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TIKKUN

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A BIMONTHLY JEWISH AND INTERFAITH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY

MAY/JUNE 2004



JESUS THE JEW

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BUSH UPDATE: ENVIRONMENTAL MADNESS Larry Fahn
THE CONFIDENCE MAN Thandeka

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DISENGAGING FROM GAZA Jessica Montell, B'tselem
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THE MYTH OF MORAL JUSTICE Thane Rosenbaum **ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL** Burt Jacobson

Each Rose

Each rose is an island
of the promised peace,
the eternal peace.

In each rose dwells
a sapphire bird
whose name is
"They shall beat their swords..."

And the light of the rose
seems so near,
and its fragrance
so near,
and the silence of the leaves
so near,
that island
so near—
take a boat
and cross the sea of fire.

—Zelda, translated from the Hebrew by Marcia Falk

2 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

7 PUBLISHER'S PAGE: *Confronting Confusion in Iraq*

8 EDITORIALS: *Iraq is a Hard Place; Withdrawal (from Gaza) for the Sake of Perpetuating Occupation*



FEATURES:

14 Bush Update

Thandeka predicts the presidential race will be won by *The Confidence Man* (14). Sierra Club's Larry Fahn exposes *The Sorry Environmental Legacy of the Bush Administration*—a full disclosure of environmental wrecklessness (27).

16 Israel Update

B'Tselem's Jessica Montell reports on the *Disengagement with Gaza* (16). Yossi Beilin, the Israeli negotiator of the Geneva Accord, reflects on the *Path to Geneva* and his struggles to wage peace in Israel/Palestine (19).

33 Jesus the Jew

Gibson's "Passion" has unleashed a centuries-old debate about anti-Semitism and the Church. In *Jesus the Jew*, TIKKUN editor Michael Lerner reclaims Jesus as a Jewish Renewal teacher whose legacy was twisted into a horrendous history of hatred against Jews (33). Thomas Moore explores the *Radical Conviviality of the Gospel of Jesus* (38), Matthew Fox focuses on *Mel Gibson's Passion and Fascism's Piety of Pain* (41), and Susannah Heschel ponders *The Passion of America* (44). In *The Corner of My Cloak*, Rabbi Tzvi Marx shows how an Orthodox Jew can overcome the anger at Christianity that its long history of anti-Semitism had produced (46).



ARTICLES:

23 Paul Farmer on *Haiti's Wretched of the Earth*

51 Burt Jacobson on *Abraham Joshua Heschel*.

58 Yitzhak Husbands—Hankin argues for *Justice at the Checkout Counter*.

59 Estelle Frankel on *The Messianic Torah of Wholeheartedness*.

62 Janet Mason Ellerby on *Intimacy in the Classroom*.

65 Thane Rosenbaum on *The Myth of Moral Justice*.

80 Kim Chernin on *Generosity*.



REVIEWS:

70 Joel Schalit on the new refusenik literature.

72 Lawrence Kushner reviews *Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship*.

75 Roger S. Gottlieb on *Zalman Schacter-Shalomi*.

78 Carly Steinman critiques Irshad Manji's *The Trouble with Islam*.

Inside Back Cover: *Sikkum*:

Books TIKKUN Recommends.

Opposite: "Each Rose" by Zelda, translated from the Hebrew by Marcia Falk.

Front Cover: *The Torment* by Matt Lamb.

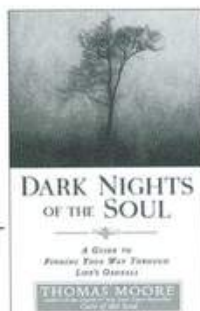
Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

Dark Nights of the Soul

A Guide to Finding Your Way Through Life's Ordeals

Thomas Moore
Gotham Books, 2004

Thomas Moore is one of our most brilliant and sensitive interpreters of the soul, and this new book is a powerful and insightful guide to a problem that faces all of us at some point in our lives: how to grapple with pain or depression. Moore leads us through the process, helping the reader mine every possibility for growth and wisdom that accompanies our suffering. He helps us experience painful moments with a new level of awareness that does not seek to obliterate the pain, but rather to immerse ourselves in ways that amplify the beauty behind the darkness. Every therapist and clergyperson should give this book to clients and congregants—it will deepen any therapeutic and spiritual process.

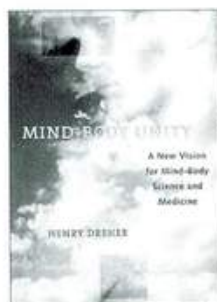


Mind-Body Unity

A New Vision for Mind-Body Science and Medicine

Henry Dreher
Johns Hopkins, 2004

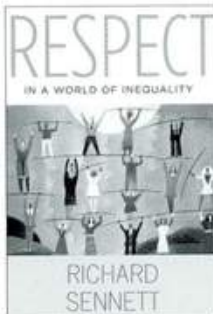
It may not be news for TIKKUN readers, but the impact of psychosocial factors on health has never been fully integrated into the practice of medicine. In this carefully documented study, Dreher reviews the overwhelming evidence for the importance of psychosocial factors in cancer, heart disease, and a wide range of other physical health problems. It is time to overcome the systemic division between treating the body and treating the mind.



Respect in a World of Inequality

Richard Sennett
W.W. Norton, 2003

We all know that when we treat each other as equals, we affirm mutual respect. But we find it difficult to do that when we find real inequalities in talent. We tend to blame people for not having the level of talent that we think they ought to have in order to win our respect, which gives us



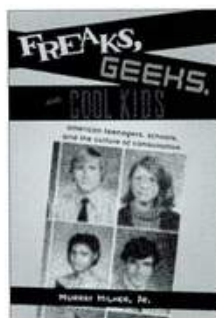
leave to treat them unequally. Sennett shows us a path to respect that involves accepting in others what one does not understand about them, rather than demanding that they "improve" or develop the skills we have. This is a powerful set of reflections on how the strong can practice respect toward the weak.

Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids

American Teenagers, Schools, and the Culture of Consumption

Murray Milner, Jr.
Routledge, 2004

Remember being trapped in an oppressive high school role that didn't fully correspond with your inner self? In Milner's study of teenage life we get a deeper understanding of the way that status groups function to shape the daily life experiences of teenagers and choices they make. Students are preoccupied with status because they are excluded from meaningful forms of economic or political power. Unfortunately, Milner never satisfactorily unpacks what a meaningful form of life could be for teens—and hence misses the spiritual dimension of the crisis of status.

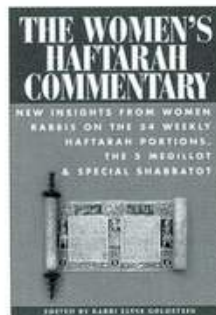


The Women's Haftarah Commentary

New Insights from women Rabbis on the 54 Weekly Haftarah Portions, the 5 Megillot & Special Shabbatot

Edited by Rabbi Elyse Goldstein
Jewish Lights, 2004

Every week in synagogue following the reading of the Torah portion, there is a specified reading from the Prophets called the Haftarah. This includes some rather uninspiring stories (like the inauguration of Solomon's Temple) and some of the most powerful prophetic thinking of the human race. In this collection of commentaries on the weekly Haftarah—each written by a different female rabbi—we experience the richness and wisdom that has emerged from the insights of women in Judaism. This work joins the growing body of women's commentary and offers an indispensable supplement to the family library for those who have opened to the pleasure of weekly Torah study.



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Letters to the Editor

Hooray for the Thoughtful Undecided

To The Editor:
George Vradenburg's article "Hooray for the Thoughtful Undecided" (March/April, 2004), achieves its intention: to spark a debate between Old Guard Republicans and Democrats, Greens, Progressives, and anyone else who is anti-Bush. Thank you Mr. Vradenburg, for providing us with the opportunity to lay out a concise argument for the Republicans in our lives.

We who are concerned about Israel-Palestine may agree that no matter who is elected, there will be little policy change on this front, despite the well thought out and hard won Geneva Accord. Both parties have a dismal record when it comes to using the necessary political capital to bring pressure to bear on both sides of that



conflict. We are therefore unlikely to be single-issue voters.

But what about the other issues Mr. Vradenburg brings up? Foreign Policy: There is clear and mounting evidence that Bush was warned but was unwilling to address the terrorist threat until after the 9-11 attacks. Since 9-11, not one member of the Bush administration has been held accountable for any aspect of the breaches of security or intelligence failures which allowed these terrible events to occur.

The Commission only began hearing testimony from key Bush administration officials in March 2004—thirty months and two wars later.

Afghanistan: Was Bush's war in Afghanistan "decisive" or opportunistic? Plans had been made prior to 9-11 to attack Afghanistan, not necessarily to root out terrorists, but to rid the world

Articles in TIKKUN do not necessarily reflect TIKKUN's stance on any issue. TIKKUN's positions are presented in our editorials.

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LETTERS

of the heinous Taliban regime (which the United States helped shore up), and install a more malleable regime which would cooperate with the United States' desire to build an oil pipeline from the Caspian Sea to Turkey.

Iraq: The war on Iraq was also planned before 9-11. We see from Paul O'Neill in *The Price of Loyalty: George W. Bush, the White House and the Education of Paul O'Neill*, that in newly elected (actually selected) President Bush's very first cabinet meeting, the idea of invading Iraq was discussed. Earlier, Paul Wolfowitz had written a position paper to this effect. Evidently, these plotters were surprised that Iraqis, like most people in the world, don't like being occupied. Furthermore, that Iraqis have the cynical view that the U.S.-led coalition is there for their vast oil reserves.

Like Afghanistan, the U.S. attack on Iraq was about opportunism. Only the fear of the American people in the wake of 9-11, combined with the Bush administration's intentional deception about Iraq's links to Al Qaeda, enabled the Iraqi invasion to take place at all. Whether any real democracy has been brought to Iraq remains to be seen. Several of our Iraqi friends are Sunni, and they shudder at the thought of rule by the Shiite majority. So far, the Iraqi people have seen their fear of Saddam replaced by fears of crime, unemployment, and a civil war. In the meantime, Iraq's resources are being pillaged by the West for profit.

The reproductive health world and the Bush Administration do not mix well. Bush's religiously tainted "abstinence only" sex education emphasis,

with its worldwide reach, combined with non-research based information (for example that condoms are ineffective against STDs, and therefore not very useful) will certainly undo any good effects from the increase in HIV/AIDS funding.

One could go on endlessly about Bush's destructive and backward policies, both domestic and international, but there isn't the space, even in your magazine. So we would like to state the biggest over-arching reason why it is so imperative that Bush be ousted as soon as possible: Bush's re-election would signal the end of American Democracy as we know it. If Bush is re-elected, there will be a right-wing Republican President, a Supreme Court stacked with right-wing justices, and a Congress which is majority Republican.

Please think about this, all ye Republicans! How can there be any of the discussion Mr. Vradenburg so values if we are ruled by only one party? Some will argue that Democrats and Republicans are one and the same. We counter that Al Gore would never have chosen John Ashcroft to be the attorney general. Of course, even if Bush is defeated, this dire scenario underscores the need for continued change, which will only be enacted if we "liberals" are willing to keep standing and fighting, instead of going back to our armchairs.

HEATHER MERRIAM
Berkeley, CA

JOHN G. MERRIAM
Toledo, OH

Vradenburg Replies:

This succinct and articulate letter provides fodder for more debate than space allows. Let me respond only to three points.

To the claim that Bush was "warned about, yet unwilling to address the terrorist threat" pre-9/11, the 9/11 Commission will speak more definitively in July of this year. But not in dispute are the facts that the Bush Administration went to high alert on July 5, 2001, in response to intelligence warnings of increased terrorist "chatter," and only came down off that alert six weeks later when the "chatter" ceased; and, before 9/11, the Bush Administration made the decision to change the Clinton Administration's ineffective "law enforcement" policy approach to terrorism to one more reliant on military options. The Bush Administration was addressing the terrorist threat before 9/11, but let's not take our eye off the party truly responsible for 9/11—al Qaeda. To the claim that military intervention in Iraq was on the table pre-9/11, it is important to recall that Congress, with the support of the Clinton Administration, made "regime change" the national policy of the United States in 1998. The Bush Administration attitude of considering new options to implement what was already national policy is not the stuff of personal whimsy. But, my most important question back to the Merriams is this: Why would the election of George W. Bush "signal the end of American Democracy as we know it," rather than a reflection of American Democracy as we know it? Election of Democrats is not a constitutional or democratic mandate, but an electoral choice.

The Assassination of Sheik Yassin

Following is correspondence we received between the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a TIKKUN reader.

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

A BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
FOUNDATION FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

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Philip C. Wilcox, Jr., President
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There will be no peace between Israelis and Palestinians without an agreed resolution of the settlements problem. The Report is the indispensable guide to this key issue.

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Send for a free mailed subscription to The Report, the authoritative American journal of analysis on Israeli policy and settlements in the occupied territories and their impact on peace. Or subscribe to the Internet-based version at www.fmep.org. Back issues (also in Hebrew and Arabic), maps, commentary, documents and data are also at www.fmep.org.

LETTERS

Dear Friend:

On Monday morning, the IDF targeted a vehicle carrying the head of the Hamas terror organization, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and his aides. Sheikh Yassin was personally responsible for numerous terror attacks, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of civilians—Christians, Muslims, and Jews alike.

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin was not a spiritual leader. This term is an insult to genuine religious leaders. He was a terrorist mastermind and the dominant authority of the Hamas leadership. He was directly involved in planning and orchestrating terror attacks carried out by the organization. In this capacity, Sheikh Yassin personally gave his approval for the launching of Kassam rockets against Israeli cities, as well as for the numerous Hamas terrorist bombings and suicide operations. These included the suicide bombing last week in Ashdod, in which ten people were murdered, and the suicide bombing of a bus in Jerusalem on Jan. 29, 2004, which killed eleven people.

Hamas is one of the biggest obstacles preventing peace between Israelis and Palestinians. As a terrorist organization that espouses an extremist Islamic fundamentalist ideology, calls for the total destruction of the State of Israel, and militantly opposes all peace proposals that include a two-state solution, no political progress can be made as long as its leaders can act with impunity.

Yassin was also a far-right theocrat. If the Hamas program he inspired is ever put into practice, the dream of Palestinian liberation will turn into a nightmare on the day of an Israeli withdrawal. He explicitly wanted to turn a Palestinian state, when it finally came into existence, into a fundamentalist state under shariah law. There would be no liberation for women in his Palestine. Dissenters would be dealt with as they are in all fundamentalist states. The savagery inflicted on any Jews who remained there would be too horrible to describe.

In his public appearances and interviews, Sheikh Yassin called repeatedly for a continuation of the "armed struggle" against Israel, and for an intensification of the terrorist campaign against its citizens. Hamas is opposed to Israel's existence in any form. Its charter states that "there is no solution for the Palestinian question except through

jihad."

He repeatedly acted to derail the peace process by escalating terror attacks as soon as it showed signs of progress. His death can only serve the cause of peace in the long run.

There is clearly a need to negotiate with the Palestinian leadership to create a Palestinian state alongside Israel. But at the same time, those who oppose Israel's right to exist within any borders and seek to destroy a two-state solution whilst killing innocent Israeli Jews, Muslims, and Christians must be fought.

For more information, please go to the Israeli Government website at:

WWW.MFA.GOV.IL

Israel Public Affairs Department

Reply:

My Beloved Chaver,

Your recent email presenting the Israeli government's rationale for killing Sheikh Ahmed Yassin causes me grave concern. On the basis of your arguments, it is reasonable to expect that your next assassination target will likely be Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

You have rather precisely identified a number of the serious crimes that link the Prime Minister with Sheikh Yassin: Sharon has personally authorized many missile, bomb, and commando attacks against Palestinian cities, villages, and refugee camps. He constantly calls for continued military occupation and aggression against Palestine and intensifies the violent repression of Palestinian civilians (I would like, following your language, to say "citizens," but the government you represent denies citizenship to Palestinians in the territories under occupation—while nevertheless barring them from creating their own sovereign state). He has repeatedly acted to derail the peace process by escalating retaliatory attacks (inasmuch as all terror attacks are "retaliatory") whenever a Palestinian cease-fire threatened to revive it. He refuses to this day to negotiate with the democratically elected Palestinian leadership. He pursues no "solution" but through violence, terror, and war. He has long allied with far-right theocrats—those who want to turn Israel into a nightmare fundamentalist state under the authoritarian rule of halacha [Jewish Law] (I say this as an Orthodox Jew, who freely and lovingly accepts of malchut shamayim), as well as those whose politics are driven

by messianic religious fantasies culminating in global apocalypse. He allies also with preachers of racial hatred, ethnic cleansing, and a war of civilizations. He is opposed to Palestinian freedom in any form—whether as equal citizens of a democratic state encompassing the whole land of Israel/Palestine, or as a sovereign people in a viable, independent state limited to the 22 percent of the land conquered by Israel in the 1967 war. Like Sheikh Yassin, Sharon does all this with a thin veneer of "moderation." He is, indeed (to borrow your expression), "one of the biggest obstacles preventing peace between Israelis and Palestinians."

Would all these arguments of yours justify your implicitly threatened assassination of Mr. Sharon? Maybe by some abstract principle of absolute justice, some logic far removed from the world, they would. But political and social relations, law, culture, morality, national security, decency, the human spirit, and the world itself cannot long survive standing on the single pillar of retaliatory justice.

I implore you not to assassinate the Prime Minister. I implore you to stop the endless, furious cycle of retaliation and counter-retaliation, escalating to engulf the world. (I don't care who started it; all/each of you, just stop immediately!) I implore you to return to the world of vulnerable flesh and mutual care; to sanity. Return to the Way of Torah—"all Her paths are peace."

HAYYIM FELDMAN
Boston, MA

Anyone But Bush?

To the Editor:

I honor so much of what TIKKUN is doing and am glad to have read your comments and the article about Kerry's foreign policy ["Anyone But Bush?" March/April 2004].

Between the Yale Skull & Crossbones connection as well as Kerry's go-along politics since his opposition to the Vietnam War, he comes across as a vacuous candidate without any conviction or higher vision.

My firm belief is that we need a very positive life-affirming agenda to have any possible impact on the destructive and death-oriented agenda of Bush & Co.—war, nuclear weapons, anti-environment, and almost total disregard of basic human needs.

Congressman Dennis Kucinich speaks with a spirit and vision I have not

LETTERS

seen before in politics (I'm 63). I regard [his] message not as progressive, not as leftist, not even as a Democrat, but as *central* and essential for human needs and survival.

Unfortunately it seems quite clear that Americans are not ready for such a vision—even Democrats.

KATHRYN KEVE
Suquamish, WA

To the Editor:

Since TIKKUN is not interested in "electability," this letter may be deemed irrelevant. However, an exclusive focus on large scale "social transformation" has serious implications, the most important of which is that more people will die. More Americans will die because they had the bad fortune to be born into situations where "volunteering" for the military was their best practical alternative. More people in Iraq and Afghanistan will die because of the administration's total incompetence and lack of interest in providing security, and clearly without a U.S. administration willing to use its influence to stop Sharon, deaths in the Middle East will continue to rise.

The reality is that an exclusive focus on making the sort of long-term changes TIKKUN advocates will have many direct and negative impacts on people throughout the world. The problem with many who take this long-range view is that most are lucky enough to be shielded, although only temporarily, from the direct effects. In general those who write and read TIKKUN—and I include myself here—have not lost jobs in factories nor have we had to join the military as the only viable way to get an education.

The idea that a more progressive candidate would have a serious chance to win were it not for the press is simply not realistic. It ignores the fact that this election is unique in that the perceived ability of the candidate to handle matters of defense and foreign relations is important. Dean had an ample chance to prove his viability to the electorate in this area and he failed.

The Bush administration, as your editorial shows, is a clear and present danger to the entire world. We must oppose it on all levels; but at the moment the most crucial job is to minimize pain and the danger of actions—such as further invasions of other nations—that cannot be undone. This job can only be accomplished by electing a candidate

who, while far from perfect from a progressive standpoint, will make a difference in the level of concrete suffering experienced by human beings.

RICHARD WARK
Durham, NC

To the Editor:

TIKKUN's analysis on John Kerry is woefully oversimplified. Kerry's ongoing analysis before and after the congressional vote was invasion only as a last resort, with his emphasis on diplomatically pushing for real international inspections with a credible threat backing them up. He even pushed to follow the European/Canadian initiative to extend the deadline to the Fall and almost for sure would have pursued Iraq's last minute agreement to international demands that Bush turned his back on.

Given his very real, not faked, experiences in Vietnam and his ongoing caring more about American soldiers (over the posturing of our leaders), he is not at all invasion-crazy like the present administration.

He supports fair trade principles and ecological responsibility and is dead set against the Bush oligarchy (detailed in *The Secret War Against the Jews* and *The Bush Dynasty*) which threatens to devastate our country and the world. Yes, Kerry needs to be challenged, but he offers a clear choice for the betterment of our country and the world.

RABBI JEFF FOUST
Newton, MA

Israel/Palestine

To the Editor:

I read Richard Cummings article, "International Law and Peace in the Middle East," [January/February 2004].

I was amazed that the author, who purports expertise on law, rights, and peace in the Middle East, neglected to mention that prior to the Six Day War, Egypt and Syria joined into one country, politically and militarily, Nasser swore to destroy Israel, and Egypt closed the straits of Tiran.

This last fact was apparently so uncomfortable for the author, and I would suggest the radical Left throughout the world, that he simply neglected to mention it. If the violent threats to destroy Israel and throw the Jews into the sea are not enough to prove that the Six Day War was a war of self defense, then anyone who knows a bit of international law would know that the closing

of the Straits and choking off the shipping and sea lanes to Israel's port of Eilat was unquestionably *causus belus*, an act of war.

How could this "distinguished scholar" fail to mention and analyze this significant fact? Was he grossly negligent or grossly biased?

What is more important is that this kind of "error" is indicative of the liberal or left-wing perspective which cannot come to terms with the fact that the Arab countries and leaders never were willing to accept or live with Israel within any borders. If the problem is the Occupation then why declare and attempt to destroy Israel from 1948 to 1967?

Further, if the '67 War was a defensive act by Israel, then the territories occupied are disputed and Israel certainly has a right, morally and legally, to make a claim on the territory, or parts of it, and certainly should demand territorial adjustments to advance the security of Israel.

JEFF SPITZER
Jerusalem, Israel

Author Replies:

In response to Jeff Spitzer, the United Arab Republic was a nominal unification of Syria and Egypt. They continued to function, in reality, as separate countries.

Based on Mr. Spitzer's interpretation of international law, Japan was justified in its attack on Pearl Harbor because of the embargo imposed on it by Roosevelt. Proportionality is a basic component of the doctrine of self-defense in international law, something which apparently has escaped him. A war between Israel, Egypt, and Syria cannot be the justification for the annexation of territory that belonged, under international law, to neither Egypt nor Syria. The Palestinians never wanted to be part of Jordan, of which they are no longer a part, so any military issue Israel has had with Jordan has nothing to do with them. Consequently, the argument that the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza has to do with self-defense arising from the 1967 war is erroneous.

What escapes Mr. Spitzer entirely is the illegality of the Occupation under the United Nations charter, as territory cannot be annexed by the use of force. Further, since Israel has diplomatic relations with Egypt and Jordan, the continued occupation is in no way related to self-defense against either of these

LETTERS

countries. Jordan is a virtual ally of Israel and poses no military threat, and Israel is in direct negotiations with Egypt to secure Gaza in the event of Israel's withdrawal, so Egypt is certainly not regarded as a military threat. It certainly has nothing to do with Syria. The occupation of the Golan Heights remains a separate issue.

If Mr. Spitzer is saying that the continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is somehow justified, let him say why. The tragic violence that has damaged Israel and the Palestinians makes it clear that Israel's national security is better served through the two-state solution. Tragically, Israel chose not to participate in the oral arguments at The Hague, at which it could have raised all of Mr. Spitzer's points. Instead of his mindless rant, he might have gone to The Hague himself.

Mr. Spitzer should be aware that I publish also in The American Conservative and on Lewrockwell.com. TIKKUN has reached out in the pursuit of a rational peace in the Middle East to writers of differing persuasions. Rational discourse is not evidently one of Mr. Spitzer's strong points, since he assumed that anyone who favors nonviolence in settling the Israeli-Palestinian dispute is somehow part of the far Left, whatever that is.

RICHARD CUMMINGS,
Sag Harbor, NY

The Passion

To the Editor:

As an ordinary Gentile, it has always seemed to me that anti-Semitism stems mainly from the notion of being "chosen" and, therefore, superior to the rest of us. Of course, this has also been fueled by the idea that Jews had the right to deprive other human beings of their right to their homeland—the land of their birth. Every human being was born somewhere on this planet and isn't that his or her birthright? Just as every one of us is entitled to the air we breathe, aren't we all entitled to our original homeland?

I think when the majority of Jews rise up and confirm that they believe all of us are created equal (that everyone has the same right to return to the homeland from which they were uprooted) there will be a substantial reduction in anti-Semitism. The esoteric discussion about who killed Jesus is not as important to most of us Gentiles as is the Jewish claim to have superior rights, i.e., the right to deny the Palestinians the same right of return that every other human being can

enjoy.

It took African-Americans a couple hundred years to be accepted as equal human beings. I hope it doesn't take that long for Palestinians.

You could be a much stronger voice for peace if you would unequivocally support international law by clearly stating that Palestinians should have full right of return.

EDITH CACCIATORE
from the internet

Editor Replies:

Blaming the victim is nothing new, so it's no surprise that some non-Jews are now emerging once again to do so, accusing us of being responsible for the craziness that leads them to kill us (murdering one out of every three Jews alive in the twentieth century). So now our claim to have a special relationship with God is the problem—except it turns out that the primary murderers of Jews in the last two thousand years, Christians, have a religion which claims that they themselves have a special relationship with God, a special path to salvation through faith in Jesus, and that those who don't believe in Jesus are not saved and will burn in hell (a position that Judaism never took in regard to non-Jews). But wait, it's not our religion that is the problem, the writer alleges, but our claims to a land different from that in which we were born. Well presumably that would make Americans the object of universal hatred because we came here, committed genocide against the Indians, and then continued to bring people here who were not born here and who, following this logic, had no right to the land. We at TIKKUN want Palestinians to have a right to return—to a Palestinian state created in the Geneva Accord.

To the Editor:

Thank you for your powerful piece on the Gibson film [at www.tikkun.org]. As a pastor of a liberal Protestant church in a community in northern Michigan which is highly evangelical and fundamental, I am appalled by the response of so many of the Christians here as they await with great joy the opening of the film at the beginning of the Lenten season. Ever since first seeing the announcement of the Gibson project I have been very concerned about the direction he has taken. I will share your article with as many as possible.

REVEREND CHRISTINE D. BARTON
Cadillac, MI

To the Editor:

Mel Gibson has missed the point, as have many of the critics and analysts who have reviewed "The Passion of the Christ." The Christian New Testament clearly states that the Christ dies "for the sin of the world." The narrative logic of the gospel stories is one of redemption brought about by the assumption of responsibility for the corruption of the world. "No greater love has a man than this, that he lay down his life for the lives of [others]." In full possession of his faculties and in full anticipation of what would follow, the Christ initiates the events that culminate in his own execution. As the Gospel of John quotes him, "I lay down my life of my own accord." For nearly two thousand years, a panoply of Christians have wasted many lives and much progress in the mistaken exercise of blaming: blaming Satan, blaming the Jews, blaming anyone who was convenient, missing the point. It was never about finger pointing, but about assuming global responsibility. It amazes me as a historian and a student of the Bible how many who have called themselves Christians have continued to miss the point.

REV. JAMES ALTMAN
Jacksonville, FL

To the Editor:

Criticism that seeks to impute political motives ("fascism") where none exist, a glorification of violence where the opposite is the case, and name calling is clearly a case of "methinks thou doth protest too much."

If Jews wish to wipe the crimes of Israel off the front pages, to bury the wicked deeds of the neocons, to pretend that Goldman & Sachs doesn't exist, raising a ruckus over this movie will not do the trick. Nobody's buying it. It's a beautiful movie, true to the gospels, and a lovely re-affirmation of faith.

TREVOR MACK
San Diego, CA

Erratum

In "The New Anti-Semitism" (November/December, 2003), Miriam Greenspan reported that a Jewish Student at Yale university was attacked on campus by a Palestinian. The location was erroneous; the attack occurred at the University of Michigan.

Confronting Confusion in Iraq

George Vradenburg

The conditions of daily life in Iraq are a decidedly mixed bag right now. But we are on the right course—strategically and morally—and must not confuse the difficulty of the challenge with the wisdom of our policy.

The daily life of most Iraqis is markedly improved over the situation under Saddam Hussein—ask the Kurds, ask the Marsh Arabs whose homelands we have restored, and ask the Shiites who practice their religion without fear of persecution. Every day brings new schools, new hospitals, new newspapers, and new jobs in healthcare, education, and critical service sectors. And let us not forget the absence of torture, arbitrary imprisonments, and mass killings.

The security situation for the average Iraqi seems to vary from week to week, but, as of the writing of this column, Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence appears to be increasing as insurgent forces punish those helping the Coalition Provisional Authority create a unified and democratic Iraq.

June 30 looms large in this equation. That is the date on which the Coalition Provisional Authority will turn over sovereignty to an Iraqi government. The escalating insurgent violence seeks to foster a total breakdown in authority after June 30, derailing up-coming democratic elections and creating an environment for the return of autocratic rule or a separatist Sunni state in a dismembered Iraq.

Public opinion polls demonstrate that Iraqis generally, including Sunni Muslims, do not support this new Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence *or* violence against coalition forces *or* a division of Iraq. But will the Iraqi people have a chance to choose their leaders in the face of potential religious and ethnic violence driven by warring armed militias?

Providing that choice is at the heart of Administration policy: disarming independent militias and increasing the capacity of Iraqis to manage their own security and determine their own destiny. We should continue to provide the support of coalition forces as sanctioned by a new sovereign Iraqi government. The recommendation of John McCain and Hillary Clinton that additional U.S. forces be committed to Iraq to assure its security during this transition deserves serious consideration.

As the Council on Foreign Relations has urged, the Bush Administration, Democratic candidate John Kerry, and Congressional leaders should jointly declare that (1) coalition forces will continue to provide essential security until

Iraqi security forces are able to do so on their own, (2) transfer of sovereignty does not signal a diminished U.S. commitment to supporting stability, reconstruction, and a peaceful political transition, and (3) the United States will sustain a multi-billion-dollar commitment to the reconstruction of Iraq for several years with involvement of Iraqis and the United Nations.

Readers of this column will recall that I supported the intervention in Iraq (TIKKUN, "The Case for War," November/December 2002), on several grounds: enforcement of UN resolutions (requiring comprehensive disclosure of the elimination of WMDs), self-defense (the presence of biological and chemical weapons, a possible Iraqi nuclear program, and the prospect of future links to global terrorist networks), humanitarian (the removal of a cruel dictator guilty of war crimes), and strategic (improving prospects for Middle East reform).

Some of the factual bases for pre-war arguments may prove to have been wrong. We have not yet discovered evidence of WMD stockpiles or a nuclear program of consequence. However we are just now seeing evidence that senior political figures of two UN Security Council members (France and Russia) may have been bribed by Saddam Hussein to block further UN action.

Given the facts as we now find them, however, the course we are on, while far from complete, remains the strategically and morally correct one (with unanticipated dividends in causing Libya to dismantle its WMD programs, Iran to open up to UN inspections, and North Korea to negotiate an end to its nuclear program). An immediate "pull-out" of American and coalition forces would be disastrous for the safety and security of Iraqis and a set-back to counter-terrorism efforts world-wide. As deeply troubling as American casualties are to each of us, Iraqi lives are entitled to moral recognition as well.

We do not have anything to apologize for in the manner in which we have conducted ourselves in Iraq. We have freed a people of a brutal dictator guilty of war crimes, we are fostering a free and prosperous Iraq, we are improving the daily lives of the Iraqi people, and we are, through the remarkable young men and women of our armed forces, proving the extraordinary generosity and good-heartedness of the American people.

And with the presence of a democratic and prosperous Iraq in their midst, perhaps the totalitarian regimes in neighboring countries will get the message that social justice and economic prosperity is the product of freedom, not tyranny. □

George Vradenburg is co-publisher of TIKKUN.

Iraq is a Hard Place

Michael Lerner

"So what do we do now?" say the people who got us there, from President Bush, who brought us to war on the basis of faulty information that we and millions of other Americans challenged at the time, to Senator Kerry and a significant number of Democrats who supported the war though many of their constituents pleaded with them not to (do you remember the day of the invasion when supposedly centrist Senator Diane Feinstein congratulated George Bush?)

"You may not have supported our initial decision to go in," the questioner continues, "but now that you've heard the testimony of so many Iraqis about the torture they endured under Saddam, you must see that there was a positive outcome. And in any event, you must see that leaving now without stabilizing a government would be a disaster for the Iraqi people. Now that we are there, we have some responsibility to leave only when we've created a decent life for the people there." And, if you subscribe to the ideas of Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times*, you add that "we need to show other Muslim countries that we have the staying power to create a stable democracy, so that we can encourage other countries to do the same or use our power to extend democratic regimes throughout the region."

First, let me state unequivocally that that many of those who supported the war in Iraq had good motivations. They did not listen to the rest of us who warned that the people of Iraq would not be greeting us as liberators, that the war would have many unintended consequences that would



Iraqi Shiite Muslims gather in front of a U.S. Army post to demonstrate against the U.S. Presence in Iraq.

be far worse than people expected, and that the case for a "clear and present danger" in Iraq at that moment was slight indeed. But many decent Americans were motivated by the same concern for the welfare of the people of Iraq that had led TIKKUN to support an immediate intervention into Bosnia and Kosovo. There is in most Americans a spirit of generosity and caring for others.

This generosity was not mobilized on behalf of the democratically elected government of Haiti against the

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EDITORIALS

barbarous thugs who overthrew its government, apparently with collaboration of the United States just a few months ago (read about Haiti's coup in an article by Paul Farmer on page 23). It hasn't been mobilized on behalf of the Saudi people to free them from their ruling autocrats, or on behalf of the Sudanese slaves or the Palestinians, or on behalf of the people of Rwanda when genocidal activities were happening there.

The reality is that this genuine generosity is manipulated by the media and by the U.S. government toward aims that may have more to do with global strategic interests than with the morality to which policy makers appeal; nevertheless many of those who respond are responding because of their goodness. It is this goodness in America for which we at TIKKUN are perpetually grateful—and which gives us the freedom to articulate our critiques of the distortions that we see. It is also true that at least some policy makers hoped by the invasion of Iraq to strengthen Israel—a goal that we support as legitimate and valuable, though one which we believe would have been far better accomplished by the UN sending troops to Israel and Palestine to protect each side from the other while the United States proceeds to implement a two-state solution if the parties refuse to do it on their own. In addition, we fear that since some of the motivation for this war was perceived as being in Israel's interest, the fallout from it may one day take its toll on the Jewish people.

We at TIKKUN rejoiced at the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and his regime. While we believe that the people of Iraq are far better off with Saddam out of power, it does not follow that the way we accomplished that goal was justifiable. The ends do not always justify the means.

We therefore don't accept the argument that now that we are there, the United States must stay and make the best of a bad situation. Here's why:

1. We should not reward George Bush's aggression by providing him with a fig-leaf afterwards. The reasons given to the American public have proved to be without merit, as we said at the time. There were no weapons of mass destruction. There was no tie to terrorism or 9/11. There was no immediate threat. There was plenty of time to explore peaceful avenues or an intervention sanctioned by and led by the international community.
2. There is no way for the United States to stabilize a government when it is the connection with the United States that will make any government seem illegitimate in the eyes of many Iraqis.
3. The United States most definitely has a responsibility to the Iraqi people, even more so after having engaged in twelve years of economically crippling boycotts and then perpetrating a society-ravaging intervention. But our responsibility is to help the people of Iraq, and there are better ways to help them than continued military presence.

4. While it would be wonderful if the Muslim world were to adopt our system of democratic processes and civil liberties, there are many things that I hope the Muslim world does not learn from the United States. Our current militarism has set a very bad example. The lesson we've taught is that if you don't like the regime of a country and believe it to be oppressive to some of its citizens, you should invade, overthrow that regime, and then create structures you believe to be democratic, while prohibiting those who supported the previous regime from holding office, running newspapers or media, or creating political parties. With this lesson, Saudis or Syrians might argue that it is therefore appropriate to invade and overthrow the Zionist regime in Israel and end the oppression and torture of the Palestinian people. This is not what we should be teaching the world.

So what *is* our responsibility to the Iraqi people?

1. Publicly acknowledge that our initial arguments for invasion were mistaken, and that our intervention has caused untold heartache and suffering to many Iraqis and American families. If we could approach the people of the Middle East with a spirit of humility and contrition, we might be able to model precisely the kind of behavior we'd like to see from them. We are not ashamed of having helped them rid themselves of the Saddam Hussein regime. But we should have the courage to acknowledge that living without water and electricity or security from the internal conflicts let loose by this military invasion has made the condition of many Iraqis far more painful than it was under Hussein, however fearful people were of his secret police.
2. Follow these steps outlined by Congressman Dennis Kucinich:
 - A. The United States must ask the United Nations to manage the oil assets of Iraq until the Iraqi people are self-governing.
 - B. The United Nations must handle all the contracts: No more Halliburton sweetheart deals, no contracts to Bush Administration insiders, no contracts to campaign contributors. All contracts must be awarded under transparent conditions.
 - C. The United States must renounce any plans to privatize Iraq. It is illegal under both the Geneva and the Hague Conventions for any nation to invade another nation, seize its assets, and sell those assets. The Iraqi people, and the Iraqi people alone, must have the right to determine the future of their country's resources.
 - D. The United States must ask the United Nations to handle the transition to Iraqi self-governance. The UN must be asked to help the Iraqi people develop a Constitution. The UN must assist in developing free and fair elections.
 - E. The United States must agree to pay for what we blew up.

EDITORIALS

- F. The United States must pay reparations to the families of innocent Iraqi civilian noncombatants killed and injured in the conflict.
 - G. The United States must contribute financially to the UN peacekeeping mission.
 - H. The United Nations, through its member nations, will commit 130,000 peacekeepers to Iraq on a temporary basis until the Iraqi people can maintain their own security.
 - I. UN troops will rotate into Iraq, and all U.S. troops will come home.
 - J. The United States will abandon policies of "pre-emption" and unilateralism and commit to strengthening the UN.
3. This is the moment to seek a real transformation of the UN. We don't blame people who are skeptical about the UN, which often acts more like a collection of egos than a body aimed at representing the highest aspirations of the world's peoples. An important step would be for the United States to acknowledge that it has played an undermining role in the UN by seeking to make it little more than a cheerleader for American global ambitions, and then refusing to pay our share of support when it has failed to ratify our desires. Other countries have similarly used the UN for their own narrow goals rather than as an entity through which we might foster a world of peace, economic justice, human rights, and ecological sanity. The United States should insist that the UN move from being the arena where nation-states jockey for power over each other, to an arena in which the highest visions of the world's peoples are articulated, and plans are developed for international implementation. Instead of fueling the UN with realpolitik, let's empower it with visionary politics. Let's ask that every country send its most visionary leaders, philosophers, spiritual leaders, poets, and healers to the UN. Let it become the first institution that embodies a New Bottom Line, so that wisdom replaces cynical realism, and morality replaces narrow self-interest. In short, let us re-envision and re-empower the UN.

One goal for such a UN would be to develop a long term vision of how a Global Marshall Plan could be implemented to build the economic, democratic, and ecological well-being of the third world, and to do so in ways that were respectful of local traditions and sensibilities, but also respectful of the desire of the world's peoples to respect the rights of women and minorities. We have called for such a Marshall Plan to be funded by allocations of 10 percent of the GNP of the advanced industrial societies. Let this UN develop a detailed plan for how to most sensibly allocate such funds, and how to guarantee that the funds would be used in the interests of all, and not primarily to sustain the narrow class interests of the elites who currently govern those countries. The persuasiveness of the plan will, of course, be one of the factors in whether we can build a suf-

ficient base of support in the advanced industrial societies to actually implement the plan.

The United States should model the kind of activity we hope to see on a more global scale by making Iraq the first recipient of this Global Marshall plan. We should allocate tens of billions of dollars each year to rebuilding the Iraqi economy under the direction of an international consortium.

Military intervention is the wrong paradigm, and any attempts to "make it work" are morally misguided even if they "work" in the sense that U.S. forces are as successful as the previous military regime (Saddam's) in repressing dissent.

What we can and should do instead is to act with a spirit of humility and begin a very different path—a path of generosity and kindness that expects to "win" the hearts of the Iraqi people not by power, and not by might, but by the spirit of goodness and openheartedness with which we deal with the people of Iraq.

Until this change takes place, we should not be surprised at acts of crude savagery such as the Faluja murders of four Americans, who were then burned and dragged through the streets. That anger was not fostered by "terrorists" or by Saddam—it was the outgrowth of the insensitivity and brutality of our own military intervention. This in no way excuses the outrageous acts of violence perpetrated by Iraqis. But we are fooling ourselves if we think that our reliance on violence will not produce more violence. This is how it will always be. The path to peace must be a path of peace.

We hope that both Bush and Kerry will allow themselves to hear the voices of those who want a whole new direction for U.S. foreign policy. Either one of them may find themselves severely handicapped by the fact that they supported the intervention in Iraq—not unlike Lyndon Johnson, who inherited the Vietnam war but ended up losing his presidency as he became increasingly identified with a policy whose immorality he could never admit.

The time for visionary thinking is now, before the situation deteriorates irreparably.

"We are not going to let violence in Iraq make us turn and run—that will only encourage other acts of violence," you'll hear partisans for war say. This is the same self-defeating thinking that led the United States to hold on in Vietnam while tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers and millions of Vietnamese civilians died. It is the thinking of the small-minded who are afraid to admit defeat or acknowledge being wrong. And it's time to get over it. The admission of wrongdoing by the United States, far from empowering the terrorists, would make it harder for them to build upon the anger that American arrogance generates abroad.

But more importantly, our recommendation is not to run, but to engage in an entirely new way—with generosity

and love and caring for the other. The United States needs to take the lead in creating an international entity capable of embodying these ideals and acting upon them to rebuild Iraq. We mustn't return to isolationism, but instead create institutions that foster a new ethos of generosity. We need to cease spreading the dogmas of selfishness and materialism that have for too long dominated American life and destroyed the hopes of humanity under the weight of its cynical realism. Generosity and kindness, it turns out, create the most realistic path for ending the war in Iraq.

Withdrawal For The Sake Of Occupation

Ariel Sharon is determined to never let the Palestinians have the state they were promised in the Oslo Accord negotiations in 1993. As Yossi Beilin makes clear in these pages (see "The Path to Geneva," page 19) and elsewhere, the Palestinians were told that in five years they would get a state that included almost all of the West Bank and Gaza with "minor border modifications" to allow Israel to take in a few border settlements.

That same deal was made even more explicit in the Geneva Accord, which gives Israel 6 percent of the West Bank and thus incorporates some major settlements into Israel, but yields 6 percent of its own land on the border with Gaza to the Palestinians state.

But for many on the Israeli Right, yielding land on the West Bank to create a Palestinian state is anathema. For the religious nationalists, the military victory of 1967 that gave Israel the West Bank was an expression of God's will, a return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland, and an important step toward the flourishing of our "redemption." Only a fool or an evil person would negotiate away what God had given to us! For the secular nationalists, the West Bank would provide Israel with a needed military buffer against a hostile neighboring world. Of course the SCUDS of the first Gulf War weakened their conviction that this land actually provides serious protection in a world of advanced technology. But there was another argument among the cynical realists: the Occupation had created so much hostility within the Palestinian population that by the 1990s it was no longer safe to withdraw from the West Bank. The Palestinians, who had no army, were so enraged by their oppression that it constituted a threat to Israel should Israel ever withdraw. Acts of terror—a frequent tool of resistance for people or nations that have no army—were interpreted as proof that a West Bank state would be a genuine threat to Israel.

Yielding Gaza raised few similar objections. Even in the 1980s there was a considerable body of Israeli opinion that

argued for unilateral withdrawal. The religious nationalists could point to Hebron and other West Bank cities as part of the Biblical legacy of the Jewish people, but they had no claim on Gaza, which had been part of the territory of the Philistines. Gaza did not provide any military advantage for the secular nationalists and, increasingly impoverished by Israel's thwarting of serious economic development, Gaza had become one of the most densely populated and undernourished populations in the entire world. Its population was drawn to Hamas primarily due to its network of social service enterprises created to fill the gap left by Israel's failure to provide the minimal caring required of an occupying power. Lacking natural resources, overpopulated with undereducated Muslims, Gaza has always seemed a perfect place to abandon quickly. It was only the handful of settlers, backed by the Sharon government, that turned leaving Gaza into a controversial issue. Sharon then announced that abandoning the Gazan settlement of Netzarim was, in his view, no different than abandoning Tel Aviv.



A Palestinian policeman looks at the rubble of the destroyed science college at the crossing of the Jewish settlement of Netzarim and Southern Gaza City, March, 2004.

Sharon's reversal and call to unilaterally leave Gaza may have been painful for him personally, but for most Israelis it was the most reasonable thing in the world. Few had ever talked about leaving Gaza as a stumbling block for a comprehensive peace agreement with the Palestinians. However, one might have hoped that if Israel was going to give up territory it would do so in a way that would manifest a spirit of generosity, perhaps even contrition, for failing to have cared adequately for the people under its occupation. Imagine an Israeli people with the spiritual capacity to acknowledge that it had not done a very good job with the people of Gaza, and who could say so, apologize, and seek better relations in the future, offering a unilateral withdrawal as a down payment on a different

EDITORIALS

kind of future in which both peoples would seek to live with mutual respect and in peace. If such a withdrawal were coupled with generous aid to help rebuild some of what Israel had destroyed and provide economic relief for the many Gazans who had been integrated into Israel's service economy before Israel decided to shut its borders, one could imagine a grateful response from at least some sectors of the Palestinian people.

But generosity of spirit is no more what Sharon has in mind than generosity in economic terms. The withdrawal he proposes is not an attempt to win a new relationship with the Palestinian people, but rather to strengthen Israel's ability to maintain control over the West Bank. Sharon talks about moving settlers from Gaza only to resettle them in the West Bank. And in "exchange" for the "concession" or "compromise" of "giving up" Gaza, Israel seeks U.S. support for the continued construction of the great Wall through the West Bank, which de facto incorporates a significant part of Palestinian land into Israel.

But with whom exactly is Israel compromising and to whom is it making an exchange or giving up something? Not to the Palestinian people, whose representatives have made it clear that they want a withdrawal from Gaza only in the context of a comprehensive agreement that includes an end to the Occupation of the West Bank along the lines specified in the Geneva Accord. They point out that Israel's plan for withdrawal does not include ending periodic military incursions against any targets Israel considers a danger, nor does it end Israel's smothering control of the borders which keeps Gazans from developing direct contact with the rest of the Arab world. Gaza will simply become one large Arab ghetto, sealed off by the Israeli army. No wonder they will not be grateful for a unilateral withdrawal.

The withdrawal has little to do with trying to make peace with Palestinians and everything to do with Israel's propaganda war in the West. Counting on the distractions of the Presidential campaign in the United States to obfuscate the real intent of his withdrawal plan, Sharon hopes that his lapdogs in Congress, his AIPAC-mobilized troops in the American Jewish community, and his Christian Zionist allies in the Evangelical world will be able to portray this unilateral withdrawal as a major move for peace, proof that Israel is the righteous force and that Palestinians are the irrational and hateful obstacles to a lasting solution.

The unilateral withdrawal will be portrayed by Hamas, the dominant force in Gaza, as further proof that armed struggle is the only way to challenge Israel, and that Israel responds only to violence, never to the weak-kneed and reasonable demands of the Palestinian Authority whose largely non-violent response to the Occupation has been rewarded only with more occupation and repression.

Some Israeli commentators suggest that this empowering of Hamas may be one of the more Machiavellian goals of unilateral withdrawal. Sharon's determination for Israel

to make the Occupation permanent will be aided by further weakening of the Palestinian Authority.

Here is the picture of the Middle East Sharon hopes to create: a strong Israeli state that has de facto incorporated approximately half of the West Bank; a weak Palestinian state composed primarily of the Palestinian cities in the West Bank linked by small corridors, and surrounded by Israeli troops on all sides—essentially a tiny and powerless entity whose residents are cut off from the rest of the Palestinian people inside Israel and Gaza; and a semi-independent Gaza which is ruled by Islamic fundamentalists who are almost as antagonistic to this phony Palestinian state as they are to Israel. And the continuing frustration of the Palestinian people will ensure terror for generations to come—thus fulfilling the predictions of the Israeli Right that "nothing will ever satisfy these people" and that they had "no alternative" to incorporating much of the West Bank into Israel and surrounding the Palestinians on all sides with Israeli military power.

No wonder, then, that many in the Israeli peace movement oppose Sharon's proposed withdrawal as yet another cynical power grab rather than viewing it as an act that deserves support or praise. Yet the peace movement activists feel out-manuevered by the Right, and though they are momentarily encouraged because Sharon might be forced to resign for reasons of corruption, they feel certain that the government that comes to replace him is likely to be as bad or worse. As such, many of them have turned their attention to the United States, hoping that here the Geneva Accord will find traction and support after the 2004 election. For them we will continue to bring people to Washington, D.C., to project an alternative voice for peace to the pro-Occupation voices that dominate both the Democratic and Republican parties today. □

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The Confidence Man

Thandeka

Unless John Kerry can make human emotion rather than political platforms the center of his campaign, George Bush will win the presidential election by the end of June. Kerry won't know what hit him until it's too late.

Here's how Kerry will lose. When Kerry clinched the democratic nomination of March 2, most voters did not know much of anything about him. A window of opportunity opened up for voter education. However, the factual information the Kerry campaign is trying to shove through this window will not shape voters' political judgment—their emotional responses will. As political scientists Richard Nadeau, Richard G. Niemi, and Timothy Amato have trenchantly argued in their essay "Emotions, Issue Importance, and Political Learning," voters may forget the information they initially learned about the candidate, but they will hold onto their emotional attitudes.

Bush's team has been studying this new science of political emotion. In fact, one of Bush's advisors, W. Russell Neuman, who works on information and security technology policy at the White House, literally wrote the book on this kind of political maneuvering (*Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*, co-authored by George E. Marcus and Michael MacKuen). While Kerry went on a much deserved but poorly timed vacation, Bush's team got busy shaping voters' affective responses to the candidates, pouring over \$20 million into anti-Kerry ads in March alone.

The Bush campaign is based on what Nadeau *et al* call the anxiety/hope model. In this model, the politician who promises voters (or creates the expectation) that a threat to voter well-being will end wins emotional capital. In short, if a politician can replace voters' anxiety with hope, that politician will come out ahead. It's a political confidence game.

*Thandeka is associate professor of theology at Meadville Lombard Theological School (Chicago), affiliate minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockford, IL, co-president of the Center for Community Values (www.the-ccv.org) and author of *Learning to Be White: Money, Race, and God in America*.*



Here's how it works:

A politician:

1. Takes an issue that causes anxiety among some voters
2. Turns it into a high anxiety issue for most voters
3. Offers up guaranteed hope and thus an expectation that the threat will be removed
4. Gains new emotional capital from voters because of new confidence in the leadership ability of the politician to end the threat
5. Becomes their confidence man.

The fundamental structure of this strategy draws on the formula for Christian faith created by sixteenth-century Protestant Reformer Martin Luther in his 1535 *Lectures on Galatians*. Luther's formula can be divided into the same five steps:

1. **Anxiety.** The believer tries to please God on his own (without Christ or the Holy Spirit) and fails miserably because he is a sinner.
2. **Anxiety Heightened.** Each repeated attempt by the

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believer to please God through works increases God's wrath. God is enraged because He is being offered the man's sin (unfulfilled Divine Commandments or "Law") as if it were good works (fulfilled Law). The believer thus experiences an ever-deepening terror and humiliation in the sight of God. He comes to the realization that he is all flesh and not spirit.

3. **Universal Salvation Guaranteed:** Christ. The believer now sees himself as God sees him (he's a sinner). Being in complete accord with God's vision and will is the human experience of faith. This experience of faith is the experience of the presence of Christ, who is present in the faith itself.
4. **The Human Feeling of Salvation While on Earth:** Christ as Divine Mediator takes the sins of man upon himself. With this act by Christ, the man is justified in the sight of God and no longer feels guilty.
5. **Confidence.** Luther now proclaims that "[Any]one who teaches something different or something contrary—we we confidently declare that he was sent from the devil...." By equating inner, personal certainty (a conscience at peace because it is united with Christ) with so-called objective truth ("Christians [are] constituted as judges over all kinds of doctrine and become lords over all the laws of the entire world"), Luther made the emotional experience of extreme personal confidence *the central religious experience of faith for many Protestants*.

For Christians, Christ certainly deserves personal confidence. But Bush is not Christ. The confidence Bush asks for, unfortunately, is of a completely different sort. What secular liberals don't understand is that when Bush uses the anxiety/hope strategy effectively, it doesn't matter if the economy's depressed, jobs continue to disappear, the U.S. deficit's still rising, and Bush is still calling for more tax cuts and free trade. While these liberals speak policy-talk, much of Protestant America resonates to the affective force of Bush's anxiety/hope strategy.

Here's just one example of Bush's mastery of this political strategy: Gay and Lesbian marriages.

1. **Anxiety noted.** Bush is told by "several prominent evangelical Protestants in Washington" that voter turnout by evangelicals is directly linked to his support of a constitutional amendment to ban homosexual marriage (*New York Times*, March 12, 2004). Thus Bush, when introducing his proposal for a constitutional amendment of marriage, first mentions the anxiety: the "uncertainty" caused among the American people by "arbitrary court decisions" and "defiance of the law by local officials" who have sanctioned gay and lesbian marriages at the state and local level.
2. **Anxiety Heightened.** Bush escalates the anxiety into a universal, all-encompassing threat: a "few judges and local authorities are presuming to change the most fun-

damental institution of civilization," one "honored by all cultures and by every religious faith."

3. **Guaranteed Hope Through Universal Salvation.** Bush promises a guaranteed salvation: he declares his intention to "prevent the meaning of marriage to be changed forever," by calling for the enactment of "a constitutional amendment to protect marriage in America. Decisive and democratic action is needed, because attempts to redefine marriage in a single state or city could have serious consequences throughout the country."
4. **The Feeling of Political Salvation on Earth is Achieved.** Bush now speaks of God. This time via a teleconference at the National Association of Evangelicals annual conference on March 11, held in Colorado Springs, which represents 30,000,000 members. Bush tells them they "are doing God's work" and he thanks them "on behalf of our country."
5. **Bush Becomes The Confidence Man.** Bush now reveals the actual content of his political hand: confidence. Here's how he put it during a fund-raising event on Long Island the following day: "[The American voters have] a choice a choice between an American that leads the world with strength and confidence or an American that is uncertain in the face of danger" (*New York Times*, March 12, 2004). The issue, in short, is confidence. Bush is the confidence man.

Every major policy statement by Bush or his top administrators can be reduced to these five political steps. Try it. Read Bush's statements on the Iraq War, its aftermath, his stance toward the United Nations, his tax cuts. He's even used the formula on his opponent, creating voter anxiety about Kerry by insisting that Kerry lacks conviction and is indecisive (*New York Times*, March 20, 2004). Once this negative association is made, Bush moves in with the message that he has conviction, and offers the hope that he will be the decisive president voters need. The formula never changes.

Bush's focused use of the theologically-based anxiety/hope strategy explains why most Americans believe, despite all the hard evidence, that he is a moral man, a defender of the faith, a Christian leader, and an American savior. In short, an elect man of God chosen to rule over others.

John Kerry will not be able to beat Bush at this confidence game unless he also becomes a confidence man. This means that:

1. Kerry must speak to the anxiety of the American people in specific, concrete terms.
2. Kerry must heighten the anxiety.
3. Kerry must then promise universal salvation.

Anything less than this will mean Kerry's defeat. If Kerry succeeds, it will be because of one decided difference. Kerry will actually be salvific for our ailing, anxiety-ridden nation. Nothing less, thanks to Bush, will do. □

Disengaging from Gaza

A View from Within

Jessica Montell

Ariel Sharon's disengagement from Gaza is a sort of palimpsest—almost anything can be read into the plan. Disengagement may or may not include relinquishing control of the Gaza-Sinai border; may or may not include the continued employment of Gazans inside Israel; may consist of the complete evacuation of Gaza settlers or just a partial evacuation. The devil is in these details, making it difficult to analyze.

Some argue that disengagement from Gaza is simply another Sharon smokescreen to distract the public from the criminal investigation against him. It does seem surreal: Sharon has not even fulfilled his obligation to dismantle the "illegal" outposts in the West Bank, a move that causes significantly less controversy within his own party. Yet, now that he is just talking about removing thousands of settlers from Gaza, some of whom are raising a second generation into these communities, the whole world is taking his plan seriously, as if he would actually follow through on it.

Whether or not this was Sharon's intention, the plan has gained momentum. From the intensity of the rhetoric, as well as the "pre-evacuation" military activity—including the assassination of Hamas leader Sheikh Yassin—one might suppose that "disengagement" is imminent, rather than, at best, long months, even years, away. While this virtual Gaza occupies the headlines and keeps senior bureaucrats flying across the Atlantic, however, the actual Gaza remains far from the public eye. In the real life flesh-and-blood Gaza the situation is dire: overcrowding, poverty, siege, destruction, and violence. More than removal of settlements will be needed for Gaza to become a vibrant, economically viable and psychologically healthy place for Palestinians to live.

The Gaza Strip comprises a total area of 141 square miles and is home to over 1.3 million Palestinians. With a population density of 65,800 persons per square mile, the Palestinian areas are among the most densely populated



places on earth. The 7,800 Jews who live in Gaza occupy 21 square miles; the population density in the built-up area of the Jewish settlements is 1,700 persons per square mile. Settlers, comprising one half of one percent of the population, inhabit 15 percent of the land. Together with military controlled areas, 20 percent of the Gaza Strip is under Israeli control.

According to the World Bank, 75 percent of Gazans live below the international poverty level of two dollars per person per day. The poverty level has doubled over the past four years, and today a shocking 86 percent of Gaza households receive food relief packages from international organizations. Over 13 percent of Gaza children suffer from acute malnutrition. These horrific figures result from several factors: underdevelopment throughout the years of occupation is compounded by laborers' current inability to gain access to jobs in Israel, difficulty for Gaza businesses to export their products, and a continued lack of investment due to the instability of the area.

Settlements also inhibit the Gaza economy. Gaza's only natural resources are the land and the sea. The settlements occupy a significant portion of the fertile land and control the entire southern seashore, thus restricting potential income from agriculture and fishing. A removal of settlements would open up this potential. However, this in itself will not significantly reduce poverty. To fully exploit these resources, Gazans must be able to import and export goods

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PHOTOGRAPH BY MAZEN MAJDELAWI/B'TSELEM

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

(through Israel or their own ports). Agriculture alone cannot sustain the Gaza economy, so access to jobs within Israel, or the stability to raise significant amounts of foreign investment for development are also crucial. The disengagement plan does not address these issues in a clear way.

Nor is the problem limited to movement of goods and people between Gaza and Israel or other countries. Israel has divided the Strip into three sections, frequently blocking movement between them. In addition, the community of Al Mawasi is literally trapped between the sea and the Gush Katif settlements. Mawasi farmers or fisherman have great difficulty "exporting" produce across the fortress-like Israeli military checkpoint to neighboring towns. Teachers from other towns are frequently unable to reach Mawasi's two schools. For any medical care more serious than Mawasi's two very basic clinics can provide, residents must leave the area. There have been cases of women giving birth while waiting at the checkpoint, and patients have been late for surgery after being delayed at the crossing points. Residents who leave Mawasi for a brief shopping trip may suddenly find themselves stranded for days or even weeks until the crossing opens up again. For Mawasi, removing the settlements would lift their siege. For disengagement to make a real difference for the rest of Gaza however, Israel would also have to remove its military installations from the area.

In addition to preventing physical movement within Gaza, Israel has demolished over 1,500 houses and destroyed thousands of acres of agricultural land, turning fertile, cultivated areas into a barren wilderness. Some of these demolitions are taking place at the Gaza/Egypt border, as Israel makes a sterile buffer out of what was once the crowded Rafah refugee camp. Other demolitions are linked directly to protecting the settlements. The military has destroyed houses, uprooted trees, and destroyed crops in order to create buffer zones around settlements, bypass roads, and army posts. All of this destruction takes place with no prior warning, no due process, and no compensation. B'Tselem has documented dozens of cases in which people were awakened by the noise of tanks and bulldozers literally at their doorstep, grabbed their children and fled, leaving all their possessions behind.

Jalal Abu Luz, who lives with his wife and their eight children in the Khan Yunis Refugee Camp, tells of the aftermath of the demolition of his home on April 10, 2001:

After the tanks and bulldozers left the camp, I walked toward where my house had been. I was shocked at the devastation. I was hysterical, and began to cry and scream.... My wife and children came home and saw that the house had turned into a pile of stones. My wife fainted, and the neighbors took her to the hospital. The children started to cry. I was still in shock.... [A few days later] my children went back to school, but their behavior changed. They started wetting the bed, and screamed in their sleep because of their nightmares. The incident also destroyed

my relations with my wife.

Most incalculable of all is the level of violence Gaza has experienced during this intifada. Although Gazans are 36 percent of the total Palestinian population, they comprise 46 percent of the casualties, and Gazans are 54 percent of the children killed. Over 1,100 Gazans have been killed between October 2000 and March 2004, at least half of them unarmed civilians, taking no part in the hostilities. Two-hundred-fourty-nine Palestinian children have been killed in Gaza, including 92 children younger than fourteen.

Over the past three and a half years, Israel has assassinated at least 139 Palestinians, sixty-seven of them in Gaza. In the course of these assassinations, an additional ninety-six Palestinian bystanders were killed, seventy-one of them in Gaza. While Israel has decreased its assassinations in the West Bank, it has increased them in Gaza, most infamously assassinating Sheikh Yassin of Hamas this spring. Because Israel employs aerial missiles and bombs in Gaza assassinations, they cause more casualties. In fact, Gaza assassinations have killed more bystanders than "targets."

The rules governing the IDF's use of lethal force are also more lax in the Gaza Strip. Ammunition like fletchette shells, which scatter thousands of darts over a wide area, is used in the Gaza Strip, though prohibited in the West Bank. In addition, certain areas of Gaza have been declared "danger zones" in which soldiers may open fire at any Palestinian who approaches them. The exact meaning of "approaching" is not clear, and even soldiers serving in these areas told B'Tselem that they are not sure whether the order is to shoot to kill or simply to wound. On June 22, 2003, for example, So'ad al-Bahadari, a twenty-seven-year old woman who was mentally ill, was shot while "approaching" the Morag settlement, which is adjacent to her house.

Shuqri Salman Hussein al-Maqadmeh tells of the death of his wife, Nuha al-Maqadmeh who was nine months pregnant, in an IDF invasion into the al-Bureij refugee camp in March 2003:

On Sunday night, I closed my restaurant around 10:30PM. I went home and began to prepare food for the next day. My wife asked if I heard the buzz of a drone airplane in the sky, and I said that I did. She said that she was afraid that the army would invade the camp. I tried to calm her and joked with her....

We sat in the bedroom, and listened to the buzz that was getting louder and louder. Muhammad, our six-year-old, came into the room, shaking in fear. "Daddy, Sharon's plane came to butcher us." Majid, my oldest son, came into the room and said that the army had apparently invaded the camp. I asked him to wake up his brothers and sisters and have them come into our room. I did not want the children to stay in their room because it faced the main street, making it more exposed to gunfire. So all twelve of us sat on the bed.

Then I felt an enormous explosion, like an earthquake, and found myself under the ruins. The southern wall of



the room, which separates our house from that of our neighbor, collapsed on top of us. I heard my wife say, "Help me, Shuqri, help the children," and then she was silent. It was totally dark, and I couldn't see a thing. I began to clear away the stones. I saw Yusef, and picked him up. As I did, I saw Muhammad. I took Yusef into the yard and then returned to remove the rubble on top of Muhammad. I freed him and took him outside. As I was clearing away the stones and the rubble, I saw Nur's clothing. I went over to her, picked her up, and took her into the yard. I heard Majid call for help. He was buried under stones. I pulled him out and he said, "Nasma is there." She was covered by rubble and furniture. Majid and I removed the stones covering Nasma and took her into the yard. I suddenly had trouble breathing... Some of the neighbors came over and began to remove the rubble... One by one, the neighbors extracted Nissim, Al'a, Jamil, and Saqer from the ruins and brought them to me.... Then I heard a neighbor say that they found Nuha, "and here is the little girl." They brought my wife and daughter out and laid them on a blanket...

The violence descends on Palestinians without warning. I sometimes try to imagine what it must be like to live in a place where the heavens can suddenly open up and rain down missiles. Dr. Eyad el-Sarraj from the Gaza Community Mental Health Center surveyed 944 Gaza children, ages ten to nineteen, and found that virtually all of them (94 percent) had been to a funeral. Eighty-three percent had witnessed shooting incidents, and 61 percent had seen relative killed or wounded. It should therefore not be surprising that virtually all of the children (97.5 percent) were suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome, with a third suffering severe symptoms. Given the life experience of these children, should it surprise us that one fourth of the children in the same study aspire to die in attacks against Israelis?

The violence descends on Palestinians without warning.

Evacuation of Gaza settlements will result in a tremendous improvement in the daily lives of Palestinians: freeing up lands, halting the massive destruction of agricultural land and some of the house demolitions, enabling free movement, and reducing flashpoints of violence. Given this reality, and the fact that settlements are a violation of international humanitarian law, human rights advocates must embrace the Gaza disengagement plan. At the same time, we must remain vigilant regarding the effects of the Gaza disengagement on the West Bank, and on Gaza itself both before and after disengagement.

The idea has been raised that a disengagement from Gaza will strengthen Israel's hold on the West Bank. In exchange for dismantling Gaza settlements, Israel has apparently asked the United States to support its claim to large settlement blocks in the West Bank. Such a move must be resisted. West Bank settlements also cause severe human rights violations that demand attention.

We are already seeing military incursions and assassinations in advance of an eventual disengagement, and many Israeli commentators contend that we are likely to see more massive military operations as Israel will want to destroy Hamas prior to any withdrawal. The implications of such operations are additional deaths, destruction, and suffering for the civilian population.

We also must look at what kind of society Israel will be leaving behind. The Palestinian Authority—which had a poor human rights record during the Oslo period—is barely functioning today. An Israeli departure may cause a violent power struggle within Palestinian society. Israel's policy of stepped-up military incursions and assassinations in advance of disengagement, designed to weaken Hamas, may have the opposite effect. *Ha'aretz* analyst

Danny Rubinstein argues that the assassination of Yassin in fact strengthens Hamas in its battle with the PA. It is still too early to gauge the implications of Yassin's assassination. Many commentators argue that it will exacerbate the growing anarchy. Others add that it will result in massive attacks on Israelis and Jews worldwide, perhaps ultimately torpedoing any disengagement plan.

Even if Sharon did not intend to actually carry through with disengagement, his declaration has important rhetorical significance, undermining the rhetoric of Greater Israel—the idea that Jewish claims to all of the biblical land of Israel supersede Palestinian claims or political exigencies. Were a right-wing government to dismantle even a few settlements, it would constitute an earthquake in the Israeli political landscape. We must applaud any level of disengagement, but at the same time we must work to make sure that Israel disengages in a way that enables Gazans to rebuild their homes, their economy, and their shattered lives. □

The Path To Geneva

Yossi Beilin

Yossi Beilin has long been involved in the search for peace in the Middle East. He was the chief negotiator for Israel in the Oslo Accords, and has held ministerial positions in the governments of Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Ehud Barak. He was Israel's Minister of Justice from 1999–2001, and the primary architect—along with former Palestinian Minister of Information and Culture Yasser Abed Rabbo—of the Geneva Accords. He was recently elected to lead Yachad, the new Israeli Social Democratic party superseding Meretz. Following is an excerpt of Beilin's latest book, The Path to Geneva, to be released in June, 2004 by RDV Books/Akashic Books.

This is the story of the thin ice. It was almost broken one hour before the signing of the Declaration of Principles on September 13, 1993, when Israel insisted on signing the agreement with the Palestinian delegation to Washington, and the Palestinians insisted it should be signed with the PLO—until it was decided that it would be signed with both. It was almost broken by the massacre perpetrated by Baruch Goldstein at the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron on February 25, 1994; it was almost broken on May 4, 1994, when Arafat refused to sign the Cairo Agreement on Gaza and Jericho, but finally reconsidered; it was almost broken when Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated on November 4, 1995; when four consecutive terror attacks occurred in Israel at the beginning of 1996; when Netanyahu opened the Wall Tunnel and blood was spilled on both sides in September 1996; on Nakba Day, as the Palestinians call it, in May 2000.

The ice was finally broken on September 29, 2000, after Sharon's provocative visit to the Temple Mount—not because the visit was any worse than all the other events, but because the ice was still thin, and we had not managed, despite all our efforts, to thicken it. Thickening the ice is the job of the peacemakers and believers, and when the ice breaks it is necessary to do everything to save ourselves from drowning. And afterwards, we must continue thickening the ice.

Excerpted from The Path to Geneva: The Quest for a Permanent Agreement, 1996–2004. © by RDV Books/Akashic Books, 2004.



Yossi Beilin, center, flanked by Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat, left, and Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo, right, wave to peace activists in Taba, Egypt, January, 2001.

There is nothing more understandable than the desire to “expose” the reason for the Intifada, but there is also no chance of finding it. A cause we have certainly found, and perhaps if Sharon had not entered the Temple Mount, and if the Taba talks had been held in September or October 2000, it might have been possible to reach a framework agreement even before the elections in the United States. Perhaps if Sharon had not entered the Temple Mount, another event would have provided the spark that led to the new Intifada. There is a great difference between cause and reason, though. Sometimes, the absence of a cause prevents disaster, but we were never so lucky.

The Intifada seemed to reinforce the arguments of the Right. After all, Barak had come with the best of intentions, had offered the Palestinians an excellent deal, and they not only rejected it, but they took advantage of a violent incident on the Temple Mount to breach the agreements they had signed, and then used weapons received with Israel's approval in order to strike at Israelis. Barak, the Right says, did us a favor by exposing the true face of the Palestinians, and proved how correct we were all these years when we insisted, “There is nobody to talk with, and nothing to talk about.” And further, the right-wingers say, in the course of the Intifada it has become clear how correct we were when we said that there is no real difference between the PLO and Hamas and Islamic Jihad, that these are different faces of the same Palestinian goal: to put an end to the existence of Israel, whether by the “salami” method—taking over territory “slice by slice”—or by means of terror and defamation.

But this is only an appearance. Against all the proposals raised by the peace camp since the Six Day War—territorial compromise, recognition of the Palestinian people's right to

self-determination, approval of a Palestinian state, willingness to consider the PLO a partner—the right wing's position has always been that there is nobody to talk to on the Palestinian side, that relinquishing the eastern part of the land of Israel (that is, Jordan) was sufficient, and that there was no need to compromise on the western part of the land of Israel as well. In their view, only forceful insistence on our rights would ensure our survival.

The Oslo process was designed to create a responsible addressee on the Palestinian side, to separate the pragmatic groups from the fundamentalists, to present principles for a permanent solution, and to implement, over a five-year period, an interim agreement in a format almost identical to that agreed on at Camp David in 1978 between Menachem Begin's Israel and Anwar al-Sadat's Egypt. In the correspondence between them, the parties decided to recognize each other and put an end to the violence. Self-rule was granted to the Palestinians at a stage earlier than that proposed by the Camp David accords, but territory was transferred gradually, while under the Camp David agreements it was to have been implemented all at once.

The strong police force under Palestinian self-rule was also set up pursuant to the Camp David agreements, which dealt explicitly with this issue. Israel approved the introduction of rifles into the Palestinian Authority, because without weapons it would have been impossible for the Palestinian Authority to function against the various opposition entities, particularly against Hamas, since over the years, despite our control there, the West Bank and Gaza had become veritable weapons depots. These rifles were also used by the Palestinian Authority to prevent terror activities which could have caused a great deal of damage to Israel. In any permanent arrangement, Israel would have no interest in leaving the Palestinian entity exposed to internal violence, with no means to maintain order. There is no doubt that as soon as the Palestinian police and security organizations took part in the Intifada, a pivotal principle of the Oslo Accord had been breached, but it would still be foolish to conclude that Israel should insist on an unarmed police force.

The contention that there has never been any difference between moderates and extremists in the Palestinian camp, and that this was exposed in the Intifada, is as false as the argument of Palestinian rejectionists that there is no difference between the peace camp and the extreme right in Israel, and that all Jews have the same goal. In this framework, whenever one side expresses itself moderately, the other has to claim that it is hypocrisy. The symmetry in this situation is fascinating, and is repeated in every single conflict of this type.

In fact, one of the most important steps in the Oslo process was the effort made to distinguish between the pragmatists and the extremists on the Palestinian side, between those who were willing to talk, and those for whom the very act of talking was considered a sin. Obviously, this process

also led our side to sharp disagreement. So long as there was nobody to talk to, an interim arrangement, as had been originally proposed at Camp David in 1978, seemed far too abstract. But as soon as there was someone we could talk to, then of course there would be something to talk about. The Labor-Likud national unity government of the '80s could not have existed in the '90s for that reason, and the same was the case in the Palestinian camp—accepting the Oslo principles led to a rupture in the PLO, the secession of organizations, boycotts. The pragmatic camps on both sides came together against the extremists on both sides.

When this Intifada erupted, there was a movement back to the barricades. Israel saw Fatah and Hamas announcing brotherhood and cooperation, and the Palestinians saw Shimon Peres and Avigdor Lieberman sitting at the same government table headed by Ariel Sharon, who promised a struggle lasting generations and a decisive move away from the permanent agreement.

Does this prove that although both sides have separate pragmatic and extremist camps, they are now fused into one and the truth has finally been exposed? Of course not. The true distances remain. The believers in peace must make a supreme effort to return to the separation between these camps that existed during Oslo, because that is the only road to peace.

Another argument holds that Barak turned over every stone, that the Palestinians rejected him instead of agreeing to his proposals, and therefore it is impossible to reach an agreement with them. But this is a contention that has been refuted—in the 2003 Geneva Accord. Indeed, Barak did make very brave proposals, or, more accurately, Clinton made such proposals and Barak did not reject them. This was the most far-reaching position ever taken by an Israeli prime minister, not because Barak was the most moderate among them, but because he was the first prime minister prepared to enter talks on the permanent arrangement. He was the first who was forced to deal with real positions on borders, Jerusalem, solutions to the refugee problem, security arrangements, and the future of the settlements.

Since he did confront these issues, and surprised many with his courage to slaughter a few "sacred cows," he had to wait and see whether the Palestinians would accept or reject his offer. And if indeed it was rejected, their recalcitrance would be exposed to the world. But Ehud Barak did not turn over every stone, because a few months later, in January 2001, we went to Taba with directives based on the Clinton Plan, which were more ambitious than what had been proposed at Camp David. The Taba talks did not break down, and did not end in disagreement. They took place four months after the start of the Intifada, and after the talks, the elections in Israel were won by the extreme Right, which had no serious intention of returning to the negotiating table. The argument that it was only after Israel had shown its willingness to make a fair compromise with

the Palestinians that violence broke out, drastically violating the Oslo Accord and the subsequent agreements, is correct, and requires a Palestinian response that was never given and perhaps never will be. But anyone who infers, therefore, that every stone has indeed been turned and the arrangement with the Palestinians is over and done with—or that our partners in negotiations since the start of the process are no longer our partners—is wrong, and is misleading the public....

And as for exposing the true face of our opponent? This kind of exposure is valuable only in rare cases. Considering Barak's own past, there is no doubt that the head of the Intelligence Branch must try to ascertain whether a particular agent constituting the source of his information is a double-agent. There is certainly nothing more important than exposing a spy. But what about exposing an opponent? What would we have exposed of Sadat, had we wanted to, in the negotiations with him? Sadat, the young officer, enchanted by certain European dictatorships? Nasserist Sadat, who did not display any difference between himself and the populist dictator who led his people to unnecessary wars? Sadat, who was willing to accept the compromise proposed by Gunnar Jarring in 1971, which was amazingly similar to the Camp David agreements? Sadat, who caused the Yom Kippur War, the death of 2,800 young people of my generation, and the wounding of tens of thousands more? Or Sadat, the man with the pipe and the deep voice, visiting us in November 1977 (after the statement by the security system that this was merely camouflage for the preparation of another war), immediately becoming the most popular man in Israel until his assassination in 1981?...

Which Barak would be exposed if we wanted to do so? Barak the army Chief of Staff, or Barak the politician? The Barak who spoke at the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva, or the one who spoke at the Labor Party center? Barak announcing that the Golan Heights are of great strategic importance even in peace time, or Barak stating bravely before the inhabitants of the Golan Heights, over their shouts of derision, that he was willing to give up the Heights for peace? Barak fighting against acceptance of a Palestinian state, or Barak taking it for granted three years later? Barak stating that unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon was an unequivocal danger to the northern settlements, or Barak withdrawing from Lebanon over the protests of the military? Barak declaring on Jerusalem Day that the city would never be

divided, or Barak at Camp David, two months later, considering the transfer of the Arab neighborhoods to Palestinian sovereignty and speaking thereafter of the greater Jewish Jerusalem?

And Rabin? If anyone had wanted to expose Rabin, would it be the Prime Minister whose advisor on the war against terrorism was the extreme right-winger Rehavam Zeevi, and whose security advisor was Ariel Sharon? Would it be the man who rejected King Hussein's proposal before the Rabat Conference in 1974 to reach territorial agreement on the West Bank? Would it be the opposition member who recommended to Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon that the

water be shut off for the inhabitants of towns in Lebanon in order to tighten the siege? Would it be the man who called the "doves" of his own party "PLO lovers"? Or would it be the peace hero who shook hands with Arafat, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, who was murdered in 1995 with the words to the "Song of Peace" still in his jacket pocket, stained with his blood?

And Begin? And Peres? And Ben-Gurion? And Moshe Dayan? And many, many others who in the course of their lives showed many faces and made completely contradictory statements which they were passionately willing to defend?

Arafat is both leader and follower, initiating terror and concerned for the orphans of his fighters. He is the blustering speaker still using the language of the past, but also making speeches of peace and understanding. He wants it all and understands that he will only get a part. Arafat traveled to Amman in order to kiss Sheikh Ahmed Yassin after Netanyahu released him, and then put him under house arrest in Gaza. He called for jihad, and then explained that he meant the "great jihad," signifying internal challenge and devotion, not holy war. He stood behind operations that led to the murder of innocent Israelis, as well as operations by his own security organization that saved many Israelis, particularly after 1996—including one potentially terrible operation that was prevented in Tel Aviv in 1999, at the end of Netanyahu's term. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and then promised a few years later to continue the Intifada until complete victory was achieved, but on the eve of the Passover festival he phoned Sharon to wish him a happy holiday. Is he the Arafat whom many Israelis call "a two-legged animal," or the one who is depicted as a likable, if bumbling puppet on "Hartzufim," a satirical TV show in Israel?

*When the second
Intifada began, there
were many people in
Israel who wanted to
forego the partnership.
But the alternatives to
the PLO are extremist,
nationalist, and religious
entities who refuse
to recognize or to
negotiate with Israel.*

Perhaps it is the duty of the head of an espionage service to expose double-agents and spies. But a statesman's job is not to expose the person standing in front of him, it is to protect the national interests of his people. The Oslo process was an effort to shape circumstances. Previously, the Palestinians had objected strenuously to a long interim arrangement without agreement in advance (as was the case in the Camp David discussions with Egypt in 1978) on the principles of the permanent arrangement. If we had settled for "exposure," we could have shown the Palestinians as having no desire for an interim arrangement—but we wanted to achieve an arrangement, not exposure, and after interminable, difficult talks and crises, we did.

Ehud Barak exposed nothing, although he thought he had, to the joy of the right wing. Arafat remains a multifaceted leader who wears many masks, like most other world leaders. In certain circumstances or conditions, under agreed formulae, it was possible to reach agreements that committed him to internal rupture and severe struggles within his own house. Under other circumstances, he maintained his adamant refusal. He is neither a pacifist at all costs nor a terrorist at all costs. He is still the man who can move his people, more than anyone else in his camp, even when prime ministers like Abu Mazen or Abu Ala are appointed, and he can also make surprising and brave decisions. No honest person in Europe was impressed by Barak's "exposure" of Arafat, even if there were many who appreciated the Israeli leader's courage. Arafat remained as he had been—a problematic and difficult partner, wearing a military uniform and making provocative speeches, with whom, by means of sensitive management, it would be possible to reach not only interim agreements, but even a permanent agreement. The group around him, aged sixty, fifty, and forty, some of whom went to university in Israeli prisons, and some of whom completed academic studies in the United States and England and other countries around the world, consists of people interested in the establishment of a Palestinian state, living normal lives, and developing democracy and culture, professional bureaucracy, and a physical infrastructure alongside Israel. This is the group facing up to Islamic fanaticism, religious madness, and those sending suicide bombers. There is no need to occupy ourselves with exposure. The picture is well known to us all, even if the right wing in Israel will try to argue that Dr. Nabil Sha'ath is the other face of Ahmed Yassin—just as the Palestinian extremists will argue that Yossi Sarid is the other face of Benny Elon, the *Moledet* MK and an open advocate of "transfer." Our future here depends, among other things, on our ability to maintain the alliance of the moderates, the pragmatists, the people who believe that we were born to live, not to sacrifice ourselves on the altar of false dreams....

It is in Israel's national interest to ensure the completion of an Israeli-Palestinian agreement before an Arab majority

is created in the region west of the Jordan. Without an agreement the region will soon reach a boiling point. An Arab majority would not agree to be ruled by a Jewish minority, and a Jewish minority would not agree to relinquish the existence of a Jewish state. Those interested in preventing such a confrontation, both Israelis and Palestinians, must make a supreme effort to draw up an agreed border and reach a political agreement.

It is in Israel's national interest to reach an arrangement with a partner representing the Palestinian people. For twenty-five years we looked for a negotiating partner, then found one in the PLO. This has been a problematic partnership, in the course of which there have been crises and successes. When the second Intifada began, there were many people in Israel who wanted to forego the partnership. But the alternatives to the PLO are extremist, nationalist, and religious entities who refuse to recognize or to negotiate with Israel. We have an interest in the existence of a strong partner, with a broad span of control, who can fulfill its commitments....

Some foresee for Israel another hundred years of living by the sword, believing that those with faith in peace are naïve and do not understand the region in which they live. They explain constantly that if we had a European neighbor, all would be well—their word is their bond, their promises can be relied upon, and their agreements are engraved in stone. But these doubters have short memories, and they are the naïve ones. First of all, anyone who prepares for another hundred years of war will find himself within a short time part of a Jewish minority ruling over an Arab majority. Anyone encouraging more generations of violence might just as well say to other Jews, "Do not come to Israel," and to young people, "Do not stay here." If the state of Israel, instead of being the safest place for Jews in the world, becomes the most dangerous place for them, the only people who will remain here will be those without the ability to leave. That is an absolute distortion of the Zionist ideal, and although it sounds very nationalistic and proud, it is in fact a kind of post-Zionist concept. As for the short memory—what was done to the Jewish people in Europe only sixty years ago has not been done to us anywhere else in the world. The constant complaint about the absence of a suitable partner merits not only the response, "Physician, heal thyself," and the recognition that it was Israel in Netanyahu's time who rejected an agreement, but also an historic reminder of the agreements that were indeed reached.

The Geneva Agreement ... may be a glimmer of light for those who believe in peace. The agreement, reached by a significant group of Israelis and Palestinians, proves once again that there is someone to talk to and something to talk about. If we can muster the necessary courage, we can transform this agreement into reality. □

Haiti's Wretched of the Earth

Paul Farmer

In central Haiti's largest town, a dusty and beaten-down place, there stood, at the entrance to the city, a military checkpoint: chains barred the way, and the station was manned by heavily armed soldiers for most of the twentieth century. During the 1980s, I was stopped there on many occasions, as the town was home to central Haiti's chief referral hospital, and we would often be transporting patients or medical supplies. Usually we were just waved on without a search. But during the military coup that stretched from 1991 to 1994, we were often harassed and threatened, one time in the presence of some American nuns who were searched, more carefully than is respectful, for papers or tapes or what the soldiers termed "contraband documents." The military men had guessed, correctly, that the good sisters were part of a human rights delegation and had interviewed the victims of far worse harassment than was ever meted out to any of us.

But soon after, the Haitian army, which was established through an act of U.S. Congress during the American occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) was disbanded. Nobel laureate Oscar Arias, formerly president of Costa Rica, described how this occurred in an opinion piece published in *Washington Post* on March 11, 2004:

The 1991 coup against Haiti's first democratically elected president was definitive proof of the army's predatory role. Even though the 1994 agreement returning [exiled president] Jean-Bertrand Aristide to office called for a reduction of the army from 7,500 to 1,500 troops, a force that size was still a clear threat to democratic governance. Since Aristide said that he could not abolish the army without the support of the Haitian people, the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress commissioned an independent polling firm to gauge popular support for the idea. The results were stunning: 62 percent of Haitians were strongly in favor of abolition and only 12 percent were against. These figures were key in convincing Aristide that demilitarization was an idea whose time had come. He cut the army's funding and set in motion a legislative process to have the abolition of the army enshrined in Haiti's constitution.

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Haitian children watch the movements of a French soldier and his gun, March 17, 2004.

Cut to the same city in early March, 2004. The military check point is back, but now the soldiers' uniforms are different. They're Haitians, several of them former officers, but they are sporting what one assumes is army surplus, because "US ARMY" is emblazoned on much of their gear.

How did this come to happen? We know that, on the night of February 28, Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced from power, in part by an armed uprising by former members of the military. We know that Aristide claimed he was kidnapped and had no idea where he was being taken until the very end of a twenty-hour flight, when he found himself in the Central African Republic. But the current crisis isn't something that started a few months ago. It has been going on for the past couple of decades and longer. A quick review of Haiti's history is indispensable to understanding the current muddle.

The History

During the eighteenth century, Haiti, then known as Santo Domingo, became France's most valuable colonial possession. Haiti stands out, according to historians, as perhaps the most brutal slave colony in human history. It was the leading port of call for slave ships during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and a third of new arrivals died within a few years of reaching the colony. On the eve of the French Revolution, the bit of real estate now dismissed as a failed state was producing two-thirds of all of Europe's tropical produce. This is already forgotten outside Haiti.

Haitians remember: They consider themselves living legacies of the slave trade and the bloody revolt, starting in 1791, that finally removed the French. Over a decade of war followed, with France's largest expeditionary force sent to put down the rebellion. As the French containment operation flagged, the slave general Toussaint Louverture, victorious in battle, was invited to a parley. Instead he was kidnapped and imprisoned in the mountains of France, where he died of exposure and tuberculosis. Every Haitian

schoolchild knows by heart his last words: "In overthrowing me, you have cut down in San Domingo only the trunk of the tree of black liberty. It will spring up again by the roots, for they are numerous and deep."

The slaves in revolt had few friends, and the war continued in Haiti, with Europe's chief colonial powers—France, England, and Spain—caught up in the fray. In November, 1803, the former slaves won what proved to be the war's final battle and on January 1, 1804 declared the independent Republic of Haiti. It was Latin America's first independent country and the only nation ever born of a slave revolt.

Virtually all of the world's powers sided with France against the self-proclaimed Black Republic, which declared itself a haven not only for all runaway slaves but also for indigenous people. Hemmed in by slave colonies, Haiti had only one non-colonized neighbor: the slaveholding United States, which refused to recognize Haiti's independence.

Haiti's leaders were desperate for recognition, since the only goods the island had to sell were sugar, coffee, cotton, and other tropical produce. In 1825, under threat of another French invasion and the restoration of slavery, Haitian officials signed what was to prove the beginning of the end of any hope of autonomy. Charles X of France agreed to recognize Haiti's independence only if the new republic paid an indemnity of 150 million francs and consented to the reduction by half of import and export taxes for French goods and purchases.

It may be impossible to put a price on the toll taken by slavery—the destruction not only of lives and families, but of cultures and languages—but the same cannot be said about "the French debt." One hundred and fifty million gold francs amounts to close to today's half a billion dollars—in the most conservative estimate, without attempting to calculate 175 years of interest and inflation. France maintained that Haiti owed this "debt" because the slaves had deprived French owners not only of land and equipment, but of their human "property." But the threat of force made it more closely akin to extortion than to compensation.

In the late nineteenth century, the United States eclipsed France as a force in Haitian affairs. A U.S. military occupation (1915-1934) brought back *corvée* labor and introduced aerial bombing, two symptoms of the vast disparity in power between occupier and occupied. Officials sitting at desks in Washington created institutions—like the Haitian army—that Haitians would have to live with. Military-backed governments, dictatorships, chronic instability, repression, and the heavy hand of Washington over all continued throughout the twentieth century.

When I first traveled to Haiti in 1983, the Duvalier family dictatorship had been in place for a quarter of a century. There was no free press within Haiti, and no dissent, to be sure, from radios or newspapers; no politicians declaring themselves the heads of parallel governments. The

Duvaliers and their military dealt with all such threats ruthlessly, while the judiciary and the rest of the world looked the other way. Haiti was already "the poorest country in the Western world" and those who ran it argued, with a certain sociological confidence, that force was required to police deep poverty.

By the mid-1980's, however, the hunger, despair, and disease that are the lot of most Haitians was beyond management.

Aristide's rise from slum priest to presidential candidate took place against a background of right-wing death squad activity and threatened military coups. Preaching liberation theology—which was sweeping through Latin America with its proclamation of a "preferential option for the poor"—Aristide rose quickly in the eyes of the Haitians, but his stock plummeted with the United States and its press. The *New York Times*, which relied heavily on informants who could speak English or French (most Haitians speak only Creole), had few kind words for the priest: "Among the business community, pessimistic reactions run stronger," ran a news story published three days prior to Haiti's first elections. "He is a cross between Ayatollah and Fidel," one downtown businessman said in a typical assessment of Father Aristide from those in the entrepreneurial class." But Haitians knew that Aristide would win any democratic election. On December 16, 1990, the priest won 67 percent of the vote in a field of 12 candidates.

The United States might not have been able to prevent Aristide's landslide victory, but there was much they could do to undermine him. The most effective method, adopted by the first Bush Administration, was to fund the opposition (its poor showing at the polls was no reason, it appears, to cut off aid to them) and the military. Declassified records now make it clear that the CIA and other U.S. groups helped to create and fund a paramilitary group called FRAPH, which rose to prominence after the September 1991 military coup that ousted Aristide. Thousands of civilians were killed outright and hundreds of thousands fled onto the high seas and across the border to the Dominican Republic.

Whether it was the refugee question or a change of heart in foreign policy—Bill Clinton mentioned the Haitian refugees in many of his campaign speeches—Aristide became, in October 1994, the first exiled president to return to office in Latin America. Only a little over a year was left in his term and, although the 1994 U.S. military intervention indisputably stopped bloodshed and restored constitutional rule, other forces were at play. While authorized by the United Nations, the restoration of Aristide was basically a United States show. Then, seven weeks after Aristide's return, Republicans took control of the U.S. Congress and from that day forth worked to block aid to the government of impoverished, strife-torn Haiti.

International aid to Haiti through official channels was never very substantial, and a great deal of it went to nongovernmental organizations and to the anti-Aristide

opposition. A lot went to pay for the UN occupation and Halliburton support services. U.S. organizations like the International Republican Institute and even the U.S. Agency for International Development funneled hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of dollars to the opposition.

The cuts in bilateral aid and the diversion of monies to the opposition meant there could be, in a country as poor as Haiti, little effort to rebuild schools, health-care infrastructure, roads, ports, telecommunications, or airports. When the anti-Aristide opposition cried foul over a handful of contested seats in the May 2000 local and parliamentary election, the United States acted to freeze international aid. Eight parliamentary seats—out of approximately 7,500 posts filled that day—were disputed, even though all went to those with the greatest number of votes. Since seven of the senators in question resigned in 2001, and the other's term expired shortly thereafter, that should have been the end of the aid freeze if it was ever about the electoral process; yet it continued throughout Aristide's tenure.

International financial institutions engaged in discriminatory and probably illegal practices towards Haiti. According to the London-based Haiti Support Group, an advocacy organization,

Haiti's debt to international financial institutions and foreign governments has grown from US\$302 million in 1980 to US\$1.134 billion today. About 40 percent of this debt stems from loans to the brutal Duvalier dictators who invested precious little of it in the country. This is known as 'odious debt' because it was used to oppress the people, and, according to international law, this debt need not be repaid.

You'd think this might be newsworthy—the world's most powerful nations join forces to block aid and humanitarian assistance to one of the poorest—but for three years this story was almost impossible to place in a mainstream journal of opinion. It was not until March of this year that one could read in a U.S. daily that the aid freeze might have contributed to the overthrow of the penniless Haitian government. In its one and only investigative piece about the three-year-long aid embargo, on March 7, the *Boston Globe* finally reported long-evident facts:

For three years, the U.S. government, the European Union, and international banks have blocked \$500 million in aid to Haiti's government, ravaging the economy of a nation already twice as poor as any in the Western Hemisphere. The cutoff, intended to pressure the government to adopt political reforms, left Haiti struggling to meet even basic needs and weakened the authority of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who went into exile one week ago.... Many of Aristide's supporters, in Haiti and abroad, angrily contend that the international community, particularly the United States, abandoned the fledgling democracy when it needed aid the most.

The Aristide Question

Given all the coups and and spectacular crimes mentioned above, what is the standard storyline in the mainstream press? That Aristide had the chance to be "Haiti's Mandela," but instead "cruelly disappointed" his supporters who then defected in droves. Nothing could be further from the truth, as even a superficial review of the facts will show. Haiti is not South Africa. There can be no lofty figure who survives terrible mistreatment in order to lead his nation into the sunlit uplands of democracy because in order to preside over such transitions, or even to survive them, leaders have to be able to deliver on campaign promises. Haiti's legendary poverty makes this impossible without repatriating resources or having access to credits and assistance. Aristide knew this—hence his attempts to free up development assistance for health, roads, water, and primary education. When outside assistance was blocked by Washington and Aristide's first strategy failed, the restitution of the French debt was moved to the fore. This broader background helps explain why the two superpowers in the Caribbean region—the United States and France—are united on Haiti, if not on Iraq.

It would be convenient for the traditional elite, other allies, and funders abroad if Aristide, who has indeed been forced to preside over unimaginable penury, was in fact abandoned by his own people. But Haiti's elections and polls show that the poor majority still support Aristide. (Gallup polls, conducted in 2002 in the hope of discrediting Aristide, showed instead that he is far and away Haiti's most popular and trusted politician.) And though Haiti is almost always referred to as polarized, this is not true in every sense. Most Haitians have a lot in common: poverty, disease, and mistrust of the great powers. What's polarized are the middle classes and the traditional political elites—which together seem to constitute what human rights groups and political analysts term "civil society," a grouping that for some ineffable reason does not include the poor majority.

The Who's Who

Haiti policy is determined by a small number of people who were prominent in either Reagan's or George Bush Sr.'s cabinets. Most are back in government today after an eight-year vacation in conservative think tanks, lobbying firms, and the like. Elliot Abrams, convicted of felony during the Iran-Contra hearings, serves on the National Security Council. Reagan's national-security advisor, John Poindexter, is now heading the Pentagon's counterterrorism office. John Negroponte, former ambassador to Honduras, is now ambassador to the United Nations. Jeane Kirkpatrick is on the board of the International Republican Institute, a prime source of funds for the political opposition to Aristide and perhaps, credible sources suggest, for the demobilized army personnel who provided the muscle for the Haitian opposition earlier this year.

The Bush administration appears to have put two men in charge of its Latin American diplomacy. As the "Special Presidential Envoy to the Western Hemisphere," Otto Reich is the United States' top diplomat in the region, even though he has never survived a House or Senate hearing—he was given this post by Bush during a Congressional recess. In the 1990s, Reich worked for the State Department under Reagan and headed a Nicaraguan Contra-support program. During the course of the Iran-Contra investigation, the U.S. Comptroller General concluded that Reich's office had "engaged in prohibited, covert propaganda activities." But by then Otto Reich had been named U.S. ambassador to Venezuela, where he laid the groundwork for future efforts to destabilize President Hugo Chávez.

In March, the Bush administration sent Roger Noriega as its envoy to "work out" the Haitian crisis. For the better part of a decade, Noriega was a senior aide to senator Jesse Helms, who, as chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, was a backer of longtime dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier and an opponent of Aristide. In short, the Bush administration's Latin American policy operatives are best known for their support of contras and juntas.

On the Haitian side, you have Haiti's business elite, including those who own the Haitian media, and the former military and paramilitary—the very persons involved in the 1991–94 coup. Some were in jail for murder, drug trafficking, and crimes against humanity. Now every single one of them is free.

Among those released by the rebels is former General Prosper Avril, a leader of the notorious Presidential Guard under both François and Jean-Claude Duvalier. Avril seized power in September 1988, but was deposed by another coup in March 1990. A U.S. District Court ruled that Avril's regime had engaged in "a systematic pattern of egregious human rights abuses." It found him personally responsible for enough "torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment" to award six of his victims \$41 million in compensation. His victims included opposition politicians, union leaders, scholars, even a doctor trying to practice community rural medicine.

Rebel leader Guy Philippe is also a former soldier; during the last coup, he received training at a U.S. military facility in Ecuador. When the army was demobilized, Philippe was incorporated into the new police force, serving as police chief in the Port-au-Prince suburb of Delmas and in the second city, Cap-Haïtien. During his tenure, the UN International Civilian Mission learned that dozens of suspected gang members were summarily executed, mainly by police under the command of Philippe's deputy. The U.S. Embassy has implicated Philippe in drug smuggling during his police career. These crimes, committed in large part by former military incorporated into the police force, are often pinned on Aristide, even though he sought to prevent coup-

happy human rights abusers from ending up in these posts.

Louis-Jodel Chamblain was a sergeant in the Haitian army until 1989 or 1990. He reappeared on the scene in 1993 as one of the founders of the paramilitary group FRAPH. Formed during the 1991–94 military regime, FRAPH was responsible for numerous human rights violations before the 1994 restoration of democratic governance. In September 1995, Chamblain was among seven senior military and FRAPH leaders convicted in absentia and sentenced to forced labor for life for involvement in the September 1993 extrajudicial execution of Antoine Izméry, a well-known pro-democracy activist. In November 2000, Chamblain was convicted in absentia in the Raboteau massacre trial. In late 1994 or early 1995, Chamblain went into exile to the Dominican Republic in order to avoid prosecution.

The leaders of the political groups claiming to represent "civil society" include U.S.-born André Apaid, the founder of a television station and owner of Alpha Corp., a garment manufacturer that was prominently featured in news reports about Disney's sweatshop suppliers. Aristide's relentless push to raise the minimum wage above 72 gourdes a day—about \$1.60—cut into the massive profits of the offshore assembly industry, since its principal resource is the desperate need of the Haitian population. The U.S. Congress has proposed a measure to build new garment factories in Haiti and to encourage American companies to contract out more sweatshop labor—an answered prayer for Apaid.

As for the owners of the media in Haiti, they behave as owners often do when surrounded by the poor, the famished, and by *chimères*—the groups described in the foreign press as the "armed thugs" working for the Aristide government. But who are the *chimères*? Certainly they are not part of Haiti's "civil society." As Madison Smartt Bell, writing for *Harper's*, recently reported:

Before that term [*chimères*] was coined, Haitian delinquent youths were called *maleleve* ("ill brought up") or, still more tellingly, *sansmaman* ("the motherless ones"). They were people who'd somehow reached adulthood without the nurture of the traditional *lakou*—communities that the combined forces of poverty and globalization had been shattering here for the last few decades. That was what made them so dangerous. The *Chimè* were indeed chimeras; ill fortune left them as unrealized shadows. With better luck they might have been human beings, but they weren't. These were the people Aristide had originally been out to salvage; "Tout moun se moun" was his earliest motto ("Every man is a man").

Coup d'Etat

This human salvage operation exploded last month as "rebels" continued to "take cities." I work in these towns and know the rebels' *modus operandi*. They came in, shot the police—who usually numbered no more than two or three per town—and left. Only a similarly equipped counterforce could have stopped them, and there you have it:

(continued on page 61)

Future Generations Be Damned!

The Sorry Environmental Legacy of the Bush Administration

Larry Fabn

In March of 2003, Republican strategist Frank Luntz issued a memo to all Republican members of Congress, which opened by stating: "The environment is probably the single issue on which Republicans in general—and President Bush in particular—are most vulnerable." With war in Iraq, the Middle East peace process in shambles, a looming record deficit, and widespread concerns about unemployment, why is it that now even conservatives are concerned with an issue that has often been placed on the back burner?

The current administration and many Republican leaders see this issue as their Achilles heel because they have spent the last three years systematically dismantling decades of accomplishments in environmental protection. In fact, looking at how the Bush/Cheney administration has quietly waged its war against the environment—which many of us know as Creation—reveals as much about the state of our democracy as it does about the state of our water and air.

In three short years, the Bush/Cheney administration has amassed an environmental record that amounts to a wish list for energy, timber, auto, mining, and other industries that tend to do the most damage to our air, water, and land. Some of the lowlights include:

- Weakening a key clean air protection rule that required aging coal-fired power plants, oil refineries, and other industrial facilities to install modern pollution controls when they upgrade or expand in a way that increases pollution.
- Reversing the principle that polluters should be taxed to pay for cleaning up toxic waste sites, making this the first administration to do so since the nation's Superfund toxic cleanup law was passed. Those few sites that are being cleaned up are now being paid for by us—the U.S. taxpayers, and not by the corporate polluters that made the messes.
- Opening up an area the size of Texas and Oklahoma combined to logging, mining, and oil extraction, stripping a variety of crucial environmental protections from 10

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ENVIRONMENT

percent of America's land. The most famous example is the administration's decision to target the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—home to polar bears, wolves, and migratory birds—for destructive oil and gas drilling.

And the list goes on and on, from weakening efficiency standards for air conditioners and other home appliances to allowing unfettered waste discharges from giant animal factories. The pattern has been to change the rules to benefit industries at the expense of the environment and public health.

A recent study by Knight Ridder concluded that enforcement of environmental laws has plummeted since George W. Bush took office three years ago.

"It's very discouraging," complained an Environmental Protection Agency enforcement official. "We're concerned about people's health. We have a job that we're supposed to be doing and we're not doing it." Meanwhile, monthly violation notices dropped 58 percent compared with the Clinton administration's monthly average.

Doublespeak

Perhaps the most egregious aspect of the Bush/Cheney administration's environmental record is its attempt to deliberately mask its actions, dressing them up in what the *New York Times* calls "warm and fuzzy words." This strategy assumes that it is enough to sound good on the environment, without actually doing any good.

Luntz outlined the approach most clearly in his memo distributed to top administration officials. "A compelling story, even if factually inaccurate, can be more emotionally compelling than a dry recitation of the truth," he advises. Avoid bad news, he cautions, and dress up your actions with words that evoke positive feelings, such as "safer," "cleaner," and "healthier."

The administration seems to have followed this advice to a T. The administration's proposal to double allowable levels of soot and smog pollution is called the "Clear Skies Initiative." This plan adopts pollution standards that are far weaker than the Clean Air Act, and allows industry to emit three times as much mercury—a poison proven to cause birth defects—into the air. Upon close inspection, the only

thing "clear" about this initiative is that it endangers public health.

When wildfires raged through the West last year, President Bush seized the moment to sign a "Healthy Forests Restoration Act," which dramatically increases

commercial logging of our national forests. There is no denying that, with hundreds of communities across the country at risk from wildfires, the top priority of the U.S. Forest Service should be the protection of people's homes and lives. But the President's plan focused on commercial logging in remote areas of the forest despite the fact that the Forest Service's own fire experts

argue that the best way to protect homes and communities from fire is to thin brush and small trees within 500 yards of where people live. By using disingenuous and misleading rhetoric and by exploiting the public's legitimate concerns about wildfires, the administration got away with yet another handout to its friends in industry.

In essence, the administration's environmental platform is about style over substance. Last summer, *Vanity Fair* did an investigative piece on special treatment for special interests at the Bush/Cheney administration's Department of Interior. The article was a powerful indictment of conflict of interest gone wild. According to editor Graydon Carter, "When we asked [Interior Secretary Gale Norton and Deputy Secretary J. Steven Griles] to pose for pictures to accompany the article, they both said yes; what's more, their representative wanted them to be photographed in outdoor, natural settings. They both look like Sierra Club veterans: Norton in trekking gear and a Patagonia-cum-Smokey-the-Bear outfit, and Griles on horseback, resembling some latter-day Theodore Roosevelt."

Sins of Omission

It's not just what the administration says, it's also what they don't say, or rather how they make sure the public doesn't hear. The administration has a record of announcing far-reaching environmental changes on Friday afternoons and right around holidays, when they are likely to get ignored or, at best, buried in the news cycle. Of the 100 anti-environ-



mental actions taken by the Bush/Cheney administration during its first three years, a majority were disclosed late on Friday afternoons, just before a major holiday, or during long holiday weekends. These late-in-the-day announcements, made by low-level officials, are intended to fly far below the media's radar screen—even when they pertain to critical public health issues—so as to minimize the press coverage and reduce the chances of any public outrage.

For example, the administration chose New Years Eve, 2002 to announce rule changes that would weaken pollution control requirements for America's oldest and dirtiest power plants. This past Halloween, late on Friday October 31, 2003, while most American families were preparing their kids for a night of Trick or Treat, the Bush/Cheney administration quietly announced a frightening, precedent-setting decision to entrust water testing for one of the most commonly used weed killers to the chemical manufacturer that produces it! To rephrase Frank Luntz, it's not just about telling "compelling, if factually inaccurate," stories. It's also about controlling which stories get told at all.

Taking The Public Out Of Public Policy

The Bush/Cheney administration has discovered that the best way to frame the debate in its favor is to cut the public out of the debate altogether. Increasingly backroom negotiations with polluting industries are used as a method for creating environmental policy—without public input.

The most famous example involves the Bush/Cheney Energy Task Force. In early 2001, oil, mining, nuclear, coal, and other energy executives began having a series of meetings behind closed doors with Vice President Cheney, in the Vice President's office, to craft the nation's energy policy. Enron CEO Ken Lay and other industry lobbyists were invited to influence—and essentially ghostwrite—what eventually became the administration's pork-laden energy bill. This bill was basically a mix of taxpayer subsidies and legal exemptions for the oil, gas, coal, and nuclear industries. The administration refused to divulge what exactly went on behind those closed doors at Energy Task Force meetings, or to release any of the documents from those meetings. One thing is clear—industry was given the red-carpet treatment and the American people, including representatives from consumer and environmental groups, as well as state and local governments, were completely shut out of the process.

The Sierra Club sued Vice President Cheney in fed-

eral court, and the District Court ultimately ordered that the meeting documents be released. The administration appealed to the second highest court in the land and lost, and then appealed again to the U.S. Supreme Court, which heard the case this past April. A decision is expected in early summer.

Adding another chapter to the "Secret Lives of the Well-Connected," within weeks of the Supreme Court's decision to hear the case, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia joined Cheney on a weekend hunting trip in Louisiana, hosted by a well-known energy executive. They traveled together on Air Force Two. Notwithstanding the clear appearance of a conflict, Justice Scalia refused to recuse himself. While the story was fodder for editorial cartoons and late night TV talk shows, it's more evidence that the Bush/Cheney administration is taking the public out of public policy.

Don't Take My Word For It

Don't just take my word for it, as President of the Sierra Club. Outrage over the Bush/Cheney administration's policies and practices is coming from across the spectrum. When the administration tried to weaken pollution control

rules for America's oldest and dirtiest power plants, no fewer than fourteen states, made up of a bipartisan, geographically diverse coalition, sued to block the new laws from going into effect. In fact, the General Accounting Office (the investigative arm of Congress) found that a majority of state officials have concluded that the Bush/Cheney administration's air policies will mean more local air pollution in hundreds of local communities across the United States.

Sportsmen, who tend to be fairly conservative, were up in arms over the administration's plans to remove protections from more than 20 million acres of wetlands, which provide vital habitat for water fowl and other wildlife. Likewise, the administration's efforts to dramatically expand oil and gas drilling across the West have drawn vocal opposition from livestock ranchers, who had been some of the administration's strongest

supporters. Even the Paragon Foundation, a right-wing, private-property rights group, is currently fighting the administration over plans to drill in Southern New Mexico's pristine Otero Mesa.

And when the Cato Institute, the nation's leading libertarian think tank, is reaching far across the political divide to join forces with the Sierra Club in opposing the adminis-

Looking at how the Bush/Cheney administration has quietly waged its war against the environment—which many of us know as Creation—reveals as much about the state of our democracy as it does about the state of our water and air.

tration's disastrous energy bill, it becomes apparent that concern about the administration's assault on the environment is not about Left and Right. It's about right and wrong.

Fox Guarding The Henhouse

Why would the Bush/Cheney administration go to such extremes? There are those out there who project an image of Bush as a president who hates the environment—but we are not convinced that it's a personal vendetta. The central issue is that it is simply impossible for an administration so beholden to corporate interests to deal responsibly with issues of corporate misbehavior. And this administration seems to have little interest in doing so.

When the list of administration officials reads like a "Who's Who" of the corporate world, we can expect lax enforcement of laws that require irresponsible companies to clean up their act.

Everyone knows that Bush and Cheney are oilmen, which may have something to do with the policies that blindly favor more oil production at any cost. But that's just the beginning. Consider Ann Veneman, for example. She's a former director for Calgene, a biotech corporation that developed genetically modified food products. She's currently serving as the Bush/Cheney administration's Secretary of Agriculture.

Or J. Steven Griles, former lobbyist for the coal, natural gas, and oil industries—now Deputy Secretary of the Interior. A longtime timber company lobbyist, Mark Rey, oversees policy and management for our national forests. And James Connaughton, former lobbyist for the mining and chemical manufacturing industries, chairs the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Even Chief of Staff Andrew Card used to be a lobbyist for the auto industry. And the list goes on and on.

Courting The Far Right

While cabinet secretaries and undersecretaries come and go with each new administration, the Bush/Cheney administration's federal court appointments will impact America's environmental policies for thirty or forty years into the future, perhaps more. (It's analogous to a passage in Exodus that describes the sins of the ancestors being visited upon their descendants "even to the third and fourth generation.")

The most extreme example of court-packing is the recent appointment of William Myers to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Another former mining, timber, and ranching lobbyist and attorney, Myers has a well-documented record

of hostility toward laws protecting our environment. Myers has publicly compared the government's management of our public lands to King George's "tyrannical rule" over the American colonies, and called the California Desert Protection Act, which protects 7.5 million acres of wilderness, and 5.5 million acres that include national parks "an example of legislative hubris."

Moreover, Mr. Myers has only minimal litigation experience at any level and lacks a record of scholarly legal writings. More than one-third of his American Bar Association review panel deemed him "unqualified" for this post, while the remaining members of the panel gave him a tepid, "qualified" rating. Myers's environmental record, coupled with his background working for industries that exploit public resources for private gain, calls into serious question his ability to rule without bias.

Myers is just one of the many examples of the Bush/Cheney administration's radical judicial nominations. These controversial court picks are so far out of the mainstream that the Bush/Cheney administration has twice seen fit to bypass the normal process of Senate approval by granting back-door recess appointments. Due to their very extreme views and records, Bill Pryor and Charles Pickering failed to survive the Senate's "consent" to nomination by a relatively rare filibuster. Though more

than 170 other Bush judicial nominees have been approved by the Senate, Bush responded to the Senate filibuster by appointing these judges during periods when Congress was in recess. This allowed the administration to bypass public process and accountability altogether. As such, Bill Pryor, an extremely right-wing Alabama Attorney General, is now serving as a Justice on the Federal Appellate Court. Pryor has argued that the Endangered Species Act, one of our country's most important environmental protection laws, is unconstitutional under the Commerce Clause, and has also argued that acts of Congress to protect the nation's wetlands are unconstitutional.

Charles Pickering, Bush's other recess appointment, is an ideological conservative who has repeatedly ruled in favor of polluting industries and against the interests of citizens' groups. He has repeatedly overstepped his authority by dismissing cases without just cause and by illegally enjoining environmental groups from filing suits. His ethical record is bleak as well. In a criminal case in which a defendant was convicted of cross-burning, Pickering threatened prosecutors and illegally contacted the Department of Justice for a new trial. He issued an order calling the mandatory sentence for cross-burning "absurd" and placed this order under seal to hide it from public scrutiny.

*The pattern has been
to change the rules
to benefit industries
at the expense of
the environment
and public health.*

Is It Or Isn't It The Economy, Stupid?

One could argue that the Bush/Cheney administration is merely trying to balance the economy and the environment. Its scores of rule changes, however, tend to benefit specific industry players, which is not the same as the economy as a whole. In fact, last October new, persuasive evidence was released which demonstrates that the economic benefits of federal environmental regulations far outweigh their costs. The author of this study wasn't some progressive think tank; it was the usually anti-regulatory Office of Management and Budget (OMB). It would be like the National Rifle Association releasing a report that says that gun control laws do work.

OMB found that the 107 major environmental policies finalized in the last ten years have produced quantifiable benefits of between \$146 billion and \$230 billion, in contrast with costs of \$36 billion to \$42 billion. More importantly the study showed that four clean air rules alone, which cost industry \$8.8 billion, provided annual benefits of at least \$100 billion in terms of fewer deaths, hospitalizations, and lost workdays. In other words, the Office of Management and Budget is demonstrating with hard data what American citizens have known intuitively all along: protecting clean air, clean water, and our natural heritage is overwhelmingly beneficial to the economy.

Solutions

While the administration's attitude about the environment is "Can't Do," the good news is that there are plenty of things we *can do* to protect our air, water, and natural heritage. Poll after poll has shown that what the American people want and expect from their leaders is progress.

No issue better illustrates our potential than energy. If we can put a man on the moon, we can build a twenty-first century energy industry, and reindustrialize America in doing so. The Apollo Project, for example, is an alternative energy vision launched by steelworkers, machinists, electrical workers and other unions, in collaboration with the Sierra Club and a number of other environmental groups. The goal is to redirect our national energy policy to focus on clean, renewable energy technologies; energy efficient buildings, factories, appliances, and cars; and on mass transit. By spending only a fraction of what America spends in a single year on imported oil, economic modeling shows that these programs could create three million new manufacturing jobs, while leading us to a new energy future. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman similarly envisions a Manhattan Project for energy efficiency to improve our national security, strengthen our economy, and protect our environment.

In some cases, we need to invest in the development of new technologies to solve old problems, and technological

Top Ten Environmental Offenses of the Bush Administration

- 1. MERCURY RISING**—Issued public health warnings to pregnant women and children about mercury while allowing power plants to pollute our air and water with three times more mercury than the current law and for decades longer.
- 2. SUPER DUPED**—Became first administration to support shifting burden of Superfund toxic waste cleanups from polluters to taxpayers.
- 3. SOOTY SANTA**—Dismantled provision of Clean Air Act that requires oldest, dirtiest power plants and refineries to curb soot and smog pollution.
- 4. BACK IN BLACKOUT**—Actively promoted an energy bill that would deepen America's dependence on oil, funnel billions of dollars to the biggest polluters in the country, and do nothing to repair or address America's antiquated energy grid.
- 5. DRILLING WILDERNESS**—Opened an area larger than Texas and Oklahoma combined to logging, mining, and oil extraction, stripping protection from 10% of America's land.
- 6. STONEWALLING, BIG TIME**—Continued to withhold documents from secret meetings between Bush/Cheney Energy Task Force and energy industry lobbyists.
- 7. DON'T AX, DON'T TELL**—Exploited public fears about wildfires to expand commercial logging on national forests rather than protect people where they live.
- 8. NEXT STOP, SHINOLA**—Blocked proposed rules that would protect homes, streams, and beaches from raw sewage overflows and would warn public when overflows occurred.
- 9. CRITICAL CONDITION**—Ended the process of critical habitat designation for imperiled wildlife under the Endangered Species Act.
- 10. COP OFF**—Allowed environmental enforcement to plummet, by cutting funding for inspectors and dramatically reducing referrals for environmental prosecutions.

innovation happens to be something of an American specialty. But in many cases, it's actually a matter of using the technologies that already exist. When the EPA studied the problem of mercury emissions from power plants, it concluded that the technology exists today to clean up 90 percent of mercury pollution. That didn't stop the Bush/Cheney administration from pushing rule changes that would allow three times more mercury pollution for decades longer than the current law, but it reminds us that our nation can do better.

When it comes to air pollution, the solution can be found in the success of the last thirty years. The Clean Air Act was successful because it required all new power plants to use state-of-the-art pollution control technology. And guess what? Power plants on average got remarkably cleaner. But the law didn't require the oldest, dirtiest facilities to clean up, thinking that they'd eventually be retired. They never cleaned up their act because they never had to do so. The solution? Evenly apply and enforce the same pollution standards to all power plants, rather than continue to shield them from the law.

Or consider the lingering problem with toxic dumpsites. Today, one out of every four Americans lives within a bicycle ride of a federally listed toxic waste site. When polluters were charged for the cleanup—a policy that the Bush/Cheney administration is the first administration to oppose—more than eighty sites a year were being cleaned up. Now that taxpayers are footing the bill, we're closer to fifty a year. If we restore the "polluter pays" principle, we could clean up all the remaining toxic waste sites within the next fifteen years.

And the list of solutions goes on. In some cases, the answer lies in jump-starting cleaner, more efficient technologies. In other cases, we simply need the courage and leadership to implement tried-and-true methods. But no matter how you slice it, protecting our environment is something we actually know how to do.

Restoring Hope To Civic Life

The majority of Americans are rightfully optimistic about environmental solutions, but there is a strong disconnect between that faith and the leadership, or lack thereof, being shown by those who now hold the reigns of power. That shared sense of hope among people, and the willingness to pull together for a better world, is the environment's greatest asset. If we stand any chance of making our politics as hopeful as the American spirit, we need to engage people more directly in civic life.

People are bombarded with information and tune out most of what they hear. The facts about the environment in general, or about the Bush record in particular, simply aren't getting through. The only thing that seems to really be working is person-to-person contact. That's exactly what lies at the heart of the Sierra Club's ten-year campaign to "Build Environmental Communities."

The crux of this effort is to connect neighbors around the local environmental issues that affect them. We have pilot projects all over the country in places like Las Vegas, Philadelphia, and Atlanta. In New Hampshire, for example, which has the fourth highest asthma rate in the nation, we've

trained volunteers to go door-to-door, organize living-room meetings, or address local civic groups about solutions for the pollution problems affecting their kids. They are also educating each other about the Bush/Cheney administration's record on air pollution, but more than that, they are nurturing the faith, community, and civic duty that makes real lasting change possible.

We believe that by connecting people to nature and to each other, we can ultimately enhance civic participation. Of course, we cannot only reach out to self-identifying environmentalists. Our environmental communities have to include unions, farmers, health professionals, teachers, hunters, and people of faith, among others. We may not have the political leadership today that we need to protect our communities and the planet. But, as the movie *Field of Dreams* reminds us, "If we build it, they will come." That is, if we build strong, diverse, and engaged environmental communities, and if those communities work together, we will create more opportunity and accountability for our leaders. It won't happen any other way.

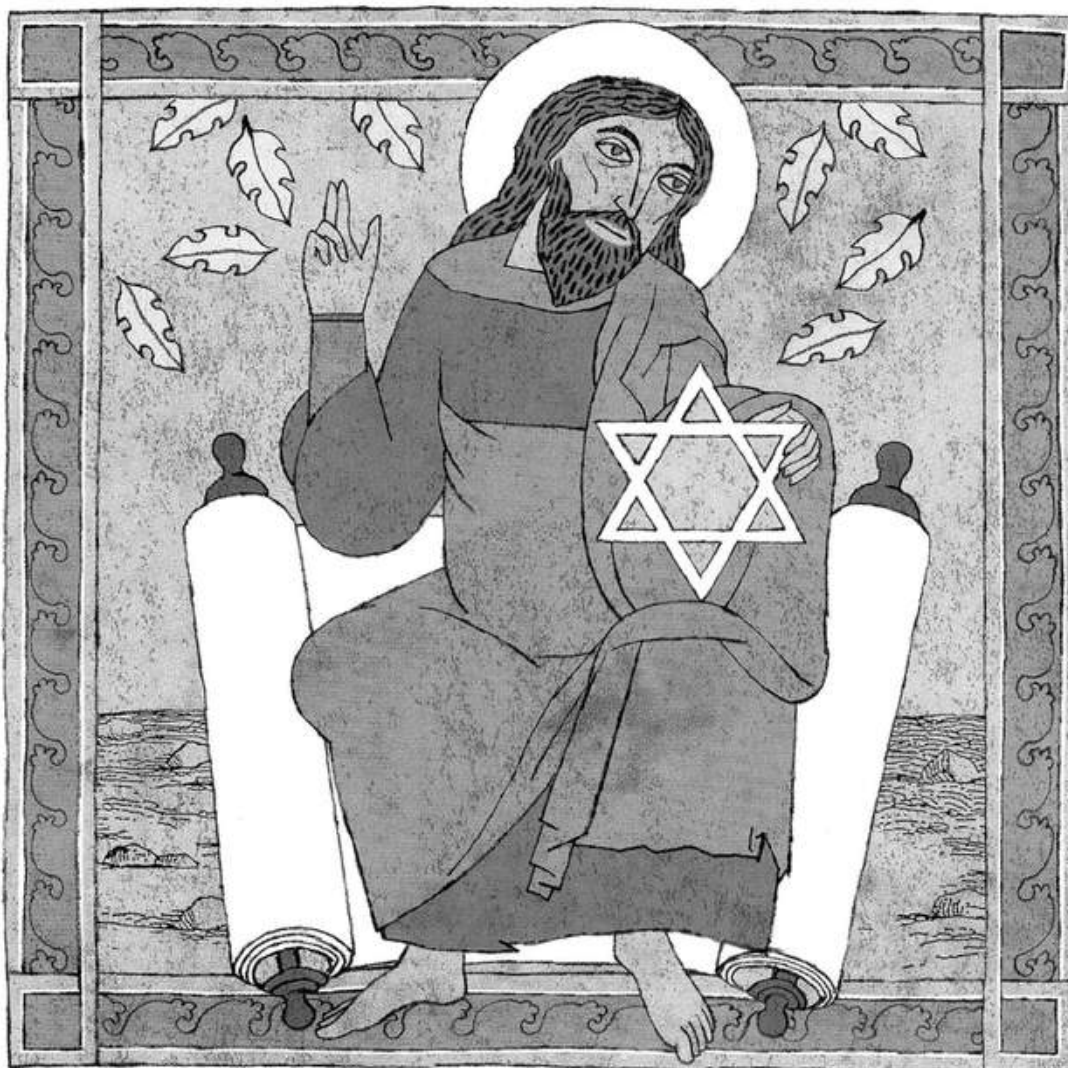
The Bush/Cheney administration is taking a big gamble: Through anti-environmental legislation, refusing to enforce the existing protections, and strategic manipulation of their communications tactics, they are betting against the American people. The assumption is not only that the public can be kept in the dark, but also that we won't care enough to organize once these issues come to light.

We must make sure that they lose this bet. Let us help one another to see the magnitude of the environmental challenges we are passing on from generation to generation. Then let us gather together in communities across the country and make it clear that the time has come to put the public before polluters, to put the health and well-being of the planet and its inhabitants at the top of our social and political agenda—before it is too late. □

The administration's efforts to dramatically expand oil and gas drilling across the West have drawn vocal opposition from livestock ranchers, who had been some of the administration's strongest supporters.

Jesus the Jew

Michael Lerner



Jesus is our brother, partner in Jewish Renewal, and part of the tradition of prophets, mystics, social change activists, and teachers who have for the past 2800 years been seeking to return Judaism to its highest vision and deepest truths. Jews do not see Jesus as

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God, except in the way that everyone is part of God and created in the divine image; not the Son of God, except in the sense that everyone is a daughter or son of God; not the Messiah, at least not in the sense meant by Jewish tradition in which "messiah" means the person whose appearance will be accompanied by the lion lying down with the lamb and nations beating their swords into ploughshares and war being learned no more.

Jesus' message of love is both an intrinsic part of Torah Judaism and a message that badly needs more champions in every age. It was the Torah, not Jesus, that first taught "Thou

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTIANE GRAUERT

shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" and "Thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might." It was this same Judaism which taught a truly revolutionary message: "Thou shalt love the stranger" (Hebrew: *ger*, which might also be translated as "The Other," or "the Powerless one," based on the follow-up point made in Torah, "Remember that you were a Ger in Egypt" when the Jewish people were enslaved).

Similarly, Torah's demands to "pursue justice" and its call for a redistribution of land every fifty years (the Jubilee) were as revolutionary in Jesus' day as they are today.

But what happened by the time Jesus was growing up in Galilee was what has happened with every spiritual message received by humanity in the past several thousand years: people "get it," sometimes even write it down (as in the Torah), and then are unable to stick with it, and instead the message either becomes meaningless or the practices surrounding the message (rituals) end up distancing people from the spirit of the original message.

As I've argued in *Jewish Renewal* and elsewhere, it is always flawed human beings who get the spiritual message (because that's all there is on the planet), and so the way we hear the message is limited by our own spiritual, intellectual, and psychological capacities. Tarnished by living in a world of oppression and cruelty, we sometimes hear God's voice as the voice of cruelty, embodying a message that is in line with our experience of "reality" as harsh and cruel. Similarly, it's no surprise to hear that same voice in the gospels when Jesus speaks of his family in dismissive language (when he says "If anyone comes to me and doesn't hate his own mother and father and wife and children and brothers and sisters and even his own life, he can't be my disciple").

There is another voice in Torah and in the Prophets and in the teachers, mystics, social change activists, and renewal figures of Judaism: a voice of love that affirms that the only way we can build the world we want is through love, kindness, generosity, compassion, and open-heartedness. It is this voice, repeatedly articulated by the Prophets of Israel, that is the "good news," the voice of renewal, the core message which has been repeatedly lost and which must be rediscovered and reasserted again and again.

This voice of love is always distorted when people get scared, so it's no wonder that this prophetic message was increasingly marginalized when, in the period of the Second Temple, first the Greeks and then Romans conquered Israel and imposed their harsh taxes and violent regimes. A sect of accommodators to imperial rule, the Sadducees, became the major voice of the priestly class who ran the Temple and

sought to work with the imperialists, joined also by some merchants who learned Greek or Latin and then sought to take advantage of the economic possibilities opened by the imperialists. The Sadducees may have insured themselves the power and support of the Romans, but increasing numbers of Jews found accommodation to empire unacceptable.

The question then for most Jews was not, "Do we agree with the priests who ran the Temple?" since mostly they did not, but rather, "What's our alternative—how can we resist imperial power most effectively and conscientiously?"

The most significant response was that of the Pharisees—the group of scribes, scholars, and teachers who began to develop what would become, after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, the new Rabbinic Judaism which lasted for the next two thousand years. The Pharisees created a de facto alternative to the sacrificial worship of the Temple

by emphasizing prayer, meditation, and the study of Torah in local community houses of study (synagogues). Studying Torah and elaborating its commands became an alternative spiritual practice—a way to get close to God without sacrifices.

Perhaps the best known Pharisee, who was a contemporary of Jesus, was Rabbi Hillel. When asked by a skeptic to teach the whole Torah while standing on one leg, he replied: "Do not do unto others what may be hateful to you. Go and learn." In reviving the Golden Rule, Hillel was preaching a message common among the Pharisees.

Nurtured by a revolutionary Torah story which taught Jews that the God of the universe was a Force of Healing and Transformation who had liberated Jews from slavery (and hence demonstrated that no system of oppression is ultimately necessary), Jews became the most cantankerous people of the ancient Roman Empire—the group which most frequently rebelled against Roman power both in Palestine and wherever else in the Empire a large number of Jews resided. Among them, there was a group of Jews known as the Zealots, who argued that armed struggle against Rome was immediately necessary. It was one such armed rebellion, in 67CE, that led the Romans to respond with devastating force that included burning down the Temple in 70 CE, and another such rebellion, led by Akiba and Bar Kochba in 132 CE, which led to the massacre of hundreds of thousands of Jews by the Romans and the expulsion of Jews from the land in 135 CE.

The Essenes were a proto-mystical cult that despaired of armed struggle with imperialism and instead tried to build a countercultural reality by establishing communal living groups in the hills above the Dead Sea. There they awaited the Messiah.

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JESUS THE JEW

There were dozens of would-be messiahs wandering through Judaea, each with a band of followers and an array of miraculous behaviors that gave them validation. Most of them courted the same fate as thousands of others suspected of insurrectionary desires: crucifixion. There were also growing numbers of Jews, including many Pharisees, who began to talk of salvation in some different world, in a Heaven, or in the resurrection of the dead which would occur in messianic times. If love could not rule on this earth, maybe its domain would be elsewhere or at some later time.

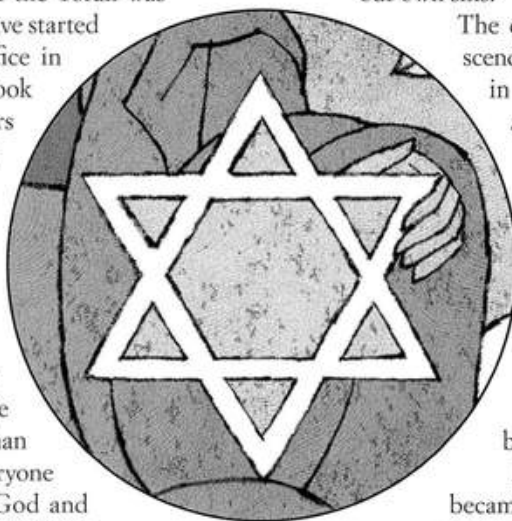
The Rabbinic Judaism that grew from the Pharisees sought to emphasize the idea that if the Torah was merely a collection of law, it would have started with the laws of the Paschal sacrifice in Exodus XII. But why this first Book of Genesis and first twelve chapters of Exodus? Why did the story start with the creation of the world and of humanity? Because, they answered, in so doing the Torah could tell us that God created human beings in God's image, and that consequently no one later could legitimately come along and say, "My ancestors come from a better lineage than yours, so we deserve a better deal on this planet than you do." No, the rabbis insisted, everyone is equally created in the image of God and equally entitled to the benefits of God's planet.

When people are hopeful, they respond to this kind of message. But as Roman power increased, and a loving world seemed more utopian, the Pharisees became increasingly enmeshed in internal polemics and in refining external ritual, and their loving message receded. This dynamic repeats itself through the history of spiritual and religious traditions—and hence there is a constant need to renew the community of love so that it does not turn into something else. This was the great promise of Jesus and his movement. In a dramatic way, it challenged the Jewish people to come back to our own deepest truths—and to not let its justifiable struggle against the Roman imperialists and their priestly collaborators in the Temple turn them away from the real message that God had meant to impart to the world through the Jews: that the God of the universe sought a world of love, kindness, compassion, peace, justice, openheartedness, and generosity.

The generosity sought by God was a generosity on both the material level and the spiritual level. On the material level, the Torah called explicitly for sharing of one's food with the hungry, and for a redistribution of the land every fifty years (back to its original essentially equal distribution). When Jesus taught that the way people could best honor his memory would be to treat "the least among you" (that is, the most despised, the Other, the *Ger*) as though they were

dealing with God directly, he was insisting on this basic recognition of God's desire for us to share what we have.

Yet there was also a spiritual level of generosity called for—the generosity of spirit that comes with forgiving sin. For the Temple based version of Judaism, the only way one could achieve cleansing from sins was to offer a sacrifice. But in the Pharisaic tradition, the forgiveness of sin could be accomplished directly by repentance to God, and by adopting a new spirit in our relationship with fellow human beings. This new relationship had at its core a spirit of forgiveness for others, just as we sought God's forgiveness for our own sins.



The centrality of forgiveness or for transcending judgment of others was enshrined in the Pharasaic (rabbinic) saying: *"al tadeen et chavercha ad she'tagi'a leem-koemoe"*—"do not judge your fellow human being until you come to his place." Until we experience what a person went through in her childhood and adult life, we are in no position to make judgments. And since none of us will ever be able to do that, judgments of others are always inappropriate. Forgiveness became a central rabbinic virtue.

It was this call to forgiveness that became central to Jesus' message as well. We were to forgive those who trespassed against us, those who hurt us. Not just little trespasses, but even big and hurtful ones. Forgive our enemies! So when the disciple Peter asks Jesus "How often should I forgive my brother if he keeps wronging me? Up to seven times?" (repeating the cynical realism of those who insist that forgiving another won't change their behavior), Jesus responds: "Not just seven: seventy times seven." Because the goal is not to change the behavior of the offender but to change our own behavior, and through that begin to heal the world.

Jesus' message is meant to apply to the Romans, but also to Hitler, Stalin, Saddam Hussein. Forgiving doesn't mean empowering them or letting them continue their hurtful behavior—we are not being enjoined to passively allow evil to triumph. One can resist evil actions without blaming or judging those engaged in hurtful acts.

Jesus' call is a spiritual call. Jewish commentator Stephen Mitchell, in his wise and brilliant book, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, put it this way: "When we condemn, we create a world of condemnation for ourselves, and we attract the condemnation of others; when we cling to an offense, we are clinging to precisely what separates us from our own fulfillment. Letting go means not only releasing the person who has wronged us, but releasing ourselves. We receive exactly what we give. The more openhearted we are, the more we can experience the whole universe as God's grace."

JESUS THE JEW

Forgiveness is essentially openness of heart."

It is this message that we teach in the Jewish Renewal movement when we ask each of our members to say a prayer before going to bed each night to connect with our capacities to forgive so that we can forgive each person who has hurt us in the past day. We think of each of them and send them blessings and forgiveness, no matter how strong the pain they've caused us, thereby allowing better alignment with the God part of us. This practice doesn't detract an ounce from our commitment to resist all the ways that hurtful people act. Rather, as we separate from our judgments, we become more empowered to struggle for tikkun olam, the healing of the world we need.

The energy freed up by forgiving others makes it possible for us to withstand the pain and disappointments of a world that has too much pain and too little love, a world that in various ways crucifies all those who struggle seriously for a world based on love.

As Christian theologian Ched Myers recently pointed out to me, (echoing a message that has been put forward in these pages by Michael Bader and Peter Gabel, among others), the call for a world based on love, generosity, compassion, and kindness often provokes anger and resistance from those who feel that their lives have been built around "being realistic." They resent the very assertion that something else is possible. This is why, Myers teaches, the cross has remained a powerful symbol for Christianity—understood as the reminder that if you live a life committed to love, you may end up facing the powers that be (including the powerless who have internalized the oppressor's message and fear of love) and their determination to crucify you for daring to shake their certainty in the inevitability of domination and control by the few of the many. Nothing upsets them more than the "naivete" of those who talk about love and kindness—they base their lives on the assumption that "the real world" requires you to dominate others before they dominate you; so if you claim that something else is possible, they feel that you are invalidating everything they stand for.

For these people, the message of the cross gets transformed—so that instead of a sign of hope, it is a reminder of the inevitability of cruelty (and hence leads to a politics in which we prepare ourselves for the need to defend ourselves against all the evil others that surround us). This is the "muscular" Christianity glorified in Gibson's film *The Passion*, where it seems the whole point is to endure suffering.

Just as in Judaism there are those who gravitate to the message of fear and the need to defend oneself against evil others as well as those who gravitate to the message

of hope and the notion that each of us can play a central role in the task of healing and transforming the world, so in Christianity we get the voices of a Christian renewal movement who gravitate to the Resurrection as the central truth of a world based on hope and those who gravitate to the Crucifixion as a message focused on grim realism and the acceptance of cruelty (coupled, sometimes, with the hope that it can be escaped in some afterlife which will be there if one believes in Jesus).

We at TIKKUN embrace the Jewish Jesus, the part of the story that is most consonant with the vision of prophetic and Renewal Judaism, seeing there the reaffirmation of the possibility of possibility. And we do so in the same way that we embrace our other prophets and teachers, recognizing them as flawed even when they are able to have moments of transcendence. Just as Jesus and his Gospels are filled with moments when Jesus seems an ill-tempered or self-inflated being ("I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in me, though he shall die, yet shall he live"), so too all our prophets and teachers, including all of us who today do spiritual teaching or tikkun olam work, sometimes get lost in ourselves, self-pitying, and self-aggrandizing, and that too should be forgiven just as we should forgive Jesus for his all-too-frequent moments that do not embody his message.

I also have compassion for the many Jews who were not able to sustain this compassion toward Christians when the message of love and openheartedness was transformed by later generations into a message used to beat up on Jews and others.

It was only fifty years after his death that Jesus' message was put into writing as a Gospel that claimed to supersede Judaism with a new religion based on Jesus not as an inspired human being, but as a higher order of being, later understood to actually be God. As moved as his followers were by the message of love, many had begun to despair of his "second coming" and were increasingly attracted to the allure of having their message accepted by larger numbers of people in the Roman empire. Unable to fully hold on to the significance of the revolutionary message of Easter and the beautiful story of resurrection—that love would triumph over death, and that no amount of imperial power could fully defeat the power of kindness and generosity—the gospel writers twisted the story in ways that portrayed the Jews rather than the Roman imperialists as the culprits in killing Jesus. The gospel writers made it seem as though the destruction of the Temple, the military act of Roman triumph over Jewish revolutionary impulses, was actually also a triumph for Jesus—because in their new interpretation it



was the Jews who were the real enemy (for not accepting Jesus), and not the imperial regime that had actually crucified him! In this retreat from faith in the power of love to an identification with the power of the Romans, the gospel writers had opened the wedge to temporal power that would actually defeat in actual practice the loving message that Christianity had promised to bring to the world. Every move to make Jesus into a god, and then into the Son of God, and then into a part of God, was a move of fear, a desperate attempt to make Jesus more powerful, sitting on the right hand of God, or even being God, because as King he would be exercising the kind of power that was “real” rather than “merely” the kind of power that Jesus had, which was the power of testifying to the possibility of a world of love. And in this move to become more closely aligned with the powerful, to reshape the story so that the Jews are portrayed as the bad guys—the Christ-killers—and the Romans as merely innocent bystanders, we get the sick dynamic in which Christianity gets elevated by demeaning Judaism.

Jews responded in kind with unsavory tales of Jesus as they knew him, and the competition was often intense and unpleasant until Christianity gained state power (and some say, lost its own soul) under the rule of Constantine (see the powerful account, *Constantine's Sword*, by James Carroll). It was in the fourth century that Christianity began to teach an active hatred toward the Jews. Jewish life was permitted, but laws were passed to degrade the condition of Jews and make their lives miserable—as a living example of what would happen to anyone who knew Jesus and yet rejected his message.

The full picture of the hateful policies of the Church are detailed by Catholic priest Edward Flannery's monumental study *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Anti-Semitism*. St. John Chrysostom laid the groundwork for the teaching of hate that went on for the next 1600 years when he described the Jews as “inveterate murderers, destroyers” and “lustful, rapacious, greedy, perfidious bandits” whose synagogues were “the house of the devil” and filled with prostitution.

Legal restrictions soon followed, as Church legislation became the law of the land throughout most of what in the next centuries became “Christian Europe.” Jews were prevented from engaging in most forms of work or owning property, forbidden from socializing with Christians, banned from public life and from practicing law, prevented from testifying against Christians (so Christians could assault or rob Jews but it was illegal for Jews to demand

punishment or just compensation), and eventually in many Christian countries, Jewish children were forcibly baptized, Jews' property forcibly expropriated, and ultimately they were forcibly expelled (from England in the thirteenth century, France in the fourteenth century, Spain in the fifteenth century, Portugal in the sixteenth century, etc.).

Thus began a popular culture of hatred toward Jews that was sustained by Church teachings, and which manifested most frequently on Good Friday and Easter when the official teachings of hatred toward the Jews for having supposedly been the ones responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus (at least as told by some of the Gospels) manifested in wild mobs of Christians entering into Jewish sections of town, killing, raping, burning, and stealing from the Jews as part of the annual Easter celebration.

Most Christians have never been taught about the way Christianity perpetrated hatred against Jews. Few Protestants have read the ruthlessly hateful statements against Jews by Martin Luther. And though Vatican II (1963-1965) finally banned the teaching of hatred of Jews on Good Friday, the Catholic Church never taught about its disgraceful role in fostering centuries of hate, and how this hatred was mobilized by the fascists and manifested in the Holocaust. No wonder, then, that many thought Jews were being irrational and paranoid about Mel Gibson's

film and its attempt to revive the story of Jewish culpability for the death of Jesus (while simultaneously ignoring the Jewish Jesus and his teachings of love).

No wonder, also, that Jews, having had this long experience with the Christian religion that taught hatred while claiming to be an embodiment of Jesus' love, built walls of hostility and anger around ourselves to protect us from Jesus. But this has been a loss for Jews. To the extent that we Jews feel safer today than we have in the past, we should finally allow ourselves to open to Jesus the Jewish renewal revolutionary and prophet, treating him with the same respect, and the same rough-and-tumble criticism that we give to all our great teachers. Particularly at this moment when his legacy is again being appropriated by the forces of fear and hatred, it's important for us to ally with the many Christians who affirm the revolutionary and loving aspect of Jesus' message. Our Christian brothers and sisters—whose renewal/prophetic message of generosity seems increasingly marginalized as the churches that celebrate power and domination grow in political importance and power—may need Jewish allies to help them reclaim and validate the Jewish Jesus now more than ever. □

Laws were passed to degrade the condition of Jews and make their lives miserable—as a living example of what would happen to anyone who knew Jesus and yet rejected his message.

Radical Conviviality And The Gospel Jesus

Thomas Moore

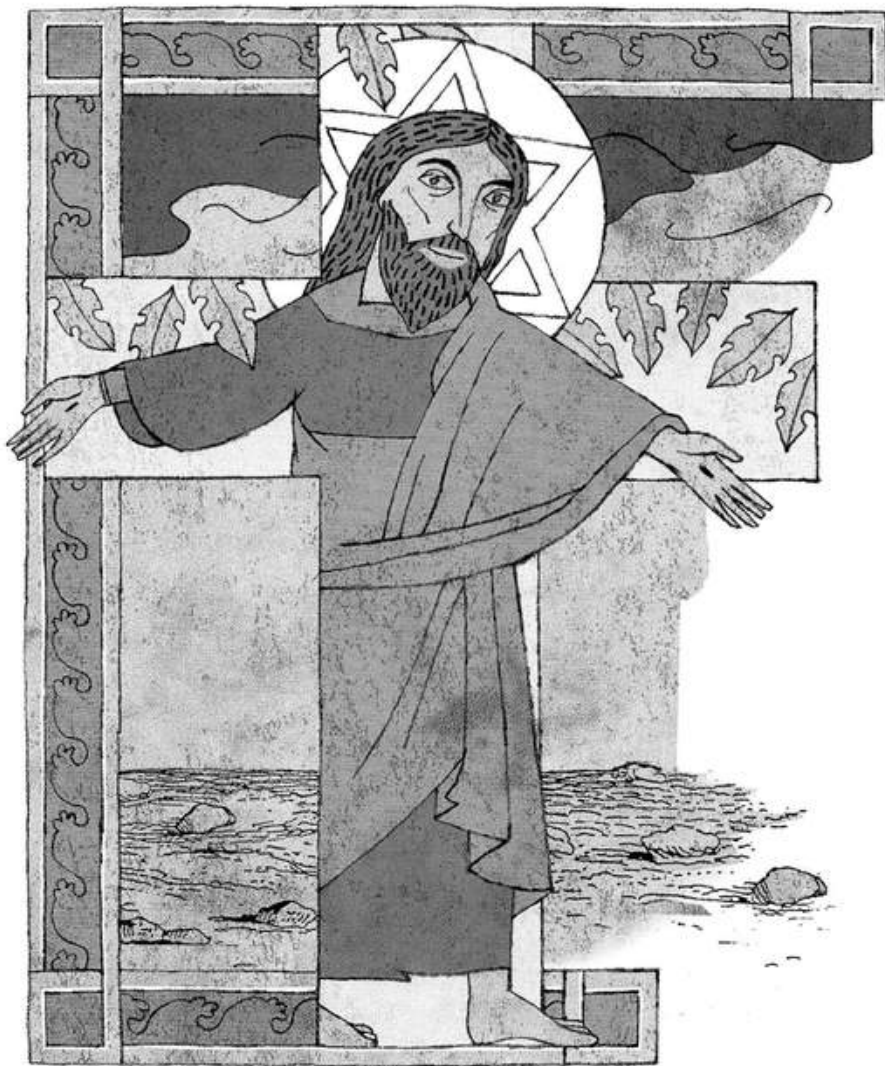
Some people think of Jesus as a holy and insightful ethical teacher, something like Socrates. Others think of him as the literal son of God, who worked miracles, rose from the dead, and physically ascended to the place known as heaven. Neither approach, in my view, does Jesus justice.

Most religions and spiritual traditions involve some strong mode of reflection that keeps the teachings from being too literal or too metaphorical, too emotional or too rational. The Zen master devotes considerable attention to keeping his students from reducing Zen to something known and circumscribed, or making too much of the founder. "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him," the Zen master says. But has anyone said that about Jesus, and does it apply?

The Tibetan master Chögyam Trungpa wrote a book on "spiritual materialism," warning his students not to transform the teachings into an "antique shop" or "junkyard" of beliefs and practices. You have to get the ego out of it, he says. The problem with people who attach themselves to Jesus is similar. Some tend to focus their attention on the person of Jesus in a way that is not unlike infatuation. They keep using his name, the way a person gushes about a lover, but they do not necessarily become involved in the teachings or even in Jesus as a model of compassionate behavior. Jesus is more "in your face" than a spirit deep within. The Gospel of Thomas has the beautiful passage that emphasizes this interiority: "Split a piece of wood; I am there. Lift up a stone, and you will find me there."

The effect of literalism and infatuation—spiritual mate-

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rialism—is to suck the intelligence out of the teaching. But what if we understood Jesus as having an inspired vision and a radical conception of how human life could be lived without injustice, violence, and enemies? That is the Jesus of the gospels, but all the millions who say they believe in him have not been able, for two thousand years, to effect the world of peace and mutual regard he spoke of as a "heavenly kingdom." Maybe that is because we have embraced Jesus on the road, instead of realizing that he has to disappear in us. Emily Dickinson asked, "Is it oblivion or absorption

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTIANE GRAUERT

JESUS THE JEW

when we forget?" I don't want to abandon Jesus, but I do want to absorb him, so that if you were to open me up, you would find him there.

The religion scholar Mircea Eliade once wrote that John the Baptist saw Jesus and recognized the Messiah in him. Note that Eliade does not say that John recognized that Jesus was the Messiah. This is a crucial difference. The latter leads to adoration of Jesus, the former to seeing through Jesus to the mystery of saving that was his whole being—his teachings, his way of life, and his personality.

I admit that this is a more mystical Jesus than the one honored in most churches, but mysticism is exactly what has been missing from the presentation of Jesus and is what people long for when they say today that they want spirituality, not religion. Further, when Jesus' person, rather than the saving power in him, is the object of concern, we get spiritual competitiveness, not Jesus spirituality but Jesusism.

The Jesus zealot clings to the virtue he finds in aligning himself with the person of Jesus. He competes with zealots of other persuasions and with those who don't follow Jesus at all. His jealousy is aggressive and potentially violent. The need to feel exclusively in possession of spiritual truth is rooted in anxiety, not joy, and anxiety is a sign of the ego that Chögyam Trungpa warns about.

• • •

There is another deep and powerful problem that infects belief in Jesus. Scholars are telling us now that early in the history of Christianity, certain texts and stories were approved—especially those that portrayed Jesus as an asexual man—and other texts were "lost." There is nothing wrong, and in fact there is much inspiring, in the image of a celibate Jesus, especially one who could be happy in a warm, small community of men and women. But this image has also glorified the notion of a sexless world and apparently made religious people nervous about their desires and passions. The resulting repression has bred, in many instances, a dry, negative, fearful, and misanthropic approach to life.

With sex, too, we run into spiritual materialism. We take sex to be a physical act, at best the expression of love between two people. But sexuality is far more subtle. It permeates the whole of the personality and life. Its qualities of love, passion, sensuality, beauty, and pleasure play a role in every aspect of life, all of which are connected by the sexual or erotic dynamic. Suppress or deny the sexual at one level, and you suffer a loss of all the qualities that give life its vitality and power.

The Jesus of the gospels shows no sign of sexual neurosis. He seems to understand the human struggle with Eros and readily forgives the woman about to be stoned for adultery. He performs his very first miracle at a wedding, changing

water into wine simply to allow the party to go on without any embarrassment. I would think followers of Jesus would take that miracle as an invitation to enjoy good wine, and yet many demonize it, apparently perceiving a dark spirit in alcohol. This fearful reaction to Dionysian wine implies anxiety about all things Dionysian, including sexuality.

The non-canonical gospels show a Jesus who dances, laughs, kisses, and enjoys the company of his friends, men and women. Jesus is close to several women, who apparently support him financially and are devoted to his ideas. The Gospel of Philip even refers to Mary Magdalen as his companion. It appears that the early stories about Jesus didn't

have the sexual negation in them that came along with the organization of a church. Nervous asceticism is always a danger in the spiritual life, and it seems to have infected Christianity at a very early stage.

The sexual anxiety that creeps into the post-gospel teachings created a deep and corrosive emotional fissure from which Christianity—and especially, perhaps, Catholicism—has never recovered. The effects of this underlying psychological anxiety touch the core of the teaching. Today, Catholics practically equate sexual problems with sin, and many complain of the guilt they feel deep within them and the repressive style they don't want to hand down to their children. The current crisis around pedophilia in the priesthood reveals a small part of the confusion and repression that lies at the psychological heart of the religion.

The sexual preoccupation has repercussions not only for a mature moral conscience and the difficulties in sustaining a celibate priesthood but also for the emotional tone of the religion. You don't repress sexuality without paying a price. It leads to a kind of depression, a loss of vitality, and a generally negative attitude toward life. You live by Freud's death principle rather than by the principle of life. You are quick to condemn and are prone to aggression. Sex represents life and vitality. Keep it under excessive restrictions and you lose your love of life.

Having been a teacher of religion and a psychotherapist for thirty years, I have heard story after story from Christians who suffered anxiety about their sexuality due to enormous pressures from teachers, parents, preachers, church camps, and friends. Harsh lessons from childhood stayed with them, close to the surface of their memories and twisted into their emotions and fantasies, for years. It's difficult to be a loving, embracing member of the world community if your sexuality has been stymied for decades.

Two related problems complicate this issue of sex. The more general problem is that we tend to overlook the psychological basis of the spiritual life. We take matters of faith and belief literally and fail to see how personal insecurity, anxieties, and repressed desires play a role in the life of reli-

*The Jesus of the gospels shows
no sign of sexual neurosis.*

JESUS THE JEW

gion and spirit. We argue our positions and try to out-reason our adversaries, when, in fact, the issue is deeply embedded in highly emotional patterns.

I suspect that Christianity fears sex and tries to keep it in constraints because the religion is nervous about the tendency of life to be always in flux. Where will it go? What will people do? Wouldn't it be better to be dead in our moralism than risk life in all its variety? How can we feel innocent and virtuous and surrender ourselves to all this possibility?

The desire for more than one partner, the appeal of homosexuality, the lure of pornography, the gloss and sheen of sex in movies—they are all not only sexual phenomena in themselves, they also point toward a need for variety and satisfaction in all aspects of life. The ascetic person sees all of it as an obstacle to virtue and spiritual focus. The soul-centered person, awake to life in a body and a world of beauty, sees it as passionate confusion that needs to be sorted out in preparation for a spiritual life.

Jesus was a man of profound compassion. He is described in the gospel as being “deeply moved” at the death of a friend. The root Greek word used is *brimo*, the name of an underworld goddess. That's how deep Jesus feels his loss. He is not paranoid, not defended against suffering. He responds by healing and forgiving and relieving. This pattern is of the essence and could be the core of Jesus spirituality: you open yourself to suffering and you respond effectively and sensitively.

...

The root metaphor of the gospel teaching of Jesus is the “kingdom of heaven.” Although this image, “kingdom of heaven,” is sometimes taken as a reference to afterlife, the gospels clearly say that it is happening here and now. The Gospel of Thomas even says that it is “within you.” I don't see any evidence in the gospels that Jesus intended to form a church, but he did create a community of followers and spoke of a realm in which regard for community would be the central value. “People,” he said, “will know that you are my followers if you love one another.” The teaching couldn't be clearer.

The gospels use the Greek word *agape* over and over for this love. The word usually refers to the love of children, love in families, or expressions of contentment and greeting. People today might find it difficult to appreciate this kind of love because we live in an emotionally cool environment. We have grown accustomed to a lack of civility. We don't appreciate how important it is to find love on the streets of our towns and in the world at large. Taken more seriously, *agape* is the kind of love that holds a community, even the world community, together. Love is never perfect, but ideally *agape* contains no compulsive desire and self-interest.

The kingdom of heaven is a way of being in the world shaped by the dynamic of *agape*. When he teaches, forgives, heals, and gathers his friends together, Jesus demonstrates

how a citizen of this kingdom might behave. The gospels make it clear that *agape* is not meant to extend only to the exclusive group of insiders but to the world as a whole.

With his image of the kingdom, Jesus offers nothing less than a new way of imagining human beings gathering together based on mutual regard and greeting. If you have this Jesus nature in you, you give up conventional narcissistic concerns and embrace an outrageously forgiving and extremely accepting way of life. In all that you do, you are interested in embodying the teachings, healing whatever needs to be healed, and gathering as friends.

This is not just a sentimental wish that people get along; it's an absolute, challenging philosophy of life. People will know that you follow the way of Jesus if you respond to all people as capable of breaking through the paranoia and self-interest that characterizes human relations that lack a transcendent vision. Communities and nations have a soul and are also challenged to greet the people of the world with *agape*.

If you take the Jesus teaching radically, you would, as the early Christians apparently did, experiment with a highly unconventional set of values. You would not be the guardian of moral standards so much as the protector of those judged and persecuted for their infractions of the standards. Your morality would be rooted in a deep sense of unity with your fellow human beings, instead of in convention and anxiety.

...

It is an undiscovered secret about the spiritual life: You are most godly when you are in a certain way most worldly. Asceticism and self-denial can serve the spirit, but one has to be most diligent not to let them be transformed into world-denying masochism. In the context of enjoying life, you can carefully find ways to be simple and sparse. The combination not only reflects the original Epicurean philosophy; it also captures the Jesus way.

In the gospels I don't perceive a neurotic bone in Jesus' body. He is so much more comfortable with himself and with an assortment of others than are his adversaries and even his colleagues. He doesn't bristle at emotional confusion or even the acting-out of passion. He does get frustrated with condemnatory and intolerant authorities. Chögyam Trungpa says that when Jesus chased the merchants out of the Temple, he wasn't angry; he simply responded spontaneously to an abuse of the sacred.

Jesus represents a new set of values and a new way of life. But to appreciate his relevance today, we have to liberate him from the ideologies and institutions that jealously claim him for themselves. The Jesus spirit is accessible to all people, regardless of their affiliations. In fact, his teachings and spirit favor peace and reconciliation at all levels. His spirituality is not divisive. If anything, it is a philosophy of radical conviviality rooted in neighborly love and regard. It is a philosophy that urges and celebrates the joy of human community. □

Mel Gibson's Passion and Fascism's Piety of Pain

Matthew Fox

Many years ago, after finishing doctoral studies in Paris, I spent a semester at the University of Munster in Germany. While there I lived in a Dominican convent which housed about six other Dominicans, one of whom was old and very strange and never appeared during the day at meals or for any other reason. He seemed only to go out at night. One day I was asked to go in his room to fetch a book, and I was amazed to see the books on his bookshelf (including *Mein Kampf*). I was especially amazed by a "holy card" on his *prie dieu* (a place where one kneels to pray). This holy card was the most gory I had ever seen, with Jesus depicted as thoroughly bloodied, beaten, abused and victimized. I later learned that this Dominican priest with the gory holy card was a self-appointed chaplain to the Nazis of Munster. The year was 1970.

As I sat and watched Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, with its unrelenting emphasis on blood and gore, I had a déjà vu experience as I vividly recalled this Dominican priest and his particular form of piety. Gibson set out his intentions for his film in an interview: "I want to push you over the edge, push you right over the edge, so you can stay there and hang out with and get to a higher plane—*through the pain*." Piety as pain, pain as piety. This movie opens a door on fascist piety which is pain-driven. The piety of fascism is inevitably a piety of pain and suffering (thus the complete fascination with redemption and total refusal to entertain grace and original blessing), and it manifests itself in full bloody form in this movie. Gibson is allegedly a member of Opus Dei, a secretive Catholic sect of wealthy men whose spirituality is deeply fascist. Its founder, a Spanish priest named Escriva, whom the Pope rushed into canonization two years ago in record time, was a card carrying fascist who actually praised Adolph Hitler and who was also deeply sexist. Two of his Opus Dei members served on Franco's cabinet. The present Pope has taken this religious order under his wing (his own press secretary is a member of Opus Dei) and has appointed many Opus Dei



bishops and cardinals (especially in Latin America, after decimating the liberation theology and base communities there). They have constructed an eighty-one-million dollar edifice in Manhattan and are ensconced in the financial capitals of Europe, especially in Frankfurt, which is replacing Switzerland as the financial capital of Europe. One Peruvian I met told about growing up in an Opus Dei household and how his father forbade him to be alone at any time with his mother and sisters. Thus as a boy he lived on the streets and never went home before 8PM, when his father would most likely be home from work. (Boys could not be alone in the house with females of any age—so much for sexual common sense.) In addition, the family prayed the rosary on their knees on *upturned bottle caps* and were expected to bleed. Piety of pain indeed. Not, alas, the pain of the suffering of others that can be relieved by acts of compassion, but self-inflicted pain.

In many ways the film is a monument to sadomasochism. By emphasizing the worst eighteen hours of Jesus' life and leaving most of his teachings out of the movie, Gibson makes Jesus a victim rather than a

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martyr while removing Jesus' passion for justice and equating the term "passion" with "passive victim." Our culture is deeply engaged in sadomasochism—understood here as the haves lording over the have-nots. How so? Let's take contemporary capitalism and the world distribution of wealth and power as an example: In the 1960s, the overall income of the richest 20 percent of the world's population was thirty times that of the poorest 20 percent. Today, it is 224 times larger! In the 1960s, the richest 20 percent held 70 percent of the world's revenues; in 1999 it was 85 percent. Today the income of the richest 225 people in the world is equal to the income of 3 billion poor people. The income of the three richest people in the world is equal to the collective national incomes of the poorest forty-nine countries! It would take no more than 5 percent of the overall annual sales of arms in the world to feed all the starving children, to protect them from dying of preventable diseases, and to make basic education accessible to all.

Gibson's Jesus shows none of the passion for justice that served as a corrective to the sadomasochistic tendencies of his own culture and times, and barely opens the door to issues of soul and society that could serve as correctives to our current culture. Where is the compassion, human dignity, and love that lie at the very heart of Christ's teachings? You don't cure sadomasochism with more sadomasochism legitimized with religious sentiment. Gibson's rejection of Vatican II (which, among other things, apologized for the church's long and sorry history of blaming Jesus' death on the Jews and its primary role in fueling anti-Semitism over the centuries), gives one a sense of where his piety lies. While studying in Paris, I unknowingly moved in with a family that was "integriste"—extreme right wing Catholics who, like Gibson, would only attend Mass in Latin and who rejected Vatican II. They said that "Vatican II was a Jewish and Freemason conspiracy." They even denied that Jesus was Jewish.

Though Gibson tells us that people who object to his movie are actually objecting to the gospels, in fact the movie owes much more to the medieval practice of the Stations of the Cross (a practice of meditating on Jesus' trial, and his carrying of the cross to his crucifixion) and the visions of a nineteenth-century nun named Anne Catherine Emmerich than it does to the gospels. It is in the Stations of the Cross practice that we are told Jesus fell three times; that Veronica wiped his face with a veil, etc.—all scenes graphically

depicted in the film. Mixing all of the gospels into one narrative, as Gibson does, is artistic license but it is not history. The gospels' bias against Jews stems from the fact that they were written after the fall of the Temple, long after Jesus' death, when serious tensions between Christian Jews and other Jewish sects were beginning to emerge. But the gospels themselves lack historicity—as in their muddling of the Pharisees and Sadducees and their sympathetic portrayal of Pontius Pilate, known historically to be one of Rome's most

brutal governors. Gibson takes this one step further in portraying Pilate as a kind of saintly figure, with a deeply troubled conscience.

Religious imagery is not a private matter; it is a profoundly public matter. Medieval mystic Meister Eckhart said that "all the names we give to God come from an understanding of ourselves." If we apply this insight to this film, we learn that the images Gibson gives to Christ reveal much about himself. As one viewer said, they seem to indicate a tough childhood, one in which his father must have taken him to the woodshed with a belt for a whipping. The point being that the God represented in this film is not a God whom I would want to worship in any form whatsoever or whom I could recommend others worship. It is no wonder, though, that this film is being seen by so many Christian groups whose piety is built more on fear than it is on love and hope, more on sin than

on blessing, more on victimization than on liberation. It provides a logical haven for fall/redemption religious world views. No wonder Gibson leaves out so much of the message of Jesus: It is not compatible with fascism, which is about control and not justice, about power-over, not power-with (compassion).

It is one of the signs of our times that generations born since the defeat of fascism in World War II (and the attempt to throw off fascism in the Catholic Church in the Second Vatican Council), know very little about fascism. I recently met a twenty-six-year-old college graduate who did not know what fascism was. It is a scandal that our Congress appropriates millions of dollars to build monuments to the heroes of World War II but apparently very little to educate youth (or itself?) about the lessons to be learned from the purpose of that war: To defeat fascism. Susan Sontag has defined fascism as "institutionalized violence." I would define it as an authoritarianism that swamps all else—conscience, community, human rights, justice—and in the process legitimizes violence. Fascism is a philoso-

Gibson's Jesus shows none of the passion for justice that served as a corrective to the sadomasochistic tendencies of his own culture and times, and barely opens the door to issues of soul and society that could serve as correctives to our current culture.

JESUS THE JEW

phy of disempowerment based on fear, power over (sadism), power under (masochism), victimhood, and scapegoating. Fascism seems to need religion, wrapping itself in religious piety to foster feelings of pious sentiment and self-righteousness. Its God is the God of Authoritarianism. (Cardinal Ratzinger, the current Pope's right-hand man and current inquisitor general, is a devotee of authoritarianism.) It is in this context that the late theologian Dorothy Soelle wrote of a new "Christofascism" coming to the fore in our day. Recently a political scientist, Dr. Lawrence Britt, wrote an article naming fourteen characteristics of fascism. He based his study on an examination of the regimes of Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, Suharto and Pinochet. (For the record, four of these men were Roman Catholics never excommunicated by their church—all except Suharto.) A summary of Britt's points follows.

1. Powerful and continuing nationalism employing constant use of patriotic slogans, symbols, songs, and flags.
2. Disdain for the recognition of human rights because security needs outweigh human rights.
3. Using enemies as scapegoats for a unifying cause.
4. Supremacy of the military.
5. Rampant sexism including more rigid gender roles and anti-gay legislation.
6. Controlled mass media.
7. Obsession with national security driven by a politics of fear.
8. Religion and government are intertwined, especially in rhetoric employed by its leaders.
9. Corporate power is protected. Industrial and business aristocracies put government leaders into power and keep them there, creating a mutually beneficial business/government relationship and power elite.
10. Labor power, which represents one of the few threats to fascism, is suppressed.
11. Disdain for intellectuals and the arts and hostility to higher education, along with censorship of arts or refusal to support the arts.
12. Obsession with crime and punishment.
13. Rampant cronyism and corruption.
14. Fraudulent elections.

One does not have to be paranoid to see these elements alive and well in the United States in 2004. To encourage them through pious film-making underscores the danger. Perhaps we can thank Mel Gibson for opening up possibilities to discuss fascism once again—including its peculiar mix of politics and very strange religious notions. One wonders who will be the beneficiary of Mr. Gibson's billion-dollar profit on the crucifixion of Jesus? Will it lead to more Opus Dei bishops in North America?

More mixing of right-wing politics and right-wing religion and right-wing media? Stay tuned.

In the multimillion dollar campaign to get churches to support this movie, a four-color flyer was sent to most churches in the country that boasted the following headline: "Dying was Jesus' Reason For Living." It is difficult to imagine a slogan more contradictory to the facts of Jesus' life or his teaching or indeed of that of the Christ who in John's gospel says: "I have come that you may have life and have it in abundance." Mel Gibson ought to read the great spiritual genius Ernest Holmes who writes: "The will of God is never toward suffering. Man must constantly reaffirm his belief in the Infinite Goodness if he expects to exclude the idea of evil from his thought....God's Will is always toward Life and more Life....the Life within you is God." Holmes got Jesus' message right. But the slogan Gibson invokes, "Dying was Jesus' reason for living," sick as it is, tells the true story about this film and the piety behind it. What we have here is a clear case of religion as necrophilia. From this movie we learn that necrophilia (love of death) is more important than biophilia (love of life).

Here lies the *ultimate scare* of the movie and its success. It speaks to and elicits from people in our culture a desire to wallow in necrophilia at the expense of biophilia. (I do not recall an ounce of biophilia much less humor in the movie.) I am reminded of the wise warning from Erich Fromm in his brilliant study on evil, *An Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. He writes: "Necrophilia grows when biophilia is stunted." And this is how evil is unleashed in the world. (Remember that the opposite of evil is not good; it is the Sacred.) Russian Orthodox philosopher Nicolas Berdyaev warned about a "decadent humility" that "keeps humanity in a condition of repression and oppression, chaining its creative power." And Rabbi Abraham Heschel reminded us that prophets do not become such from a life of asceticism but from passion for life. Clearly, a movie like this kills creativity and the prophetic spirit in its appeal to pain and gore.

The question of "who killed Jesus?" is a silly question in the sense that it was done 2000 years ago. No one alive today killed Jesus. How could we? We were not there. We are fully capable of killing the Christ, however, that is the God-self (or Buddha nature) in all beings. We do this when we destroy rainforests, render species extinct, starve the children, refuse health care to the people, allow starvation and unjust distribution of the earth's resources—in short, when we ignore the teachings of Isaiah and Jesus and others about the need for justice and compassionate works. What a shame that Mel Gibson, with all his potential access to decent theologians and today's contemporary scholarship about the healthy Jewish roots of the historical Jesus, chose to make a film based on false history, contradicting gospels, anti-Semitic overtones, fascist piety, and necrophilia. Hopefully, prophetic forces of biophilia will resist. □

The Passion of America

Susannah Heschel

Every era gets the Jesus it wants. Gibson's Jesus is not simply the product of his own religious imagination; it is an effort to shape the American cultural moment. Why the Passion and not the birth, miracles, preachings, Last Supper that constituted earlier films about Jesus's life? The torment of Jesus in Gibson's film (a detailed account of torture found nowhere in the Scriptures, an account that Gibson allegedly holds as sacred as Scripture) sanctifies the right-wing memory of the horrific events of September 11—the Passion of America—as innocent, defenseless Americans, were attacked over and over in a most brutal fashion, in an unthinkable, unprecedented, unwarranted assault that killed thousands of innocent people, and left thousands of families bereft.

Think of the wars, massacres, crusades, and burnings that have been committed in the name of Jesus's crucifixion and imagine what we Americans might do with our Passion if it is elevated from an unconscionable political assault to an act of religious martyrdom. Christian America: how will this film reflect on us, once it is seen in Muslim countries? Will American imperialism be linked to Christianity? Will the film evoke as much anti-Americanism as anti-Semitism?

The Christian hegemonic moment of the United States is being reestablished in the film. A Jewish Jesus cannot be allowed to appear because Christian hegemony cannot be established if it is forced to admit links to another religion. There can be no hegemony of Jesus if his teachings are shown to be neither unique nor original, but shared with the Judaism of his day. Yet simply eliminating the Jewishness of Jesus is also not sufficient—the Jews are also portrayed as irrationally seeking the destruction of Christianity in the name of their religion.

What is the American quality of this film's anti-Semitism?

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The film is possessed by Holocaust-envy, seeking to outdo in horror and suffering the many Holocaust films that Jews hope will inspire compassion for Jewish suffering. Yet can we identify with the sufferings of another people? That is supposed to be the premise of American multiculturalism, but in the Gibson/Bush culture there are friends and there are enemies, and there is no turning the other cheek. Those who tortured Jesus to death are not friends.

The Jesus of Gibson is not new. He reiterates the fascist myth of the "Aryan Jesus." Invented in Germany long before Hitler came to power, that myth is marked by three motifs: Jesus was no lamb of God but a macho man; he was racially Aryan and not Jewish; and he liberated himself from the constraints of Jewish doctrine. The Aryan Jesus was more than racially non Jewish; he was the Jews' sworn enemy

and, indeed, their crucifixion of him was claimed as "proof" of their evil nature. He was also a manly Christ, a powerful, heroic warrior who fell victim to his implacable enemy, the Jews, and whose cause the Nazis would now take up in their fight against the Jews. Finally, by rejecting selected doctrines about Jesus, theologians could easily manipulate the Gospel texts and revise them to construct a Jesus in their own

image. During the Nazi period, a deJudaized version of the New Testament was published which purged the Gospels of all positive Jewish references. Some Aryan proponents even suggested that Hitler was a reincarnation of Christ.

Gibson's film recapitulates some similar motifs. In the film, Jesus appears as visually and linguistically different from those whose Jewishness is clearly marked—the ugly priests with their hooked noses and dark, stringy hair, a stereotype that goes back to antiquity. This Jesus, like the Aryan Jesus, is a manly Christ who withstands a barrage of physical abuse. The film throws down the challenge: Are you macho enough to watch this film, man enough to be a Christian? And while Gibson claims to be theologically conservative, a biblical literalist, his film repeatedly violates the text of the Gospels by inventing a narrative of torture and murder that comes not from the New Testament, but

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JESUS THE JEW

from medieval Passion narratives.

In 1942, the Nazi Walter Grundmann, a German Protestant theologian who participated in the deJudaization of the New Testament and directed an institute whose mission was to eradicate Jewishness from German religious life, proclaimed in the preface to his book about Judaism: "Should one be upset about Germany's attitude toward the Jews, Germany has the historical justification and historical authorization for the fight against the Jews on its side! To prove this statement is the special concern of this work; and later research cannot alter anything about this statement! So this work serves the great fateful fight of the German nation for its political and economic, spiritual and cultural and also its religious freedom." His was a theology for the Holocaust.

If theology is as much about politics as it is about religion, what is the Gibson film trying to instill in us? Here

we are as Americans, waging war against Afghanistan and Iraq, inflicting horrific civilian suffering. But whose Passion are we witnessing? Do American viewers of Gibson's film regard Jesus's suffering as representative of the suffering of those who are casualties of American bombs? Will they identify with Pilate, who ordered Jesus crucified (despite the ambiguities of the film, which contradict the text of the New Testament)? Or will we watch the film as an expression of our own suffering, as innocent American victims of our allegedly implacable Muslim enemies? Johannes Hempel, Professor of Old Testament at the University of Berlin, and a member of Grundmann's Institute, declared in 1942, "The opposition between the Third Reich and the Jews is a struggle for life and death." Similarly, George Bush declares ours a war of "civilization against terrorism." Is September 11 to be sanctified, made into a sacred Passion that will justify our "war on terror"? □

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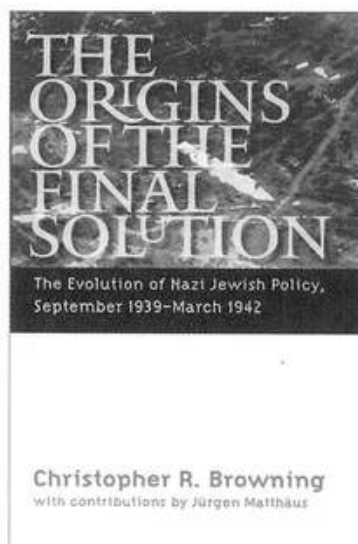
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The Corner of My Cloak

Tzvi Marx



Surprisingly enough, the prophet Zechariah foresees that in the end of days “ten people from nations of every language” will “take hold of every Jew by the corner of his cloak and say, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you’” (Zech. 8:23). If we follow the great medieval biblical commentator Rashi and interpret this passage to mean that each Jew will be followed by ten people from each of the seventy nations referenced by the Bible; if we assume with Rashi that each of these 700 people only hold one corner of the

Jew’s cloak; and if we assume, as rabbis usually do, that an outer garment has four corners, then Zechariah would be imagining 2800 people pulling at one Jew’s coat! This prophecy, at least in Rashi’s interpretation, certainly served the much-battered medieval Jewish ego well.

But where is one to find the prophecy that a Jew might also “take hold” of a non-Jew’s garment, so as to learn from spiritualities different from his or her own?

Rashi himself points to one such example in the figure of Moses, “the teacher,” who learned from his father-in-law Jethro, the heathen Midianite priest turned monotheist (see esp. Exod. 18:14-24). At the occasion of Jethro’s religious service even “Aaron and all the elders of Israel

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ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN RUSHEFSKY

came to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God" (Exod. 18:12). Interestingly, the talmudic sages wondered why Moses is not explicitly mentioned as taking part in this meal. "He is not mentioned as having come to eat bread with Jethro because he was standing by and waiting upon them," Rashi says (in *ad loc* commentary based upon the *Mechilta*, second-century rabbinic commentary on Shemot). In fact, Rashi argues that since the Bible says they ate their meal "before God," we can infer that "one who takes part in a meal at which scholars sit may be regarded as though he has enjoyment from the splendour of the *Shechinah* [God's Presence]" (Rashi, based upon Talmud Berachot 64a). Simply put, Rashi sees Jethro, this non-Jew, as a scholar who can inspire the Israelite leadership to experience God's very presence. The interreligious precedent for this kind of sharing is permanently inscribed in the weekly synagogal Torah reading named in honor of Jethro—*Parshat Yitro* (Exod. 18–20).

Jews do not need to invent a prophecy to allow us to learn from the spiritual wisdom of others. That possibility exists in our own sacred texts. However, because we no longer live amid the Midianites, it is up to us to expand this teaching to our current multicultural and multireligious reality. Given the wars fought over religious identity today, at stake in this effort to learn from the other is the very survival of us "earthlings." My own effort to grasp the hem of the other's garment shows just how necessary, but also how difficult, learning this teaching can be.

For those who have grown up without religion, or with families of multiple religions, sharing the spiritual wisdom of other traditions may seem obvious, even natural. That was not my background, however. I come from a fairly traditional Jewish family. Though I grew up in the United States, I was educated in a closed ethnic community, the yeshiva, where the very word "Jesus," or even worse, "Christ," was anathema; I was forbidden even to speak the word "Christ" out loud, as if the articulation itself had the force of evil. In order not to say "Christ-mas," we used to substitute the similar sounding and derogatory "*krats-mech*" (Yiddish for "scratch me"). I defined—and protected—my identity as a member of a religious minority in part by deriding the majority religion, Christianity. In short, though thoroughly American in other ways, in my spiritual identity I was more akin to a Hindu separatist who denies a place for Islam in her pantheon than I was to a pluralistic American.

Paradoxically, I did not learn how to hear what Christians have to tell in the cosmopolitan environs of New York City where I grew up, but in the parochial environment of Jerusalem. As an adult, I became an Orthodox rabbi and a theologian. In 1976 I emigrated to Jerusalem out of Zionist motives, and lived in my spiritual homeland for twenty years. Coming "home" had a restorative effect,

allowing me to discover that spiritual worlds exist outside of my own.

I cannot credit myself with the first impulse to reach out to others. The first thought I ever had of talking in any serious way with Christians about religion came from my colleague, Yehezkel Landau, who invited me to give a talk to a group of Christian young men and women on the Jewish concept of *mitzvah*, commandment. My reflex reaction to his invitation was, "What could I possibly have to talk about to *goyim* (gentiles) in what concerns my religion? If they leave me alone, I'll leave them alone, and that's just fine. Don't need a love-in." My reaction was the reflex of an Ashkenazic New Yorker whose ancestors had been subjected to thousands of years of Christian "love," culminating in the Holocaust.

As a child, my deepest relationship to Christianity centered around the free bus pass that a student could use for public transportation to school. Every Sunday, I would get on the bus and show my pass, and every Sunday the Irish or Italian bus driver would say: "That is not valid on Sundays." And I would have my argument ready: "But I go to yeshiva." Yeshivas are Jewish orthodox schools which strictly follow the Jewish calendar and especially disregard Christian holidays like Christmas, Easter and Sundays. To my childhood regret, we had school six days a week, except Saturday, the Jewish Shabbat. This meant that I was forever in a disputatious relationship with Christians, represented by the bus drivers.

This disputatious attitude followed me even to the pulpit, when I served as rabbi to a small outlying city near New York. I did belong to the interfaith clergy association in this small town and we would collegially convene at different houses of worship for meetings of the association. I could admit that the mostly Christian clergy were rather friendly, but still, in the back of mind, I would wonder how open could I be with these *goyim*. Centuries of Crusades, Inquisitions, pogroms, Shoah were deeply imbedded in my spirit. I was born in France in 1942 and only luck, fate, or God's absent-mindedness can account for my and my parents' and brother's having survived. The suffering of my people was a part of my perception of suspicion. *Kabdahu ve'chashdehu*, "respect but suspect him," is how the Talmud puts it.

So when my friend Yehezkel Landau asked me talk about theology with a group of Christians, asked me to go beyond suspicion to actually share the core of my beliefs, I paused. Then I went. I was in Israel, after all, not New York. No one even drove buses on Shabbat in Jerusalem! Then, too, Landau was my friend, and one never disappoints a friend. I went along for the ride, and had an experience that transformed my perception. To my surprise, this Christian group was interested in everything Jewish under the sun. *Mitzvah*, *Torah*, *Shabbat*, *kiddush*, *Halachah*—all my concerns! And these Christians wanted to know about

them and about *Eretz Yisroel* (Land of Israel) and *Medinat Yisroel* (State of Israel), and how it all fitted together. They didn't want to convert me; they didn't want to discuss Jesus; they didn't want to talk about the "new" Testament, only about the *Tanach*, what Christians call the "Five Books of Moses." I was beside myself with simple joy.

Yehezkel was then the program director of religious education at Nes Amim, the Christian settlement in North Israel that exists to testify to the rebirth of the Jewish people in their land by taking part in the life of the reborn Israel and its people. He invited me to lecture there as well. And again I met Christians, from Holland, Germany, the United States, Sweden, England, who not only volunteered to work in Israel but who also studied Jewish things and wanted to learn all about them. Thus began a period in which I taught Christians who were genuinely interested in things Jewish, not because they were in the process of converting to Judaism, but because they respected this ancient tradition that was the ground of their own.

When these Christians reached out to touch my garment, to learn from my teaching, I was able to finally lose my fear of them. I finally was able to begin—to *begin*—to see Christians as spiritually engaged fellow travelers along a path of learning. Yet even with this awareness, I still saw that path as a one-way street, in which I was the teacher, and Christians the students.

It took a Christian teacher and theologian, Paul van Buren, to show me how much I have to learn from Christianity.

A seasoned Protestant Anglican theologian, van Buren was struggling with the question of how Christians could continue to face up to their own tradition given its two thousand year teaching of contempt for the Jews. Encountering the scandal of the cross at Auschwitz he reflected, "I was seeing the cross in full and awful truth for the first time." How could his religion, a religion that preached love, be reconciled with the facts of its historical agenda?

Paul put his wrestling down into a manuscript that he called *A Christian Theology of the People Israel* (New York, 1983) and submitted it to a highly educated and critically oriented group of scholars and theologians who formed the core of the Shalom Hartman Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies in Jerusalem. At the time, I was fortunate enough to be a member of that Institute. Headed by Rabbi David Hartman, this group, together with van Buren, spent a month taking his manuscript apart with critical comments and analyses. He, with his cool and sober New

England attitude, absorbed and responded by debate and corrections, which were ultimately incorporated into his Christology. This experience became the founding event of the Osher Center for Religious Pluralism at the Hartman Institute, of which van Buren and Hartman became co-directors. To this day, annually, Jewish, Christian, and now also Muslim theologians, scholars, and literary personages study each other's religious texts.

The first conferences were difficult to organize, because we really didn't know how to speak to each other. We discussed what to discuss. We created a conference on "interpretation" only to find what I call the fourteenth hermeneutic principle (punning on Rabban Gamaliel's famous *Thirteen Rules for Elucidating the Torah*) namely, that "there was never a text that stood in the way of a good interpretation."

After a month of interpreting interpretations of interpretations, we realized that our conversations remained vague in part because we tended to dance around the issues that stood in the way of mutual respect and appreciation. So we decided to follow van Buren's lead, and only focus on what we called "dangerous" texts. These are the texts within our respective traditions that rule other spiritual ways out, that endanger the possibility of another spiritual way, that threaten in principle and/or by action the toleration of another way of approaching spirituality. We decided to identify those dangerous texts and examine

how our traditions might handle them if we were interested in promoting a way of religion and a life of faith whose integrity does not depend upon the annulment of another's way of religion and faith.

For example, one of the most difficult Christian texts for Jews is a line from the Gospel of John: "No one comes to the Father who does not come through Me." (John 14:6). For centuries, this line has been used as a doctrine of Christian exclusivity, condemning Jews, Muslims, and all others who do not come to God through Jesus. How to deal with such a line? I was so innocent at first. I remember asking van Buren whether placing a question mark instead of a period would solve the problem by turning dogma into rhetoric, like so: "Does no one come to the Father who does not come through Me?" (John 14:6) How absurd! Of course the resolution of such dangerous texts could not be simply a matter of new punctuation! Our work was to create a way of thinking about such texts that would be credible to the community of the faithful who took those texts to be sacred. Instead of trying hermeneutic tactics, we instead tried to put this line back into context. Didn't John



also report that the Christian messiah said, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John 13:47)? Here was evidence, from within Christian theology, that an exclusivist, dogmatic reading of 14:6 wouldn't fit John's larger perspective. We learned from this that formal solutions must be bolstered by substantive arguments.

We also came to understand that intention was as important as substance. Jacob Katz, a Jewish historian who has written extensively on the history of Jewish-Christian relations during the Middle Ages, has argued that "heartfelt conviction proved stronger than the written word" in changing the attitudes of one group to another (*Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, p. 123). For example, ancient Jewish texts had forbidden a range of relationships between Jews and non-Jews. Yet, fourteenth-century talmudist Rabbi Menahem Ha-Me'iri was able to sweep away centuries of prohibitions by arguing that the old rules only applied to idolaters and "had nothing to do with contemporary Christianity." Katz explains that credible theology does not depend merely on the text, but also on the creativity of the interpreter and most importantly, on the capacity of the community for new ideas. When communities are ready to accept the other, they can find new ways to understand their theological texts.

In the course of these discussions, I came to see that my work was not only to teach Christians about Judaism, but to open myself to Christian teachings. How could I learn to receive new ideas, to overcome my prejudices toward Christian theology and the deep suspicion I held toward Christianity itself? I used to make it my business to be the first to meet Paul van Buren on his visits to Jerusalem, so that my own personal questions about Christianity could be given a full hearing by "my" Christian expert. Paul never disappointed me in his nuanced listening or in his refusal to be trapped into a one-sided perspective.

What was, for me, the most startling discovery in these conversations was that Paul was not at all interested in that sacred theological cow which is dignified by the term "dialogue." He was interested in "monologue"—he wanted to "do" his Christianity, to clarify its religious demands upon himself, his community, its relations to existence, its terms for the divine dimension and its relationship to modernity. But he could not "do Christianity" honestly, nor fully, if he did not do it in the presence, or,

better said, within the hearing range, of Jews who were serious about their Judaism the way he was about his Christianity. He needed that checkpoint so that he would not fall into the kinds of disastrous religious errors that, according to him, had plagued Christianity since the original Paul was misunderstood in the second century to the everlasting regret of Jews and shame of Christians. It was this error that he, the modern Paul, wanted to rectify. For the rest, to say it bluntly, he could not care less whether or not Jews agreed with his spiritual way. He was not looking for a seal of Christian comprehensibility in Jewish terms, only of a *kasbrut*—"fitness"—a seal for Jewish survival under Christian interpretations of the Christian tradition.

On the Jewish side, David Hartman shared Paul's one-sidedness, which perhaps is why there was such good

chemistry between them. He too was interested not in "dialogue" but in "learning." He founded his Institute in Jerusalem from the firm conviction that the establishment of the State of Israel made it imperative to reexamine the significance of the Jewish tradition in all its aspects. A tradition that served a minority culture struggling to survive in the Diaspora, could not simply be taken over to serve a majority that wielded influence over others. Power was the new issue. Jews now needed to gain the transformative capability to free ourselves from the limits we imposed on ourselves in the past as defensive measures to facilitate our survival. Urgent on this agenda was Judaism's relation to other cultures and religions, Christianity among



them. David's most important message in this regard has been, "travel light!" By this he means, don't talk about things you don't know about. Don't assume things that are outside your own competence and experience. So if you want to know about Christianity, ask a Christian; don't impose your conceptions from your apologetic needs upon others. He writes:

Acknowledging the existence of other faiths in their own right need not be a violation of our covenantal faith commitment. The very presence of a dignified other enhances our covenantal creature consciousness.... Our memory of suffering must transform the profound sense of isolation we have felt in history into new energies to celebrate the dignified flourishing of strangers within our own national community (*Pluralism within the Judaic Tradition*).

We knew our work was succeeding when we invited Coos Schoneveld, Director of the International Council

of Christians and Jews, to the Institute to present his way of living his Christianity. He entitled his talk: "Why I Love Jesus Christ." And he began with essentially these words: "In being invited to your *beyt midrash* (study hall) to share my vision of Jesus Christ, I feel that you have truly come home. Only at home could you feel confident enough, relaxed enough to invite a stranger, a Christian at that, to speak his heart without reservation. Thank you." Orthodox, conservative, liberal, and secular Israelis sat and listened and then asked for more clarifications—not justifications, but insight into his way of spirituality. The messiah had truly arrived at that moment.

My own journey has taken me far since my days at the Hartman Institute. In the year 1990–91 I left Israel for Holland to write a dissertation under the mentoring of Yehudah Aschkenasy. I returned to live in the Netherlands in 1996 and since then have worked as a kind of freelance theologian of Judaism with responsibilities as the director of the Folkertsma Talmudic Institute. My work has brought me into contact with *leerhuizen* (study groups) comprised mostly of Christians who are intent on learning more about Judaism for a variety of motives. Especially interesting to me are the *leerhuizen* of clergy—Protestant ministers and Catholic priests. They are taking a new look at Jewish

sources, at the Bible as seen through Jewish spectacles. My method is open. I do not use different methods than I would use with Jewish students. At the same time that I am being "researched" for Judaic understanding, I am "researching" them for Christian understandings.

This extraordinarily rich interfaith experience has convinced me, more than ever, that every tradition represents an effort of one part of humankind to articulate a spiritual gateway to transcendence, to faith, to ethics, to a higher calling. We need access to each other's efforts so that we can understand and correct those places where one group's efforts block another's. We also need to be open to ideas that can contribute to our own efforts. But our focus is upon our effort, not everyone else's. There is not enough time in one lifetime to try on every mantle of spirituality. There is barely enough to begin to wear one's own.

Perhaps in this, one could say that Zechariah's imagery is exaggerated. One could hardly try on another's garment. Or perhaps the prophet was careful after all: taking a hold of merely a corner of a garment is not like trying on the whole mantle. We will have reached the messianic age when we have learned how to wear our own cloaks well, but also have learned how to reach out to touch the corner of the other's. □

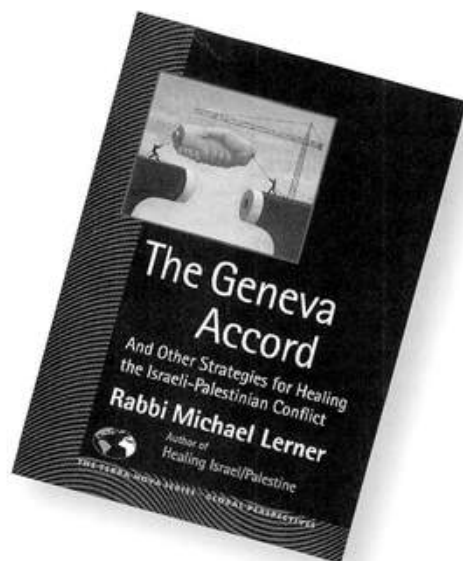
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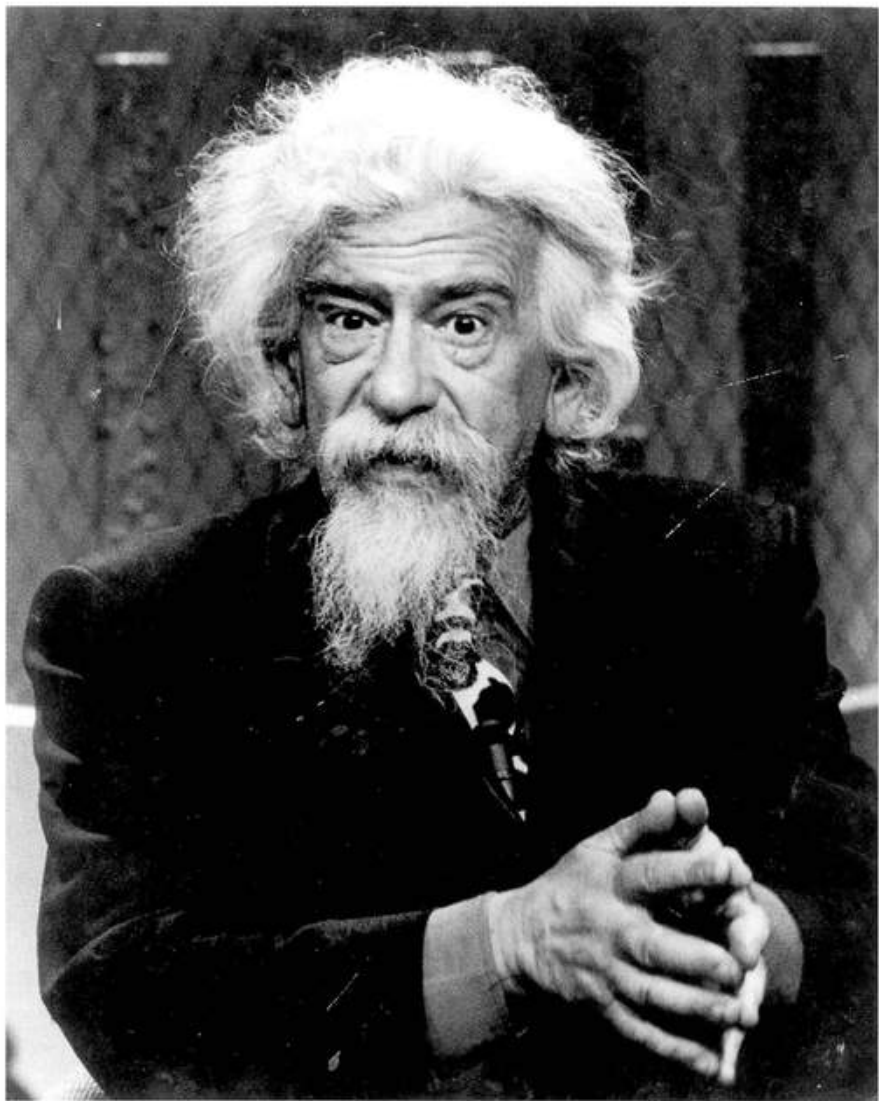
The Ba'al Shem Tov in San Francisco

Burt Jacobson with Richard Stone

On a Friday night in June 1966, two days before my ordination as a rabbi, I ingested a sugar cube laced with the psychoactive entheogen, LSD. I began a slow ascent to a state of consciousness in which all my normal cares and anxieties simply lifted away. As these boundaries dissolved, being became a vast transparent center of awareness, totally open, accepting, loving and ecstatic—an entirely blessed and holy state. My “I” had disappeared, replaced instead with this center of awareness that was intimately linked with everything, one with the entirety of the Universe, a small part of a vast oneness my “I” had always termed “God”....

After that night, rabbinic student “Burt Jacobson” went through with ordination, but as if on auto-pilot. I became a conservative rabbi, serving as a Jewish educator. My perceptions, however, had changed, and I began, slowly, to re-evaluate the major life decisions I had made. The traditional Judaism I had been practicing, even abetted by years of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, had failed to alleviate the rage and anxiety in my soul, and continued to feed the sense of guilt and victimization that had been my companion since childhood. I wanted more of life. In 1971, five years after being ordained, I made what I believed would be a complete break with Jewish tradition and identity, fleeing from Boston to the West Coast. By 1972 I was teaching in a counter-cultural free school in San Francisco, living with a group of hippies in the Haight-Ashbury district of the city, and smoking a lot of pot.

Burt Jacobson is one of the founders of the Jewish Renewal Movement and the founding Rabbi of Kehilla Community Synagogue in Berkeley, CA. He is working on a book about the Ba'al Shem Tov. Richard Stone is director of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, a writer, and Burt's long-standing dialogue-mate and editorial consultant.



One day, while browsing in a bookstore on Haight street, I came across a new book by Abraham Joshua Heschel entitled *A Passion for Truth*. And so it happened, in the midst of my escape from Judaism, that the spirit of the Ba'al Shem Tov found me in San Francisco. Rabbi Heschel had been an important teacher for me in rabbinical school. I had been affected especially by his religious philosophy, which derived, in part, from his personal experiences of wonder, mystery, and what he termed “radical amazement.” The dust jacket told me that the book was a parallel study of two nineteenth-century spiritual teachers, the Polish Hasidic master, Reb Menachem Mendl of Kotzk, and the

Danish Christian theologian, Søren Kierkegaard, father of religious existentialism.

I opened the book and immediately found myself riveted by Heschel's words. Heschel talked about the lifelong struggle that had raged within him as two radically different spiritual masters battled for his soul: Israel Ba'al Shem Tov and the Kotzker Rebbe. The Ba'al Shem Tov, I knew, was the founder of the eighteenth-century revivalist movement in Poland known as Hasidism. He had taught the importance of ecstasy, love, and faith to the masses of dispirited Jews in eighteenth-century Poland.

I found myself drawn to the Ba'al Shem, who emphasized human goodness and potential. He disclosed the reality of the Divine in the here and now, in *every* here and now, and—most important for me—within the human self. According to the Ba'al Shem, the physical world consists of nothing but veils hiding the Oneness of reality. If we can just learn to see through the veils, we will be able to experience the immediacy of the Divine in each and every event and thing, in ourselves, and in all being. I had seen a glimpse of that oneness thanks to my LSD experiences. In some sense, I had left the East Coast seeking a way to be able to find Divinity wherever I was, to feel God surging through my limbs, to witness the Presence in my own consciousness. I wanted to be attached to God even while carrying out mundane tasks or making small talk.

Something, however, was holding me back, preventing me from letting myself go into the wonder of the moment. Thus I was intrigued by Heschel's description of his struggles with Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, the Kotzker Rebbe. Heschel wrote:

I was taught about inexhaustible mines of meaning by the Baal Shem; from the Kotzker I learned to detect immense mountains of absurdity standing in the way. The one taught me song, the other—silence. The one reminded me that there could be a heaven on earth, the other shocked me into discovering Hell in the alleged Heavenly places in our world. (*A Passion for Truth*, 10)

The Kotzker brought about a revolution in Hasidism. While Mezbizh [the town in which the Baal Shem lived] emphasized love, joy, and compassion for this world, Kotzk demanded constant tension and unmitigated militancy in combating this-worldliness. The Baal Shem was kind to everyone, the Kotzker harsh. The passionate indignation of the Prophets came back to life in the Kotzker. (10)

As I read on and learned more about the Kotzker I found myself frightened, even repelled. Certainly part of this had to do with the stark typology Heschel employed in contrasting the two men, as here:

*If we can just learn to
see through the veils, we
will be able to experience
the immediacy of the
Divine in each and every
event and thing.*

Wonder and exaltation infused the words of the Baal Shem Tov. His teaching called for fervor, joy and ecstasy. Suffering and torment suffused the maxims of the Kotzker. His teaching called for earnest reflection and self-inquiry, for sobriety and severity. (37)

But the Kotzker was not simply some paper bogeyman from a traditionalist past. I feared the Kotzker. His message was a relentless attack upon the ego: it undermined the sense of human adequacy. Here was the sternness and judgementalism, the narrow, obsessive focus on human shortcomings, that I already struggled with in myself. I began to see Heschel's struggle as my own. But why would Heschel make humiliation into a *virtue*? And how would I be able to integrate or repel the message of the Kotzker? I had to understand Heschel's struggle to understand my own.

Heschel's Passion

In recent years I have learned much about Abraham Heschel's life journey from the first of a projected two volume biography, *Abraham Joshua Heschel: Prophetic Witness*, by Edward K. Kaplan and Samuel Dresner (Yale University Press, 1998). Heschel was born and grew up in a Hasidic family in Warsaw, Poland; his father, Moshe Mordecai of Pelzovizna, had been a rebbe, a spiritual master. During his childhood in Warsaw, Heschel's father charmed Avrumele—as his family called the boy—with tales that centered around the small town of Mezbizh, where the youngster's grandfather and namesake, Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Apt, had served as rebbe. Of course, Mezbizh was and is most celebrated as the town where Israel ben Eliezer, the Ba'al Shem Tov (also known as the Baal Shem or Besht) had lived and taught.

"The earliest fascination I can recall," wrote Heschel, "is associated with the Baal Shem, whose parables disclosed some of the first insights I gained as a child" (*A Passion for Truth*, xiv). The impression that the Ba'al Shem made on the boy can be gleaned from a reflection of Heschel's found in one of his earlier essays:

"He who really wants to be uplifted by communing with a great person whom he can love without reservation, who can enrich his thought and imagination without end, that person can meditate about the life and being of the Besht. There has been no one like him in the last thousand years." (from "Hasidism as a New Approach to Torah" in *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, edited by Susannah Heschel, 34)

In their biography of Heschel's life, Kaplan and Dresner write that as a child, Heschel was seen as a prodigy. He had a remarkable memory, great self-confidence, and

JUDAISM

precocious wit and charm. Avrumele had three older sisters, but as the youngest child he was often the center of attention. His family saw in him a future rebbe, and groomed him for his adult role. They also noticed the youngster beginning to develop an excess of self-regard.

Avrumele's father died in the boy's ninth year. At that point, his uncle took over his education. Rabbi Alter Israel Shimon Perlow of Novominsk was also a Hasidic rebbe, but unlike Avrumele's father he was a follower of the Kotzker Rebbe. He assigned the boy a tutor, Bezalel Levy.

Kaplan and Dresner state that Reb Bezalel, in the tradition of Kotzk, addressed Avraham's youthful pride by repeatedly questioning the boy's self-worth, driving home his incomplete spiritual integrity. Reb Bezalel succeeded in breaking Avrumele's overconfidence, but the Kotzk influence was unintegrated and psychologically damaging. For the remainder of his life, Heschel would be a person divided, plagued by contradictory perceptions of himself. Heschel once wrote in his diary: "His one aim was to plant in my heart the feeling of contrition, of repentance, the danger of being a rebbe's son. He would constantly break down my ego, my self-confidence. To such an extent that whatever inferiority complexes I have. . ." (*Prophetic Witness*, 40. Also see note 10 on p. 316). He did not complete this entry.

The Ba'al Shem Tov and the Kotzker came to personify for Heschel the two forces contending for his soul. In *A Passion for Truth* Heschel wrote:

In a very strange way, I found my soul at home with the Baal Shem Tov but driven by the Kotzker. Was it good to live with one's heart torn between the joy of Mezbizh and the anxiety of Kotzk? To live in both awe and consternation, in fervor and horror, with my conscience on mercy and my eyes on Auschwitz, wavering between exaltation and dismay? Was this the life a man would choose to live? I had no choice: my heart was in Mezbizh, my mind in Kotzk (xiv)

Heschel was ordained as a rabbi and completed his doctoral studies in Berlin in the mid-1930s. He was stranded in Europe in

1940, when the president of Hebrew Union College secured a visa for him and brought him to the United States. He struggled to save members of his family who were stranded in Poland, but to no avail. On several occasions Heschel tried to awaken American Jewish leadership to what was occurring in Europe, but no one would pay attention. He looked on, impotent, as his people were murdered in Poland and Europe.

In his 1949 *The Earth is the Lord's: the Inner World of the Jew in Eastern Europe*, an eloquent and moving elegy for Eastern European Jewry, he wrote:

A world has vanished. All that remains is a sanctuary hidden in the realm of the spirit. We of this generation are still holding the key. Unless we remember, unless we unlock it, the holiness of the ages will remain a secret of God. We of this generation are still holding the key—the key to the sanctuary which is also the shelter of our own deserted souls. If we mislay the key, we shall elude ourselves. (107)

Clearly, to Heschel, the Ba'al Shem was a key to that sanctuary. In those same years, Heschel made plans to write

Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Joshua Heschel march to promote voting rights in Selma, AL. (1965).



a comprehensive book on the life and thought of the Ba'al Shem Tov. Heschel's desire to write this book had to do with preserving the legacy of the founder of Hasidism, and of the Hasidic world that was systematically destroyed by the Nazis. But I believe it was more than that: "The Baal Shem made dark hours luminous..." (*Passion*, xiv). In that hour of the greatest tragedy that had ever befallen his people, he was linking himself to the powerful spiritual affirmation of the underlying goodness of God and the world represented by the personality and teachings of the Besht.

After publishing *The Earth is the Lord's*, he went on to write *Man Is Not Alone*, *The Sabbath*, *God in Search of Man*, and *Man's Quest for God*. These works were heavily influenced by the sensibility of the Ba'al Shem Tov. Heschel wrote that the Besht had helped him refine his immediate sense of mystery. The first chapters of *Man is Not Alone*, arguably his masterwork, were titled, "The Sense of the Ineffable," "Radical Amazement," "The World is an Allusion." In *God in Search of Man*, there are chapters with titles like, "The Sublime," "Wonder," and "The Sense of Mystery." In 1954 he received a Guggenheim Fellowship to write a biography of the Ba'al Shem Tov. He completed preliminary studies of four prominent companions of the Ba'al Shem. These were translated and edited into a book by Samuel Dresner entitled *The Circle of the Baal Shem Tov* (University of Chicago, 1985).

In 1965-66, during my senior year in rabbinical school, there were two serious arson attempts on the Jewish Theological Seminary. I was living on the sixth floor of the rabbinical school dormitory. In both instances, I had to escape by climbing through a window onto a narrow parapet and then crawling several hundred feet to safety. The first fire did little real damage, but the second reached the rare books collection of the library, destroying many irreplaceable books and manuscripts. It took three days to extinguish the blaze. My fellow student, friend, and mentor, Arthur Green, was standing next to Rabbi Heschel during the fire, in front of the Seminary. He told me that Heschel was weeping. "Well, there goes my book on the Ba'al Shem Tov," he said. Heschel had left his entire collection of notes and insights on the Ba'al Shem with the volumes he was studying in the rare books collection.

Heschel's last writings were two works on the Kotzker, a two-volume work in Yiddish entitled *Kotzk* and *A Passion for Truth*. Why did he choose to write about the

Kotzker rather than the Besht? While it is true that his research on the Ba'al Shem had been lost in the seminary fire, still he was eminently knowledgeable about the Besht. He could have easily written a popular and inspirational study of the Ba'al Shem. The early outline that Samuel Dresner found in Heschel's files after his death might have become just such a book (see *Circle*, xxxiii).

In an interview with Heschel at Notre Dame in 1967, the interviewer stated: "Your recent writings reflect your concern with man's deepening alienation from God and the world's drift toward destruction." Heschel added:

I am really a person who is in anguish. I cannot forget what I have seen and been through. Auschwitz and Hiroshima never leave my mind. Nothing can be the same after that. After all, we are convinced that we must take history seriously and that in history signs of the future are given to us. I see signs of a deterioration that has already begun. The war in Vietnam is a sign that we don't know how to live or how to respond. God is trying us very seriously. I wonder if we will pass the test(390)

And a few years later in *A Passion for Truth*, he wrote:

Gone for our time is the sweetness of faith. It has ceased to come to us as a gift. It requires "blood, sweat, and tears." We are frightened by a world that God may be ready to abandon. What a nightmare to live in a cosmic lie, in an absurdity that makes pretensions of beauty. (320)

In his final years, the Kotzker's anguish over human mendacity and vulgarity had gained ascendancy in Heschel's heart. He had seen the full panoply of human cruelty. He had witnessed the murder of European Jewry, the destruction of the religious culture of Judaism in his native Poland, and the annihilation of the greatest living Jewish mystics and spiritual teachers. He had seen his adopted country, the United States, use atomic bombs to obliterate Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and he feared nuclear destruction. He was aware of the brutal effects of racism in America, and he was witnessing the senseless destruction of Vietnam. He worried for the future of Soviet Jewry. His two works on the Kotzker were his personal and theological response to human degeneracy.

The Kotzker ... seems to have had a haunting awareness of the terrible danger of human cruelty ... Had he been alive in the 1940's the Holocaust would not have come as a surprise to his soul ... Indeed, when human beings establish a *modus vivendi* on the basis of mendacity, the world can turn into a nightmare ... (*Passion*, 321).

JUDAISM

But Heschel was, I believe, also questioning God's hiddenness during the Holocaust. Earlier he had spoken of this in *Man is Not Alone*, (see chap. 16) but his view there was influenced strongly by the Ba'al Shem Tov: We have been taught by the Baal Shem that His remoteness is an illusion capable of being dispelled by our faith" (154). But in *A Passion for Truth* he writes about the Kotzker's decision to spend his last years in total solitude:

It is my hypothesis that his withdrawal was a shifting of the fronts, from waging the battle with man to a confrontation with God... From his utterances on those occasions when he left his chamber, we can only surmise that he was tormented by the ever-present enigma: why did God permit evil in the world? . . . The Kotzker felt the agony, knew the tragedy, but what was the remedy? There was only one way to survive: to be Holy in challenging God, to pray militantly, to worship heroically, and to wait. Above all, not to be fooled by false concessions from Heaven. (234, 263, 266)

Time and time again the Kotzker returned to this issue: was it conceivable that the entire world, heaven and earth, was a palace without a master? . . . "Could it be that this palace has no lord?" This problem tormented Reb Mendl. He, who never ingratiated himself with anyone and spoke the truth to everyone's face, did not delude himself with facile solutions. (272-276)

In an article about Heschel as a Hasidic scholar, Stephen Katz comments:

Like Reb Mendl, Heschel seems to have grown troubled with God himself. In fact, so troubled is Reb Mendl that he even dares to question the existence of God . . . Similarly, Heschel seems, as expressed through the subject matter of this last work, to have entered a phase of more radical and more honest uncertainty.... In the entire corpus of Heschel's work one will not find such an evocative indictment of life's possible meaninglessness." ("Abraham Joshua Heschel and Hasidism, in *The Journal of Jewish Studies*, Volume 31, 1980, 98-99)

Heschel wrote that if the Kotzker had witnessed the Holocaust, he would not have been surprised. But what about the Ba'al Shem? How might this master's witnessing the greatest tragedy of Jewish history have affected his optimistic spiritual philosophy? Toward the end of *A Passion for*



Truth Heschel penned a powerful passage that yokes the distinct voices of the two masters together into a single avowal:

Life in our time has been a nightmare for many of us, tranquility an interlude, happiness a fake. Who could breathe at a time when man was engaged in murdering the holy witness to God six million times?

And yet God does not need those who praise Him when in a state of euphoria. He needs those who are in love with Him when in distress, both He and ourselves. This is the task: in the darkest night to be certain of the dawn, certain of the power to turn a curse into a blessing, agony into a song. To know the monster's rage and, in spite of it, proclaim to its face (even a monster will be transfigured into an angel); to go through Hell and to continue to trust in the goodness of God—this is the challenge and the way. (300-301)

Personal Path

I did not personally flee the Holocaust. I was just a child when the bombs hit Hiroshima. Yet, as the Jewish tradition teaches us, I was there—I have seen and felt the cruelty of a world in which wars do not end. And I, like many of us, have been through my own private agony. I understood the voice of the Kotzker. Unlike Heschel, the Kotzker only repelled me. I was not willing to admit the Kotzker's voice as part of my own. Yet I could not deny his voice. To find my way through to the fullness of the Ba'al Shem Tov, I first had to confront the Kotzker in the particulars of my own life.

I was born in 1936, the eldest son of Gertrude and Albert Jacobson, native of Cleveland, Ohio. During my childhood years, my mother waged a furious campaign to convince the leaders of her community that Adolph Hitler's rise to power in Germany posed a threat to the Jews of Europe.

Her Cassandra warnings were ignored. The sense of helplessness she felt as her catastrophic visions materialized left her enraged, bitter, and depressed. Against the onslaught of history and the fate of millions, the needs of her children—my brother Stuart was born in 1940—seemed an irritant and a distraction.

I had been born with severe asthma and allergies, which at times threatened my young life with suffocation and death. Slow and passive by temperament, I did not begin to walk until age two. The physicians thought I might be retarded, but when I was tested it became clear that I was dyslexic and suffered from hypothyroidism. There also seems to be evidence of sexual molestation. I could not trust my body. I felt little support from my family. My anxiety, fear, and melancholy were at times overwhelming. I clung instead to my first spiritual intuition—that the outer world simply cannot be not be all there is. There has to be something more, something beyond the pain of the here and now. I retreated inward, abandoning body, forsaking heart, withdrawing into my mind, and putting up a mental barrier against the outer world.

My mother's sighs and dread about the Holocaust entered my soul, contaminating my sense of being Jewish with the poison of victimhood. Yet despite the negativity around Jewish existence imbued in me by my mother's struggles, it was Jewish religion that brought me the first rays of light, the first hope of refreshment beyond the cell of my childhood consciousness.

Though I was formally introduced to Judaism at a secular Jewish Sunday school, I was seven years old when my socialist grandfather, Ruby Goldberg, took me to a synagogue for the first time. It was the eve of Simchat Torah, the holy day of rejoicing with the Torah. We children were given decorated paper flags with apples stuck onto their thin wooden dowels, and candles set into the apples. Waving our flags, we marched happily around the synagogue following the men who were carrying the Torahs. When we had made a complete round of the synagogue, the men began to sing and dance joyously with the Torahs. Then another group took the scrolls and wended around the synagogue. What great fun! My grandfather sat in his pew watching the procession, smiling warmly at me whenever I passed by.

At that same time, my mother, sensing my unhappiness, arranged for me to attend Jewish summer camps for three summers. I loved the music and the singing, especially during the religious services. These camp experiences were the happiest times of my childhood, and it is largely because of them that I came to identify with Jewishness and Judaism in a positive way. But when I returned home from camp I

would re-enter a world fraught with the sadness and heaviness of being Jewish.

In 1947 the Jacobsons moved to San Antonio, Texas, and life began to improve for the family, and for me. My mother wanted her son to become Bar Mitzvah and our family affiliated with the local Reform temple. I came under the spiritual influence of Milton Bendiner, the educational director of Temple Beth El, who became my religious school teacher and, two years later, my Bar Mitzvah teacher. Throughout my adolescence he held Judaism up to my view as a prism through which I might find value, purpose, and meaning.

I entered the University of Texas with a religious bent; by my second year I understood clearly that my road to meaning and acceptance would be Judaism. One of the members of the local conservative congregation, Abraham Gottesman, was a Holocaust survivor, and the first fully committed

I was drawn to the demanding and absolutist God of the Torah (a psychiatrist might say it was a masculine version of, and rebuttal to, my mother's authoritarianism).

orthodox Jew I had ever spent time with. I began to see the world through his eyes. Under Gottesman's influence I turned to tradition with a near-fundamentalist ferocity, immersing myself in Jewish religious practices. I was drawn to the demanding and absolutist God of the Torah (a psychiatrist might say it was a masculine version of, and rebuttal to, my mother's authoritarianism). Reflecting on the condition of the world, I felt disgust for the failure of human beings to follow God's will. People were callous, vain, petty, and violent. God had provided us with wondrous opportunity, and humanity had

squandered this gift, failing to live in the image of God.

In those years I discovered the writings of the sainted nineteenth-century rabbi, Israel Salanter, the founder of the Musar movement of spiritual discipline. Salanter taught that because the urge to do evil is so powerful, one must be continually on guard so as to defeat its machinations. Fear of punishment, the negation of worldly pleasure, and striving for moral perfection were at the core of his spiritual awareness and practice. Such discipline involved the continual monitoring of thoughts and deeds and ongoing rigorous self-examination. I followed Salanter in his belief that self-denial and self-control would lead to the true affirmation of God, suppressing my desires and appetites, especially the sexual instinct. And of course my imperfection with these practices only reinforced the dismal view of myself they were meant to correct.

When I later encountered Menachem Mendel of Kotzk in *A Passion for Truth*, I immediately sensed the presence of Israel Salanter in another guise. Salanter was not a Hasid, but he nonetheless shared with the Kotzker a similar temperament and outlook on life. Both teachers sought God

out of fear and trembling; both believed that reason was not the road to truth, and that truth could be discovered only through a relentless ardor and inner searching; both saw as their great spiritual task the defeat of the machinations of the human ego.

During my fourth year at the seminary I read two books which shook my faith to the core: Andre Schwartz-Bart's *The Last of the Just* and Elie Weisel's *Night*. The first is a novel about a Jew who undergoes the trials of the Holocaust and ultimately dies in one of the concentration camps. *Night* is an autobiographical account of Weisel's personal ordeal in Auschwitz. Both authors harbored rage toward God and struggled with the question of why God allowed the Nazis to butcher six million Jews. These works reopened the wounds of my childhood. Like the authors, I wondered where this "moral" God had been during the Holocaust? Where had he been during my childhood?

My reflections brought me to believe that my attempt at piety and humility had been a sham, and my subservience to the God of Judaism had been disingenuous. How could I have allowed myself to believe in all this traditional garbage? The world is off-kilter, flooded with moral chaos. If there is a God at all, I concluded, he must be evil as well as good. Yet, I was caught in ambivalence, for despite my unrest, the seminary had become the only home I knew. I was no longer sure that I could believe in God, and thought about leaving; but in truth I could imagine nowhere else to go, nothing else to do.

I was clearly lost. Was there some path out of the empty wilderness of self-estrangement? I later understood that what I had been desperately longing for was acceptance, love, the embrace of the universe. Two years later I entered what kabbalists call the World of Unity through the grace of a psychoactive chemical.

Recovering the Besht

What drew me toward the Ba'al Shem Tov? I had tasted the cosmic oneness of existence, but I did not know how to bring that visionary imperative into the struggles and anxieties of my everyday existence so as to transform the mundane into the holy. I discovered that unlike Salanter and the Kotzker, who strike at the dark and resistant elements of human nature, the Ba'al Shem illumined the vast reservoir of human potential, a potential born of nurturing mystery, linking my small life to the great life of the universe.

For many years I have been cultivating an awareness of the divine presence in my life—one of the Besht's core practices—and I have witnessed the profound effects that this work has had for me. When I am able to remain anchored

in an awareness of God's continual presence, I can look at the negative patterns that arise as Divinity in disguise and as spurs to spiritual growth. Of course I do fall into forgetfulness, lose my balance, and get carried off by addictive fantasies. It took me a long time to come to understand that spiritual discernment requires self-discipline and surrender—surrender to life and to the universe and the vast mystery at its core. For me, this has meant recognizing that I am loved and, in turn, deepening my ability to love.

Judging myself harshly in the manner of Kotzk has not led me to healing. Nor has living in the tension and struggle that seems to have characterized Abraham Heschel's life. The Ba'al Shem counsels us to be gentle with ourselves and to learn from our defeats, trusting in our progress toward God and God-consciousness, even when we feel stymied. For the most part I have made my peace with the issues raised in my family of origin. I am grateful for the incentives to growth that were secretly bundled up with all the suffering.

But the challenge of Kotzk still rings in my ears. After decades of embracing the Besht, I have now come to some kind of rapprochement with the Kotzker and what he represents in my life. Truth to tell, he never really disappeared. There have always been times when I become too comfortable and self-satisfied, when I fear looking at blocks to growth. The Kotzker then appears, waking me to inner work that must be undertaken.

His voice also stirs me out of excessive inwardness and spiritual self-concern. He rails about the dangers of a world gone mad. He carries the stern tones of the ancient Hebrew prophets crying out against injustice, mendacity, and moral callousness. It was, I now appreciate, this terrible suffering of conscience that motivated my mother to try to save European Jewry. And it is that voice that has, in large measure, been responsible for my political work on behalf of causes ranging from Soviet Jewry and nuclear disarmament to the struggle for a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

But, for the most part, I am no longer torn between the Kotzker and the Ba'al Shem. The Kotzker does not have the final say. He lacks a measure of love and compassion, of equanimity and joy. In these last years I have come to understand that, for me, the compassionate voice of the Ba'al Shem Tov must undergird and inform the Kotzker's longing for truth and justice.

"How can the harshness of existence be sweetened at the core?" the Ba'al Shem once asked his disciples. He then answered his own question: "By raising oneself toward the greatest desire of all: the longing for true goodness. And what is true goodness? It is perfect compassion."□

*My reflections brought me
to believe that my attempt
at piety and humility
had been a sham...*

Justice at the Checkout Counter

Yitzhak Husbands-Hankin

Each time we pass cash from our hand to the hand of a checkout clerk we are participating in a global process that shapes our collective reality. When we buy products that are made in sweatshops, we affirm and support the legitimacy of that exploitive production process. When we buy products that have been produced through the inhumane treatment of animals, we fund the continuation of that cruelty. When we buy products that are made at the cost of environmental degradation, we fund the worsening damage to Creation.

Though we collectively exert an enormous influence at the checkout counter, we typically do not base our purchases on our value systems. We often don't realize the power we do have to change the world through what we buy. Even if we do, as consumers we do not usually have adequate information about the working conditions, treatment of animals, or environmental impact that went into creating the products we see at the store. What incentive do stores have to provide us with this information? The fact is, they have a disincentive, due to the efforts of organizations such as the WTO and multinational corporations who actively seek to suppress information about production processes.

For many of us, knowing how the products we buy were made is increasingly essential in order to allow us to live by the values that our ethical or religious traditions require. For example, over the centuries Jews have developed a special certification system to insure that foods are produced according to biblical and rabbinic standards. Most grocery stores carry these "kosher" food products. However, the word "kosher" does not just apply to food. "Kosher" means "proper to use" and can be applied to other kinds of products one does use. Just as "kosher certification" tells Jews which foods are permitted according to the dietary component of Jewish law, Jews now need some parallel or enhanced system of "kosher certification" to address biblical imperatives pertaining to the humane treatment of animals, environmental protection, and workers' justice.

For example, it is well known that many sports products such as soccer balls are made under conditions that are

dangerous and exploitive of workers. Often young children are the workers in this production process, and their health and well-being are severely diminished as a result. We need to develop a system of Ethical Kashrut in order to provide practitioners of the Jewish tradition access to essential information about products like soccer balls, so that conscience can be joined with consumption.

Other faith traditions have similar ethical prohibitions and so have a similar need for knowledge about practices they consider unethical or inhumane. And this need is not just experienced by people of faith. Many secular people today buy kosher, organic, free-trade, or similar products because they want their purchases to line up with their values. Ultimately, what our society needs is a system of applied Global Ethics in which Ethical Kashrut is the Jewish component of a broad alliance of many ethical traditions.

While other faith or ethical systems may choose different language to describe what Jews call "kosher," there is certainly a shared ethical/religious commitment to the underlying values and standards that the certification of Ethically Kosher products would address. Christianity, Islam, and other religious traditions, as well as a broad spectrum of ethical humanists, environmentalists, animal rights activists, union members and others, could join together in developing a significant, well-organized consumer base that requires high standards of ethics in production. Together these particular approaches would be the key components of a unified system of Global Ethics. This system would empower ethically-motivated consumers to have a significant impact on the production practices of global corporations.

The organized faith communities are well suited to serve as instruments for such large-scale education about the ethical challenges resulting from globalization. Church, synagogue, and mosque bulletins and newsletters are already available for communicating about agreed-upon standards and approved products. Membership organizations that are focused on labor, environmental, and animal rights issues can utilize their magazines, websites and networks to strengthen the coalition of partners in this common struggle. These elements, if successfully coordinated, could create a vast consumer base that would move the global market towards more ethical practices. □

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The Messianic Torah of Wholeheartedness

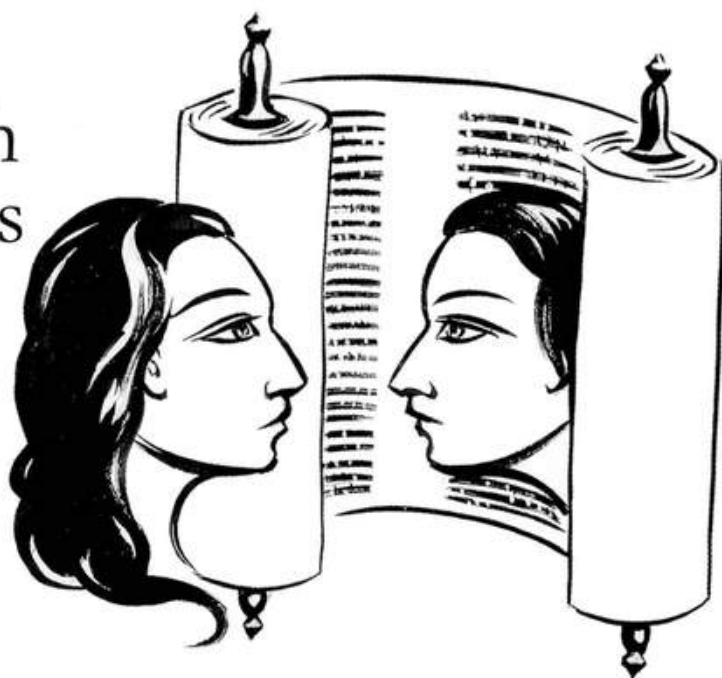
Estelle Frankel

For the past three and a half millennia, the Jewish people have engaged in an intimate love relationship with the Torah or scriptures. As with an earthly lover, we have both discovered and transcended ourselves through our relationship to sacred text. The Torah has been the repository of the deepest projections of our soul, and like a Rorschach inkblot, it has in turn revealed the deepest secrets of our souls to us. As God is said to have looked into the Torah in order to learn how to create the world, Jews have used the Torah in order to know themselves and to awaken and find a pathway back to God.

Though I don't think Freud was consciously aware of this, in his discovery of the unconscious he revealed that we are all much like a Torah scroll. In fact, many of the very same interpretive tools (word associations, puns, free association) that once captured the imagination of biblical scholars were transferred by psychoanalysis from the domain of sacred text to the human soul. As the Torah was considered to have both a "revealed" (*nigleh*) as well as an infinitely vast "concealed" (*nistar*) dimension, psychoanalysis made it clear that the unconscious mind is far more vast and complex than the conscious mind. Much like the "seventy faces" or possible meanings that the rabbis say co-exist within every word of Torah, psychoanalysis has revealed the multiple and often contradictory voices, impulses, and feelings that can co-exist within each individual. It's no great wonder that so many Jewish people have been attracted to the field of psychoanalysis, for Jews have been engaged in the psychoanalysis of scriptures for eons.

I know that when I sit with my therapy clients and listen to their stories, attuning myself to all the many subtle nuances of communication, I often feel as though I am studying a sacred text. And I realize that whatever I am actually picking up is only the tip of the divine iceberg. Ultimately, every person is an awesome mystery—a complete *sefer* Torah in and of themselves, with the potential for infinite meaning.

Adapted from Sacred Therapy: Jewish Spiritual Teachings on Emotional Healing and Inner Wholeness. © 2004 by Estelle Frankel; by arrangement with Shambhala Publications, Inc., Boston, www.shambhala.com. Estelle Frankel is a psychotherapist and teacher of Jewish mysticism. www.sacredtherapy.com



The radical notion that our lives and actions can become living embodiments of Torah was one of the unique innovations of Hasidism. Torah study, for the Hasidic masters, was not just about acquiring knowledge. It was about personal transformation. The aim was not just to *know* the story, but to *become* the story. And so among Hasidim, the *ma'aseh*—the tale spun from the real life stories of saints and simple pious Jews—became as important a focus of study as the ancient sacred texts. Disciples went to the rebbe often to learn the most mundane and ordinary things. When Reb Leib Sures was asked what he hoped to learn from his visit to the Maggid of Mezerich, he responded that he intended to learn how the Maggid tied his shoelaces. In other words, he wanted to learn how the rebbe embodied his Torah knowledge in the most ordinary of daily acts.

When people questioned Reb Shneur Zalman of Liadi about his decision to go study with the Maggid of Mezerich rather than the Vilna Gaon, who was considered to be the most illustrious Torah scholar of his generation, he responded that one goes to Vilna to learn how to learn Torah. He, however, was going to Mezerich to learn how to become a *sefer* Torah.

Reb Tzaddok Ha'Cohen of Lublin (1823–1900) took it a step further, suggesting that the entire Torah is contained within each of our souls, while scriptures are simply a commentary revealing “the depths that are hidden in every single soul”:

How foolish people are when they stand in front of a Torah scroll but don't stand in front of the great people around them. People think that the books of Torah are more important.... But from God's perspective ... the souls of Israel are the intended fruit of creation and they contain within them the entire Torah, only it is inaccessible and the (written) Torah is its interpretation. (Tzidkat Ha'Tzaddik #196)

While Reb Tzaddok's understanding of Torah as a commentary on the soul is a rather bold assertion for a nineteenth century Hassidic master, an even more striking perspective can be found in an ancient *midrash* (legend) on the book of Ruth. This *midrash*, which happens to be one of my all-time favorite *midrashim*, records a fascinating conversation among several rabbis that explores the relationship between "life" and "sacred narrative"—how our deeds become sacred writ. In the course of their conversation they come up with a notion of a messianic Torah, a Torah for a new world order, that will be comprised of the stories of each of our lives. Interestingly, the single most important guideline for inclusion in this sacred anthology, they suggest, is "wholeheartedness" (*lev shalem*).

A messianic Torah? Aside from my Orthodox friends, most of the Jewish people I know have long given up on the messiah, or have no idea what place this Jewish concept has in our real lives. Case in point, while writing this essay I decided to "google" the expression "messianic Torah." Every site that flashed on my computer screen referred me to a Jews for Jesus community or study group. There's no reason, however, that messianic Judaism should be the province only of Jesus Jews. If we can begin to intuit the nature of messianic consciousness, we may be able to bring that state of consciousness into our lives right here and now, in the same way that *Olam ha'ba* (the world that is coming) is available to us here and now when we open ourselves to the timeless dimension of Spirit. For those of us who are engaged in Torah study not just as a path of personal spiritual awakening, but also as a vehicle for social transformation, these kinds of questions are particularly important to consider.

The Ruth *midrash* points one way towards that kind of consciousness. Reb Yitzchak opens the discussion by examining the deeds of three biblical figures—Reuven (Joseph's brother), Aaron (Moses' brother), and Boaz (Ruth's benefactor). Though each one of these characters acted with apparent good will, the *midrash* points out that on some subtle level they failed to give wholeheartedly of themselves. And by acting half-heartedly rather than wholeheartedly, each of these characters missed an opportunity to influence all eternity through their actions:

Reb Yitzchak said: We learn from the story of Ruth and Boaz that when a person performs a mitzvah, he should do it with a whole heart. For had Reuven known that his actions were being written down in scriptures for all times, as the Torah wrote 'Reuven heard and saved him (Joseph) from their hands,' (Gen. 37:22) he would have carried his brother, Joseph, on his own shoulder straight back to his father! Had Aaron known that his actions were being written down in scriptures, he would have greeted his brother Moses with drums and dance. Had Boaz known that his actions would be written up in the text as 'he gave her a bit of corn,' he would have fed her (Ruth) stuffed veal! (Yalkut Shimoni Ruth)

In the famous tale of Joseph and his brothers, Reuven,

the eldest of the twelve brothers, makes a half-hearted attempt to stand up to his brothers' evil plot to kill Joseph by proposing that they throw Joseph into a pit rather than kill him. Secretly, scriptures tell us, he plans to return and rescue Joseph when the brothers are not looking. Reuven's intentions are good, but, let's face it, he lacks, well, balls. And by not acting more courageously and assertively on his loving impulse, he misses the opportunity to save his brother and to influence history for all eternity. According to Reb Yitzchak, he should have "carried his brother, Joseph, on his own shoulder straight back to his father!" Instead, Reuven must face profound grief and regret over this missed opportunity: "And Reuven returned to the pit and behold Joseph was no longer in the pit; And he tore his garments in grief. And he returned to his brothers and said: 'The boy is not there, and I, where shall I go.'" (Gen. 37:29-30)

When Aaron greets his brother, Moses, upon his return from Midian after not having seen him for forty years, the Torah says that "he went and met him at the mountain of God and he kissed him." (Exod. 4:27) Though Aaron greets his brother with "joy in his heart," the *midrash* wonders why, after decades apart, Aaron does not show more affection or excitement. Where are the "drums and dance"?—the feelings of exuberance and exhilaration over being re-united with his brother after forty years! Can you imagine the joy one might feel in this kind of situation? And in noting that Aaron's joy seems muted, the *midrash* suggests that, on some level, he misses the moment. He is not fully present. Like so many of us who withhold the full expression of our love and joy in order to play it safe, Aaron is unable to express the depth of his innermost feelings.

Finally, the *midrash* comes to the story of Ruth and Boaz. And though Ruth is probably one of the finest role models of wholeheartedness in all of scriptures, the *midrash*, unfortunately, does not comment on that. Instead it focuses on Boaz's lack of wholeheartedness. Though Boaz is kind to Ruth, and even gives her extra grain when she comes to glean in his fields, the *midrash* faults him with a certain stinginess. He gives, but his giving is measured. Somehow, the *midrash* seems to be suggesting, Boaz is afraid to give wholeheartedly of himself. Like Reuven and Aaron, he is unable to show the depth of love and generosity he feels in his heart. And by holding back, he, too, misses an opportunity to influence life for all eternity.

Ruth, by contrast, does not hold back. She not only acts with impeccable integrity and generosity towards her mother-in-law, she is also not afraid to express her deepest feelings of love and devotion. Even when she is repeatedly discouraged from following her mother-in-law back to the land of Israel where she will potentially be shunned as a complete stranger and outsider, a despised Moabite, Ruth persists in her devotion, saying: "Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you

SPIRITUAL HEALING

go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus and more may the Lord do to me if anything but death parts me from you." (Ruth 1:16-17) Frankly, I can't think of a better example of "wholeheartedness" in all of scriptures. And, when I think about it, it's rather remarkable that the midrash-makers did not find it in their hearts to point this out! Especially since Ruth was the great-grandmother of King David, progenitor of the messianic lineage. Her "wholeheartedness" gave birth to the seeds of the messiah.

Why does each of the characters cited in the midrash hold back? For that matter, why do any of us hold back? Are we simply too embarrassed to show the fullness of our love and true being? Is it because when we were kids our parents failed to receive all our gifts of love and exuberance? Do we hold back so as not to risk feeling that old childhood pain of non-recognition once more—of expressing feelings that may be met with rejection or indifference? Are we ashamed of the depth of our feelings, so we hold back to play it safe? Whatever the cause, the authors of this midrash are suggesting that we find our eternity—our place in the messiah's Torah—only when we give ourselves fully

and wholeheartedly to life; when we meet the moment and the deed (mitzvah) at hand with non-ambivalent wholeheartedness. In short, when we stop holding back!

The midrash then goes on to challenge each of us to live our lives as though *our* deeds, our *mitzvot*, were being recorded in a sacred scroll—the Torah of the messiah:

Rebbe Kohen and Rebbe Yehoshua of Sachnin in the name of Rebbe Yehoshua ben Levi said: In the past a man performed a mitzvah and the prophet wrote it down. Now, when a person performs a mitzvah who writes it? Elijah and the Messiah. And the Holy One (God) seals it ...

The messianic Torah alluded to in this midrash is the cumulative spiritual work of all the generations. It is composed of the stories of each of our lives, as we live mindfully and wholeheartedly from the depth of our true being. To experience our lives as living embodiments of Torah is to know that our lives have meaning and purpose. It is a call to live life with greater awareness and mindfulness of the awesome holiness of each moment, for each of us, like the characters cited in the midrash, has the power to influence the world for the better through our deeds. Our actions, in fact, reach out to all eternity. □

Haiti's Wretched of the Earth (from page 26)

Haiti has no army. The beleaguered government appealed for help to the UN Security Council, but this was delayed by the Bush administration—delayed long enough for the government to fall or be pushed out.

And so, on the morning of February 29, Haitians and the readers of American newspapers learned that the president of Haiti had "fled the country." In the following days the Aristides objected to this description, calling the "flight" a "kidnapping." Did the United States and France have a hand in his forced removal? Were President and Mrs. Aristide held against their will? Most of Aristide's claims—initially disputed by U.S. officials from Assistant Secretary of State Noriega to Donald Rumsfeld—are now acknowledged to be true. And many more questions remain unanswered. We know that U.S. official and unofficial interests overtly financed the opposition. But did they also provide, even indirectly, the high-powered U.S. weapons that gave the rebellion its muscle? (Only a year ago 20,000 such weapons were promised to the Dominican Republic. A *Boston Globe* reporter, writing on March 1, 2004, cites a senior U.S. official who confirmed that the weapons were in fact delivered). Senator Christopher Dodd is urging an investigation of U.S. training sessions for 600 "rebels" in the Dominican Republic and also wants to investigate "how the International Republican Institute spent \$1.2 million of taxpayer money" in Haiti.

Oscar Arias concludes that "were the international community now to stand by as the rebels reinstated the army, it

would surely destroy the seeds of peace and self-rule that have been planted with great sacrifice by the Haitian people." But about the return of the military, there can be little doubt. Gérard Latortue, the man sworn in as Haiti's new prime minister, announced that Aristide's order to replace the military with a civilian police force violated Haiti's constitution; he promised to name a commission to examine the issues surrounding its restoration." The de facto prime minister also named a former general to his new government. A ceremony in the city of Gonaïves had him sharing the stage with rebels and gang leaders ("Latortue praises gang leaders, gunmen," was the headline in the *Jamaica Observer* on March 21, 2004). And in the *New York Times* we read—not in an editorial but in a news article—that "Mr. Latortue and his cabinet, which are installed this week, are trying to send a clear message of stability after several months of bloody revolt and three years of a corrupt Aristide administration that have left the public sector in tatters and exhausted the people's trust."

The same story informs us that Mr. Latortue and his entourage flew in a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter and a Chinook transport helicopter, escorted by U.S. troops, to meet the "rebel" army leader Guy Philippe and Jean Tatoune, a convicted mass murderer.

More guns and more military may well be the time-honored prescription for policing poverty, but violence and chaos will never disappear until the Haitian people's hunger, illness, and related problems are addressed. □

Emotion and Intimacy in the Classroom

Janet Mason Ellerby

It has been several years since I came across a want ad in the *New York Times* that I found so remarkable, I cut it out and stuck it on my refrigerator. It is for the position of Director of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. and reads: "The successful candidate must ... be knowledgeable about the Holocaust, have a special sensitivity to the events in Europe from 1933 to 1945 and possess an absolute passion about the mission of the Museum." How rare to require so frankly that applicants be absolutely passionate about their purpose. And how different from my own profession's "Job Information List" for humanities professors provided by the Modern Language Association. An example of a typical ad for a position comparable to mine in Women's Studies reads: "The successful candidate ... must be prepared to teach the politics, economics, and cultural representations of gender." How dutifully restrained.

In academia, where a standard of unbiased rationality still dominates, "absolute passion" is highly suspect. The convention of the objective, disinterested, scholar/teacher still haunts those of us who are passionate about our profession. Seventeen years ago, literary theorist and memoirist Jane Tompkins wrote an influential essay entitled "Me and My Shadow" in which she proclaims, "I've taken off the straitjacket, and it feels so good." More than a decade later, it's still risky to take off the constricting guise of professional decorum and invite emotion and intimacy into the classroom.

Nevertheless, that is precisely what I risk in my university classes where my students and I consume texts passionately. We ardently throw ourselves into our reading, no longer passive consumers but active, intense agents responding eagerly, even tempestuously as we discuss how the fictional characters we encounter connect with our actual lives. Rather than keeping our personal lives carefully submerged beneath an objective persona, we confide in one another meaningful fragments of our pasts, our dreams, and our

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fantasies. These are pedagogical performances without masks.

From my own experience, I know that the consciousness-raising that often precedes a feminist commitment evokes feelings—profound ones. And so, to foster heartfelt responses in my students, I have had to abandon the expected standard of objective detachment and instead create intense spaces in my classes for my passions and my impassioned students. If I let that space be provisional, secure, and explorative, I have found that the unrehearsed, fervent conversations my students and I share can stimulate new psychological stretches beyond the expected. But for this to happen, I have to curb my conventional academic preoccupations: the expectation that I remain disinterested, appear all-knowing, merely a sage passing on a delineated body of knowledge. Such a dry approach can only repress the emotionally charged, impassioned atmosphere of what writer and teacher Jane Gallop calls "feminist excitement."

How to justify and elaborate on the crucial and intense emotions of love, desire, anger, and grief in the classroom? How to make plain my students' life experience? Many are at vulnerable junctures in their lives. They may not be in actual crisis (though some are), but almost all are questioning their identities, the limitation and potential of their gender, their sexuality, and the ways the spiritual impinges on their "real world." How can engaging them in passionate discourse help them explore these pivotal sites?

First, I ask them to see themselves not as polarized extremes—either stable or unstable—but as subjects-in-

EDUCATION

process. Second, I must refuse myself the subject position of resident authority since I, too, am a subject-in-process. Given those two conditions, we can then together begin to interrogate our identities and to permit ourselves an intimacy between teacher and student which has almost been quelled by institutional practice and conventional taboos. By becoming a fellow learner with my students, I allow myself to be more pliable, more gregarious, and more personal as I resist the customary, stern, removed, and repressive pedagogical model.

The classroom becomes a more undetermined location where students can realize the inclination to open themselves to the influences of this different school environment and the individuals they meet there. By developing and preserving this exploratory disposition, we can nurture the capacity to engage in creative transferences onto one another and even onto symbolic characters such as those encountered in the books we read together. By transference, I am referring to Freud's conception of the intense, emotional relationship that grows between the patient and the analyst, but I contend that transference occurs not just in analysis but in many shared cultural activities, the classroom included. Although we have ample evidence of transference, as teachers we most often either ignore it or deny its presence and power. Nevertheless, students' responses to their professors run the gamut: they may harbor a secret crush or barely tolerate a teacher; they may respect and defer to a professor as if he were their newfound father or defy another as if she were the mother they had long suffered. For their part, professors likewise flirt with certain students and ignore others; sometimes they fall in love with a student; and sometimes there is that student that they inexplicably loathe. Neutrality is a pretense. My students and I have powerful feelings for one another. Whether we understand it or not, each of us is a symbolic object of transference.

Although I want to preserve some emotional distance from my students, the Freudian model of the silent analyst who remains the unresponsive object of transference is inadequate for the kind of vibrant classroom interchange I encourage. Furthermore, Freud's emphasis on the interpretation of the transference as its most important feature is also too limiting for my purposes. Within that model, the analyst needs to establish a single meaning, a single truth that is valid and demonstrable to effect a cure. I see this same need in patriarchal pedagogical models: the learned professor needs to convey the meaning or the truth of a cryptic text, demonstrate its validity, and then test his interpretation on his captive audience, assuming learning has occurred. Clearly such a model is insufficient for the kind of intimacy I want to establish with my students.

Academia seldom provides either literal or metaphorical space where unimpeded, communal, interpretive play permits students to articulate their unique perspectives.

Rarely are they invited to link their lived experience with the literary representation at hand. To break down the expectations of my expertise, to invite discursive and communal free play, and to draw connections between our lives and the literature we are reading, I try to forge a more nonrestrictive playing field for interpreting our texts and ourselves. Most importantly, I try to honor my students' passions, for such respect is crucial to the kind of transference I want to evoke in my teaching. As my students play their roles in the shared culture of our class, they shape that world with their own particular meanings.

Transfential exploration between my students and me becomes the heart of our shared enterprise: we work hard, constructing our own knowledge and understanding. Such serious play enables us to adapt to the ethos of the class and to identify intimately with one another. By way of conversations about ourselves and the imaginative texts we consume, we strive for a new level of intimacy—one that is more highly sensitive to the emotional and intellectual needs and desires of each other as well as the women we read about. As we develop this new, attuned psychic apparatus, we begin to create new images of whom we want to be (or not to be) within the transference.

By connecting more personally with my students and being sensitive to their anxiety and their enthusiasm about such growth, I think I can render the classroom a trusting space where the drama of our individuation processes can be played out. My effectiveness ultimately comes from my capacity to relate to the lives of my students as they turn to me in the midst of their own self-discovery. Without disappearing, I must become benevolently flexible, able to adapt to the unique relationships my students create with me and to sustain a nurturing substructure that invites the testing of ideas, pleasures, dreams, and fantasies that are being formulated within us all as subjects-in-process. The transference between my students and myself is not just acknowledged; it becomes a positive, even fertile ground for learning.

Last semester, for example, I had three students who took full advantage of the trustingly intimate atmosphere of our Introduction to Women's Studies course and used it courageously to further their own renewal. Anna is recovering from anorexia. Only a year ago, she was in the hospital. Since her return to school, her weight has increased by fifty pounds. Anna found a place where she could tell not just her therapist, but thirty other engaged and caring women of her profound insecurity about her different body, her overwhelming feeling of repulsion for her new hips and breasts, her unnatural fear of waiters whenever she visits a restaurant. And she beamed when we all told her how beautiful she looked and how healthy she seemed. Elena was able to not only tell us about overcoming breast cancer, but found the space we had created so secure that she was able to show us the mistake her surgeon had made in giving her

an implant that in no way matched her remaining breast. Linda was able to tell us about drinking herself into oblivion and waking up naked in a male acquaintance's bed, only to hear him say as he lay next to her: "I finally got what I wanted." She was able to benefit from our ability to identify with her feelings of anger and loss, but she was especially moved when we told her our version of her story. She should stop condemning herself with the label "slut"—her word to describe herself after the event; instead, after we interpreted the incident as a clear example of date rape, she came to see how she had been coerced to have sex. These young women were able to tell their stories to all of us because we had first read about fictional characters with whom they intimately identified, and we had continued talking about them with understanding and concern. It was only then that they wanted to say, each in their own way, yes, my experience was something like that. We were able to listen without passing negative judgment, without drawing boundaries of fear or abhorrence. We could listen with acceptance and support.

Anna, Elena, and Linda left our course with less shame and greater self-acceptance. None of us in the class will ever be the same; we are now wiser for the lessons they taught us about hunger, about pain, about rape, and the tenacity they needed to heal. They came to us with their sorrowful stories, and our caring receptivity became part of the classroom transference. In analysis, transference love assists the patient in becoming the open-structured, subject-in-process. Dare this alien notion of love in the classroom be of use to us as teachers? I suggest that the nurturing, loving distance that is germane to transference love does indeed support students in their moves toward self-awareness, self-acceptance, and growth. In addition, such intimacy can modulate academia's obsession with the transference of content as the sole basis for learning and its follow-up—cold and uncompromising evaluation.

Such a suggestion seems an intimidating step away from the mechanical predictability of the patriarchal model for pedagogy. But if, as a teacher, I can serve as an empathic listener, handling the transference between my students and myself lovingly, I can create an idealizing space that can yield creative discourse and the potential for change. The teacher can strengthen the transference bond through empathy in order to create an intimate psychic space that will allow students to take risky intellectual leaps and emotional chances. In the classroom, transference love can be synonymous with identification, intuition, and empathy, all crucial elements for liberation from fixed opinions about one's self and others.

I want to suggest, then, that teachers can encourage a state of loving transference between themselves and their students within which the subject-in-process flares up, achieving a creative and flexible kind of identification. I offer students like Anna, Elena, and Linda the opportunity to

identify with me, just as they become representations for me. My students do important emotional work through me as I do through them; together we grow. This sort of identification is what I would call an amorous coalition. Naturally the term "amorous" should give us pause when it gets attached to relationships between students and teachers. Indeed, Jane Gallop was found guilty of having a "consenting amorous relationship" with a graduate student; "amorous" being defined by her university "as denoting a relation that was 'sexual' but did not involve sex acts." It should be noted that Gallop does not have sex with her students, but she does sexualize the atmosphere in which she works. She maintains that knowledge and pleasure, sex and thought, play off and enhance each other. In her book *Feminist Accused of Sexual Harassment*, she discusses the erotically dynamic relationship that she had with a student and the passionate kiss they shared in public; the relationship not only provoked charges of sexual harassment against Gallop but also provoked important discussions of eroticism and sex in pedagogy.

But I am not suggesting an erotics for the classroom. The emotional intimacy I seek is intense, but it is never sexual. Sexual desire is necessarily sublimated in transference. Transference love is significant in my classroom, and I find myself caring strongly about my students: it is the indispensable pact that insures our renewal, our rebirth; it is the key to establishing the foundation for personal narration, even risky disclosure in an intimate, accepting classroom. But the transference, as I experience it, is maternal, or perhaps I might even say, tribal. Unlike Gallop, there is no avenue for sexual flirtation between my students and me, and, therefore, there are no physical, erotic entanglements.

In conclusion, I want to suggest that by acknowledging transference and eliciting transference love, by refusing to douse our illuminating intensity, by creating pedagogical settings that entice the passions to surface, teachers can practice modes of communication that refuse feigned neutrality and homogeneity. As a Women's Studies teacher, I can be absolutely passionate about my subject and about my students, but I also must be able to negotiate the tangled nuances of a guardianship that invites emotional intimacy and requires sustaining alliances. Everything becomes more complicated within transference when we drop the lifeless, neutralized "professor-act" and create a new dynamic space—a psychic life with and for one another. The inevitable complications should not deter us; transference has always been there. Why not use it to revitalize our classes and reach those students who want passionately to learn with us, who no longer wish to remain silent and brushed aside? Those of us who are absolutely passionate about our vocation can revitalize the classroom and rekindle the kind of intimacy we need to nurture personal and social change, to create a world in which our humanizing feminist ideals can be realized. □

The Myth of Moral Justice

Thane Rosenbaum

As a novelist, I appreciate the healing benefits that come from the telling of a story—even a fictional one. Actually, as a novelist, it is my prerogative to tell made-up stories in any way I choose—the front story and the back, told from beginning to end, without interruption, without objection, without being overruled or dismissed or censored in any way. This is far more than can be said for those who appear before the law, where stories and truth are often trumped by administrative, efficiency-promoting values. A novelist knows the freedom that comes with narration, the liberty that arises out of the unconscious self. It brings expression to the soul, putting words in its mouth and flesh on bones broken by despair.

Those wounded by business transactions gone bad, failed marriages and severed partnerships, negligent merchants, doctors, and service-providers, and the mischief of criminals, deserve an equivalent freedom. They need to be able to experience what the novelist already knows, and what the injured intuitively sense: that there is no way to heal emotionally from an injury if the story goes unheard and victims are denied their moral right to testify to their own pain. And the appropriate remedy to redress such harms often transcends the mere impulse toward retribution and revenge.

...

As a lawyer, I see all the fault lines of the law—the way in which stories are swallowed up without ever having been

heard. As a novelist, I speak the language of people who, more than anything else, want to hear their stories told.

The case of the surviving victims and families of the



September 11th tragedy is an excellent example of the law's emotional and moral insensitivity to storytelling. Soon after the World Trade Center collapse, Congress established the Victim Compensation Fund, which it created in order to place a cap on legal claims arising out of the tragedy. Families and victims who received compensation under the fund were required to relinquish any individual lawsuits against either the airlines or the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (which owned the World Trade Center) that they may have otherwise contemplated. The fund essentially served to prevent the ruination of the airline industry by victims who might have chosen to pursue individual claims—relentlessly and without limitation.

Excerpted from the book The Myth of Moral Justice: Why Our Legal System Fails to Do What's Right. Printed by arrangement with Harper Collins Publishers. ©2004 All rights reserved. Thane Rosenbaum is a novelist, essayist, and law professor at Fordham Law School.

But there is a problem here, one of immoral justice. In all situations involving mass-tort litigation and class actions, individual members of the class are deprived of an opportunity to tell their individual stories. This is the consequence of being part of a class. Everyone is reduced to a number, one claimant among many, with nothing special or unique other than their similar injuries and a common agent, enterprise, or product that caused them. The lawsuit offers no special attention—legal or otherwise—on how the harm specifically damaged individual lives, and the ongoing effect that the harm has had on those lives.

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The Victim Compensation Fund will divide roughly six billion dollars among the victims of September 11th and their surviving families. To make this distribution, the relevant factors have been largely reduced to a table of numbers that measures loss and calculates damages based on life expectancy and future earning potential. More value is being placed on economic loss than on emotional loss; indeed, typical of the conventional legal paradigm, the fund provides no mechanism to measure emotional loss. Aside from some discretion that Kenneth Feinberg, the special master whom Congress appointed to preside over the fund, has reserved for himself, the tables and formulas pretty much dictate the numerical outcome.

• • •

Aside from these inequities, it is clear that the creation of the fund itself—ultimately and predictably—was morally unjust. Depriving surviving families of their individual stories of loss, and reducing their suffering to lifeless numbers that measured nothing but earning potential, provided insufficient relief. Loss must always be accounted for in ways that transcend the cold calculations of an accountant. Monetary relief, while legally sound, does not provide emotional relief, because it doesn't speak individually and uniquely to a loss. The legal system, however, operates quite smugly on the assumption that it does.

Courthouses are not places to bury truths, but to uncover them. It is where the records are housed, and the transcripts maintained. It is where the proceedings are witnessed by as many people as possible. The more the public sees, the more likely the lessons will be learned. The long arm of the law should extend itself to producing long memories. The moral imperative of a courthouse is to put those echoey exteriors to good use: giving voice to all those raw feelings of implacable loss.

It is true that Congress did not intend to value all lives lost on September 11th equally—at least not economically. But the larger issue is that surviving victims and families were given no means to obtain relief other than to accept a

dollar amount that morally undervalued their loss. Money is never sufficiently compensatory, no matter how high the amount. Bereavement requires healing, but the legal system's balm confuses people into thinking of money as curative, rather than what it is, simply remunerative.

In a legal system that is good with numbers but lousy with empathy, what can a surviving relative do to honor a loved one other than demand the highest payout possible? As one father of a fireman was quoted in the *New Yorker*:

"You'll hear it said many times here that people don't care about the money, and it's true, we don't. But somehow the higher the amount, the more value they put on your loved one's life, the more meaning it has."

Since legal justice measures life strictly in monetary terms, and offers no other remedy that responds to grief, it sends a lifeless, inexplicable message that only the largest number somehow compensates for loss. This is basically a problem of limited options, since the legal system offers no moral or emotional alternative.

That same *New Yorker* article reported the following hostile exchange between Feinberg and a woman who had lost her sister:

"We've suffered enough. Why are you making our lives even more complicated? Make something easy, make everyone happy. I know you're all about the numbers, and the statute, and the regulations, and this computation, and this deduction.... We don't need to make a plea. We're not begging for money. We want our people back."

"I can't make you happy."

"Yes, you can."

The woman was sure that the law, in response to perhaps this nation's greatest tragedy, could show some heart and find a decent and moral way to relieve the grief. She wanted the special master to do something special, to make the surviving relatives happy—or as happy as they could be under the circumstances—and not to have them feel cheated, stifled, and humiliated. She didn't know exactly how to bring this about, but she was pretty certain that the law would fail if all it did was rely on crunched numbers, spread sheets, and the coldness of an abacus.

Feinberg, a quintessential mass tort specialist who had presided over many cases involving deaths from toxic substances, was equally sure that the law is not a provider of happiness, that it cannot resurrect or reclaim the dead. And spiritual relief—to the extent to which that was what the woman was seeking—was not something Feinberg was trained or empowered to provide, nor did he particularly know what it even meant. As special master, he is simply the man who divides up the money; he is not engaged in the service of mending or repair.

Bereavement requires healing, but the legal system's balm confuses people into thinking of money as curative, rather than what it is, simply remunerative.

"I refuse to make distinctions," Feinberg said in an article in the *New York Times Magazine*. "I refuse to go down the road of 'He was on the 103rd floor and died a slow death; she was on the 84th floor and was killed instantly.' I'm not getting into that."

But if he wasn't going to get into those distinctions—the different ways in which people died; the uniqueness of their suffering; what kind of people they were while they were alive; what remains after they've gone—then who would?

In time, even Feinberg was forced to consider the incompatibility between grief and money. By September 2003, less than four months before the looming deadline for filing applications under the statute that created the Victim Compensation Fund, only 60 percent of the surviving families had sought compensation by filing claims. And only sixty-nine private lawsuits—those that rejected the presumed efficiency and tax incentives of the fund in favor of a potentially more risky, and lucrative, private remedy—had been filed. Since 3,016 people died in the attacks and only 1,309 total claims or lawsuits had been filed by their surviving relatives, one question remained: Where were all the litigants that lawyers would naturally have assumed to have surfaced? Indeed, if these people failed to file their applications by December 22, they would end up being barred from seeking compensation under the fund altogether. Surely they would want to recover for their losses. So why were they waiting?

The answer, of course, is not one that the conventional legal paradigm is particularly good at supplying. The reason so many never filed their claims was not because of legal gamesmanship or neglect, but rather spiritual deprivation. Grief, not money, is what shadows the aftermath of loss. Grief is what dominates the minds of survivors—if their minds are functioning at all. Feinberg wondered publicly what happened to the surviving relatives he was instructed to compensate. What he didn't realize was that most were still grieving, too paralyzed to confront their emotional pain in a forum that would do nothing but reduce their broken hearts to whole numbers. Filing papers may be the first and necessary step to receiving material compensation, but reliving the memories all for the sake of money is not the way to relieve grief.

"I have met with thousands of families," Feinberg acknowledged in an article in the *New York Times*. "And you would be amazed at the number of people who, when I say the deadline is approaching, still come up to me in tears and say, 'I'm not ready.'"

Actually, he shouldn't have been that surprised at all.

In early 2003, in a German courtroom, five surviving

relatives of the victims of September 11th confronted the man who was accused of supporting the plot. He was being prosecuted as an accessory to the crime, and the German court, unlike an American one, allowed the families to function as co-plaintiffs to the action, as opposed to mere quasi-witnesses. One of the witnesses on behalf of the co-plaintiffs, Stephen Push, whose wife died on the airplane that crashed into the Pentagon, said in the Hamburg courtroom: "I am testifying because I believe that before this court passes judgment and sentence on the defendant, the court should see the human face of the tragedy." Another witness, Michael Lowe, whose daughter was a flight attendant on the first plane that struck the World Trade Center,

testified, "I have traveled a long distance to let the court know firsthand the extraordinary devastation my family experienced."

The German trial wasn't about money but rather emotion, healing, and truth. And, for this reason, the German court wanted to hear about the human experience of loss—not economic loss or actuarial loss, but simply what it feels like to lose someone you love.

What's clear is that the surviving families of September 11th were given insufficient legal options in which to grieve. There was no occasion for stirring up the individual stories, giving them life even amidst all that collective death. And so, without alternative remedies, the families were forced into the conventional legal paradigm, even though the tragedy that forever ruined their lives was anything but conventional, and required extra-delicate, extraordinarily uncommon relief. It compounded the loss, truly adding insult to injury.

In the aftermath of the World Trade Center tragedy, what was necessary was not merely legal justice, but moral and historical justice as well. Never before in our nation's history was it so morally crucial for the stories of the individual lives of the innocent and the heroic to be told. The larger drama had been carried around the clock on television, but it was silent in the courthouses. Given the specialness of this crime and the sadistic nature in which the attacks occurred, the legal system had the moral duty to offer relief on a human and emotional level, in addition to relief of the conventional, material kind.

Perhaps the September 11th tragedy provided the perfect moment to open the courthouses and let them function as public grieving grounds, enabling families to come in and speak of their losses, to present proof of the lives that were taken away from them, to try to express how empty and painful it is to forge ahead when everything that mattered has turned to dust. Courthouses would have become affiliate funeral parlors for extended eulogies, and these



courthouse confessions of grief should have been captured on national television. This is the true path to moral justice: a legal system that is as much interested in grieving, healing, and restoration as it is in compensation and punishment.

• • •

It is unfair to place too much blame on Kenneth Feinberg for the failures of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund. After all, he was merely doing his job... Judges and lawyers [like Kenneth Feinberg] are trained to have a very narrow vision of what the law can and should accomplish. What seemingly matters most is that final judgments comport with constitutional procedures, prior legal precedents, or statutory mandates. A rule gets applied to the facts. The result is justice. It may be morally wrong, but the focus on doing what's legal rather than on what's right overrides all other considerations and concerns.

But the conventional legal paradigm doesn't end there, because this obsession with the legal over the moral is also expressed in the law's preference for the body over the spirit. Legal rules are triggered when the human body sustains an injury, when property is stolen or damaged, when rights are infringed. Lawyers think in concrete, tangible terms. They are concerned with the physical and external, and not with the ambiguities of invisible, untraceable, unmarked wounds.

Indeed, the law becomes animated when there is a bruise on the body, and when damage is done to private possessions—the harm that leaves evidence of itself.... The same fixation on the body occurs when courts assess the culpability and liability of human conduct, i.e., not just in the case of people who are damaged or injured, but also those who are responsible for causing the damage. A defendant must have done something affirmative and physical in order for his conduct to be legally actionable. He or she must have acted and, in doing so, caused harm. Only when the body has taken its first step and gone into motion—for instance, in delivering a punch, trespassing on someone else's property, failing a promise made under a contract, embezzling money, or performing surgery on the wrong limb—does the law become interested in punishing the criminal or assigning liability.... With the body as the focal point of the law's attention, is there any wonder that psychological wounds caused by humiliation and indignity, or harms aggravated by the neglect and indifference of bystanders—those who neither move a muscle nor say a word—are completely ignored in the American legal system? (The intentional infliction of emotional distress, which many people believe to be a tort action that addresses spiritual harm, is a largely empty legal theory, usually added

on, if at all, to an existing physical injury rather than treated as a serious, independent tort that doesn't require evidence of some other more tangible harm.)

As for remedies—what justice is capable of providing as an answer to an injury or crime—here, too, the paradigm has a limited vision of relief. The legal system operates under the assumption that justice is achieved only by way of material, retributive, or punitive relief. Prosecutions and punishments for crimes committed; damage awards as compensation for injuries sustained. This is the fulfillment of justice in America, the only way that the legal system contemplates making people whole after loss.

[I want to argue, however,] for a morally inspired transformation of the legal system, one that embraces the conventional paradigm and its legal-body-punishment/money equation, but also calls attention to other values, more spiritual and restorative in nature—an alternative paradigm, if you will, one that looks more like this:

Specifically, legal remedies should not be limited to jail sentences, cash settlements, and damage awards....

Remedies must also offer moral and spiritual relief, and be directed to both body and soul.

1. The law would strive to achieve moral outcomes.

2. The human spirit would also receive protection under the law, and the law should scrutinize the actions of those who are responsible for causing spiritual violence, indignity, and neglect.

3. Courts would provide moral remedies, such as in acknowledging the harm that was done, seeking apologies for them, and restoring relationships—for the benefit of the entire community.

Under this new moral paradigm, achieving correct legal results would simply not be enough. Moral considerations would be reflected in legal decision-making as well; and the law would no longer insulate itself from moral concerns. What is legal and what is moral would intersect so that decisions that are legally correct would also be morally sound. What happens in a courthouse should feel right emotionally—both to the parties to the action, and to the community at large.

Moreover, the human body—whether in movement or as the recipient of the injury—shouldn't be the law's only focus of attention. The legal system should also protect the human spirit and soul. And those who commit spiritual harms, or engage in acts of spiritual violence and indifference, should be as answerable in a court of law as someone who injures the human body....

There are harms that exist below the radar of physical measurement. Just because the interior world of the spirit is unseen, doesn't mean that what it experiences is unfelt. A great deal of suffering is visited on the intangible sphere

of the spirit—whether in the form of humiliation, indignity, or basic neglect.... [To take account of these spiritual sufferings, the law must also] expand its notion of remedies—how it seeks to punish some people for the harms they have inflicted, and compensate others for the harms they have sustained. Specifically, legal remedies should not be limited to jail sentences, cash settlements, and damage awards.... Remedies must also offer moral and spiritual relief, and be directed to both body and soul. In the same way that the spirit can't be quantified in material or measurable terms, spiritual and moral remedies transcend the dollars and cents of money, and the minimum/maximum sentences of jail-time punishments.

[As in the case of the victims of September 11th,] sometimes what an injured party requires is not simply a cash award, or the knowledge that a criminal has been sent to jail. Sometimes true relief comes by way of acknowledging the hurt, telling and retelling the full story, discovering the truth and memorializing it for the future. Moral acknowledgment is a process of elevating the story precisely for the sake of memorializing it, and thereby somewhat relieving the injury....

Victims need to speak of how they came to be victims—the way they were before, and how they have been changed. And civilization is always more civilized when the truth is unhidden and known. In spite of all the injustice in the world, in the end—often many years later—the truth always wins out. Truth is all part of the healing process of what it means to seek and receive relief. Ultimately, a grievance demands an opportunity for the injured party to grieve.

...

When I teach my course in Law and Literature, I begin the first day's class by reading a children's story out loud. I've been doing this for years, and each semester a good number of the students are surprised by this opening lecture, even though, given my general attitudes about traditional legal education, it shouldn't come as much of a shock. Many of these students haven't been read to in years, if ever, and they haven't read or heard a children's story since then. The story I read is *In the Month of Kislev*, written by Nina Jaffe and illustrated by Louise August. It is a Jewish story, one for Hanukkah, but, actually, many variations of it exist in other cultures. The story, briefly summarized, goes something like this:

In a small shtetl in Poland, there are two families—one rich, the other poor. As Hanukkah approaches, the three children from the poor family have very little to eat; indeed, they don't have even a single potato for potato latkes, which are traditionally served on the holiday. Passing underneath the kitchen window of the rich family, the three poor

children inhale the aroma of potato latkes, and somehow mysteriously, magically, they feel as though they have eaten. When they return home, the parents, knowing that there is no food, can't believe that their children are not hungry. They attribute this to a Hanukkah miracle. The children go on smelling the rich family's latkes for the entire eight days of the holiday.

But on the eighth day, the man who heads the household of the rich family discovers the poor children smelling his latkes outside his home. He is outraged, and claims that they have enjoyed the smell, and have taken it away from him, without paying just compensation. The next day he brings the poor family before the rabbi and demands eight rubles as payment for the eight days of Hanukkah in which the children stole the smell of his latkes. The community descends on the house of the rabbi, awaiting his wisdom and decree.

The rabbi asks everyone in the community to take all the coins they have in their possession and place them inside a bag that he provides. When the bag is full, the rabbi shakes the bag numerous times until it jingles like a music box. When he is finished, he turns to the rich man and pronounces his judgment: "What's right is right. You asked for fair payment and you have received it. We have paid for the smell of your Hanukkah latkes with the sound of Hanukkah gelt." The townspeople, who had wondered what their rabbi was up to—how jingling coins could possibly remedy a legal dispute—suddenly realize: "How wise our rabbi is."

This story is wonderful not just in the way it merges the spheres of religion and law, but also in the way in which what passes for a legal remedy works equally well as a moral one. In the mind of the child hearing the story, there is no split between the legal and moral. They are the same, both leading to the right outcome. The rich man seeks the conventional remedy of money as compensation for his presumed loss. But what he was arguably deprived of was not of the material world. The smell of his latkes could not be quantified. What he lost, if anything, was sensory. The wisdom of the rabbi's judgment is that the remedy is appropriately tailored to respond to this particular spiritual loss.

As the rabbi says, "What's right is right"—the ultimate moral, spiritual remedy. And like most children's stories, this one had a happy ending: The rich man went home and learned a moral lesson, and from there on began to enrich the world with his charity. And the community, with renewed faith in their rabbi's wisdom and upon being shown how legal judgments are worthy of faith, was able to rest knowing that justice—understood in both legal and moral terms—was done. □



Three Women Writers, One War

New Israeli Refusenik Literature

Joel Schalit

- *Breaking Ranks: Refusing to Serve in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip* by Ronit Chacham. Other Press, 2003.
- *Reporting from Ramallah* by Amira Hass. Semiotexte, 2003.
- *Israel/Palestine: How to End the War of 1948* by Tanya Reinhardt. Seven Stories Press, 2002.

It's not that there aren't sadistic commanders, there certainly are, but that's not where the problem is. The problem is the good-hearted leftist commander. The one who doesn't beat people and doesn't curse, but does only what he is told. The one who is ordered "uproot that orchard today," and does just that.

So writes thirty-year-old Staff Sergeant [Res.] Ishay Rosen-Zvi in Ronit Chacham's *Breaking Ranks: Refusing to Serve in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip*. An observant Jew and a doctoral student in intellectual history at Tel Aviv University, Rosen-Zvi's concerns are shared by the majority of the nine Israeli "refuseniks" who contribute to and are interviewed by Chacham in one of the most unorthodox and compelling collections of Israeli writing to come out of the al-Aksa Intifada.

Appearing on the heels of an intensely productive year for English translations of left-wing Israeli literature, *Breaking Ranks* does more than document the reasons given by refuseniks for refusing service in the

Occupied Territories. It also breaks rank, so to speak, with the translation monopoly exercised by the elite Israeli progressive intellectuals associated with the liberal/left daily *Ha'aretz*, such as Amira Hass and Aluf Benn, and academics identified with the New Historians movement, such as Benny Morris and Avi Shlaim.

The new (for lack of a better term) "refusenik" literature being translated into English is largely dominated by Ashkenazi intellectuals with either academic or journalistic pedigrees, strong English publication records in *Ha'aretz*, and, to a lesser extent, *Le Monde Diplomatique*. This genre of literature had its symbolic inauguration with the September 2002 release of *The Other Israel: Voices of Refusal and Dissent* (New Press), edited by Roane Carey and Jonathan Shainin. As Joe Lockard noted in his review in *Bad Subjects* (2002), there was a conspicuous absence of Mizrahi, Israeli Arab, and Haredi voices in the collection.

While never fully making up for such typically Israeli left-wing deficits, *Breaking Ranks* certainly goes a long way towards doing so in its focus on the voices of ordinary soldiers, all of whom arrived at their conclusions about the injustice of the Occupation



through their experiences in the Israel Defense Forces. Keenly aware of the ethnic and class makeup of the Israeli Left, Chacham almost goes too far out of her way to point out such problems in the introductions to each reservist's chapter she is careful to include at least one Mizrahi Jew, Tal Belo, and one holdover from *The Other Israel*, Shamai Leibowitz—the son of the late, albeit early, critic of the Occupation, Rabbi Yeschayahu Leibowitz—in the volume.

What characterizes each soldier's contribution to *Breaking Ranks* is an explication of how their tours of duty forced them to their moral limits: that at a certain point, rather than becoming desensitized by killing children and destroying private homes, they could not stomach the violence anymore, and began actively refusing to perform their reserve service in the Occupied Territories. What is equally inspiring is how these reservists' testimonies speak

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BOOK REVIEW

to a future moral exhaustion for Israel. As a microcosm of Israeli society and as battle-hardened soldiers, one wonders whether the settlers will eventually have equivalent scabs removed from their eyes and decide to leave, for the same reasons Chacham's reservists have decided to stop defending them.

It would be nice to think that, from a progressive Jewish perspective, one could ascribe an old-fashioned Zionist heroism to these soldiers' decisions—here being examples of the peace-loving Israeli warrior only wishing to take up arms when it is truly necessary. However, none of these reservists ascribes any purity to their actions. To varying degrees, nearly all of them implicate themselves in violence against civilians. Nevertheless, it is because of these experiences—specifically the intimacy created by their brutal interactions with Palestinian civilians—that these individuals undergo a process of moral awakening to the dark side of Israeli history, to war, and to the injustice of the Occupation.

Why it took military service in the territories to move these troops to such conclusions, however, is another story. One would think that after the seventeen-year occupation of Lebanon, in addition to the experience of the first Intifada, most Israelis would have known better. Addressing this lack of perspective is the *raison d'être* for journalists like Amira Hass, whose most recent anthology of writings from *Ha'aretz*, *Reporting from Ramallah*, provides a political reading of the Occupation through her first-hand presentations of its effects in a daily newspaper format. Stunningly clear, concise, and unabashedly moralistic, one cannot walk away from any of Hass' writings on the subject without having learned what it really feels like to live under Israeli military rule.

For those who have followed Hass' work on *Ha'aretz'* English-language website these past few years, none of the writings contained in *Reporting From Ramallah* will read like her

previous book, the groundbreaking *Drinking The Sea at Gaza* (Owl Books, 2000). But for first-time readers, this is the best introduction to Hass one can find. An extremely well chosen selection of articles published in *Ha'aretz* between 1997 and 2002, *Reporting From Ramallah* charts the breakdown of the peace process, moving from the

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last two years of Netanyahu's government all the way through the first two years of the Al-Aksa Intifada.

While arranged chronologically, there is no grand sequence that unites the book's narrative—simply the push and pull of everyday life for Palestinians living in the territories under Israeli and PA rule which, given Hass' clear eye for the bigger picture, is inevitably brushed by the weight of diplomatic and military decisions made in Jerusalem, Washington, and Europe. However, this is not to the exclusion of Hass' detailing of the particularities of Israeli military sadism. Hass describes countless scenes of the cruelties inflicted by roadblocks: women unable to get to hospitals to deliver their babies, men unable to travel to work, and verbal and physical harassment.

Perhaps the most memorable

documentation of IDF policy is Hass' November 20, 2000 interview with an IDF sharpshooter. Published a month after the onset of the Al-Aksa Intifada, when sharpshooters were being employed to attack Palestinian protestors around the Temple Mount and the police used snipers to kill 13 Israeli Arab demonstrators near Umm Al Fahmm, Hass' interview is chilling for what it reveals about IDF definitions of what constitutes a legitimately "adult" target:

Q: You haven't shot children.

A: None of the snipers have shot children.

Q: But nonetheless there are children who were wounded or killed after they were hit in the head. Unless these were mistakes.

A: If they were children, they were mistakes.

Q: Do they talk to you about this?

A: They talk to us about it a lot. They forbid us to shoot children.

Q: How do they say it?

A: You don't shoot a child who is 12 or younger.

Q: That is, shooting a child of 12 or older is permissible?

A: Twelve and up is allowed. He's not a child anymore, he's already had his bar mitzvah. Something like that.

Q: Thirteen is bar mitzvah age.

A: Twelve and up you're allowed to shoot. That's what they tell us.

Q: Again: you're allowed to shoot children age 12 and up.

A: Because by definition it doesn't seem to me to be a child anymore, even though in the United States a child can be 23.

Q: Under international law, a child is defined as someone under the age of 18.

A: Up to 18 is a child?

Q: So according to the IDF, is it 12?

A: According to what the IDF tells its soldiers. I don't know if this is what the IDF tells the media.

(continued page 77)

Isaac Luria

Healer of the Cosmos

Lawrence Kushner

■ *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship* by Lawrence Fine. Stanford University Press, 2003.

Because it's on such a steep mountain, they have built a municipal elevator in the Galilean town of Tsefat. You enter it from the back of the supermarket. There is a utility door, just behind the produce section. But there's no sign—someone has to tell you. And, let me tell you, this puppy is the ride of a lifetime. It traverses only six floors—but five centuries. On the top level, there's a modern Israeli street, complete with pizzeria, an ATM machine, and a one-hour photo shop. On the bottom, you have buildings from the sixteenth century where some of the greatest legal, kabbalistic and spiritual minds in Jewish history studied, wrote, and prayed. What a congregation that must've been!

Two events had a powerful impact on Jewish life in the sixteenth century and especially on Tsefat. The first came in when Ferdinand and Isabella expelled the Jews from Spain. It was a cataclysm of staggering proportions; centuries of Spanish Jewish civilization were abolished—buildings looted, fortunes lost, families scattered, libraries destroyed. And then, in 1516, less known, the Ottomans conquered the Mamluk Turks, replacing harsh Mamluk oppression with tolerance and freedom. The Jewish

migrations resulting from these two events transformed Tsefat into the largest and most vibrant community in Palestine. Exile and redemption were in the air. (I suspect that their preoccupation with redemption following exile can be traced to their expulsion from Spain just as our preoccupation with Jewish continuity can be traced to the incineration of European Jewry during the Holocaust.)

Among Tsefat's more accomplished residents were Jacob Berab, who set out to re-initiate rabbinic ordination by re-establishing an unbroken line back to Moses; Elijah de Vidas, author of *Reshit Hokhma—The Beginning of Wisdom*, one of the most influential ethical works in Judaism; Moses Cordovero, author of *Pardes Rimmonim—Orchard of Pomegranates*, one of the greatest Kabbalists of all time; Eleazar Azikri, author of *Sefer Haredim—Book of the Pious*; and Hayyim Vital, author of the *Etz Hayyim—The Tree of Life*. Shlomo Alkabetz, author of the Sabbath hymn "*Lekha Dodi*"—"Come, My Beloved," was a member of the community, as was the preeminent legal authority, Joseph Karo, author of the *Shulchan Arukh—The Set Table*, the definitive code of Jewish law. (My teacher, Eugene Borowitz, once referred to sixteenth-century Tsefat as the Upper West Side of Manhattan.)

The synergy of such intellectual power gave birth to customs and innovations, many of which are still widely practiced even by very non-mystical,



liberal Jews to this day: The custom of *Kabbalat Shabbat*, a service welcoming the Sabbath, including going out into the fields to welcome the Sabbath bride and facing the door for the final verse of "*Lekha dodi*"; the custom of wearing white or new clothes on the Sabbath; and the custom of a *tikkun layl Shavuot*, an all-night study session on the holiday of Shavuot—all inventions of the Kabbalists of Tsefat. (There were also many other, sometimes ascetic, sometimes erotic, sometimes psychic and much, much more bizarre customs which, thankfully, no one practices any more.)

To this mélange of Safed liturgists, kabbalists, halakhists, and poets, we now add Rabbi Isaac Luria or as he is known, *haElohi*, the saintly, Rabbi Yitzhak—or, by the acronym of his name, the *Ari*. (*Ari* is also Hebrew for "lion.") A seminal religious presence, Luria's bold and complex innovations in theosophy and cosmogony would forever alter the face of Kabbalah and subsequent Jewish history.

Isaac Luria was born in Jerusalem in 1534. His father died while Luria was a child and his mother moved the family to live with her wealthy brother in Egypt. There, Luria began his esoteric studies, ultimately moving to a small island in the Nile. In 1570 he moved to Tsefat, already a center of Jewish mystical life. The documentary

ILLUSTRATION BY JULIE DELTON

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BOOK REVIEW

evidence on Luria is meager. And, to make matters more confusing, most of the many historical gaps about Luria's life have been filled in with pious legends elevated, over the centuries, to the status of historic truth. We do know that Luria took peripatetic walks with his students; that he communed with the souls of deceased teachers; and that he claimed he had visionary encounters with the souls he found residing in organic and inorganic matter. He wrote nothing of his system down, claiming it was inchoate, nor did he permit propagation of his teachings during his lifetime. He died during an epidemic in July, at the age of only thirty-eight, less than three years after coming to Tsefat.

In addition to Luria's own refusal to record his life and teaching, there are at least three other very good and interrelated reasons why so few people know about Lurianic practice: First, hardly any of the primary material has been translated into English. For example, Gershom Scholem's first doctoral student, Isaiah Tishby, wrote a Hebrew essay on Lurianic Kabbalah which Lawrence Fine tells us "amazingly ... would remain the only serious and sustained study of Luria's teachings for the next forty-five years..." Second, the sources that do exist are at best intricate, at worst convoluted, opaque, self-contradictory, multi-authored, and often, simply off-the-wall. (You don't "get into" Lurianic Kabbalah; you struggle to make sense of it.) The third, and final, reason is that kabbalistic research has been primarily interested in Lurianic Kabbalah's theology but not in what Fine calls its "social, devotional and experiential dimensions."

Now, fortunately, Lawrence Fine, a scholar of enormous competence and spiritual depth, has produced the definitive English text on Luria and his circle: *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship*. This academic text (there are 895 footnotes) is clear, fascinating, well-argued, ambitious,

and important—and also an excellent introduction to kabbalistic thought. Fine asks: Just who was this person Isaac Luria and these guys with whom he surrounded himself? What was the psychodynamic of their *chevra* (fellowship)? Did they have a larger plan, and if so, what was it?

One of the most startling realizations that emerges from Fine's masterful presentation is a vision of what I am tempted to call Kabbalah on steroids. Indeed, some of it is so foreign to our modern sensibilities that we can begin to comprehend why nineteenth-century German rationalist historians were so horrified at what they euphemistically called kabbalistic superstitions. It was much more than just superstition. Lurianic Kabbalah was a system of pious practice, personal ritual, meditation, and devotion, designed to heal its practitioners, their community, world history, and the cosmos itself. Much, if not the majority, of their regimen will strike beginning students as bizarre.

Fine introduces us, for instance, to such customs as *Yibudim* with the dead, that is, "stretching yourself out on a grave, face down..." as a way of communing with the deceased. The Lurianic kabbalists also practiced; running permutations on the four letters of the *tetragramaton*, God's most mysterious four-letter name; involuntary vocal-automatism; ascetic practices ranging from month-long fasts to self-flagellation; and reading invisible Hebrew letters on the foreheads of strangers as a form of psychic diagnosis. Luria "did not wait for the sinner to voluntarily seek him out, but was able to determine a person's sin merely by gazing upon the person's face."

"Luria found it natural," notes Fine, "to speak in a language of divine genitalia, seminal and vaginal fluids, lactating breasts, divine parents, children, and lovers." Luria was particularly fascinated by the Zoharic myth of how, on the seventh day of *Pesach*, a pregnant hind, travailing in labor,

would be bitten by a snake as a *sexual act*. Fine, in a typically almost off-hand observation, notes that "...the flawed character of existence as a whole can be traced back to misuse of masculine sexuality." In a similarly matter-of-fact way, Fine dares to wonder, for instance, "Was Isaac Luria's wife curious about why sexual relations were essentially limited to Friday nights, while non-kabbalistic wives could have sexual relations with their husbands on [all other nights]..." And surely one of Professor Fine's most penetrating observations is that Luria probably believed he was the reincarnation of Shimon bar Yohai who was, in turn, a reincarnation of Moses. (Each generation gets just one.) Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai is the purported author of the Zohar—who, it just so happened, was buried in Meron, only six miles down the road from Tsefat. Is that why Luria made the move from Egypt?

While Fine is primarily concerned with the psychodynamic of Luria and his disciples, their pietism, and their experience, he does provide us with an excellent synopsis of Luria's cosmogenic myth. For many readers this will be worth the price of admission alone. Luria's story of the creation is so important, and still resonates so deeply within the Jewish psyche, that Jews today who never heard of Isaac Luria or Tsefat or even Kabbalah embrace it. It is, notes Fine, "...without doubt the most elaborate such story in all of Jewish tradition."

Here, in brief, is Luria's creation myth: According to earlier Spanish Kabbalah, in the beginning there was only God—limitless, boundariless, beyond definition, utterly unknowable. God was *Ayn Sof*: Without end. Everything was One. And everything was filled with the limitless light of the presence of God. There was only one logical problem: There was no room for creation. So, according to Luria, God withdrew God's self, making a space so there could be room in which to make the world. This voluntary

BOOK REVIEW

self-contraction he called *tsimtsum*. It is not unlike what any good parent or teacher must routinely do: Get out of the way so that the child or student can have room in which to learn and grow.

The resulting vacuum, however, was not *exactly* empty. Apparently there remained a faint trace, a *reshimu*, of the divine. As the late Dr. Alexander Altman once taught me, it was like the remnant aroma in an empty perfume bottle. Into this space, God sent a ray of light to illuminate, animate, organize, and make ten lights. This light then arranges itself into concentric circles and, simultaneously, the form of a cosmic, archetypal human form or *Adam Kadmon* (not to be confused with *Adam haRishon*, the first Adam of the Garden of Eden). This primordial form contained the whole world within itself and his soul contained all souls yet to come. (When you meet a stranger to whom you are mysteriously drawn, you are meeting someone whose soul used to reside next to yours in the cosmic body of *Adam Kadmon*!)

But alas, God underestimated God's own creative power. The light was simply too much. And, in Luria's bold imagination, the result was a cataclysm of literally cosmic proportions. Luria called it: *shevirat haKelim*, the shattering of the lower vessels. In this way, sparks or *nitzotzot* of divine light became scattered everywhere and trapped within the pieces of the broken vessels. These shards or *keli-pot* are the chief source of evil and the basis of our present world: A heap of broken pottery—shards containing imprisoned sparks of divine light, bestowing vitality, and, above all, yearning to go free. As Fine writes,

Particles of divine light have fallen into the material world, utterly alienated and estranged from their sublime and transcendent origin. These sparks of light instinctively long to be liberated and reunited with the divine source from which they originally flowed.

But there is more to Luria's great creation myth. Divinity desires now to mend itself. The Hebrew word for mend, fix, or repair is *tikkun*. According to Luria, the sparks captive in the *keli-pot* are unable to free themselves alone. That is why human beings—you and I—are here. *Everything* we do must be directed toward this sacred, ultimate goal. According to Luria, *Adam haRishon*, the first Adam, was designed to have been *Adam haAchron*, the last person, the redeemer. Adam and Eve could have repaired the whole thing, returning the cosmos to eternal, divine light. But alas, that was in a galaxy long, long ago and far, far away. We find ourselves here, living amidst cosmic debris, exiled, conflicted, and broken. And this brings us to the name of this magazine and Luria's unwitting but vital contribution to contemporary religious action: *Tikkun Olam*—Repairing the World.

Fine (using a different transliteration of the Hebrew word "tikkun") explains that, for Isaac Luria,

the most fundamental and ultimate goal of all human existence is *tiqqun*. The project of *tiqqun*, the liberation of divine light in all of its forms from its entrapment in the material sphere, its return to its source on high, and the ascent of all the worlds to their proper place within the structure of the cosmos, required the most elaborate and painstaking regimen of contemplative devotion.

Indeed, Fine explains, "God is no longer regarded as being in complete control of all history... rather, God's own well-being is contingent upon human action [!]" You will note here, however, that Luria is *not* talking about politics or fixing what is wrong with society. (Indeed, as a theology of religious action, *tikkun olam* is probably not even dateable prior to forty years ago.) For Luria, the word *olam*, in *tikkun olam*, does not mean "world" but "being" or "eternity." And the goal, for him and his *chevra*, his little society of disciples, was noth-

ing short of repairing the cosmos. Their strategy was conspicuously meditative, ritualistic, inward, elitist, and religiously Jewish. And the mechanism for the repair, therefore, is the proper performance of *mitzvot*, sacred religious deeds: Studying Torah, fasting on Yom Kippur, giving charity, refraining from gossip, not eating shellfish, praying daily, not wearing clothing made from linen and wool, observing the Sabbath—yes, all six hundred thirteen of the traditional commandments. They are *the way*, for Jews, the only way. Each *mitzvah* liberates another trapped and exiled spark. Each *mitzvah* restores more of the cosmos to its intended pattern. Each *mitzvah* testifies to our partnership with (or participation within) the divine.

Indeed, the principal flaw in much of contemporary, liberal, political action is not the absence of passion but the absence of God. We are, many of us, so frightened we will sound evangelical, fundamentalist, zealous, or right-wing that we have abandoned the spiritual dimension of our task. We are, to paraphrase my teacher, Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf, passionate about our calling but seem to have forgotten who is calling.

And this brings us back to Professor Fine's real fascination.

Luria and the members of his fellowship believed themselves to be the protagonists at the center of a great cosmic drama... it entailed bringing an end to exiled existence at every level of being and affecting the redemption of the whole cosmos.

And yet, for all their excesses and all the obstacles to understanding their plan, Luria and his fellowship offer us in the twenty-first century what may be the most potent metaphor for political action. And Lawrence Fine's *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and his Kabbalistic Fellowship* is your personal invitation to join in the great and sacred task. □

Hasidism, Tradition, and Spiritual Freedom

Roger S. Gottlieb

- *Wrapped in a Holy Flame: Teachings and Tales of the Hasidic Masters*, by Zalman Schachter Shalomi. Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- *Opening the Tanya: Discovering the Moral and Mystical Teachings of a Classic Work of Kabbalah*, by Adin Steinsaltz. Jossey-Bass, 2003.

I was fourteen when, through a collection of stories by the great nineteenth-century Yiddish author I. L. Peretz, I first encountered Hasidic spirituality. Marooned in a suburban Jewish Reform synagogue in the aggressively secular and scientific 1950s, I was taken by these tales of soulful God seekers and great rabbis castigating God for Jewish suffering on Yom Kippur. Their intense longing for God and boundless delight in Jewish learning and observance were my only model of spirituality for many years. I still find it striking that although my knowledge and practice of the tradition were practically nil, I could be so moved by what was a form of Orthodox Judaism.

Indeed, an emphasis on joy, a deeply personal sense of God, and a questioning of the value of dry Talmudic scholarship in comparison with the raptures of devotion, have made Hasidic teachings fertile ground for subsequent commentators for over a century—including Martin Buber, Elie Wiesel, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Art Green. These commentators, while all committed to Judaism, were

by and large not strictly observant in the traditional sense.

Zalman Schachter Shalomi's new book, *Wrapped in a Holy Flame*, joins this distinguished company in pursuing the insights and inspirations of the leaders of the great Hasidic religious revival—one that unfolded against a complicated historical background of widespread poverty, anti-Semitism, and strict religious hierarchy. Hasidism promised relief from these woes, teaching that the heart knew as much as the head, that joy was always available no matter what ("It is a great mitzvah," taught Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, "always to be happy."), and that the unlettered could encounter God as well as the most impressive Talmudic scholar.

Schachter's book is not meant to be a straightforward elucidation of the content of Hasidism, but an adapta-

tion of its inner intentions to what he calls the "new paradigm" of contemporary spirituality. Having looked for God in space or time, in texts and rules, we now have come to see that "Everything is God ... it's not that God created the world, but that God became the world." Schachter works with traditional texts to confirm and deepen this perspective, and to help us see what keeps us from maintaining our connection to the divine in daily life. He relates many teachings of what to do if we lose faith or face despair. For example, if you no longer feel a religious love for God, Moshe Leib of Sassov tells us, you can arouse that love by loving things of the world, and then you will be brought back to "the service of the Holy." Alternatively, Reb Pinchas of Koretz tells us that when things are so bad that you can't even recite psalms, "just sit in the silence and hold whatever it is up to God silently"

Reflecting his own unique personal history, Schachter's treatment of the tradition is itself unique. A yeshiva



Roger S. Gottlieb teaches philosophy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Two of his recent books are *Liberating Faith: Religious Voices for Justice, Peace, and Ecological Wisdom*, and *Joining Hands: Politics and Religion Together for Social Change*.

trained Orthodox rabbi, he was sent by the Lubovitcher Rebbe (along with Schlomo Carlbach) to Haight-Ashbury to reach the Jewish hippies who had turned to drugs and eastern religions. Surprisingly, Schachter himself was profoundly affected by what he found there—biochemically, psychologically, and, ultimately, spiritually. He “converted” to a new form of Judaism and became a widely known figure in non-denominational circles, a key rabbinical resource for Reconstructionist Judaism, and professor of “world wisdom” at the (Buddhist oriented) Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado.

Because of his singular range of traditional knowledge, and because for him all authentic spiritual teachers share similar goals, Schachter can intelligently represent the great Hasidic masters as part of a continuum that reaches from Judaism to Sufism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Thus he connects the revelation at Sinai with Zen Master Shunryu Suzuki’s idea of “beginner’s mind,” compares Moshe Leib’s attitude toward fear to that of Buddhist teachers Stephen and Ondrea Levine, and redefines a “proof text” as an idea that “corresponds to a pattern that sits very deep in our reality map.”

Such an approach does a good job of capturing the Hasidic concern with the psychological dialectic between inner experience and the reality of the divine. The teachings presented focus less on “the truth” than on our ability to come into a relation to the truth; and thus on the psychological barriers, inner confusions, and fears which keep us from realizing, as the founder of Hasidism put it, that the world is “filled with wonders and miracles” which we keep ourselves from seeing.

Schachter, for all his respect for tradition, is not afraid to jettison the parts of it he doesn’t like. Freely admitting that he (like everyone else, he points out) sees texts through a particular “lens,” he dismisses orthodoxy’s sexism and provides a

brief but fascinating biography of the “precocious mystical feminism” of the nineteenth century female teacher Reb Channah Rochel of Ludmire.

His tone throughout is gentle, encouraging, and reassuring, as if the great bounty of spiritual reality is always there, always waiting for us. Of course we will struggle with fear and doubt, boredom and weakness; that’s just the way people are. But whenever we are ready, God will meet us more

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than halfway.

Adin Steinsaltz’s personal history and relation to Judaism are almost the mirror image of Schachter’s. Raised as a secular Jew and trained as an engineer, he came late to the study of traditional Judaism. But an innate brilliance has led him to be among the most revered Jewish teachers of our time. For Steinsaltz, the world of Jewish learning is simply the only world there is. He makes no attempt to move out of it, see it in comparative terms, or help us see it in our terms. He does not want to make it accessible to us, but to make us accessible to it.

His approach is reverential in the extreme—both to the text on which he concentrates (The Tanya, written by the founder of Habad Judaism, Schneur Zalman, in the late eighteenth century, a text which Schachter also discusses) and to the entire corpus of Talmudic and post-Talmudic legal strictures, interpreta-

tion, and commentary. For him, there is no room for criticism, comparison, or progress. If Schneur Zalman tells us that masturbation is a more terrible sin than intercourse out of wedlock, because the “waste” of semen “touches on the very essence of evil,” Steinsaltz will explain and (tacitly, at any rate) endorse the view. Tradition does not change and cannot be fundamentally altered; it can only be deepened by continually confirming and explaining what was always in it.

At the same time, both the spiritual psychology of the Tanya—which focuses on the struggle between good and evil in the individual soul of the normal, non-exceptional person—and Steinsaltz’s exhaustive commentary contain much of value. For example, Steinsaltz’s distinction between *actually* being connected to God and simply *feeling* that connection, and his emphasis on the former over the latter, is but one example of the clarity with which he expounds a particularly Jewish perspective. If this is diametrically opposed to Schachter’s approach, which makes Jewish law subservient to the broader idea of spiritual development, that doesn’t mean we cannot learn from both. Even if we are not orthodox ourselves, we should no more be surprised that we can learn from Schneur Zalman and Steinsaltz than that we can learn from Aristotle or Lao-Tzu.

Both of these books are wonderful resources, but though I personally feel much more at home with Schachter than Steinsaltz, I am left with a nagging doubt. I suspect that the rabbis Schachter discusses would say that their inspired flights of spirituality depended on their day-to-day commitment to the laws of Talmudic Judaism; and on a belief in the absolute divinity of a transcendent God as their own faith defined Him. In their own minds they were not pursuing “spirituality,” but an absolute, exclusive, and non-negotiable Judaism. To what extent can we really separate their spiritual insights from that

READING SPIRIT

grounding and still call it theirs? To what extent can we benefit from “tradition” while abandoning the compulsory, binding quality that makes tradition something that encompasses and comforts as well as restricts us?

The answer might be that our time’s historically unprecedented spiritual freedom—which *Holy Flame* embodies and which enabled me to be fascinated by Hasidic Judaism despite my ignorance of the tradition from which it sprang—comes at a price. If we want the freedom to juxtapose Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev to a Tibetan monk, we must give up the absolute attachment to the Jewish tradition as it has been taught, and at

least certainly as the Hasidic rabbis themselves held it.

This change is profound—in its context the equivalent of what Galileo and Newton did for science or the idea of democratic rights did for politics. But it is emphatically not, as some would have it, a shift from serious commitment to an anything-goes sloppiness. Schachter is part of a breathtakingly new perspective on religious life, and because of that he has, I believe, more in common religiously with non-Jewish teachers like the Buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh or the creation theologian Matthew Fox than he does with the teachers of his youth or with Steinsaltz. This

new “paradigm,” to use Schachter’s own term, is based in the pursuit of spiritual development in whatever form, a non-negotiable commitment to women’s equality, an emphasis on ethics and psychology over theology and metaphysics, and a simple delight in calling God or Spirit by many different names. If we want to take Hasidic teachers out of their own paradigm and bring them into this one, I cannot imagine this delicate movement made more lovingly and respectfully than Schachter has done in *Holy Flame*. If we wish to see these teachers perhaps more as they saw themselves, we would do well to turn to Steinsaltz. □

Three Women Writers (from page 71)

Such is the definition of an adult according to IDF counterinsurgency policy. It is no wonder that discursive prohibitions in Israeli military circles have been so loosened that Israeli officers can openly speak of studying the German military’s strategy in putting down the Jewish revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto during the battle of Jenin; or that current chief of Staff Moshe Ya’alon can call the Palestinians a “cancer” that needs to be eradicated. These may sound like public relations faux pas. But, given the IDF’s attitude towards human life as documented in Hass’ interview, they are redolent of much larger moral problems than bad self-editing. And this is exactly what Chacham’s reservists are rebelling against.

While Chacham may be preoccupied by the moral crisis of the Israeli military and Hass by the moral transgressions of the Israeli army, Tanya Reinhart, a professor of linguistics at Tel Aviv University and a journalist in her own right (she writes a bi-weekly column for *Ha’aretz* competitor *Yediot Ahronot*), concerns herself with history in *Israel/Palestine: How To End The War Of 1948* (in this case, what led to the failure of the Oslo Accords, and the onset of the Al-Aksa Intifada). A brutally detailed, intensely bitter

history of the first two years of the war, Reinhart recounts the real sources of the conflict and engages in painstaking criticism of the level of deception indulged in by Ehud Barak in his calls for a final settlement with the Palestinians. Reinhart paints Barak as the most profound of sophists, consistently constructing elaborate linguistic scenarios to essentially do nothing other than maintain the status quo.

Though Ehud Barak is not the sole focus of Reinhart’s book, her criticism of the piano-playing former general is in many respects *Israel/Palestine*’s core, because Barak’s moral inconsistencies epitomize everything that is wrong with the Israeli political establishment. To summarize it in one word: disingenuous—with Israel itself and with the outside world. This is where Reinhart’s background in linguistics seems to shine through, because in her reading, Israeli political power is exercised through the weaving of remarkable webs of deception. There is no such thing as “discourse,” per say, of the kind that linguistic political theorists attribute to a properly functioning democracy, but rather a continuous monologue of denial engaged in by the Israeli political establishment. The end result is a profound lack of moral self-reflexivity

that Israelis assimilate and reproduce, that both assists Israelis in covering up for their own complicity in their country’s policies and makes it impossible to move the peace process forward.

The beauty of Reinhart’s arguments is that they do not make such points philosophically. Rather, as the narrative of *Israel/Palestine* pushes to a close, Reinhart’s conclusions become inescapable. In this sense, *Israel/Palestine* is more than just your average piece of critical historiography. It is also a highly complex, moralistic critique of a suicidal national ideology promulgated by a military-dominated political elite that cannot justify its political authority without a permanent state of war. Nevertheless, Reinhart’s book remains a popular history, the first to be written during the current conflict.

Intensely researched and energetically argued, *Israel/Palestine*—like *Breaking Ranks* and *Reporting From Ramallah*—is an excellent addition to a growing body of progressive Israeli literature that shows no sign of letting up. War may not be good for very much. But if the humanity present in these recent publications is any indication, the Al-Aksa Intifada might just be sowing the seeds of a new and reinvigorated Israeli left. □

The Trouble with Islam

Carly Steinman

■ *The Trouble with Islam: A Muslim's Call for Reform In Her Faith* by Irshad Manji. St. Martin's Press (January 2004).

Is Islam more narrow-minded than the rest of the world religions? That's a "party-wrecker" of a topic says Irshad Manji in her book, an open letter to her fellow Muslims entitled *The Trouble With Islam: A Muslim's Call for Reform In Her Faith*. Clearly, Manji has little hesitation about wrecking the party, as she bluntly expresses what she considers to be the dismal state of Islam. Calling herself a Muslim "refusenik," a phrase borrowed from Soviet Jews who refused to "comply with the mechanisms of mind-control and soullessness," Manji stakes out her position that Islam is stuck in "fundamentalism"—a fixation on Islam's founding moment—which has resulted in "defensive preoccupation against new and innovative thinking."

This book is an unrelenting criticism of Islam. Although a Muslim herself, Manji calls the religion anti-Semitic, homophobic, misogynist, racist, lacking independent thought, exploitative, hypocritical, complicit in the Holocaust, brain-dead and militant. She offers abundant examples to support her accusations, many drawn from her personal experience as an out lesbian Muslim hosting a queer Canadian TV show in the late 1990s.

Manji's core message is that Muslim

fundamentalism should not define the religion. She argues that this fundamentalism is dangerous, that it can violate basic human rights, that it is not a necessary part of Islam, and that both Muslims and non-Muslims must speak out against it.

Some of Manji's work resonates with the struggles that any progressives of faith have in coming to terms with their religious tradition. For example, Manji's chapter on the tensions and contradictions within the Koran adeptly describes the dilemma faced by modern people who follow ancient texts: "We have to own up to the fact that the Koran is all over the bloody map. Compassion and contempt exist side by side." Manji addresses the difficulty of dealing with troublesome passages in holy scriptures, and the need for open and honest questioning of such texts. She raises the highly provocative query:

"What if Mohammed Atta had been raised on soul-stretching questions instead of simple certitudes?" This chapter is powerful, as she expresses fear that only in contemporary Islam (and not in other religions) is "imitation" mainstream.

Manji's hope for her fellow Muslims is *ijtihad*, the Islamic tradition of independent reasoning, which allows every Muslim to update religious practice in light of contemporary circumstances. She proposes an ambitious campaign called "Operation *Ijtihad*," which would begin with an international, interfaith effort to back women entrepreneurs in Muslim countries. Given Manji's pessimism about Islam throughout the book, she shows an unexpected, yet refreshing optimism about the far-reaching possibilities of the project. Her conclusions also raise an important challenge for Westerners, arguing that Western Muslims should be exercising their civil liberties to speak out against abuses in Islamic countries, and that non-Muslims should not be afraid of charges of rac-

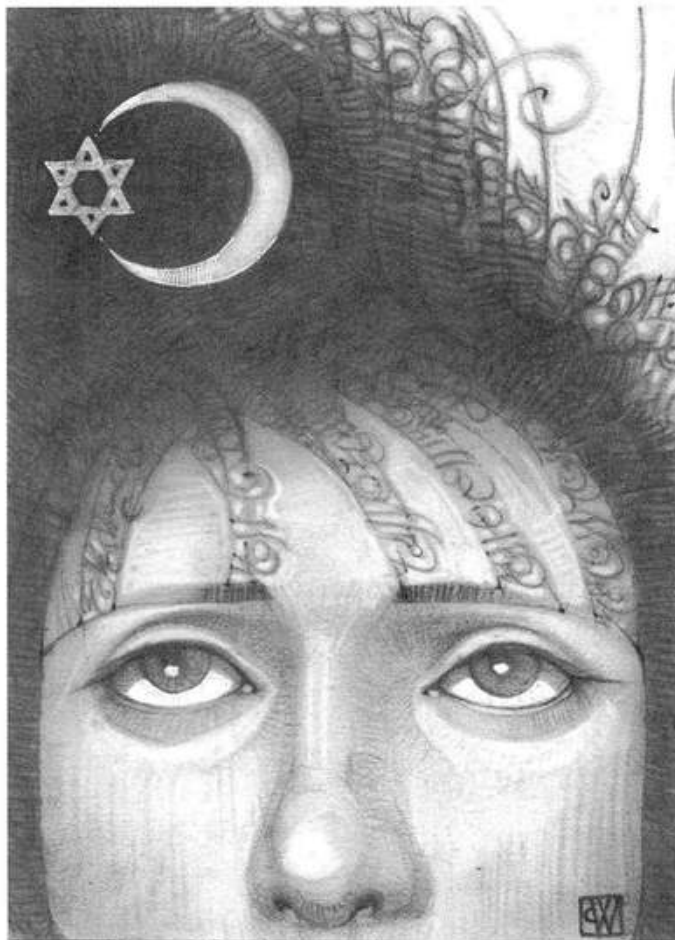


ILLUSTRATION BY CAMILLE WAINER

Carly Steinman is a housing policy advisor for the Ontario government in Toronto. She is a member of the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims (an interfaith dialogue group), and the 9th grade teacher at the Temple Emanu-el religious school.

BOOK REVIEW

ism when joining in these efforts.

However, despite Manji's embrace of *ijtihad* as a positive alternative to fundamentalism, it is hard to believe that her book, given its denigrating tone, is in fact directed toward positive action by her fellow Muslims. Rather, it seems to feed into anti-Muslim, and more particularly, anti-Arab feelings held by non-Muslims; indeed, in some passages, it seems to feed specifically into anti-Arab feelings held by many Jews.

Manji's chapters on Israel are surprising. She romanticizes the country to an extreme that would make many TIKKUN readers uncomfortable—it certainly made me, a liberal-minded Jew, uncomfortable. On her trip to Israel, sponsored by a Zionist organization, she determines that Israel embraces diversity and democracy. "Israel, I find, brings more compassion to 'colonization' than its adversaries have

ever brought to 'liberation.'" Numerous pages are devoted to demonstrating that Israel is not an apartheid state. In the course of achieving this objective, Manji makes only passing reference to the second-class treatment of Arab-Israeli citizens and dismisses settlers as "marginal." She blames the current Mideast crisis on other Arab countries and on Palestinians themselves. Manji does raise critical issues in these chapters, such as exposing the illogical propaganda at the UN anti-racism conference in Durban that likened Jews and Israelis to Nazis. Yet, these important messages are diminished by her strikingly one-sided account.

Here in Toronto, Manji has developed unusual allies and foes. She continues to be a featured speaker at well-attended Jewish events. (She recently presented a keynote address, "Defending Israel is Defending Diversity," at an Israel advocacy con-

ference for students.) Meanwhile, Tarek Fatah, host of the weekly TV show *The Muslim Chronicle* and a founding member of the progressive *Muslim Canadian Congress*, condemned her work in a national newspaper, stating that Manji's accusation of Muslim complicity in the Holocaust is an injustice to the thousands of Muslims who fought against Hitler. Fatah, who is thanked in Manji's book, asked that his name be removed from future editions. His denunciation of Manji was startling, as I expected that this man, who speaks out regularly against Muslim fundamentalism and the treatment of women in Islamic countries, would be an ally. I spoke with Fatah, who said he believes that Manji is

choosing to "act as a conduit to allow a sanitized climate of hate against Muslims." He says that the popularity of her book is evidence that there is a market for anti-Muslim

We have to own up to the fact that the Koran is all over the bloody map. Compassion and contempt exist side by side.

literature.

Irshad Manji is undeniably bright and articulate, and her book has a conversational style that is very accessible. She adeptly exposes critical issues to be addressed in contemporary Islam, and I admire her candor in documenting the dangers of strict observance of religious texts and the relationships between Islamic fundamentalism and human rights abuses. Yet, I remain unconvinced that her intention is to offer guidance to her own people. Her distaste for Islam is matched by her unstinting admiration for Jews, Israel, and the West, and Manji is shrewd enough to know who would be most interested in further dialogue. Overall, I suspect her rhetoric will not positively engage fellow Muslims, nor will it meaningfully educate non-Muslims. It is regrettable that this "refusnik" has refused to produce a more balanced and respectful work. □



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On Generosity

Kim Chernin

I have read somewhere that generosity is among the highest of spiritual values. I've always admired generosity but never thought of it as particularly spiritual. It seemed rather an eminently practical quality because of the way it tends to be contagious. Someone does something generous towards me and I immediately want to do something generous back. Now that I've begun to think of it as spiritual, however, I'm wondering whether it can be practiced, like meditation; or cultivated, like compassion.

The best place I know to study generosity is not a temple or an ashram or a meditation room. It is a little bakery/restaurant called Phoenix Pasticceria, right here in Berkeley, CA, where the proprietor has an unusual attitude. The minute he spots one of his regulars, he's there to greet and offer. A glass of wine, complements of the management? A special bread he knows you like? He ushers you into the place, with its dozen tables, its counters offering their cornucopia of home-made baked goods, its machines for cutting pasta, the cooks at work just beyond the rack where the breads are cooling, and you are made to feel that you are coming home and will be cared for beyond your just desserts.

Children cannot get out of the place without being persuaded to select a treat from the homemade cookies and sweets. I like to watch their faces as they come to understand that they are being given a gift by this man, kneeling in front of them, whom they've never met before. I like to study the workings of generosity as the child's eyes move anxiously toward her mother to check if it's okay, and the mother looks knowingly at the proprietor to see if he can be trusted and really intends the gift, and, seeing that he does, she softens and lets the eager, disbelieving child accept the offer.

This gift-giving to children was common when I was a child; it's more rare now. I wonder, will this child, because of the cookie, be more or less likely to share something good with another person? Will her mother be? I watch the people waiting to buy bread. Something important happens to their faces too, as if they were reading a text exhorting

to virtue, absorbing from this living parable, along with its good smell of bread and olive oil, a not fully-conscious, perhaps, but nonetheless valuable teaching. I like to bring friends for lunch. They come back, bring their friends. Other regulars bring friends who will tell other people how Eric, the owner, regularly employs people who would otherwise not be able to find work. One little restaurant, without doctrine or dogma, passing on spiritual values by serving food that tastes of generosity. Eric, bustling about in his long white apron, to pass the thin sheets of dough through the pasta machine, offer an unexpected espresso, or stop at your table for a chat; Eric, who was the original founder of Semifredi's breads, has created a community that cultivates giving and sharing.

Having lunch at the Pasticceria makes me want to practice generosity. It's as simple as that. If I give my loaf of bread to the next hungry person I encounter and go back for another, I suppose in a small way I will participate in generosity's immediacy. But probably the best way to practice is to call on whatever one does regularly. As a counselor, listening is what I do for a living. I do a lot of it too as a friend and lover. Recently, and with slow progress, I have started to practice generous listening. That means talking less, interrupting less often, listening longer when I disagree. It means being less sure I know and understand what people are saying to me. It means suspending my need to be right. It means a kind of leaning towards them—into their world and its special meanings—and away from my world of meanings.

This is what I have learned so far: To listen generously one has got to care for the other person as much as one cares for the self. Not more than one cares, just as much will do. Perhaps all generous acts, even the smallest, require this capacity, which sounds easy until you start to practice it and then you find out that it is as spiritually demanding as sitting in meditation.

Is that what makes generosity spiritual? The fact that it can be practiced and leads to a transformation of the self, as it learns to be nourished from nourishing another? How wonderful to think that someday, with practice, my listening could become as satisfying as a loaf of bread given to a person hungering for understanding. □

Kim Chernin is the author of many books, including, most recently, The Seven Pillars of Jewish Denial. She is a counselor in Berkeley, CA.

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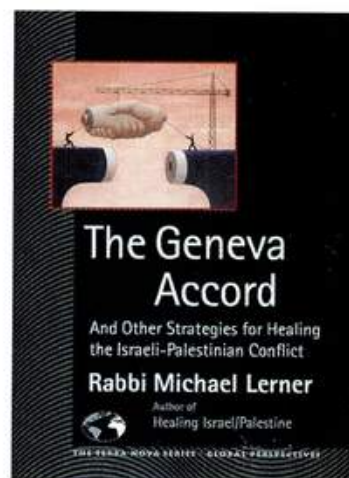
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