midge Dictor, Linda Chavez, and novelist Mark Helperin rolled up together could not have put it better. But a single, beautifully reproduced 1973 airlines ad in *Jewish Week* perhaps manages to do so: the headline next to a pretty face reads simply, "I'm Jennifer. My kosher tours to Miami start on the plane. Fly me."

Staub ends with the sad but fascinating fate of Breira. Launched in the

aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, the new organization sought to reach beyond the irredentism of Israeli and Palestinian leaders, to legitimize the demands for peace, security, and the return to the pre-1967 borders. Breira generated ferocious debate and ended in a silence so deafening that its very existence has been purged from histories of Jewish American life. With a bit of exaggeration, we might almost call its story one of one Peretz (Don Peretz, a peacenik professor at Binghamton who spoke for Breira) versus another (Martin Peretz, the multi-millionaire publisher of the *New Republic*). It was inevitably David-versus-Goliath with some of the most prominent Jewish intellectuals on the side of Goliath. But Breira had a moment, and its story, like those of JUJ (Jews for Urban Justice) and others analyzed by Staub still awaiting rediscovery, stories that deserve to be remembered for starting the peace dialogue we struggle to continue today. □

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I Could Still Love and I Could Still Fight

Roger S. Gottlieb

■ *The Blindfold's Eyes: My Journey from Torture to Truth*, by Sister Dianna Ortiz with Patricia Davis. Orbis Books, 2002.

What happens to religious faith, psychological health, and even the simple joy in being alive after the trauma of torture? This book contains an emotionally riveting, devastatingly honest, and morally compelling answer. It is not an "easy" read, because American Ursuline nun Dianna Ortiz's story is long and fraught with great suffering. Yet it is also at least half true that this book, if any one does, merits the clichéd description of being a "testament to the human spirit"; the other half of the truth, depressingly, is that it is also a testament to cruelty, indifference, denial, and a staggering amount of bureaucratic bullshit.

The outline of the story is simple. In 1989, Ortiz had been teaching for two years in a small, largely indigenous village in Guatemala, during the second decade of that country's nearly genocidal civil war. Over 200,000 citizens had been killed by a repressive military which made clear its willingness to kill "30 percent of the population," as a struggle with "communist guerillas" prompted it to eliminate anyone who resisted a land-rich oligarchy. This included nuns, priests, and even bishops; trade unionists, relief workers, judges, lawyers, peasants, and commu-

nity leaders. Dianna was a strict pacifist and had not—to her knowledge at any rate—ever associated with the guerillas. Her only concern was to alleviate the peasants' enormous poverty and lack of resources.

Whether because the government was targeting the church in general (some twenty-six priests and nuns disappeared during these years) or because of a simple error in identification, Ortiz was kidnapped, questioned, and tortured on November 22, 1989. One day later an unknown American appeared and ordered her released. He claimed to have connections in the Embassy and suggested she forget the whole experience as a "mistake."

But Ortiz could not forget, and what follows through nearly five hundred pages of excruciating detail are really three stories woven together in prose at once intimate, stifling, and hypnotic. The main story is, of course, that of Ortiz's experience of twenty-four hours of horrific suffering and her struggle to recover from a nearly crushing case of post-traumatic stress disorder. In her short time of captivity she was beaten, burned with cigarettes over a hundred times, gang-raped (and impregnated), attacked by dogs, and physically compelled to torture another prisoner. She was left physically and psychologically shattered, and *Blindfold's Eyes* conveys her flashbacks and nightmares, uncontrollable fear and grief, suicidal helplessness and moment-to-moment attempts to



recover a life. Her slow, never fully complete, yet inspiring process of recovery is described so vividly that at times I felt like I inhabited her world. I do not remember the last time I was so viscerally affected by a literary account of another person's experience. The power of the writing and the horror of the story put *Blindfold's Eyes* in the company of unforgettable Holocaust memoirs such as those of Wiesel, Charlotte Delbo, and Primo Levi.

The second story, and the one which catapulted Ortiz to international prominence, centers on her attempt to find out who the unknown American was, and what role the U.S. government was playing in the murder and torture of tens of thousands of Guatemalans. In this story we find Ortiz, and several other victims or relatives of victims, opposed by the deadly weight of American imperialist power, bureaucracy, arrogance, and dishonesty. From the U.S. envoy in Guatemala to the FBI to the Department of Justice, Ortiz's attempt to reveal our complicity in near-genocide, of which her torture, she always knew, was only the tip of the iceberg, is met with indifference, lies, cover-up, slander, manipulations, and threats.

The third story is spiritual and political. Before Ortiz's abduction, she was, by her own account, well-intentioned,

Roger S. Gottlieb's last two books are *Joining Hands: Politics and Religion Together for Social Change* and *A Spirituality of Resistance: Finding a Peaceful Heart and Protecting the Earth*. He is professor of philosophy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (gottlieb@wpi.edu).

faithful, and somewhat naïve. Then, as one of her torturers said, "God died in the torture chambers." She lost her trust and faith in God. She refused communion, bound and gagged her Bible, and could not understand why people celebrated the crucifix—which had become for her simply another example of torture. Her journey back to faith is told in bits and pieces, intertwined with her pursuit of psychological health and political vindication.

Politically, Ortiz wakes up to the realities of America's role in the world, and to male domination of the church. Working with other survivors and political groups, she helps reveal how the Guatemalan government's war against its people was supported, endorsed, and financially aided by the United States. By the end of the book she speaks about the limitations of male Catholic authority figures who cannot understand or forgive her decision to abort what the torturers implanted in her.

This book is rich, moving, and tremendously important both spiritually and politically. I can only raise a small number of its implications here.

As fate would have it, I am writing these words on September 11, 2002, as our nation remembers a day it suffered, like Ortiz, an incalculable trauma. In reading her book at this time, I am struck by a terrible ambiguity of American life. On the one hand, American radicals, liberals, and philanthropists are not routinely tortured and murdered. Our country has a kind of political openness which, for all its flaws, should be deeply appreciated. At the same time, our pursuit of world domination and Big Bucks for Big Corporations has led us to arm and train countless killers. In the midst of our national self-glorification during the September 11th remembrance, as we parade our credentials of freedom and democracy to show we are not like terrorists or Islamic fundamentalists or Iraq, I wish every pundit and politician and editorial writer could be forced to read this book. If you ever wondered why our oh-so-wonder-

ful country could be hated, this account of what we did in Guatemala will set your mind to rest.

As for Ortiz's own journey? It reveals that her healing had a basic structure: she had to find others to trust, among them fellow victims. She had to find the courage to let her outrage supplant her overwhelming survivor's guilt and to express that outrage in concrete political work to uncover American complicity and offer services to victims of torture. She had to share her story and resist that which had wounded her.

In this process she faced continuing external threats from the Guatemalan military and internal admonitions about her Christian duty to forgive. This theme of forgiveness permeates the book. At the beginning of her ordeal, one of her torturers offered to help her escape if she, a nun, would forgive him for taking part in the murder of an entire village. "He wanted to buy my forgiveness," thought Ortiz. "If I sell my forgiveness for my freedom ... If I buy my freedom, forgiving him for what he did to others ... I don't have the right to do that." And so in that refusal the ordeal begins. Years later, a stranger tells Ortiz it is her duty as a nun to stop seeking information about the crimes and to forgive the criminals. She refuses, and comments: "Get my government to tell me who my torturers were, and those who formulated the policies that resulted in my torture and those who covered it up. And then we will all sit down and discuss the question of forgiveness together."

Ortiz's personal journey to health is a model for society as a whole. Reconciliation for individuals or nations is only possible when some acknowledgement of crimes is made, and when the embedded policies which led to the cruelty are changed. No phony spiritual bypass of "forgiveness" can jump over this step, lest today's peace of mind be bought at the expense of next week's new victims.

As with the Holocaust, or Stalin's gulags, or slavery, focusing on the

horrors of torture is deeply troubling. But it is a trouble we need to experience. We cannot achieve a peaceful heart without confronting the demons that surround us; nor approximate a just world if we have no idea of the full measure of injustice. After that confrontation, happiness will not emerge unscarred. The journey from oppression to freedom, from powerlessness to resistance, from "torture to truth" will leave its mark. Yet the pain which occasions these journeys and leaves us wounded does not destroy the beauty of life. Ortiz writes that her personal healing began in earnest when another torture survivor reminded her: "They did everything they could to us, and we are still alive." And she took her most important step forward when she herself realized that despite all her pain, she was not defeated, for "I could still love and I could still fight." □

HEALING DARK EMOTIONS (*from p. 22*)
connected to others, and to Life. This to me, is what healing is about. A healed life is always a work in progress; not a life devoid of all traces of suffering but a life lived fully, deeply, authentically, and compassionately engaged with the world.

"There is nothing so whole as a broken heart," said Rabbi Mendel of Kotzk, a Hasidic sage. The world breaks our hearts wide open—and it is the openness that makes us whole. We cannot and should not expect to be completely "cured" of grief, fear, and despair in a brokenhearted world. Rather, we learn how to become more comfortable with our shared human vulnerability. We learn the art and power of no protection—a spiritual power, not an egoic conquest won through armoring ourselves against pain, or against an enemy. We learn to accept suffering and vulnerability as a normal part of life, and how to use our suffering for the good. Because we are vulnerable, life hurts. We are not here to be free of pain. We are here to have our hearts broken by life, and to transform our pain into love. □

The Renewed Quest for the Jewish Jesus

Matthew Hoffman

■ *Jesus Through Jewish Eyes: Rabbis and Scholars Engage an Ancient Brother in a New Conversation*, edited by Beatrice Bruteau. Orbis Books, 2001.

From the end of the eighteenth century, Jewish proponents of modernization, enlightenment (*Haskalah*), and reform began to reject the traditionally negative Jewish views of Jesus in favor of increasingly sympathetic appraisals. This complex and intriguing trend in modern Jewish history has come to be known in scholarly circles as the Jewish reclamation of Jesus.

On the one hand, this recovery of Jesus for Judaism was part of an attempt by many Jews, including rabbis, philosophers, historians, activists, and artists, to construct a modern Jewish identity and culture. The figure of Jesus functioned as a malleable cultural symbol in virtually all Jewish movements, often serving as a paradigm for the whole; he could be depicted variously as a Reform rabbi, a suffering martyr, a tormented artist, a Jewish revolutionary, or a Jewish nationalist.

On the other hand, reclaiming the figure of Jesus has also been part of modern Jews' attempts to secure a prominent place in Western civilization. Embracing Jesus as a legitimate subject of Jewish discourse was a way of embracing the culture and civilization that had exalted him for centuries. In this sense, Jewish intellectuals who were

forging a new Jewish culture used the figure of Jesus to simultaneously claim Western culture as their own and to show that Jesus was "just like they were." From the outset this process was fraught with internal tensions as the reclamation of Jesus has always involved Jews (re)asserting his Jewishness and thus implicitly rejecting the "Christian" Jesus of Western culture. Jewish writers have always disassociated the human Jew—Jesus—from the Christian god—Christ—as they consistently try to demonstrate the Jewish character of his life and teachings.

While the Jesus-as-Jew trend never completely disappeared, the new anthology, *Jesus Through Jewish Eyes: Rabbis and Scholars Engage an Ancient Brother in a New Conversation*, represents an explicit renewal of this quest. It includes nineteen essays by contemporary rabbis and Jewish scholars of a progressive/liberal bent, such as Rabbi Arthur Waskow, Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, and Daniel Matt, who grapple with the question: What kind of a Jew was Jesus and how can contemporary Jews best understand him? The editor of the collection, Beatrice Bruteau, says from the outset that one of the book's central motives is to resituate "Jesus within his native Judaism" and "giv[e] him back his own voice."

The basic assumption here is that the Jesus of the New Testament and Christianity is not the "real" Jesus; the argument goes that as Christianity became the religion *about* Jesus rather than the religion *of* Jesus, his authentic



Jewish character and teachings became largely lost. Some authors do acknowledge that there are "differences between" Jews and Christians over more than theology when it comes to Jesus, as in the case of certain teachings of Jesus that appear to contradict normative Jewish views. Even these differences, however, are typically attributed to later developments in Christianity and discounted as inauthentic views of Jesus. For the most part, the authors neglect those sayings of Jesus that explicitly clash with the theological assumptions of mainstream Judaism; the "Christological" Jesus, so prominently portrayed in the Gospel of John, is ignored by all but one author, and even he tries to put a Jewish spin on it. It is precisely this approach that is one of the main shortcomings of both this collection and the Jewish reclamation of Jesus as a whole. Discounting the Christological passages about Jesus constitutes a highly selective use of the Gospels, and setting out to prove the Jewishness of Jesus stacks the results in favor of Jewish scholarship beforehand. Why should Jews reclaim Jesus if they have to ignore or drastically reinterpret much of what he taught and thought about himself? Is it intellectually honest to approach Jesus with "Jewish eyes" if these eyes refuse to consider that Jesus' own voice may have been a radical departure from mainstream Jewish views?

At the very least, Jews who attempt to reclaim Jesus as a Jew should admit the inherently polemical nature of this

(continued on page 79)

Matthew Hoffman, Ph.D., is a lecturer and academic coordinator for the program in Jewish studies in the department of history at the University of California, Davis.

Re-Wilding the World

Paul Wapner

- *Wild Earth: Wild Ideas for a World Out of Balance*, edited by Tom Butler. Milkweed Press, 2002.

The fossil record shows that there have been five massive extinctions during the long history of life on earth. These were moments when the vast majority of plant and animal species disappeared. The last great extinction took place sixty-five million years ago when the dinosaurs vanished from the earth. Conservation biologists tell us that we are now in the midst of the sixth great extinction. Species are disappearing at inordinate rates, with over one-third of all species destined to go extinct over the next quarter century. There is a difference, however, between past great extinctions and the current one. This time asteroid strikes and geological events are not at work. The sixth great extinction is of our own making.

Why should we care? Why should it be our business to worry about disappearing plants and animals many of whose names we will never know, let alone microorganisms we will never see? The standard answer is that we depend upon the nonhuman world. Life on earth is a web of relationships in which plants, animals, bacteria, fungi, and even nonliving entities mutually support each other. Humans are part of this web as we use the nonhuman world for resources and turn to it for places of recreation and aesthetic experience. As we remove vast

numbers of species and their habitats from the earth, we undermine the web upon which we depend and compromise the quality—and in the extreme the very viability—of human life. In other words, we should care about massive extinction because it threatens our own lives.

There is nothing wrong with the standard response. The vast diversity of species provides ecological stability which enhances human life, supplies societies with essential resources, and performs ecological services that cleanse the air, water, and soil for human consumption. There is another set of reasons, however, that should spark our concern. This has to do with the well-being of nonhuman entities themselves. When we worry about running out of sources for medicines, depleting the array of animals we can experience, undercutting the earth's ability to absorb our waste and so forth, we are concerned with our own skin. We want to protect other species to protect ourselves. But what about these other species in themselves? Do they have a right to exist as fellow inhabitants of the earth?

An important wing of contemporary environmentalism has consistently argued that they do. Known variously as deep ecologists, dark greens, or biocentrists, environmentalists of this ilk argue that nonhuman creatures have a right to exist simply by virtue of their presence on earth. We should protect biological diversity, then, as a matter of moral concern—we have an obligation to keep all forms of life alive.



Biocentric (in contrast to anthropocentric) thinking has had an undramatic, but not altogether unsuccessful, political history. The U.S. Endangered Species Act, which seeks to guard individual species from extinction, the U.S. Wilderness Act, which aims to protect certain regions from extensive human intervention, and elements of the evolving, international Convention on Biological Diversity, which strives to protect diversity of species throughout the globe, all find inspiration from biocentric thinking. They represent efforts to integrate concern for the nonhuman world into political action. These, of course, are the exceptions. The vast majority of environmental legislation and practice aims to protect ecological integrity so humans can better flourish. Efforts to clean the air and water, preserve soil, protect against ozone depletion and global climate change, and so on are undertaken to safeguard human life. Human vulnerability is the measure of concern and human well-being the ultimate goal.

Wild Earth: Wild Ideas for a World Out of Balance weighs-in on the biocentric side of things. It represents the best writing of the first ten years of the journal *Wild Earth*, the key publication of a movement called the Wildlands Project. The Wildlands Project was established by those who care about preserving wilderness. In contrast to other wilderness protection groups, however, it seeks not only to preserve dramatic landscapes like Yellowstone, Yosemite, and the Grand Canyon—the “rock and ice” of North

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

America's ecosystems—but also the less spectacular, but nonetheless ecologically significant, other parts of the continent's natural heritage.

The Project draws upon extensive studies in island biogeography which conclude that species are most vulnerable when they live in isolated habitats with little room to roam, mate, and support genetically diverse members. Yet contemporary land use has cordoned off wilderness areas so that they represent, essentially, just such isolated islands. There are few roadless areas left in North America and plenty of cities and suburbs that splice up the land. All species are threatened by land development, but top predators like the grizzly bear, gray wolf, wolverine, jaguar, and American crocodile, are especially at risk because they require extensive habitats to flourish. The Wildlands Project seeks to remedy this by creating interlocking areas in which species can extend their habitats. The idea is to link national parks, forests and other already protected areas with wildlife corridors and thus create adequate space for sustaining biological diversity. The ultimate aim is to establish a system of connected wildlands throughout North America.

The chapters of *Wild Earth* not only explain the vision of the Wildlands Project but, even more importantly, justify the effort. The justification further distinguishes the Project from other wilderness protection efforts and makes for moving reading. While many biocentrists want to protect wilderness in the name of "rights" for other creatures, the authors of *Wild Earth* emphasize a related but more comprehensive rationale. At the heart of biological diversity is the fundamental process of evolution. All living things came onto the scene through natural selection, the inherent process by which various life forms emerge through genetic alteration. Evolution has been at work since day one of life on earth and continues today. Whatever else evolution is, it is a supremely other-than-human process. It works without consulting humans

and is indifferent to human aspirations. (Indeed, evolution is indifferent to *any* individual species.) Its workings, hence, stand as a reminder that there is more to life than human experience and that we are not the center of the universe but part of something much larger than ourselves.

Over the past half century or so, humans have coopted and, in turn, dramatically diminished the evolutionary process. According to conservation biologist, Michael Soule, "The evolution of new species of large vertebrates has come to a screeching halt," because of human carelessness. This newfound power has not only made us governors of evolution but has also cut us off from something extremely profound. By ending evolution, as it were, humans are snuffing out so much of the presence of the other-than-human world and, in turn, we are severing ourselves from that which we are most intimately a part.

For many, human diminishment of the evolutionary process is disturbing because it signals a theological reversal of roles. Rather than being one species among many and thus part of God's world, grabbing the reins of evolution makes us into God. We come to determine who will live and who will die; we decide the fundamental biophysical conditions of life on earth. The authors of *Wild Earth* rarely use theological language (although one of the more moving chapters is Bill McKibben's reflections on the story of *Job* and God's reminder that *Job* is a part of the natural world and not lord over it). Rather, they speak of grizzly bears, forests, rivers, and soils, and talk in terms of the pain of watching a clear-cut, the hubris of humans overpopulating the earth, the anguish of witnessing the preventable demise of large elk herds, the increasing loss of silence, and the growing distance between human experience and the nonhuman world. These superbly written essays, in other words, reflect a type of naturalism that values the world as it is—in all its "green grit" and without reference to super-

natural beings—but shares the lamentation and sense of insult expressed by those who prefer to speak in terms of God or otherworldly forces. At bottom is a sense that there is more to the world than human beings and that this other-than-human element is precious and its expressions worth preserving.

So much environmentalism is doom and gloom, and *Wild Earth* deals with an issue—loss of biological diversity—that has always sparked a sense of melancholy and despair. But *Wild Earth* is surprisingly upbeat. It is not blindly optimistic about the future but is hard-hitting in both its critique and vision. This is a book that sees a viable future, one in which humans make room for other creatures and for as full an expression of evolution as possible. Its ideas are "wild" in the sense of untaming our current understanding and unleashing fresh notions of what it means to be human and what the more-than-human world can mean as well. If biological diversity has a future, the way forward is written in the pages of this fine book. □

JEWISH JESUS (from page 77)

enterprise; to prove the innate Jewishness of Jesus, and especially his teachings and self-understanding, necessarily entails uprooting the theological foundations of Christianity. Some voices within contemporary New Testament scholarship certainly lend support for considering much of the Christological qualities attributed to Jesus by John and the other Evangelists as later developments and not reflective of Jesus' own teachings. Nonetheless, the kind of Jew Jesus needs to be for most modern Jews to "accept" him is not the Jesus that most Christians look to. Therefore, Jewish reclamations of Jesus do not necessarily promote better Jewish-Christian dialogue. Moreover, when the vast majority of modern Jews are profoundly unfamiliar with the teachings of the rabbinic sages of the Talmud, it would seem that Hillel and Akiba are in more need of a Jewish reclamation than Jesus is. □

Will to Power

Jo Ellen Green Kaiser



■ *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. Directed by Peter Jackson. New Line Productions, 2002.

The nature of evil is no longer the great philosophical question it once was. In the last century, evil has been unmasked in the figure of Adolph Hitler, in the threat of nuclear war, in the flight of the Twin Tower bombers. So too in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, written in the decade following World War Two. In Tolkien's mythical Middle Earth, evil is personified by Sauron, a dark wraith whose shadow reaches out for the one ring of power he can use to bring every living creature under his dominion.

No, the question faced by Tolkien's characters and by us is not the nature of evil, but the nature of good. How do ordinary people take a stand against a power infinitely corruptible and corrupting? The traditional response is to answer power with power, and Tolkien is no pacifist. *The Two Towers*, the middle book of Tolkien's trilogy, is particularly occupied with military movements, and the film's director, Peter Jackson, has followed suit, turning Tolkien's landscape into a sweeping battlefield. The computer-driven cinematography of these scenes is amazing, a medieval *Star Wars* of swords clashing on shields. Yet Jackson's loving embrace of the niceties of medieval battle threatens to turn *The Two Towers* story into yet another action-adventure in which good outpowers evil.

Jo Ellen Green Kaiser is Senior Editor of TIKKUN. She first read the *Lord of the Rings* in 1972.

That would be a shame, since the greatest achievement of both Tolkien's book and of this film is to question the old adage that might makes right. In the film, the struggle to define the nature of the good centers on the figure of Gollum. Gollum was once "Smeagol," a hobbit-like creature whose long possession of the ring of power has literally transfigured him into a grasping, deformed, frog-like monstrosity (magnificently depicted here through a complex technical process mixing human acting and computer animation). Both the wizard Gandalf and our hero, Frodo, have plenty of opportunities to kill Gollum, who is seeking to reclaim his "precious" ring from Frodo by any means possible—yet they do not. Instead, Frodo reminds Gollum of his better self by renaming him Smeagol, and entrusts Smeagol to act as his guide. As a result of this trust and generosity, Gollum, for the first time since his childhood, sees a chance to repent and turn to good. The best scenes in the film give us Gollum/Smeagol's inner dialogue, allowing us to witness the difficult psychological battle our impulse to the good faces from the evil forces of addiction, fear, and the will to power.

If the film fails us (and Tolkien's book), it is by substituting the drama of cinematography for this more potent inner psychological drama. This is the choice Jackson makes with the character of Faramir, the commander of the Gondor-based troops arrayed against Sauron. In the film, Faramir captures Frodo, intending to take him and the ring back to Gondor, where Faramir (like his brother Boromir in the *Fellowship of the Ring*)

fantasizes he can use the ring's power against Sauron. It is only when Sauron's forces attack Faramir (in a moment that adds visual excitement to a dull section of the film) that Faramir realizes the ring is more dangerous with him than with Frodo, and sends him back on his way.

Tolkien's Faramir also takes Frodo captive. Yet, when the moment comes to take the ring by force, he refuses, contrasting himself with his power-hungry brother: "Alas for Boromir! It was too sore a trial! ... I am wise enough to know that there are some perils from which a man must flee." In the book, Faramir is a complex character who manages to overcome his own will to power when the temptation is greatest. He recognizes that the path to good comes not through the domination of others, but through love, generosity, and trust. He will fight against Sauron, but he will not attempt to use Sauron's weapons—the weapons of evil—in such a fight.

In the aftermath of September 11, the response of Tolkien's Faramir deserves our particular attention. In the fight against a radical fundamentalism, our government has been too willing to pick up the enemies' weapons. Its distrust of what is foreign, different, other; its willingness to act first and question later; its blindness to the suffering of what the military casually calls the "collaterally-damaged," demonstrate how the will to power can so easily turn us into little more than the mirror-image of the evil we set out to fight. We may have to resort to the dramatic sword and shield battles Jackson so vividly portrays, but for the moment, our real battle is closer to Gollum/Smeagol's, a battle for our very soul. □

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Details inside on page 8.

Meanwhile, you can do the following:

1. Join the Tikkun Community at www.tikkun.org (and register for the conference there as well).
2. Read our new book *Healing Israel/Palestine*. Order it online (www.tikkun.org) or send \$18 to Tikkun, 2342 Shattuck Avenue, #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704.
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