

A Critique of Politics, Culture & Society

TIKKUN

(te•kün) TO MEND, REPAIR, AND TRANSFORM THE WORLD

**HOW TO FIGHT TERROR
WASTE-ING THE PLANET**

JULY/AUGUST 2004

WILL KERRY BLOW IT?

A Winning Strategy for Democrats

Peter Gabel and Michael Lerner



\$5.95 U.S. \$8.75 Canada



PLUS:

Cornel West, Tom Beaudoin, Naomi Seidman, Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Linda Zisquit, David Newman, Adam Sutcliffe, Stephen Zunes, M.K. Naomi Chazan, Rafi Dajani, Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Jonathan S. Klate, Natan Margalit, and Paul Buhle.

After Chagall

Over Vitebsk

The old man is green and leaning with cane
in hand and yellow bag over a shoulder.

He is homeless and begs from house to house.
He is the wanderer who appears at every door

or just another Elijah who collapsed outside
the studio, whose face is tragic and old and angelic

and stinks too much, but you put him on the canvas
to get one more Jew out of harm's way.

He is the man who bursts into flames and returns
every year, the one touched by the angel

over the Juniper tree, twice, the one who asked
for fire and God came down and consumed.

He is the visitor the whole village awaits,
the drunkard for whom each house pours a glass,

the hunchback slouching through our dreams—poverty
and miracles—he is hobbling down a winter road

or soaring above the town where the fences are green
and the roofs of the synagogue are blue.

—*Philip Terman*



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Letters to the Editor

An Open Letter to Hillel

Tikkun regularly reports on the multi-fold ways in which the Jewish community stifles free speech and takes retributive action against those who question the policies of the Sharon government. So we reprint here an Open Letter to Hillel, The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life:

To Hillel:

As Jewish faculty, we are writing to express our outrage that Hillel has removed a student president because of her critical opinions about Israel. At issue was her stand against the ongoing Israeli occupation and her refusal to countenance racism against Palestinians. In justifying her dismissal, her Hillel supervisors condemned her principled words and actions as "unprofessional" and "disrespectful."

For the past year, Julian Redford served as president of the University of Richmond's Hillel chapter. By all accounts—including those of her overseers at the Richmond Jewish Community Center—she was a super-

lative president, the driving force behind virtually all Hillel programming. It was only when she began to express her views on Israel that the organization called for her ouster. The facts of the case are as follows: In February 2004, after having received unsolicited emails from the Israeli Embassy for months, she asked the embassy to remove her from its mailing list. In her message, she wrote that the solution to Israel's problems lay in reconciliation with the Palestinians, not with the "radical Zionist propaganda" that the embassy had been sending her. Within twenty-four hours, she was summoned to meet with her supervisors at the JCC. They told her that the embassy was calling for her dismissal and demanded that she apologize for her "unprofessional [behavior] that demonstrated a total disrespect." Ms. Redford refused. Her supervisors also charged her with failing to provide "balanced" programming on Israel, on the grounds that she had vetoed a speaker

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they had recommended. Ms. Redford defended her action by explaining that the would-be speaker had told her that Palestinians, unlike Jews, were born with the innate capacity to kill innocent people. Ms. Redford later elaborated: "Racist statements are contrary to Jewish values and beliefs and have no place in a university setting. There is a clear line between 'a different political view' and outright racism, bigotry, promotion of violence, and hatred." Following the meeting, Hillel officials told Ms. Redford that her "statements [were] not in keeping with the mission and goals of Hillel" and asked her to resign. Ms. Redford once again refused, asserting that her actions were consistent with Hillel's mission statement on Israel. Hillel then dismissed her for her refusal to apologize and her "inappropriate [and] inexcusable" accusation of racism.

The charges against Ms. Redford are patently absurd. In terms of Israel programming, her political opinions in no way compromised her commitment to "balanced" programming. Shortly before she was dismissed she had brought a speaker from CAMERA, the right-wing media watchdog group, to the Richmond campus. What is really at stake in these spurious allegations is Hillel's attempt to silence dissent within the organization. Hillel's website states that it is "committed to a pluralistic vision of Judaism," but Ms. Redford's dismissal suggests that pluralism extends only so far as the Israeli embassy says it does. As Jewish faculty, we are appalled that the Hillel Foundation is alienating Jews instead of welcoming them, enforcing an institutional orthodoxy that tramples student autonomy, and serving a foreign government instead of its student members. The coupling of political intimidation with disrespect for student democracy ought to alarm not only those who seek justice and peace, but also those who would defend student prerogatives against high-handed bureaucrats. The University of Richmond's administration, to its credit, expressed concern over Ms. Redford's dismissal, but its mediation came too late. It is a sad day for Judaism when stand-

ing up for one's beliefs is deemed "inappropriate"; when the state of Israel exerts an overwhelming influence over the agenda and institutions of American Jewry; and when racism is normalized to the point that even the accusation of racism—irrespective of its truth—is considered suspect. We applaud Ms. Redford's courageous stand and her refusal to back down. We urge Hillel to offer her an apology and to take proactive measures to ensure a welcoming environment for all Jews regardless of political opinion. Hillel, as the main address for Jewish life on campus, has a special obligation to foster critical discussions of Israeli policy. The Jewish tradition of debate and questioning demands no less.

ROBERT BLECHER
University of Richmond
Richmond, VA
(plus 170 faculty members nationwide)

Jewish faculty who wish to sign on to this letter should send their name, title, and affiliation to Campus@tikkun.org. To counter the extremism of discussions about Israel on campus that are generated by both the pro-Sharon and the anti-Israel forces, Tikkun has created the Tikkun Campus Network (TCN). The last national gathering of TCN took place in March at Brown University. We will be sending a weekly information bulletin to students on campus to provide Tikkun's Progressive Middle Path perspective which supports an end to the Occupation and compensation for Palestinian refugees but also opposes acts of terror (from both sides) and rejects demeaning of Israel by some sections of the anti-war movement. Will you help us get as many email addresses as possible for students on campus (both Jewish and not) who might be interested in hearing this perspective? Send to Campus@tikkun.org and put TCN in the subject heading of the email.

Our Environmental Legacy

To the Editor:

I want to commend Sierra Club president Larry Fahn's article "Future Generations Be Damned! The Sorry Environmental Legacy of the Bush Administration" (May/June 2004).

Fahn is so right to conclude that "economic benefits of federal environmental regulations far outweigh their costs." I would add that we here in the "rust belt" could benefit from the manufacturing of pollution abatement equipment. And the major polluters might want to get a "piece of the action." There

is money to be made for a utility that invests in renewable technologies. I am a member of the Tikkun Community and also of the Sierra Club.

JOHN G. MERRIAM
Toledo, OH

To the Editor:

In response to the May/June 2004 article, "Justice at the Checkout Counter," I would like to voice my support for the author's goal—the creation of a system that certifies food and retail goods that are produced in accordance with faith-based standards—and offer the hopeful news that this system is beginning to evolve. I work on a project through the fair trade organization, Equal Exchange, that has already engaged over 9,500 congregations and faith-based organizations throughout the country in this type of work. Through the project, congregations buy fairly traded products including coffee, tea, and chocolate products as a way of living out their faith. What's more, after learning about the inequities of the conventional trading system, many participants conclude that buying anything but Fair Trade is antithetical to their religious or spiritual beliefs. Also, many congregations work with other fair trade groups to purchase handcrafts and retail items,



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supporting the idea that communities of faith are willing to support justice when the option is presented to them. It was through my work on Fair Trade that I learned about Tikkun and have since become an active member of the New England Tikkun Community. We have sold fairly traded products as a fundraiser for our sister community in the Negev in Israel, simultaneously living out the Tikkun principles of economic justice and healing in Israel/Palestine. For more information on faith and Fair Trade go to: interfaith@equalexchange.com.

JILL WENKE BERNSTEIN

Boston, MA

Jesus the Jew

To the Editor:

I agree with Michael Lerner in "Jesus the Jew" (May/June 2004) that Jesus should be considered a Jewish prophet, but was his message really so inspirational? The Sermon on the Mount is psychologically repressive. And there is no evidence at all that Jesus actively opposed Roman rule or provided any realistic alternative to it. As for Lerner's claim that the Torah has a revolutionary message, he plays a dishonest game. Whatever is hateful in the Torah is the fault of human beings who distort God's true message. Whatever is loving is the true voice of God. Right. The Prophets, who Lerner invokes but rarely quotes, were the worst bigots and fanatics of all. Since they all insisted they were speaking for God, how could anyone disagree with them? They typically hated foreigners and women. I think it is fair to describe them as the fundamentalists of their time. Since no one really knows what Jesus said or did, nothing Lerner says can overcome the Gospels. Just like any sacred literature, they will remain authoritative for believers, no matter how flawed they are.

BENNETT MURASKIN
MORRIS PLAINS, NJ

Editor Responds:

Yes, I acknowledge selective reading—and I do that same kind of reading to take what is valuable from Plato, Aristotle, Buddha, Lao Tze, indigenous cultures, Thomas Jefferson, Marx, Freud, Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Abraham Joshua Heschel and even from the writings I esteem of Bennett Muraskin. Once I got past the academic fascination with "gotcha" (that is, pointing out the flaws), I came to realize that every single being on the planet is deeply flawed, and that it would be best to try to focus on the beauty, wisdom, and love

fantasy, and it is for that reason that they will continue to connect to a belief in God, understood—as I write in my book *Jewish Renewal*—as the Force of Healing and Transformation that makes possible the transformation of reality from a world of pain and cruelty to a world of love and generosity.

To the Editor:

I was so gratified to see the main feature of your last issue recognizing Jesus as a positive figure in Jewish history. After a lifetime of being conditioned as a Jew to regard Jesus as irrelevant to

our people, except for being credited with founding a religion that victimized Jews throughout centuries, I realized my ignorance. Several years ago I read the Gospels for the first time while on a personal retreat. I found that I had absolutely no quarrel with what Jesus was teaching. In fact, I found his reforms to be necessary to maintain the true G-d message of the Jewish people. Had I been living then, I would have been a follower, as I imagine many of Tikkun's readers would have, regardless of what religion they are today. In today's world, Yeshua would be a leader in the Jewish Renewal Movement, right up there with Reb Zalman.

It is time for Jews to let go of exclusivity, to open up to the realities of our time. The planet is in peril. We must do all we can to make amends. I believe that welcoming Jesus into our family will move us in the right direction.

D'VORAH KOST
From the Internet



in them and in their writings. I've found that easier to do with some distorted humans than with others, and I tend to look to those for inspiration. I suppose that is the same reason that a majority of the human race points to the writing of the great spiritual teachers and prophets of all religions—they are a source of inspiration and they support our inner inclinations to move beyond the pain and cruelty of any existing reality and aspire to a more loving and just world. It is that inclination that makes them attracted to and feel supported by a belief that there is something in the universe that would make their desires attainable rather than (as the "common sense" of a world of oppression keeps telling them) utopian

To the Editor:

I was interested in Matthew Fox's discussion of Catholic sadomasochism in terms of fascism ("Mel Gibson's Passion and Fascism's Piety of Pain," May/June 2004). There is another fascist connection I should like to bring up. Currently reactionary Catholics in the

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United States are trying to have Bishops deny Holy Communion to Democratic Catholics like John Kerry because they would not legislate Catholic dogma into secular law, on abortion for instance. During the Vichy Regime in France some Catholic resistance members were denied the Sacrament by priests who thought that they should obey Vichy, the lawful government. Yet members of the fascist Milice, which spent much time hunting down Jews and other presumed enemies of Vichy, never had any trouble receiving Communion. The politicization of the Sacraments may also be fascistic.

NORMAN RAVITCH
Savannah, GA

To the Editor:

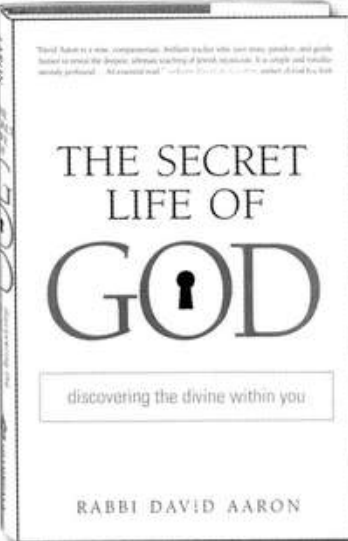
I am compelled to write *TIKKUN* after reading the May/June issue because the articles approach a dynamic tension that has been nagging me for years. In so much of contemporary Christology there is a peculiar diminishment of Judaism's autonomy—of Judaism as a faith that is not merely the “house where Jesus the Messiah was born.” Jesus is painted as a revolutionary, as someone whose wit and wisdom defied and challenged the norm. His message of love is extracted from the rest of the texts (in which Jesus is often crude, vindictive, ethnocentric, and violent) and we are left with the idea that it is love that is the revolutionary concept that Jesus introduced; love is that thing that the “establishment” was missing.

After receiving a masters in theology and studying for six years before I converted to Judaism, I discovered that billions of people (including myself) still have this image of Jesus—this atextual, archetypal image—and that this image exists at the expense of Jews and Judaism. The Romans may be legally responsible for the execution but it has predominantly been the Jews held responsible for the Crucifixion. All through the Christian texts, Jews are evil, calculating and, frankly, too stupid to understand Jesus' parables or the “truth” of his own Christology. It is the Jews who understand neither love nor God. It is the Judaism of the Pharisees that mistakes the proverbial finger for

the moon. And it is the Pharisaic leaders, the ancestors of contemporary observant Judaism, who ultimately demand his death. The question of whether or not this is historically accurate has not yet proven to be powerful enough to diffuse the inherited consciousness of anti-Semitism. This more subtle anti-Judaic bias expressed in lifting only a loving revolutionary out of the texts is, for me, very troubling because Jesus becomes the archetype of love and “the Jews”—as John so unfortunately puts it—the archetypal anti-love. You find this imbedded in the psyche of people all over the world and all throughout history. The Jews did not get it. Worse: they actually rejected, reviled, and murdered the incarnation of love. It has only been a rhetorical and academic concern, it would seem, that Judaism at the time of Jesus was a highly nuanced—to put it gently—culture and civilization. Likewise, that Roman society was filled with violence and hate has somehow only really been grasped by historians and in any case did not ever gain the psychological strength of the archetypal

antagonist/protagonist relationship between “the Jews” and Jesus. Jews, however ahistorical this is, have been painted as the evil “big fish” and Christians as the revolutionary “small fish.” Islam carried on this tradition with a very powerful anti-Jew Christology. With a billion Christians and a billion Muslims in the world, compared to the 20 million Jews, the antagonist/protagonist mythology of love vs. Jews is more than a little troubling. So many people in the world understand Jesus as an archetype—not as the complex revolutionary and teacher that he is in the texts; the various canonical and non-canonical texts are less important because a Christology of God (love) incarnate is so powerful. In other words, the academic approach is transformative mostly to academics. Rather, more work needs to be done to show that Judaism stands on its own—not that it should be isolated and unaffected by other faiths, but it has its own profundity and its own power. Thank you for all you do in this regard.

CHRISTOPHER HERB
Madison, WI



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Global Warming: Wasting the Planet

Hollywood's summer blockbuster *The Day After Tomorrow* portrays the sudden and disastrous impact of global warming on an earth dominated by American environmental irresponsibility. Though the script gives little opportunity to reflect on exactly which policies (were they mainly governmental? corporate? consumer choices?) produced the catastrophe, and wastes most of its time on a ridiculously implausible storyline, it offers us a unique opportunity to reassert the centrality of environmental issues and to review the abysmal record of both the Clinton and Bush administrations in failing to take seriously the growing danger of global ecological disaster. The movie presents us with a challenge: how to effectively use this moment of openness that people have as they leave the theater. Congrats to MoveOn.org for leafletting the movie with a message attempting to deepen the experience! Let's hope environmentally sensitive political leaders and activists will find a way to broaden the discussion and make it central to the national debate in the coming months. For more on wasting the planet, see the articles in this issue on Zygmunt Bauman's important insights (beginning on page 68).

Remember Poverty?

Well, it's still here for over two billion people who live on two dollars or less per day. The income of the most well-to-do 1 percent (50 million people around the world—whom we at TIKKUN refer to as the elites of wealth and power) equaled the combined income of the poorest 57

percent (2.7 billion people). With populations expanding at the rate of 80 million a year, within thirty years there could be 5 billion people living on less than two dollars a day.

Torah of Money

Jewish organizations controlling \$1.4 billion have formed the Jewish Shareholder Engagement Network aimed at using Jewish institutional holdings to serve socially responsible aims. The JSEN is affiliated with the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR: www.iccr.org), a coalition of more than 270 Protestant and Catholic organizations that promote shareowner action. The JSEN recommends support for shareowner resolutions on executive compensation, transparency in corporate political participation, global warming, prescription drug affordability, and equal opportunity employment.

Nader Could Have It Both Ways

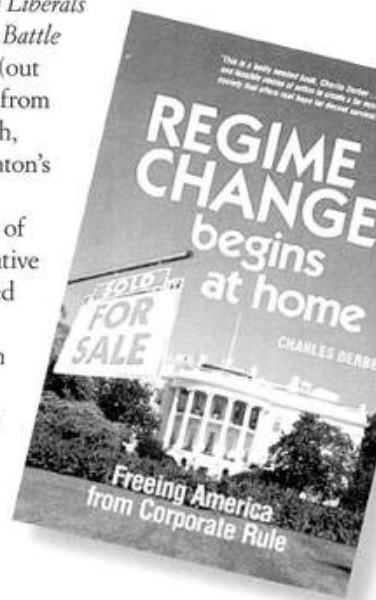
Bruce Ackerman of Yale Law School proposes that in each state where he gets on the ballot, Ralph Nader select the same electors that Kerry has chosen for the Electoral College. That way, a vote for Nader would be counted for Nader, yet the effect would be to support Kerry, since technically the electors and not the candidates are elected in the presidential voting. Kerry's electors would then receive Nader's votes, but those wishing to send a message of dissent against his waffling on the war in Iraq would have their voices counted. The Greens and others could try the same route.

Tools for Activism: Summer Reading 2004

Want to get active? Join the Tikkun Community's campaign to get Kerry to abandon his "Bush lite" strategy (see pages 32-48 in this issue). Go to our website www.tikkun.org, join the Community, create a study group using this issue of the magazine and our books *Healing Israel/Palestine* and *Spirit Matters: Global Healing and the Wisdom of the Soul*, which you can order on line or by calling 510-644-1200.

Want to strengthen your foundations before plunging in? Here are some great resources for summer reading:

To get ready for the 2004 elections, read *Regime Change Begins at Home: Freeing America from Corporate Rule* by Charles Derber (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2004); Ben Cohen and Jason Salzman's *50 Ways You Can Show George The Door in 2004* (Westview, 2004); *The Real State of the Union: From the Best Minds in America, Bold Solutions to the Problems Politicians Dare Not Address* edited by Tim Halstead (Basic Books, 2004); and Robert Reich's new book *Reason: Why Liberals Will Win the Battle For America* (out this summer from Knopf). Reich, who was Clinton's Secretary of Labor, is one of the most creative and principled people who ever served in the Cabinet of the United States,



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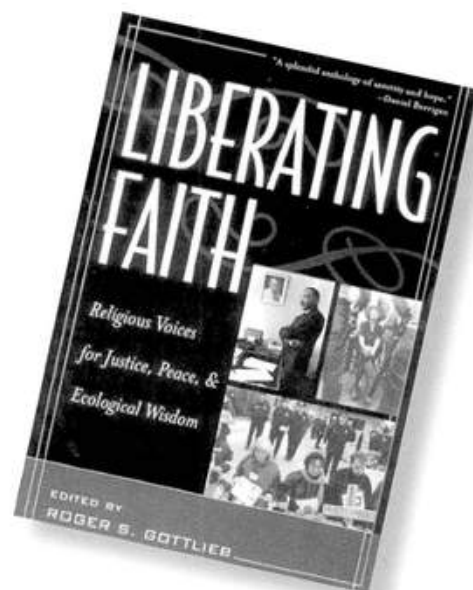
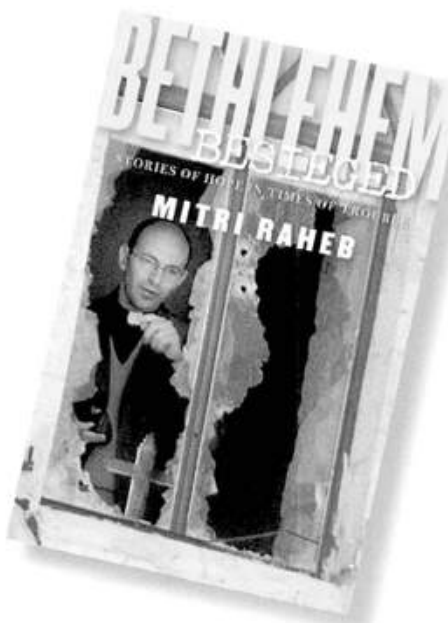


and his insights into political life are invaluable.

There is no better way to stay on top of globalization issues than reading the annual *State of the World* (Norton) collection, which you can order each year from The Worldwatch Institute (or get in bookstores). Also worth reading is Jodie Evan's *Twilight of Empire*, exploring responses to the Occupation of Iraq (Perceval Press, 2004).

TIKKUN has never been into conspiracy theories, but after the revelations about U.S. prisons in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay, we are at least open to a critical reading of David Ray Griffin's *The New Pearl Harbor* which raises disturbing questions about the Bush Administration and 9/11 (Olive Branch Press, 2004). But conspiracy is nothing new in America—see *There's Something Happening Here* (University of California Press, 2004), David Cunningham's powerfully documented study of the FBI's COINTELPRO operations designed to disrupt and crush unpopular movements of dissent.

Ready to read about the Middle East? Read TIKKUN editor Michael Lerner's powerful sequel to *Healing Israel-Palestine* this summer: *The Geneva Accords and Other Strategies for Middle East Peace* (available through Publishers Group West www.pgw.com, or call TIKKUN at 510-644-1200). Read Peretz Kidron's *Refusenik* (Zed Press, 2004), a collection of statements from fifty Israeli refuseniks—courageous members of the Israeli Army who refuse to serve in the West Bank and Gaza to enforce the Occupation. Dan Leon's collection *Who's Left in Israel* (Sussex Academic Press, 2004) is a particularly valuable tool for understanding the current array of thinking among Israeli peace activists. Also worthy of your attention: *Bethlehem Besieged: Stories of Hope in Times of Trouble* by Mitri Raheb (Fortress Press, 2004), a powerfully moving account from the Palestinian perspective, and Rashid Khalidi's *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* (Beacon Press, 2004).



And please don't neglect the spiritual foundations of social activism this summer! Read Roger Gottlieb's wonderful collection *Liberating Faith: Religious Voices for Justice, Peace & Ecological Wisdom* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), a powerfully inspiring interfaith overview of social change perspectives. Also check out *Spiritual Capital* by Dana Zohar and Ian Marshall (Barrett-Koehler, 2004) and check out Zohar's article in the September/October issue of TIKKUN. Susan Moon has put together *Not Turning Away* (Shambhala, 2004), a collection of articles on the practice of engaged Buddhism—and it's not just for Buddhists! *Rediscovery of Awe* by Kirk J. Schneider (Paragon House, 2003) is a quintessential TIKKUN book, which describes what it might be like to respond to the universe and to each other with "awe, wonder, and radical amazement." We learned those words from a towering spiritual genius of the twentieth century, Abraham Joshua Heschel, so why not finish your summer's reading with his *God In Search of Man* (Noonday, 1976) or *The Prophets* (Jewish Publication Society, 1969). □

Memo to the President

Winning the Hearts and Minds of Americans

George Vradenburg

(Note: This issue of TIKKUN contains pieces by the Publisher and the Editor advising President Bush and Senator Kerry on their election positioning on Iraq. In writing this piece, I fantasized myself as Chief of Staff to President Bush—as you read this, think of The West Wing's Leo McGarry writing to President Josiah Bartlet.)

Mr. President, with the improvements in the economy (600,000 new jobs in the last three months and a consequent narrowing of the federal deficit), our administration should be seeing improvements in our standing with the American people and be well positioned for the November election. Unfortunately, we are not. Why? One word: Iraq. Americans were with us until a few months ago because most Americans believed that a democratic Iraq was both right and realistic and a potential beacon in a troubled Middle East. Why are we now losing the hearts and minds of Americans?

Because of our repeated misjudgments, Americans have increasing doubts about our competence in achieving a democratic and prosperous Iraq, let alone larger Middle East reforms. We need an urgent change of perspective, an extreme attitude makeover.

The situation on the ground in Iraq—or shall I say the perception of the situation on the ground in Iraq—will be the single-most important factor in how the American people judge us on this issue. And that perception, in turn, will depend on the success of the new interim Iraqi government. If that government (a) is viewed as legitimate by Iraqi factions and the Iraqi people, (b) improves Iraqi security with its own security forces, and (c) moves toward fair and free elections early next year, we will win this election. If the situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate, American voters will look for new management.

We need a disciplined effort to respect the sovereignty of the new Iraqi government. Risky yes, but essential. Americans need to see Iraqis taking ownership of their own destiny: Iraqi cabinet officials (not Paul Bremer) articulating Iraqi political objectives; Iraqi business executives and workers (not Halliburton or Bechtel) making and executing reconstruction decisions; and Iraqi military and police (not General Mark Kimmitt) visibly out front on matters of their own security. Obviously, we have a responsibility to support

their efforts—with intensity, patience, and respect—but it is critical that we reduce our profile, both as a matter of substance and PR.

We must defer to Iraqi leadership and the Iraqi people. Iraqis must negotiate a representative government in a way that works in their historical and cultural context. We can be supportive of them and insist on respect for universal principles of human rights, but we cannot dictate the precise form or personality of their new government. We borrowed their country for fifteen months to help Iraqis rid themselves of a tyrant, but let's not confuse ourselves—they own their country, we don't.

And we should publicly admit our mistakes. Leadership requires courage, resolve, and steadfastness—as we've demonstrated—but it also requires an acceptance of responsibility for our mistakes. We were too fast in abandoning efforts to get a second UN resolution in 2003, but we are now modifying our tactics by asking for a UN resolution to authenticate the new Iraqi interim government. We underestimated the force levels required to prevent looting and to assure post-combat security, but now we are adjusting effective force levels by delaying troop rotations.

We can learn a lot from our Arab friends in the Region. They fear a failed state in Iraq more than they fear a democratic Iraq. Let's listen to their ideas on how to make Iraq work.

We could have sent an unmistakably positive signal to America and the world by dismissing Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld following the Abu Ghraib prison abuses. Most of our mistakes in Iraq have been the product of recommendations or actions of the Defense Department. Mr. Rumsfeld's dismissal would have dramatically demonstrated your personal leadership and commitment to individual rights and the rule of law. And it would have enabled us to select leadership in the Defense Department with a more realistic understanding of what needs to be done in Iraq. I know your personal loyalty made that step inconceivable, but our deeper loyalty to this country required more of us.

Mr. President, I am confident you can still be sworn in for a second term by Chief Justice Rehnquist next January, notwithstanding our repeated mistakes in Iraq. Unlike some of our opponents, we share with the American people the value of seeing things through, of not backing off in the face of difficulty. But resolve itself is not enough—an honest change in policy and posture on June 30 will be needed to carry this off. □

George Vradenburg is co-publisher of TIKKUN.

Bush the Sodomite

According to Jewish tradition, the sin of Sodom was not homosexuality, but rather insensitivity to the needs of the stranger. Abraham was famed for his hospitality—according to tradition, he kept his tent open during the day in all four directions, and when he saw strangers approach he would rush to greet them and feed them. Thus, he tried to prepare food for the messengers who came to tell him of the fulfillment of his dream to have a child with Sarah before he even knew who they were. Those same messengers proceeded to the house of Abraham's nephew Lot in the town of Sodom, where they were accosted by an angry mob who demanded Lot hand over the strangers. The Rabbis argued that this was consistent with the Sodomites' general refusal to treat the powerless in a welcoming and generous way—and it is for this sin, not homosexuality, that the city of Sodom merits the fire and brimstone and people turning into salt.

We have that Sodomite policy in our own society. The massive impact of the Bush tax giveaways to the rich has begun to be reflected in less funding for desperately needed social programs on the state and local level. For example, as state revenues decline, hospitals and health care programs for the poor shut down and tuition at state universities rises to levels that poorer students can't afford. While the billionaires rejoice in their windfalls, and the millionaires stuff the pockets of the various organizations created to promote Bush's reelection (the schemes for getting around the latest attempt at "electoral reform" prove that only the full-scale public funding of elections together with an absolute bar on using media advertising could begin to make a dent),



the poor are increasingly treated as pariahs. And the news is this: If taxes aren't raised, the cuts in domestic programs (even Homeland Security!) will be drastic for the 2006 budget.

This is the kind of sodomy that we need to criminalize while congratulating and welcoming into our midst the many couples newly married under Massachusetts and San Francisco law. □

Please Help Israel Stop Its Self-Destructive Occupation of Gaza and the West Bank

Immediately following revelations of American soldiers torturing prisoners in Iraq, the world's attention turned to Israel which, after the defeat of Ariel Sharon's ill-conceived Gaza withdrawal plan by his very own Likud party, launched a new offensive against Palestinian civilians in the Rafah refugee camp (on the southernmost tip of the Gaza strip near Egypt). Under the guise of searching for tunnels and clearing space for its future military presence on the Egyptian border, Israel

conducted a violent operation against Palestinian civilians accused of no crime other than living there. In front of the world's television cameras, Israel gave these Gazans a few hours to pack their bags before their homes were demolished by Israeli tanks and bulldozers.

On strictly military grounds, the whole action was senseless. Ariel Sharon had already proposed a unilateral withdrawal from all of the Gaza Strip, including evacuation of the narrow buffer zone with Egypt, known as the

Consuming Faith

Tom Beaudoin

In December, several Honduran women came to Boston College. They were on a speaking tour of New England universities, talking about their work back home sewing shirts for a major brand that many of my students wore.

These women told stories that anyone familiar with the global sweatshop workforce will find painfully predictable: verbal abuse, beastly wages, forbidden unions, forced overtime, no holidays, no health insurance or other benefits, the inability to save money so their children can break out of this life, and transportation and food costs that ate up four hours' wages every day. And the workforce consisted entirely of young women, aged 15 to 30.

I was outraged, because these women worked for a company that I knew had turned enormous profits. It was not as if the company was going to go broke if it had even minimally met the meager requests of these women. I was outraged because many of my students wore this clothing brand and I hated that they were paying this corporation to brand themselves at these women's expense, that they were so willingly offering their bodies as postmodern sandwich boards (sandwich boards because our branded clothes make us bipedaled advertisements, postmodern because we pay to advertise for others instead of getting paid for it). And I was outraged because I was reminded that this corporation got away with it because I myself spent so many years not doing my part to stop such practices. I had paid lots of money to be a foot soldier for my favorite brands of shoes, jeans, and shirts—even coffee.

Tom Beaudoin teaches theology at Santa Clara University and is the author of Consuming Faith: Integrating Who We Are With What We Buy (Sheed and Ward, 2004).



For me, the turning point came when I started seeing the faces of the women making my favorite brands. I had read a story several years ago about impoverished coffee farmers who harvest coffee beans for wealthy American coffee companies, and saw a picture of one of their faces on the Web or in the paper. I ended up pulling my favorite brands out of my closet and tracking down who made "my" brands, where they were produced, and the conditions under which they were put together. With the exception of my branded sport coat produced in Toronto under Canadian labor laws, the rest of my favorite brands were assembled by non-American faces that were forbidden to join unions, had to submit to

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pregnancy tests, and were kept in poverty by American companies that had almost eliminated the cost of labor, while avoiding paying any taxes at all due to breaks from the host countries where the factories were placed. Not that any of them volunteered this information. Most of the companies gave me public relations blowback and legal-speak and some outright lied to me. I had to turn to independent reportage to find out exactly what I was supporting, and whose faces I was affecting, by my purchase of my favorite brands. When I called the corporate headquarters of my local outpost of a coffee chain to see if I could travel—at my own expense—to South America to take pictures of the farmers who harvested my coffee and post them in the store, I got a firm and unequivocal “no.” Why did so many of my favorite coffee and clothing brands want to hide the faces of those who made my stuff?

I was beginning to see that there were relationships in which I was an involved but irresponsible partner—*economic* relationships. Just as any other common relationship we have has both pleasures and responsibilities (whether as spouse, friend, or co-worker), so do my economic relationships, I was beginning to see. By enjoying my branded jeans, I was necessarily in relationship with the women who made them. They had done their part by making clothes that protected me and brought me pleasure. What was my obligation to them? What was my part of the relationship?

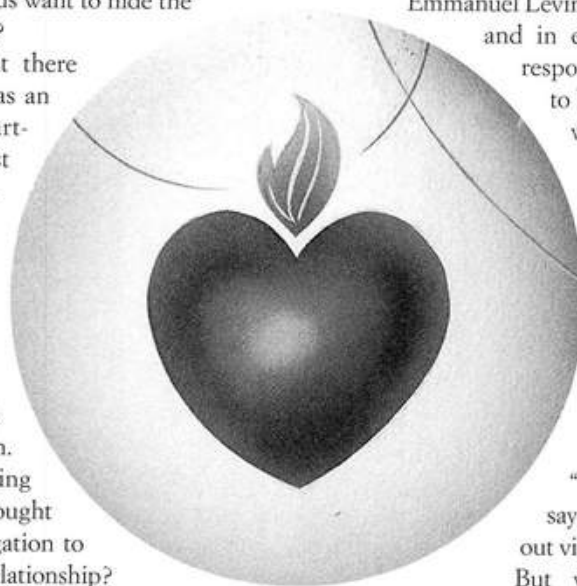
This raised the question for me: how central are economic relationships to faith? Are my economic relationships secondary to who I am before God, or central? The popular picture of Christianity today, unfortunately, does not show the best face of my faith on this issue. As a Catholic Christian, I notice the way Christianity is portrayed in the media, and how it portrays itself in its own advertising, and what I see lately is a religion too often indifferent to war, overinterested in individual morality, and defensive about its own institutional abuses. One would almost think that this public image of religiosity was mandated by the Christian scriptures. However, when I turned back to scripture to see how Jesus of Nazareth dealt with economics, I was shocked at what I found. Jesus very seldom talks about God’s final judgment, about “heaven” and “hell,” but when he does, as his way of talking about what is most important in a life of spiritual maturity before God, he does something interesting. He almost always talks about intimacy with God in the next life as bound up with one’s economic relationships in this life. He speaks of a wealthy man who ignores a poor man at his gate finding himself later in hell, crying out to

the poor man for help. He talks about those who use their resources of time and money to visit prisoners and clothe the naked as going on to a final happiness with God, and those who do not as having failed to love God and live a truly human life. Jesus was not focused on whom one is sleeping with, whether one has properly obeyed religious authorities, or how religious institutions can preserve themselves. He saw economic relationships as ultimate expressions of one’s true faith. Responsibility for the other is where and how one ought to live in relationship to that gracious and mysterious power that sustains us, which he intimately called his “Father.”

For me, the Jewishness of Jesus’ concern for the other is present in a more recent idiom in the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. For Levinas, we are everywhere and in each moment dependent on and responsible to others. To be human is to be responsible for the other, whose well-being my very existence may be threatening. This obligation to others is encountered and symbolized in the face-to-face relationship. The faces of others represent persons genuinely different from us, exposed to us. The vulnerability of the human face presents us with the claim: do not kill me. In a sense, Levinas says, the face says to us “do not deface me”; allow me, it says, my otherness and exposure without violation, shame, or indifference.

But what if we are systematically excluded, in a brand economy, from seeing the faces of the others who inhabit our lives? What if your local branded coffee shop does not want you to even see the faces of those who harvest your coffee? Would we not think of our brands differently if we had in view the faces of those who make our stuff?

A more human brand economy would be a more holy one, one in which we take responsibility for our economic relationships, for the well-being of the faces who make our stuff. In a better world, the brands themselves will better manage the economic relationships between producers and consumers that they steward. In a better world, we will each think and even pray about our obligations to our economic relationships. In a better world, brands will try to talk us into purchasing them because they give their workers in China, Indonesia, or El Salvador a living wage, holidays, overtime pay, child care, and health insurance. Whether you are more with Jesus of Nazareth or Levinas of Lithuania, this better world is possible. If only we made economics a part of the discourse of spiritual maturity today, it would begin to happen. □



The Reverent Progressive Responds to the Compassionate Conservative

Jonathan S. Klate

During the 2000 presidential campaign, George W. Bush famously proclaimed, "I am a compassionate conservative because I know my philosophy is optimistic and full of hope for every American."

Like an advertising slogan that is designed for the purpose of selling a product, the simple appellation "compassionate conservative" was highly effective. As with many advertising slogans, it mattered little that this label misrepresented or even had nothing whatever to do with the product it marketed. Like "Coke adds life!" or "Cars love Shell!" the idea behind a good advertising campaign is to associate a product with an image of something for which consumers have positive regard or hope to achieve. Americans hope to be compassionate, thus Bush became the "Compassionate Conservative." This label was a set piece no different from his official campaign tagline, "Fresh Start!" which had previously been used for such products as laundry detergent and acrylic primer.

Conservatism has an eminent tradition of affirming the importance of individual responsibility in the creation of a virtuous society. Naming himself a Compassionate Conservative allowed Bush to proudly confirm that he embodied the best of conservative ideology and thus reassured core Republican constituencies. At the same time, Bush's handlers were aware that many people feel that pure

Jonathan S. Klate, Ph.D., writes frequently about spirituality, progressive politics, and the relationship between these two. His forthcoming book is entitled Being One Being: Radical Spirituality and the Politics of Enlightenment.



conservative ideology, with its ethos of every man for himself and limitless corporate wealth and power, may ignore some of the brutality of the survival-of-the-richest society. The "compassionate" modifier was their attempt to make conservatism palatable to those outside its usual core. By calling himself a Compassionate Conservative Bush was able to suggest that he recognized that people yearn for connection to one another and a common sense of purpose and collective concern.

Conservative political thought requires a much more modest role for government in managing society's collective resources than does liberalism. If it is not the business of the democratic collective known as "the government" to assess human needs and redistribute the relative abundance of an affluent society to ensure that the most essential requirements of fellow citizens are not ignored, then it ought to at least encourage private charitable concern. At least, that is what I imagine was implied by this enigmatic phrase.

"Conservative" has some negative associations with smugness, aloofness, and stinginess. So to broaden its appeal, it requires modification for mass marketing—cleaning it up

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so it can shed some of its associations with elitism and exclusivity. That's where the "compassion" comes in.

Bush emphasized that his "compassion" is about "hope." This is interesting, because compassion implies an open-hearted willingness to share the pain of those who are suffering, and a motivation to ease their pain in any way possible. It implies generosity and sharing of resources derived from recognition that the suffering of others is our own intimate concern. If hope plays a role in compassion, it is surely its most pale and insubstantial feature. Will the starving poor have something to eat soon? Hope so. Will there be any wilderness left after rapacious corporations are done exploiting it for profit? Hope so. Will those suffering without insurance be able to see a doctor? Hope so.

This kind of compassion is little more than dismissive sympathy—if that. It is, to be frank, just pity *sans* responsibility. And the most perverse sort of pity is that which the master feels for the children of the slaves he has just sold off the plantation. It is pity for those who don't have the comfort, privileges, and power afforded by a certain race, class, and gender. It is the pity of a righteous patrician.

But the deep reality is that Compassionate Conservatives have a central animating ethic that the rich not be obligated to acknowledge the needs of those less fortunate. At best, they may be encouraged to consider some degree of *noblesse oblige*, should their conscience awaken some slumbering charitable instinct. But the crucial political conviction is that there must be no requirement for sharing of personal fortunes, no matter the enormity of the deprivation that surrounds the gated palaces of a privileged minority. There must be no redistributive role for government in rectifying even the smallest part of economic inequity. Quite to the contrary, conservatives commonly argue that the rich must be subsidized in order to encourage them to invest in productive enterprise which will return even more profit to themselves—though this is typically promoted in terms of "investment," "development," and "job creation."

The Compassionate Conservative hopes (there again is this weak term of vague interest) that some of their number may offer whatever portion of their wealth they deem appropriate to charitable organizations and religious institutions which might provide some basic human services to the most desperately suffering. Such acts of donation ennoble them, they imagine, as they give to those less fortunate a bit of the abundance that they defend as being theirs by right. But there must be no requisite responsibility to share the wealth, protect the innocent, preserve the public sector, respect the

environment, feed the hungry, or heal the sick.

The Bush administration has created legislation that purports to address the suffering of the "common people," but is insidiously designed to do the opposite. The hypocritical "No Child Left Behind Act" is one such example, which in name conveys compassion while, in effect, it destroys even the theoretical ethic of quality education for all. This is just one instance of the kind of double-speak that is endemic to this administration.

At core, most of our desires as human beings and as citizens are naturally similar. We all want nourishment, safety, shelter, meaning, care when we are unwell, compan-

ionship on our journey, and some freedom to pursue the acquisition of these according to our special natures. Bush, with an easy smile and a back-slapping good ol' boy manner, seems to make many feel connected—which we all yearn for. Those who reject him and his program do so because they recognize that he is selling a false connect-

edness that is ultimately divisive.

Conservatives like Bush suggest with conviction that the "breakdown" in our society is best responded to with a longing for a past era, always seen through a distorted lens. Thus the imagined American past of a self-reliant free people leaves out the harsh realities of slavery and persistent racism, unrelenting poverty for many, patriarchy, and brutal religious oppression. This idealization of the past seems to completely overlook the fierce debates that characterized the formation of our government's policies around such brutality and inequity.

As Gore Vidal has wryly written, "The right wing are the bad guys, but they know what they want—everybody else's money." Progressives often have a harder time clarifying what it is that we want. It's as though we fear that if we acknowledge and proclaim our vision we will not prevail politically. We suspect that people are too selfish or too frightened to embrace their better nature and agree with us in support of a progressive agenda to move towards the realization of a better society. "What if I live by the Golden Rule but my neighbor does not reciprocate?" In short, we fear that too many people believe that if we share we will be robbed.

We can rely on the fact that the soul of Bush's reelection campaign will be fear. By design and arrangement, or by perversely fortunate accident of timing, Americans will feel themselves under attack by the dark forces of "evil" during the election cycle and the president will pose as the bold protector. Brave pronouncements will be made from



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the citadels of power. He will spend hundreds of millions of dollars on an advertising blitzkrieg presenting himself ubiquitously as the indomitable beloved leader, while simultaneously distracting the electorate with distorted symbolic imagery about such issues as gay marriage and late term abortion. His handlers will present an image of him as being far too busy huddling with the generals on behalf of our safety to debate the opposition. But this strategy may not draw enough female, minority, economically displaced, and independent voters into the Republican fold. And fixing elections outright is bad form, although its potential looms in our collective imagination.

In response to this, what are Democrats to do? If "conservative" needs modification in the media age does "liberal" need to be modified as well? Is there a simple appellation that can embrace the alternative to aristocratic selfishness, and successfully "sell" a Democratic agenda?

Allow me to introduce the Reverent Progressive.

The Reverent Progressive regards with awe, gratitude, humility and reverence certain elements of our heritage. Notable among these are the bravery of the pioneers, the wisdom of the authors of our great foundational texts, the brilliance of our inventors, the gallantry of America's warrior-defenders, the sweat and creativity of our farmers, the courage and perseverance of mothers, the generosity of teachers, the stamina and inventiveness of laborers, the risk-taking of the creators of industries, the loyalty to the common good of our great public servants, and the magnificent land itself. These, and so many other features of our awesome nation, we unabashedly revere.

But we also remember that this nation is, and always has been, a work in progress. We revere the incomparable George Washington as a brilliant military tactician with extraordinary strength of character, but we also acknowledge with dismay that he was the holder of hundreds of slaves and derived his wealth, enormous in his time, largely from their labor and from their value as property. The formal end of America's black slavery was earned through decades of struggle by progressives and, ultimately, through a calamitous civil war.

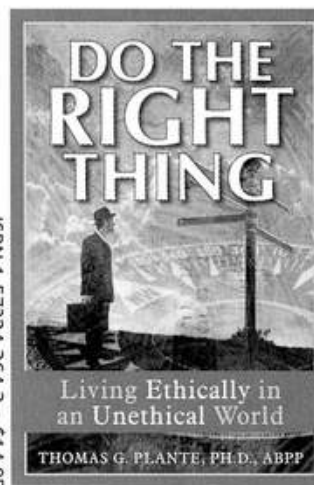
We revere our foundational documents for their incomparable wisdom at the time in history when they were composed. But we also remember that a century and a half passed before the Constitution was amended and women were permitted to vote. And much more progress is yet needed before equality is beyond question in America. Progress, after all, is what progressives believe in. It is conservatives who have traditionally resisted progress.

All Reverent Progressives share a deep and profound appreciation for these American virtues, achievements, and institutions, and live with resolve always to honor these marvelous features of our common heritage and present reality. Beyond this, the lives of some Reverent Progressives are animated by profound spiritual consciousness, which

informs their perspective (political and otherwise) and sensitizes them to the unnecessary suffering around them. Outstanding examples include Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or Elizabeth Cady Stanton, but one might also think of members of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, the American Friends Service Committee, the Tikkun Community, or the Sojourners. The realm of spirituality is thus reclaimed from the clutches of the fundamentalist evangelical right wing by Reverent Progressives.

So, whether you are a political progressive who eschews organized religion but reveres the unique legacy of all that is good about America, or whether you share this reverence but also pursue a deep sense of our universal mutuality through participation in traditions and communities of religious faith, we all share a Reverent Progressivism of which we can be proud.

As Reverent Progressives we recognize an obligation to participate in life and in the lives of our families, our communities, our country, and our world with a reverence for the common spirit of humanity and for our shared environment that recognizes no political boundaries. We affirm that every child born into our world must have their essential needs met and that those needs can certainly be met with our shared common resources. We share the belief that America, which we revere, must progress towards her yet unrealized promise of greater equality. □



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Finding Hope in Dark Times

This past April, the Tikkun Community traveled to Washington, D.C. for its annual Teach-In to Congress for Middle East Peace. Hundreds of people from all faiths and backgrounds traveled to Capitol Hill to meet with their government representatives to educate them about our pro-Israel and pro-Palestine "Progressive Middle Path" to healing the current crisis in the Middle East. Many of the Congressional representatives and staff we met with were quite excited to hear our perspective, and many of them agreed with us. There's just one problem: people who represent a Middle East peace perspective rarely visit them! How can we expect them to represent us if we don't make our presence known to them? As the conflict deepens in both Israel-Palestine

and Iraq, the Tikkun Community will continue to meet with media and public officials throughout the country. We invite you to work with us to do this kind of work in your own local area—and to join us next year! For information on how to join a legislative action committee in your area, go to www.tikkun.org, read the Core Vision, join the Tikkun Community, and help us build a Tikkun group in your part of the country. Or email: community@tikkun.org.

The following are excerpts from speeches given at the Teach-In by a few of the many insightful speakers who helped educate us before we went out to educate our public officials.

Cornel West

We are living in one of the most frightening and terrifying moments in history. In this age of the American Empire, imperial policies and imperial mentalities are becoming pervasive in a variety of different forms. America has become a superpower, a hegemon, a leviathan, a colossus, with no competing or contesting power. Becoming an empire is always dangerous because every empire in history, from imperial Egypt of the Hebrew scripture up to the British Empire of the twentieth century, has been filled with hubris, arrogance, and nihilism. Every empire we know of in human history has succumbed to this idolatry of power.

But the nihilistic policies of the current administration represent a different mentality than many previous moments in the growth of the American empire. Even Ronald Reagan believed that he had to disguise his policies with crypto-conservative arguments. That's not true of this administration. They do what they want and then make their arguments *ex post facto*, after the policies have already been implemented. If they lie, they try to cover their lies until they're caught. It's the Eleventh Commandment: Thou Shalt Not Get Caught.

But trashing the Bush administration is too easy. When

Cornel West is co-chair of the Tikkun Community and professor of religion at Princeton University. He is author of many books, including Race Matters, Blacks and Jews and The American Evasion of Philosophy as well as a spoken word album, Sketches of My Culture.



you're in a dark tunnel you don't need folks to tell you, "It's dark in here." Analysis of the darkness is important and critique is necessary, but in these kinds of times we need to be very clear about the vision that lures us toward hope and the sources of that vision. We have to remind ourselves what we look like at our best and what has been bequeathed to us at our best—particularly now, as we're witnessing the waning of democratic sensibilities.

The debates about how to use power are not new—they were raging in ancient Greece. It is no accident in the Platonic dialogues that Socrates appears in the face of Thrasymachus, whose love of money, honor, and power was

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN CHASE / HARVARD NEWS OFFICE

TEACH-IN TO CONGRESS

no match for Socrates' love of wisdom, integrity, and ethical identity. Of course what made Socrates so unpopular in his day was his *parrhesia*; his fearless speech, plain speech, frank speech—the benchmark of all forms of democratic energy. With *parrhesia* you get beyond the math, you quit playing the social role, you tell the truth about yourself and about the society you live in. You tell the truth about the world no matter how painful it is. Any time you suppress *parrhesia* in the community, you allow for non- and anti-democratic energies to surface to power, including the nihilistic energies. We need more people who are willing to speak frankly and plainly in relation to a variety of different issues—not in the spirit of self-righteousness, but in order to pierce all of the superficial banter; to pierce the mendacity and the hypocrisy that are becoming increasingly acceptable in public life today. “Of course he’s lying, he’s a politician,” people say. But you lose your democracy when citizens lose full-fledged trust in those who rule.

Socratic energy is not just about the exercise of the mind, however; it’s not just about being “right.” It’s about caring for humanity, caring if human beings are being scarred—be they Israeli or Palestinian, be they children or middle-aged. We need to remind ourselves of the history of this nation and of what I call the deep democratic tradition, which goes back to Emerson and Melville, back to David Walker and Lydia Maria Child, Ida B. Wells, Abraham Cohen, and Dorothy Day. We can hear their voices, the kind of Socratic questioning of moments in which they had reached the conclusion that American darkness was so overshadowing that there was very little sense of possibility. But they had an unstoppable predilection for possibility because they were trying to keep alive democratic energy.

Socrates never cried, never shed a tear, and there’s something deeply wrong with that. Socratic energies are not enough to sustain democracy. We also need the Jewish invention of the prophetic—which began with cries and tears. The distinctive imagination that emerged out of those people who were subjugated and exploited by imperial Egypt drew a fissure between nature and history. They made not a contract, but a covenant with the highest power in the universe. These oppressed people denaturalized their oppression and made it possible to engage in *tikkun olam*. That’s one of the high moments, the most moral moments, in the history of humankind. And I don’t say that to pat Jewish brothers and sisters on the back—it’s just a fact.

The prophetic emerges out of a particular context and a particular scripture that says that to be oppressed is unacceptable in the eyes of the highest powers. It’s what

Abraham Joshua Heschel talks about in his writings: the prophetic witness, the kindness to the stranger, the concern about the most vulnerable, taking seriously those who are marginalized, believing that their sense of humanity is not exhausted by the prevailing status quo that defines them in such a narrow way. Instead they’re defined by the *imago dei*, the image of God—a god that endows a dignity, a sanctity, upon each individual. This is what fundamentally counts. This is what sustains a movement in the long run. It’s not about an “ism”; it’s not about an election; it’s not about a candidate. It’s about what kind of human being you want to be in the short time that you’re here. How do you want to live your life? The prophetic sensibility doesn’t just sustain us, but anchors us to the world in the most profound sense.

Of course, it’s not enough to acknowledge the prophetic; the prophetic must be lived in daily life, not just in the abstract. And here Jewish brothers and sisters are just like every other slice of the human family—subject to both virtues and vices. James Baldwin, who was deeply influenced by American Jewish intellectuals in New York City and by magazines like *Commentary* (when it was prophetic), said that “one of the problems with American Jews is that they believe the Holocaust ends when they enter the New World, just where mine begins.” For Jews, learning to perceive the Egypt-like character of America for others has been a challenge. Idolatry, upward social mobility, and the illusion of assimilation all tend to attenuate

Socratic energies. Of course Baldwin, like so many other black intellectuals, including myself, reminded Jewish brothers and sisters not to believe the hype of American assimilation simply because of their escalating levels of success and upward mobility. This is a civilization shaped by Christian tradition, after all, and every Christian tradition in human history has had deep and profound anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic sensibilities. That’s a form of idolatry too, and it makes it difficult for there to be *parrhesia* exercised in the American Jewish community about the Middle East.

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People are losing sight of prophetic, Socratic, and democratic sensibilities. Free market fundamentalism—the basic dogma across the globe—is producing obscene levels of wealth and inequality around the world. Market as idol. Corporation as fetish. Acting as if workers are just appendages or some kind of market calculation. Outsourcing here, outsourcing there. Ascribing magical powers to the market and thinking it can solve all problems. When free market fundamentalism is tied to escalating authoritarianism, it

*Becoming an empire is
always dangerous because
every empire in history,
from imperial Egypt of the
Hebrew scripture up to
the British Empire of the
twentieth century, has
been filled with hubris,
arrogance, and nihilism.*

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results in increasing surveillance of citizens and monitoring of classes at universities and colleges. When it is tied to aggressive militarism, we get not just invasion of those countries perceived to be threats, but a military presence in 132 countries, a ship in every ocean.

When you get all of these forces converging into an empire that believes in no limits or constraints, it's no accident that it makes alliances with others who violate international law or human rights. It's not just Israel; it's alliances with Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Russians in Chechnya, Indochina—to their various degrees of malfeasance, the American empire just turns its back. What about Turkey in Cyprus? America turns its back. What about Morocco in West Sahara? America turns its back. We could go on and on. But when a government on the “other side” breaks international law, all of a sudden we hear rhetoric about freedom, about liberty, and so forth. The Iraq situation is a case in point. For so long, Saddam Hussein was America's gangster. (We marched against him in 1980 because we knew he was a gangster then.) Rumsfeld shook his hand in 1983 on behalf of Reagan. What about Hussein's massacre of the Kurds? Not a word. He was our gangster then. But then he turned on us. “He's taking over Kuwait! You can't gain land by conquest!” Bush Sr. said. What do you think the acquisition of the West Bank and Gaza was in 1967? Land by conquest. Different situation, yes. But you can't use that principle if you want to be morally consistent.

We need *parrhesia*. We need people to speak honestly, speak truthfully to the powers that be. But how can we do it in such a way that brings us together? Socratic questioning and prophetic witness ought to be a way of binding people. When I say binding, I don't mean in a spirit of unanimity—I don't believe in unanimity. I'm a democrat with a small “d.” I believe in robust contestation. When brother Michael Lerner and I traveled across the country promoting our book *Blacks and Jews*, we had a loving slug-it-out every time. We don't agree on everything—we have deep disagreements. We just respect each other deeply and love each other dearly. And we're both democrats with a small “d.”

In America, the land of sentimentalism, things look so difficult that we often act as if all we can be is cynical and sophisticated and sip our tea as people are dying. But there is something that black people themselves contribute to in America which shatters all sophomoric species of sentimentalism and radical chic versions of cynicism: tragicomic hope. Its highest expression is in the blues tradition, and it is as essential to our democracy as Socratic questioning and prophetic wisdom. Everybody needs to be reminded of it, especially in the darkest moments when it looks as if we're being completely overwhelmed. Of course it's not confined to pigmentation—you see tragicomic hope in Mark Twain, in Melville, you see it in Tennessee Williams and Faulkner and in Nathan Weinstein (better known as Nathaniel West). Lucien in the Roman Empire had it, Cervantes in the

Spanish Empire had it, as well as Chekhov in the Russian Empire.

This tradition of tragicomic hope is something we need to tease out, because it brings us back in touch with our deep democratic energies and sense of possibility. The Negro national anthem speaks to it: “Lift every voice.” You've got to find your voice. You've got to believe in yourself. You've got to trust yourself. You've got to give up on your narcissism and affirm the higher self. And if we're able to articulate that vision together with subtle analysis and a sense of the prophetic, then we might have a chance. But there is never, ever a guarantee for folks concerned about being forces for good in the world. Never ever.

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Brother Martin Luther King Jr. was precisely about teasing out the Socratic energies and the prophetic witness and the tragicomic hope for democratic possibility. He lived in a moment in which it seemed, for Black people especially, that America was about to snap. It seemed like America didn't have the capacity to deal with the apartheid in its own midst. On the world stage, America was talking about freedom, but at home black folks were hanging from trees.

On 9/11, vicious gangsters attacked the American homeland. For the first time, all Americans felt unsafe, unprotected, subject to random violence, and hated. And yet, to be a nigger in America for 400 years meant being unsafe, unprotected, subject to random violence, and hated. We wondered, “How will America respond to its niggerization?” Will it be able to muster the Socratic voice of morality that represents the best of the Western tradition? If you shut down dialogue you can't remain Socratic. Will it remain prophetic, or will it fall prey to cheap patriotism? Will America lose hope?

The dominant black response to niggerization in America was best expressed by Emmett Till's mother. It was August, 1955, in Chicago. Her baby was lying there in a coffin. His head was five times the size of an ordinary head. She stepped up to the lectern and what did she say to the world? “I don't have a minute to hate. I'm going to pursue justice for the rest of my life.” That's a profound kind of courage—not just to speak, but to think critically. She's responding to unjustified suffering, she's bearing witness, but she's also holding out a hope. Why? Because she knows a gangsterized response to gangsterism just recycles violence and bigotry and hatred and cowardice.

“Hatred is the coward's revenge for having been intimidated,” George Bernard Shaw said. Ours is a tradition that constitutes the glue for fragile democratic experiments. The Tikkun Community is building on the legacy of King, Heschel, and others who said we still have a chance even though it seems this dark moment is hopeless. We're here to say it's not. We need all the courage to think and love and fight for democracy we can muster. □

Letters to a Shrinking Nation

Rafi Dajani

The Israeli army's assault on the Rafah refugee camp in late May, following the Likud Party's rejection of Israeli Prime Minister Sharon's Gaza withdrawal plans, resulted in two-thousand Palestinians being made homeless and put a damper on any hopes that may have been kindled by the Gaza withdrawal plan. This only reinforced the fact that the recent exchange of letters between President Bush and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, in which Bush endorsed Sharon's plans for the West Bank and Gaza, has transformed the political terrain of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. What's more, it has once again brought to light the discrepancy between Bush's vision of a viable and independent Palestinian state and his support for Sharon's actions on the ground.

Needless to say, the Bush-Sharon understandings are being interpreted very differently by the parties involved or concerned with the Israel-Palestinian conflict. On one side are those, including President Bush, who think that the Gaza and limited West Bank withdrawal will benefit not only Israelis (which is more than likely the primary motivation), but Palestinians too. American politicians and media pundits alike touted the withdrawal as a bold move, perhaps even a compassionate one, on the part of Prime Minister Sharon.

The opposing view—that of the Arab and Muslim worlds, much of Europe, and of progressive Jews in America and Israel—is much more skeptical and foreboding. The Arab “street” seethed with rage and protest after the exchange of letters between Bush and Sharon, while the Arab leadership, caught once again in a position of weakness before the world and their own peoples, reacted cautiously after expressing their eternal support for the Palestinians and heaping their usual vitriol on Sharon. In an interview in *Le Monde*, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak stated that Arabs’ hatred for America was at an all-time high. While in California, Jordan’s King Abdullah II expressed his irritation by skipping his scheduled trip to Washington and flying directly back to Jordan instead.

Perceptions of the Bush-Sharon understandings are at

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least as important as the realities they contain, just as process is at least as important as substance. After all, it would seem that Bush merely gave official U.S. support to long-standing assumptions that are universally held among those involved in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. So why the disparity of opinion? A close reading of Bush's letter to Sharon on April 14 sheds some light on this question.

ASSUMPTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

There are two basic points in the exchange of letters that convey assumptions already held by a majority of people involved in negotiating the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

1. There would only be a symbolic return of some Palestinian refugees to Israel proper, while the majority would repatriate or settle elsewhere and receive compensatory economic and political rights to be negotiated by the Palestinians, which would affirm relevant international law and UN resolutions.

2. The large Israeli settlements bordering the 1967 lines would be permanently incorporated into Israel. This particular point was not new to President Bush, since it had first been articulated by President Clinton after the failure of the 2000 Camp David negotiations. Israeli and Palestinian leaders accepted these parameters then, with some reservations. President Bush stated that “any final status agreement will only be achieved on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities.” In other words, while the United States has an opinion on the subject, there can be no final borders drawn without Palestinian approval.

Bush's position is, therefore, crafted in such a way as to seemingly give each party something useful and important: Israel and Sharon get Washington's slightly vague support on the key issues of settlements and refugees; the

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Palestinians get reaffirmations that final status agreements will be negotiated between Palestinians and Israelis; and Bush gets an anticipated boost from pro-Israel voters in the November presidential election.

Given that these assumptions are more or less universally held, why were the Palestinians and Arabs so angry? Simply put, the Palestinians felt they'd been excluded from the process. In Arab eyes, the perception is that Washington, in collusion with Israel, unilaterally decided on the key final status issues of settlements, frontiers, and refugees, and thus abandoned a thirty-seven-year commitment to achieving a permanent Arab-Israeli peace *through direct negotiations* by the parties themselves.

In addition, for the past thirty-seven years, the policy of the U.S. government has been that Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories are illegal and that Israel must not use the billions of dollars it receives from Washington to develop them. However, referring to the settlements as "existing major Israeli population centers," Bush said, "the realities on the ground and in the region have changed greatly over the last several decades, and any final settlement must take into account those realities."

While it had become accepted that a future Palestinian state would not exactly follow the 1967 lines, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators had discussed exchanging parts of the West Bank for commensurate parts of Israel proper. Bush's letter effectively removed large settlement blocs from the negotiating table, thus condoning Israel's unilateral land grabs. In addition, though no one—including the Palestinian leadership—expects that all the Palestinians who fled Israel in 1948 or their descendants will actually return to Israel and reclaim their property, the Palestinian refugee question has always been considered a final-status issue, to be resolved in negotiations and not by Israeli and U.S. dictate.

In short, the most damaging aspect of these understandings is the perception that the United States has acted unilaterally and in consort with Israel on issues that are existentially significant for Palestinians and other Arabs. The recent developments also reveal yet again how vulnerable and impotent the Palestinians and Arabs are today.

It is important to note a key group adversely affected by President Bush's endorsement of Ariel Sharon's policies, a group whose support is indispensable for U.S. plans in Iraq, Israel-Palestine, and for its plans to democratize the Middle East: moderate Arabs. These moderates have been arguing that the world community is the Palestinians' best ally. They constantly refer to UN resolutions and repeat that they want any peace agreement to be based on "international legitimacy." Hardliners, on the other hand, disagree with this logic completely, arguing that only the language of force yields results. Bush's endorsement of Sharon has unified Palestinian moderates and radicals more than ever. In the years since Oslo, the moderates had become increasingly

skeptical of, and disenchanted with, U.S. "even-handedness," but official U.S. policy remained by and large consistent with relevant UN resolutions on Israel/Palestine. This consistency was what moderates could always fall back on—but now the rug has been pulled from under them. Suddenly, the reasoning of the radicals, who have always argued that U.S. policy is made in Israel, seems validated.

The radicals' arguments were further reinforced by the specifics of the Gaza withdrawal plan. Gaza will be "demilitarized and devoid of armaments," and it will have no airport or seaport without Israel's approval. Israel "reserves" the right to cut off Gaza's supply lines and to invade at any time, and "will continue to maintain a military presence" along the Egyptian border, thus isolating Gaza from its only Arab neighbor. In other words, negotiation will at best result in a penned-in Gaza, cut off from the rest of the world and at the complete mercy of Israel. Violence, on the other hand, according to the radicals, might force Israel to bend to their will or, at a minimum, it satisfies the desire to avenge Palestinian deaths.

THE IMPERATIVE OF STRATEGY

What, then, is to be done? New realities and perceptions require a reformulating of strategy. Lamentations and loud expressions of hatred directed against America and its president as well as Israel and the Arab regimes may help vent anger, but they are no substitute for strategy. The Palestinians by now have to come to grips with the fact that the support of Arab and Muslim masses cannot and will not solve the problem of Palestine. Palestinians must confront their problems squarely. They are a people living under an oppressive occupation, with a weakened and isolated leadership, without an army and with a tattered security force, a wrecked economy, and fractured institutions. The image of defenders of a just cause has evolved into that of terrorists.

Whatever strategies the Palestinians have utilized in the past have not worked. It is time to reflect, reassess, and innovate. The Palestinians alone have been unable to liberate Palestine. No people have sacrificed as much or as long as the Palestinians have, but sacrifice without a strategy designed to win is not enough. In their struggle to be free of the Israeli Occupation, more allies who, for their own reasons, share the vision of a state of Palestine alongside Israel are indispensable. Allies in the United States and in Israel, the two countries that play a pivotal role in the outcome of this conflict, have to be identified and mobilized. Violence against civilians alienates these potential allies and the Palestinian people must make the fateful choice between military confrontation and peaceful resistance and negotiations.

One avenue to peaceful resistance and negotiations that is gaining currency rapidly, and that was first articulated publicly in the United States by the leading Palestinian pollster Khalil

(continued on page 25)

The Time Is Now

Naomi Chazan

We are probably at the most important juncture in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 1967, and potentially since 1948. What happens in the next six months is going to be monumental.

It's during periods of transition, when things are changing, that it's possible to make a difference. But given the way things have been going, I'm not 100 percent sure that we'll be able to make a difference. It's absolutely essential to anybody who believes in a just and fair peace for Palestinians and Israelis to look hard to see where it might be possible to intervene to avert what may truly be a human, ethical, moral, political, and historical disaster.

Since April 14, 2004, when President Bush met with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and gave him a letter of support for Sharon's policies, we have entered a totally different and new path. Many people were surprised by the Bush-Sharon exchange of letters. But I don't think we have any right to be surprised whatsoever, because Sharon has been saying for the past four years that he intends to establish a Palestinian State in 44 percent of the Occupied Territories, and the Sharon-Bush exchange simply confirms American support for this plan.

Since the Gaza disengagement plan received official support from Washington, four major parameters have literally changed before our eyes. First, the conventional wisdom until now has been that the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict—and by extension the Arab-Israeli conflict—would occur through the creation of a viable Palestinian State alongside Israel. Conventional wisdom, in other words, has been a two-state solution. But Bush and Sharon signed off on a modified two-state solution which is anything but viable; which, for the first time since 1967, grants American approval to the annexation of major segments of the West Bank; which declares non-recognition of the Right of Return for Palestinians to Israel; which contends that Israel has the right to build a security



barrier outside the Green Line, the 1967 boundaries; and which essentially grants Israel military control of Gaza after its "withdrawal." That's not a two-state solution.

In short, for the first time since 1967, the two-state solution is being called into question. Of course there have always been one-staters: there are Jewish one-state fundamentalists ("it's all mine") and there are Muslim one-state fundamentalists ("no, it's all mine"). They play a zero-sum game. But it has also become radical-left chic to be a one-stater as well. The Left's one-state solution seems to boil down to this: one day there's going to be a democratic one-state solution, but in the meantime people are going to kill each other off for another generation and there's not much we can do about that. I've always found this abominable on a purely human level. But to authorize a modified two-state solution reopens the question of the nature of the solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in very dangerous ways. The Bush-Sharon deal forces us to rethink and restate our objective: Where are we going? We thought we knew where we were going, and now we must make our objectives even clearer.

The second change relates to strategy. Everything up until now has been predicated on the assumption that a peace agreement was going to be negotiated between the two principal parties: the Israelis and the Palestinians. But Bush and Sharon agreed to authorize unilateral steps, which means Palestinians are no longer to be given a say in their own future. It is an old form of imperialism of a kind I could not imagine occurring in the twenty-first century.

In real terms, the Bush-Sharon agreement means that the Road Map is dead, despite the fact that their letters mention the Road Map over and over. The Road Map, however, is about negotiations between two parties, and the current agreement is the antithesis of such negotiations. More to the point, the Bush-Sharon exchange makes it much more difficult for proponents of other peace proposals like the Nusseibeh-Ayalon principles or the Geneva Accord.

The third shift has to do with timing. For the past three years, awful things have been going on—in a matter of minutes, people can explode in suicide bombs and people can

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die as a result of F-16 fighter bomber explosions in Gaza. Sharon and Bush are saying, "We're going to have a gradual disengagement. The disengagement from Gaza and from the West Bank will be completed by the end of 2005 and this is a temporary state, and when the Palestinians learn and they choose a new leadership and they stop doing this, that, and the other, then maybe something else can happen." Nothing is urgent according to Sharon and Bush. And if nothing is urgent, it means more people are going to get killed and more people are going to suffer while politicians dilly and dally. When you draw out time in our region, lots of things can happen—most of them not good. The Wall can be completed. In Jerusalem this Wall literally cuts through living rooms. More settlements can be constructed, and therefore more "facts on the ground" can be created. As the clock ticks, peace becomes ever more difficult.

The final change in parameters created by the new Bush-Sharon agreement relates to "operationalization"—which means "implementation" or carrying out. The conventional wisdom has been that implementation occurs carefully, with external monitoring, outside observers, somebody to keep order. But now the Palestinians, according to this exchange of letters, are not even allowed to ask for outside assistance or observers without the permission of the United States and Israel. Not only that, but there are no measures, there are no standards, for any process that occurs; Israel will be able to decide how it will operationalize. What does this mean? That the withdrawal from Gaza is not a real withdrawal. When Israel pulls out its troops, people will claim that the Occupation in Gaza is over, but according to this agreement Israel will maintain control of all the borders, including the sea border, entrances, and exits. Israel will retain full rights to enter Gaza when it wants to, as long as it says that it's no longer occupying Gaza. I think that what we're about to see is not Gaza as the first withdrawal, but Gaza alone, as the only withdrawal. And in exchange for leaving Gaza, Sharon is going to annex large portions of the West Bank and pursue new construction. This is one of the most bizarre withdrawals I can think of. Two days after the Bush-Sharon exchange, Israel once again engaged in a targeted assassination of Hamas leader Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi, after assassinating Sheik Yassin two weeks earlier. And recently, Sharon has begun to mumble about "removing"—listen to these euphemisms—Yassir Arafat. This is all about "operationalization."

All of this has serious implications. First, from now on, the United States is no longer an honest broker in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. I say that with a fair amount of sadness, because the United States has immense power, and if it is no longer an honest broker that means the prospects

of bringing the sides together at the negotiating table are reduced. Second, for the first time since the early 1970s, I see the reunification of the Arab world around the Palestinian-Israeli conflict—a seismic shift from what we've known in recent years. Third, the gap between the United States and Europe is growing. Even Tony Blair, the only leader who supported the Bush-Sharon exchange, had to rap Sharon on the knuckles about his threats to Arafat. These are significant changes that can't be ignored. If they are even partially implemented, they fundamentally alter the parameters of the Arab-Israeli conflict and specifically the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

These facts cannot be willed away. There is a tendency time and time again for good people not to see reality as it exists and to find a whole series of excuses about why interpretations like these may be too dismal and depressing. I would plead with you to take the Bush-Sharon plan and its consequences seriously.

The Sharon plan is brilliant. Why? Because it isolates the Right, but it also isolates and weakens the Left and blurs the distinction between Likud and Labor. Many in the peace camp are going to reluctantly support the Sharon plan because they were the first to suggest elements of it. Sharon took the positions the Labor Party offered in last year's election—namely the dismantlement of illegal West Bank settlements and the withdrawal from Gaza—distorted them, and is now throwing these proposals back at Labor, saying, "How can you oppose your own plan?" Even my party,

Yachad, which had a very difficult debate on the subject, is going to go along with portions of the plan. But it will be hard pressed to go along with portions without explaining itself—which in the end will make it sound like it's supporting the plan. I don't think this plan should be supported and I'm in the minority—in the peace camp in Israel! That's why it's such a brilliant plan. It puts the Right in the corner, but it puts the Left in the corner as well.

My assumption is that there will be a coalition reshuffle within the next few months; in fact, I think Labor will eventually enter the Sharon-Likud coalition because it will talk itself into supporting this plan. Because of the Sharon plan, it's going to be much more difficult for Israelis on the Left to continue to press for a viable two-state solution, evacuation of all settlements, and a return to the 1967 borders. Americans on the mainstream left will also be stuck in a similarly difficult position. If you want to know why Democratic nominee John Kerry supported this move, it's because he is stuck in exactly the same corner. In terms of the Jewish community abroad, and especially in the United States, the plan is brilliant because it appears to be compassionate (Israel is withdrawing; what more could you want?).

The Sharon plan is brilliant. Why? Because it isolates the Right, but it also isolates and weakens the Left

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It's difficult to explain to the world that in fact Israel is locking 1,200,000 Palestinians into an enclave without any breathing space under the guise of withdrawal.

For Palestinians, the immediate effects are going to be dangerous indeed, because this move totally discredits Palestinian moderates. It makes our partners in Geneva, for the first time, really afraid. A couple of days ago, the first post-Sharon-Bush poll in Palestine was published showing that for the first time ever, Hamas enjoys more support than the PLO. That's scary. Fundamentalists on any side, for any reason, are not pleasant people. Even more serious, however, is the fact that this imposed withdrawal almost forces the Palestinians to resist. If the very same moves were the result of negotiations, then the Palestinians could claim, "We liberated territory and that gives us responsibility." But just as liberation can lead to responsibility and cooperation, imposition leads to resistance.

We're making a mistake that is going to reverberate throughout the Middle East. Why? Because we're leaving the Palestinians with no options. It's criminal to leave people with no options, because if you have no options, you have one option: violence. It's almost an invitation to violence. If you are peace loving, if you believe in a fair and viable and humane resolution to the conflict, what do you do? That should be the challenge of the Tikkun Community. The first direction is to prevent the Sharon plan. But unfortunately I've begun to think that even if Bush and Sharon are gone by November, it will be very difficult to halt their plan unless there's an alternative in place. The Geneva Accord is such an alternative, so one way to oppose the Sharon plan is to support the Geneva Accord.

The second possibility—and there is talk about this among friends—is to get the Palestinian Authority to officially adopt the Geneva Accord and to put that plan out as their alternative. The only problem is that once again this calls on the Palestinians to do something, rather than focusing on what we can do.

The third possibility, and I think this is the wisest, is to pick apart the Sharon plan. Portions of the plan, to my mind, are an abomination. But there are two elements that are precisely what many of us have been struggling toward for many years: dismantling settlements—as many as possible and as quickly as possible—and ending the occupation. We can say "yes" to these and to everything else "no"—no ifs, ands, or buts. If we deconstruct the Sharon plan and support only the elements that are precisely where we are going, and oppose those elements that lead to the opposite, it may be possible to get somewhere. But that means doing something that's difficult to do in the twenty-first century, especially in Washington, D.C., and that is to be sophisticated and nuanced and explain things in more than a sound bite. The Sharon-Bush meeting is a turning point, and if we want to prevent its evil consequences, we've got a lot of work to do. □

LETTERS TO A SHRINKING NATION (continued from page 22)

Shikaki (in the *New York Times* on March 26, 2004), is authorizing Palestinian elections. Given that according to the Road Map, the Palestinians were supposed to have held "free, open, and fair elections" throughout the territories in May 2003, it is past time for them to go to the voting booths and cast their ballots to elect their representatives. The United States cannot seriously prevent a people from voting, and once convinced, can engage Israel to make elections feasible. All parties need to see that the compromises required to achieve peace can only be made by elected representatives. It would help to couple elections with a referendum on a two-state solution based on the Road Map. The Road Map is the one international instrument accepted by Israeli and Palestinian leaders, as well as by the Quartet and the Arab League. Such a referendum would define the parameters of the political horizon for the Palestinians. Opponents of the Road Map will lose their ability to thwart progress if the referendum wins.

The Palestinians must also make choices about the future of Gaza after Israel withdraws. Gaza must be made to work, thus depriving Israeli hawks of an argument to extend the occupation of the West Bank. The Gaza withdrawal offers Palestinians an unusual opportunity—to plan for a future event rather than to cope with a done deal. It should be viewed as the first milestone in establishing their viable state.

Finally, the Palestinian leadership owes the Palestinian people an honest and open conversation about what is and what is not achievable. If the leadership knows that in a final agreement the borders of a Palestinian State will not follow the 1967 lines exactly due to Israeli incorporation of settlement blocs in a land swap, then the people need to be prepared for this. If the leadership knows that in a final agreement, the refugees will not be able to exercise a physical return to their homes and properties, then the people need to be prepared for this. President Bush and Prime Minister Sharon should not have been the people to break the news to the Palestinians. That is the responsibility of the Palestinian leadership to its people, a responsibility that it has not carried out to date.

The stakes for the United States are enormous too. With the occupation in Iraq, the United States is very much a physical part of the Mideast equation and Mideast realities today. At least in the Arab world, Americans are seen as ready to invest an enormous amount of money and to endure casualties in both Iraq and Afghanistan, while neglecting what Arabs view as the more important issue: the Arab-Israeli peace process. The only way to offset this extremely damaging perception is in the practical follow-up and implementation by the United States to turn the Gaza withdrawal—regardless of its motivations and in spite of its different interpretations—into a historic opportunity for progress toward a negotiated peace. □

Challenging Occupation in an Election Year

Stephen Zunes

Much has been made over the years of the close bonds between America and Israel. Unfortunately, the most salient commonality between these countries—particularly as far as the Arab and Islamic worlds are concerned—is that both are engaged in repressive military occupations of Arab lands and both are actively supporting each others' occupations.

The ongoing assault on international law and human rights by the United States in Iraq has been compounded by President George W. Bush's unprecedented endorsement of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plans to annex large chunks of the West Bank. And it appears that even a defeat of President Bush in November will not change much: presumptive Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry has largely supported these same policies.

THE OCCUPATION IN IRAQ

Senator Kerry voted to authorize the invasion of Iraq, supported President Bush's decision to go war in March of 2003, and supports increasing the number of American occupation troops in that country. When NBC journalist Tim Russert asked Senator Kerry on Meet the Press if he believed the war in Iraq was a mistake, Senator Kerry could only say that, "the way the president went to war is a mistake." While the Bush administration has indeed made many mistakes in its Iraq policy, Kerry's response implies that he believes there is somehow a "right way" to invade and occupy foreign countries.

Gideon Samet, writing in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, has referred to this phenomenon as the "Sharonization of America." America, like Israel, is increasingly adopting an occupation policy which consists of targeted assassinations, house demolitions, torture, collective punishment, the sealing off of entire communities with razor wire and checkpoints, humiliating searches and harassment, mass detention, and large-scale killings of civilians.

At least Israel sees the Palestinians as the enemy. They

are not even trying to win hearts and minds. They want to crush and humiliate them.

By contrast, the United States is supposedly trying to liberate the Iraqis. We are supposed to be on their side. And yes, we are treating them even worse.

Indeed, as heinous as the war crimes committed by the Israelis in their 2002 assault on Jenin may have been, the number of civilian deaths in that West Bank refugee camp pales in comparison with those that resulted from the U.S. assault on the Iraqi city of Falluja.

As terribly as Palestinian prisoners have been treated in Israeli jails, they have not been treated as badly as have prisoners under U.S. military detention in Iraq.

There are many other examples, but the fact is that the U.S. occupation of Iraq and other policies in the so-called "war on terrorism" have not only made it more difficult for the United States to challenge Israeli policies because we are now engaging in similar practices, but as a consequence, the United States no longer has to be concerned that support for Sharon will lead to an anti-American reaction; the Arab/Islamic world is already so inflamed by our policies that we can hardly make things any worse.

Having just returned from the West Bank, I was struck at how, for the first time in my half dozen or so visits to Israel and Palestine, I felt afraid as an American. With the Bush administration and Congress having jointly covered up a murder and a near-fatal shooting of two young American nonviolent activists by Israeli forces, I realized that the Israelis now knew they could kill a U.S. citizen like me without consequence. Meanwhile, anti-American sentiment in the Occupied Territories has never been higher as



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American and Israeli policies are now seen as one and the same; a group of young stone-throwing Palestinian youths in Hebron confronting Israeli occupation forces nearly turned on me when they saw I was an American.

Unfortunately, Bush and Kerry, like Sharon, appear to have trouble recognizing that invading and occupying another people breeds its own resistance. The two major party presidential nominees simply fail to recognize the fact that the more the United States has militarized the Middle East—either directly or through Israel and other regional allies—the less secure we have become.

TARGETED ASSASSINATIONS

In September 2001, President Bush rescinded President Gerald Ford's 1976 executive order banning agents of the U.S. government from engaging in assassinations and lowered the standard of proof for assassinations to those merely "suspected" of being terrorists. For example, in November 2002, President Bush ordered the assassination of a suspected al Qaeda operative in Yemen. Not only has the administration not released evidence of why it believed the victim was an al Qaeda leader, but the missile attack on his car killed four other people, including a U.S. citizen.*

The United States has also been engaging in assassinations against Iraqis suspected to be part of the anti-occupation resistance, both those suspected of engaging in terrorist attacks against civilians as well as those simply engaged in guerrilla operations against U.S. occupation forces. It is not surprising, then, that the United States now supports Israel's assassination policies.

Victims of Israeli death squads have included not just terrorist leaders, but community leaders Isaac Saada—a teacher at a Catholic high school in Bethlehem who was working with Israeli colleagues in developing a joint curriculum in conflict resolution—and Shaden Abu Hijleh, a Palestinian social worker and nonviolent activist in Nablus. Neither had any affiliation with the extremist Islamic group Hamas, whose military wing has engaged in terrorist bombings, or any other radical group involved with terrorism. A special UN investigation, headed by a prominent Jewish American professor of international law, concluded that Israel has utilized "a seemingly random hit list" in its assassinations.

Not only does the Bush administration defend Israel's murder of Palestinian activists, but Democratic leaders like John Kerry, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Assistant House Minority Leader Steny Hoyer, Senator Joseph Biden, and others have defended Bush and Sharon's assassination policies as well. Interestingly, most of these Democrats oppose the death penalty here in the United States, even when there is due process and trial by jury. Though Israelis in the past four years have killed three times as many Palestinian civilians as Palestinians have killed Israeli civilians, President Bush, Senator Kerry, and other Democratic

and Republican leaders still insist that it is the Palestinians alone who are responsible for the bloodshed and that Israeli attacks on Palestinians are necessary defensive measures.

Ironically, Israelis themselves are deeply divided on the wisdom of such provocative actions. Sharon's own interior minister, Avraham Poraz, declared, "I think the damage is greater than the usefulness." Even more significantly, Shin Bet, the Israeli security service charged with protecting Israelis from terrorist attacks, has also expressed opposition to the assassination policy, according to Israeli press reports.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

In order to justify an American takeover of oil-rich Iraq, President Bush told the American people in the months before the invasion that Iraq had clandestinely reconstituted weapons of mass destruction and missile systems. His arguments were echoed by leading Democrats, including Senator Kerry, who in an October 2002 speech on the Senate floor claimed that Iraq had chemical and biological weapons more advanced than in 1991, an active nuclear program, and delivery systems which threatened Americans. These assertions came despite evidence put forward by UN agencies and independent arms control experts that Iraq could no longer have such weapons programs or delivery systems. Indeed, despite Bush and Kerry's fear-mongering, no such weapons, weapons programs, or delivery systems have been found.

Bush, Kerry, and others also insisted that military action was necessary to enforce UN Security Council resolutions which called for Iraq's unilateral disarmament and unfettered inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other UN inspectors. Not only does it now appear that Iraq was largely in compliance with these resolutions at the time of the U.S. invasion, but other countries have refused to abide by similar resolutions with no apparent objections from Washington.

For example, Israel remains to this day in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 487, which calls on Israel to place its facilities at Dimona under IAEA trusteeship. Despite bipartisan efforts in Congress to seek repeal of that resolution, it is still legally binding.

Similarly, UN Security Council resolution 1172 calls upon India and Pakistan to cease their development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

Both Democrats and Republicans, however, appear to believe that UN Security Council resolutions addressing non-proliferation should only be applied to nations the United States does not like.

Last year, Syria—along with Jordan, Iran, Egypt, and other Middle Eastern countries—called for a WMD-free zone for the entire Middle East (similar to those established for Latin America, the South Pacific, and other regions).

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In response, President Bush signed into law a bill, co-sponsored by Senator Kerry, demanding, under threat of sanctions, that Syria alone disarm its chemical weapons and missiles, even though they have far less extensive programs than U.S. allies in the region like Israel and Egypt.

Bush and Kerry, then, essentially reject law-based region-wide disarmament and arms control initiatives in favor of a kind of WMD apartheid, where the United States alone determines which countries can have WMDs and advanced missile systems and which cannot. Such a policy is not only immoral, it is bound to fail and provoke a reaction that threatens Israel and the United States far more.

THE SEPARATION WALL

In an effort to incorporate large parts of the occupied West Bank into Israel, the Sharon government has been erecting a large concrete barrier dividing most of the Palestinian population from Israeli-built settlements and bypass roads (which are reserved for Jews only) as well as from each other. While most Israelis believe that the construction of such a barrier may be necessary as long as the threat of terrorist attacks continues, the assumption had been that it would be built along Israel's internationally-recognized border, not snaked within the occupied West Bank in such a way that it surrounds Arab towns, cuts off farmers from their land, and makes any kind of viable contiguous Palestinian state impossible. As a result, the question of the Wall's legality has been placed before the International Court of Justice.

The Bush Administration and congressional leaders of both parties, however, have publicly denounced the United Nations and the World Court for even considering the Wall's legality. Senator Kerry, for example, has signed a strongly-worded letter to Secretary General Kofi Annan criticizing him for questioning Israel's decision to build the Wall inside occupied Palestinian territory, which Kerry defends as somehow necessary for Israel's security.

However, if security for the state of Israel were really the senator's primary concern, he would insist that Israel build its security wall along its internationally recognized border, not on occupied Palestinian land. Instead, he appears to have effectively endorsed those who advocate Israel's territorial expansion, rejecting Shalom Achshav's argument that "peace is greater than a Greater Israel."

THE SHARON PLAN

President Bush's unconditional endorsement on April 13 of Sharon's disengagement plan constitutes a shocking reversal of longstanding U.S. Middle East policy and one of the most flagrant challenges to international law and the integrity of the United Nations system ever made by a U.S. president.

By giving unprecedented backing for Israeli plans to annex much of the occupied Palestinian territories in the West Bank in order to incorporate illegal Jewish settlements,

President Bush has effectively renounced UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which call on Israel, in return for security guarantees from its Arab neighbors, to withdraw from territories seized in the June 1967 war. These resolutions were the basis of the Arab-Israeli peace talks commenced by his father in Madrid in 1991.

The remaining pieces of the West Bank that would make up the new Palestinian "state" Sharon and Bush envision would be surrounded by Israel, which would control passage between the Palestinian sectors, its air space, and its water resources. In short, it will be no more a viable independent state than the poverty-stricken Bantustans created by apartheid South Africa.

In his interview on Meet the Press the Sunday following the Bush-Sharon announcement, Senator Kerry stated that he backed President Bush's endorsement of Sharon's plan "completely." In doing so, the presumptive Democratic nominee is affirming Bush's assertion that Israel has a right to impose a settlement on the Palestinians rather than to negotiate one through peace talks, and that an occupying power can ignore international law and UN Security Council resolutions.

Sharon's U.S.-backed effort is largely designed to short-circuit last fall's Geneva Accord, a comprehensive peace plan supported by the Palestinian leadership and leading Israeli moderates. In that proposal, the Palestinians agreed that Israel could annex some blocs of settlements, but only along Israel's internationally recognized borders and only in exchange for an equivalent amount of territory currently part of Israel that would be granted to the new Palestinian state.

Neither the Bush administration nor the congressional leadership of either party has backed the effort. Indeed, Kerry—who last year said he would consider Jimmy Carter to be his special emissary in the Middle East—reversed himself following the former president's endorsement of the Geneva Accord. Kerry now states that Carter is no longer under consideration and that he will instead appoint someone who supports the position of the current Israeli government.

One of the biggest mistakes made by critics of U.S. Middle East policy is to accuse Bush and Kerry of being too pro-Israel. Being anti-Palestinian hardly makes one pro-Israel; sabotaging the peace process through support for Sharon's policies will only lead additional numbers of Palestinians to give up on peaceful means of ending the Israeli occupation and to resort to violence.

The reality is that Israeli security and Palestinian rights are not mutually exclusive, but mutually dependent upon each other. The Palestinians will not have their rights until Israel is secure. That is why—even putting the moral and legal arguments aside—Palestinian attacks against Israelis, particularly civilians, must stop. By the same token, Israel will not be secure until the Palestinians have their rights.

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If Bush, Sharon, and Kerry have their way, the Palestinians will be backed into a corner—both figuratively and literally. What could be more dangerous than a people with nothing more to lose?

KERRY THE LIKUDNIK

Moderate and progressive Israelis, like their counterparts elsewhere in the world, had been desperately hoping that Americans would vote Bush out of office come November. Kerry's embrace of Sharon and his policies, however, have led these Israelis to wonder if, should Bush be defeated, it will actually make any difference.

Indeed, Senator Kerry's support for Sharon's militarist and expansionist agenda should be disturbing to anyone concerned with Israeli-Palestinian peace, international law, human rights, or basic notions of justice.

Whenever I've raised these concerns with Kerry supporters, they don't try to defend his positions on Israel and Palestine; they instead fall on an old time-honored tactic of blaming the Jews. They claim that he has to take these positions in order to get elected, thereby implying that Jewish voters are essentially a bunch of right-wing zealots who think it's cool to dispossess, imprison, brutalize, and murder Palestinians.

The reality is very different. A recent poll commissioned by Americans for Peace Now indicated that well over 60 percent of Jewish voters support a peace settlement along the lines of the Geneva Accord. Barely more than a quarter support Sharon's policies and most of them are conservatives who would probably vote for Bush anyway.

If Kerry did lose a small number of conservative Jewish voters by taking a more moderate position on Israel and Palestine, he would be more than compensated by winning back the votes of those who oppose the occupation and currently plan to vote for independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader. For example, a full 20 percent of Arab Americans, according to recent public opinion polls—many of whom reside in important swing states like Michigan—now support Nader.

The only one to blame for John Kerry's embrace of the Israeli Right, then, is John Kerry.

Bush and Kerry's support for a Greater Israel imposed upon the Palestinian population through force makes them the heirs of Revisionist Zionist Vladimir Jabotinsky. Bush and Kerry's policies could destroy any remnant of a Zionism based upon principles of liberation, equality, and rule of law.

Indeed, Senator Kerry's position on Israel and Palestine is far closer to that of Rep. Tom DeLay than to Rep. John Conyers, far closer to the Christian Coalition than to the National Council of Churches, far closer to the Project for a New American Century than to Peace Action, far closer to the American Enterprise Institute than the Institute for Policy Studies, and—in terms of Israeli politics—far closer

to the rightist Likud Bloc than the liberal Meretz.

But, believe it or not, that's not even the worst of it.

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

Bush and Kerry are not just pursuing policies which cause enormous suffering among Palestinians and Iraqis living under repressive military occupations. They are not just pursuing policies which are turning the United States into a rogue superpower and threaten Israel's future as a secure, democratic, Jewish state. They are pursuing policies which violate UN Security Council resolutions and international law.

Through most of his Senate career, Kerry has demonstrated more concern over America's international legal obligations than has President Bush, and he has called for greater international involvement in dealing with Iraq. However, the policies pursued by both men are undermining the United Nations Charter and the underlying legal principles of the post-WWII international system that recognizes the illegitimacy of expanding one's territory by military force. Both Bush and Kerry are effectively turning back the clock by replacing twentieth-century principles of the right of self-determination with nineteenth-century notions of the right of conquest. Bush and Kerry's policies, therefore, are literally reactionary.

Unfortunately, due to the structure of the American presidential election process, if the race looks close in November, voting for Kerry—despite his dangerous foreign policy agenda—may be the wisest and most responsible thing to do, at least for those who live in swing states. However, the threat to vote for Ralph Nader or some other progressive alternative may be one of the most powerful tools we have to challenge the rightward drift of the Democratic Party.

Ultimately, though, it is less important whom we elect than the choices we give them. With a few conscientious exceptions, Democrats have rarely led. They have more often been forced to take more responsible positions because of grassroots pressure.

This is where we come in. There is much here at stake. We are fighting not just for the people of Palestine, Israel and Iraq, but for something much bigger.

I never thought, back in my days as a radical student activist anticipating an incipient revolution, that I would be here in 2004 fighting what may be a losing battle to simply save the liberalism of my parents' generation. I never imagined that, in this presidential election year, both major parties would nominate candidates who seek to undermine the international legal constructs built by Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and other visionary American leaders.

I fear, then, not only for the children of Iraq, of Palestine, and of Israel, but for my own children and the children of the entire world.

So, let us redouble our efforts to give all children a world where they can be safe and free. □

We the Peacemakers

Mohammed Abu-Nimer

I am an Israeli citizen and also a Palestinian, I was born in the Galilee, got a Masters degree in counseling and psychology at the Hebrew University, and am well versed in Israeli society, culture, language, and politics. Today is Israeli Independence Day, and the last time I spoke on Independence Day was in 1986, when I gave personal testimony to a group of Israeli soldiers about why the Israeli government should get out of the West Bank. And here I am, doing the same thing almost twenty years later.

So how should a Palestinian feel today on Israeli Independence Day? I usually avoid these holidays because of the emotional baggage that comes with them. Israeli officials who visit Arab villages and towns on this day expect Arab citizens to be “thankful” for what the state of Israel and it’s the various governments of Israel have done for Palestinians living in Israel. Yet, many of the Arabs in Israel have family members in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, the West Bank, and Gaza who are refugees of the 1948 war (or Independence Day). Palestinians in Israel have lived under the pressure of declaring and proving their loyalty to the state. Such loyalty has to be declared from the first sentence so that you’re not considered a “threat” to the state. So it’s hard to speak about Independence Day with pride, or loyalty, or even a sense of connection. The governmental policies of discrimination and land confiscation (among other dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) have kept Arab citizens from associating with the symbols of the state. Even those who succeeded in developing some understanding of the symbolic meaning of independence for Jewish nationalism, still find it very hard to ignore the narrative of injustice and oppression expressed by the Palestinian community in the Occupied Territories.

Listening to the stories that have been shared this morning by several Jewish peace activists, I’m very sad to hear that there’s so much pressure in the American Jewish community these days to silence the voices of peace, or voices that seem to be critical of Israeli policy. However, we peacemakers always suffer from this issue. Our respective

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groups tend to characterize us as traitors, disloyal, and we’re ostracized. What we are facing is fear, ignorance, and lack of information from our own national and religious communities. From our past experiences in Israel and Palestine, peace activists have learned (some have paid the heavy price with their lives) that it is important in a way not to jump too far ahead of their communities and to try to understand their concerns, fears, and where they stand. However, such understanding has not, thankfully, prevented Israeli and Palestinian peace activists from meeting in times when such actions were politically taboo.

I want to share with you some of the internal dynamics within the American Muslim and Palestinian Arab communities regarding this issue of jointly working for peace with our Jewish and Israeli counterparts. Yesterday I had a conversation with a group of Muslim scholars who came from Central and Southeast Asia. We spoke about pluralism and religion. One of the Imams from Kabul took me aside afterwards and said: “Are there really Christians and Jews who recognize Islam as a religion?” I was not as surprised as some of you might be by his question. I immediately thought of the similar dehumanization and stereotypes applied to Muslims both prior to and after 9/11. I also was reminded of the same kind of stereotyping and ignorance that drives people to characterize all Palestinians as terrorists, or Palestinian mothers as killing their children and having no respect for life. In response to these negative images and the reality of the Occupation, there have always been forces in the Palestinian and Arab communities who opposed joint peace work, dialogue, or any contact with the “enemy.”

Palestinians who have worked for political compromise and dialogue have also faced pressure and have even been sanctioned by their own communities. One of the mistakes we make as Palestinian and Jewish or Israeli peace workers is to say that we’re on two sides. We’re not on two sides. We share lots of commonalities as people who advocate for

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peace and justice. Palestinians who call for joint peace work go through the exact process that Jewish peace workers go through in their own communities—in terms of identity, in terms of proving their loyalty, in terms of defending the “other” side—but it’s important to speak and work within our own communities. When I speak to Jewish groups they often think, “This is a nice, good Palestinian working for peace.” But there’s always this cognitive defense mechanism that makes people wonder if they can really trust me. What I really need is for Jews to speak in their own communities because it’s harder for people to dismiss you if you’re from “within.” And if we continue to have people in the Arab community speaking of peace and justice in their own communities, this group of “us,” who suffer from not belonging fully to either side, will grow. And it’s the growth of this middle group that reflects and leads the path toward hope.

Are there American Muslims who are speaking this way in their community? This is a typical question raised by audiences when they listen to a voice from the “other side.” Let me affirm and say yes, there are groups who are talking about the need for internal changes and addressing issues within the American Palestinian community, as well as the American Muslim communities, regarding coalition building with other peace groups, especially Jewish Americans.

However, it is becoming harder and more challenging to raise such issues, especially since the recent Bush-Sharon exchange of letters in which Bush unequivocally supported Sharon’s policies. If you’re a Palestinian living under occupation, and you see the policy of assassination, and you’re unemployed, and you have no political solution on the horizon and no credible Palestinian leadership to negotiate or confront the Israeli occupation, and you have Arab regimes who are basically buying time from one crisis to the other without much credibility or belief that they could bring any substantial change to Palestine, then essentially you give up on the notion that the Arab regimes will save you or end the Occupation. Then there’s the final stroke: the president of the United States, the only country in the world that can challenge Sharon, steps in and says he fully supports Sharon’s policies. You are a Palestinian who lives among 1.4 million people in Gaza—where would you go? There is no one single group who offers hope or confronts the Israeli occupation except Hamas.

I can certainly understand the deep frustration of the Palestinian people right now who are suffering under occupation, military attacks, and a policy of collective punishment. What is hard to understand is that certain Arabs and Palestinians (as well as certain American Jews), who live 12,000 miles from the conflict and mostly live comfortable lives, choose to support policies of increased militarism, fanaticism, or radicalism. Jews, Palestinians, and Muslims who live in the Diaspora don’t pay the heavy price directly, they’re not involved on the ground, and they don’t live under occupation. They’re not Israelis living in Jerusalem afraid to

drive beside a bus. They’re not Palestinians living in Gaza getting firebombed in the middle of the night. At the end of the day they go home and watch TV.

From a place of comfort, these voices declare radical positions that actually inflame the conflict. For example, in some circles people insist on a one-state solution or insist that every Palestinian refugee must return to the historic land of Palestine, without even considering other possibilities (including recognition of the right to land but the choice of settling in other Arab and foreign countries as full citizens, or leaving the negotiations to Palestinian political leadership). Such individuals claim the moral high ground and identify so strongly as victims that they end up adding to the process of dehumanizing the other.

But if you’re going to take the moral high ground as a sympathetic outsider, you should at least do something constructive to end the conflict. I think that’s the role of the Jewish American, Muslim American, Arab American, and Palestinian American communities—to act constructively to end the conflict. Many people in this conversation ask “What should we do?”

Here are four things we can do:

1. Dialogue

We can host dialogues to understand the perspective of the “other” and learn more about “them.” Being engaged in collective and individual actions, American Arab and Jewish dialoguers can support each other and sustain and expand their forums and impact. And dialogue can be very helpful in bringing about reconciliation, particularly when it addresses and is constructed around the following three principals:

- A. That Arabs and Jews have the same historical right to the land. This goes against the beliefs of many Jews, Christians, and Muslims, who say, “God gave it to us, but we’ll share it.” That’s not reconciliation; that’s strategic compromise. In faith, in spirituality, “God gave it to all of us”—and because we all live in this land, then historically we all have the same equal rights. An act of reconciliation is not, “I’m giving you 60 percent or 40 percent or 20 percent of the land because you’ve been using too many bombs and I can’t defeat you.” But also not, “I’ll share with you because I am very generous.” I’ve heard this among Muslims and Jews as well. People say, “We should compromise because Judaism as a religion gives us the higher moral ground.” That’s not reconciliation; that’s ethnocentrism disguised in moral high ground language.
- B. That Arabs and Jews have equal human rights. We are all human. We are born the same. Whatever we think afterwards was taught to us by our rabbis and imams

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and priests, our teachers, our mothers, and our politicians—and we should be skeptical about what they tell us. For example, just because your mother is Jewish doesn't give you more of a right to the land—even if you come from Ethiopia or Russia or Venezuela—when you arrive to in town. The same statement can be made to Muslims who claim all the land of Palestine because the holy Koran and the Prophet identify Jerusalem as a third holy city.

C. The third component that dialogue can bring is cultural and religious pluralism. I'm now finishing research on Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon, studying interfaith relations. I have been conducting interviews and have seen amazingly pluralistic interfaith dialogue groups; yet the majority of people in these interfaith groups actually come there to convert people (but in a nice way), or defend their faith and national positions. It is hard to achieve religious pluralism through such forums. Dialogue can bring us to religious pluralism if it's conducted with the sincere intention to understand the other and grant them the equal space to exist.

2. Human Rights Advocacy

Learning to understand the "other" and creating human bridges is extremely important. But it is equally important to move beyond the individual and collective sense of understanding of the other into joint or separate actions to correct injustice in our reality. Joint advocacy campaigns are an important tool for those who want to affect the course of the conflict constructively. Rabbis for Human Rights in Israel is a good example. We should be doing this work not because we want to help the Palestinians or help the Jews, but because it's the right thing to do, regardless. Advocating for equal rights for all people in this conflict is a moral stand that both Arab and Jewish Americans can and should work for. We should be advocating that U.S. government officials monitor and protect the human rights of Palestinians and Israelis equally.

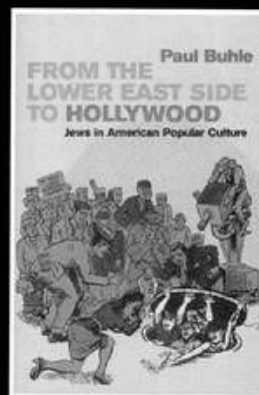
3. Humanitarian Aid

The Palestinian community is suffering a severe human tragedy under the conditions of war and occupation. This is one of the worst periods that I remember. There are reports of starvation in Gaza, and unemployment is rampant. Even small humanitarian relief or aid can relieve much of the suffering of Palestinians—kids, families, and people living under the occupation. So if you do not want to be involved in political activism, your constructive role in the Diaspora can be expressed by taking actions to reduce the suffering and tragedy of this conflict.

4. Nonviolent Direct Action

Nonviolent direct action is for people who really want to take an active direct stand against the occupation. Gush Shalom is a protest group engaging such action in Israel-Palestine, as are the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) and Al Mubadra (The Initiative). Nonviolent direct action is the ability to stand facing Israeli soldiers at any of the 450 checkpoints and say, "This is wrong." It's the ability to confront the Hamas narrative inside the Palestinian community and say, "Suicide bombing is wrong."

One of the people who has captured the essence of peace work is Professor Haim Gordon at Ben Gurion University, who has said: "To be a peace worker you need to be able and capable of confronting the evil in your own side." We need a coalition of Jewish peace workers critical of Israeli government policy, and American Arabs, Muslims, and Palestinians who are critical of the policies and actions of groups like Hamas, to work together (here in the United States) to move U.S. policy toward more peaceful, constructive, and engaged diplomacy. Arab and Jewish Americans owe Israelis and Palestinians who suffer from the conflict such active coalition. □



FROM THE LOWER EAST SIDE TO HOLLYWOOD Jews in American Popular Culture Paul Buhle

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Like our publisher who imagines himself in an episode of The West Wing giving advice to the president, this section is written for John Kerry and his advisors, to the delegates at the Democratic National Convention, to the insiders in Washington D.C., and to the cynical realists in the media. It provides them with a fundamental challenge to their way of thinking about politics and how to win a national election. Just as the late Ronald Reagan and his entourage challenged the fundamental assumptions of politics in 1980 and managed to initiate a right-wing revolution that still shapes contemporary discourse, so we urge liberal and progressive insiders to rethink their uninspiring attempts to win through copy-cat ideas, and instead to break on through to the other side—by speaking to the deepest needs of the American people. In the next sixteen pages we show how.

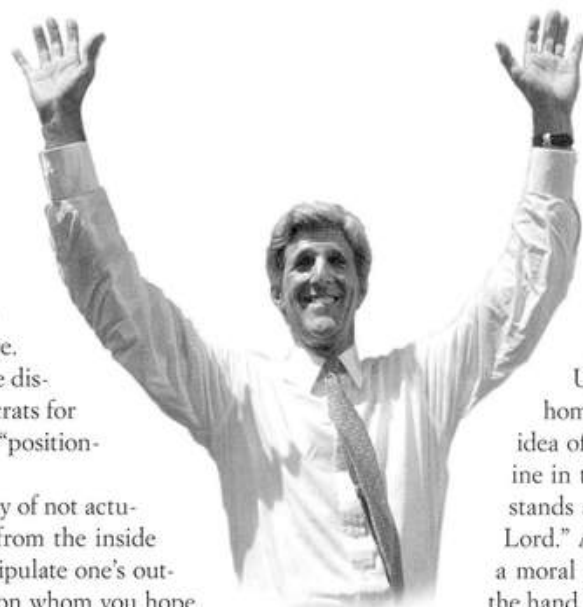
Will the Real John Kerry Please Stand Up!

Peter Gabel

For John Kerry to win in November, he needs only to do one very difficult thing: find his true self and manifest it as a moral presence. The current John Kerry does not yet exist as a compelling moral presence. Instead he is afflicted with the disease that has plagued Democrats for two decades—the disease of “positioning himself.”

Positioning oneself is a way of not actually standing for something from the inside out, but rather trying to manipulate one's outside to appear to be the person whom you hope “the majority” wants you to be. When John Kerry intones, in his best stentorian voice, “From North to South, from East to West, all across this great country, the message is clear; the people want change,” he is trying to “sound like” someone, but he is not actually being someone and not actually speaking—“lights on/nobody home,” to quote the Talking Heads. A sound that merely sounds like something conveys only hollowness; John Kerry only echos himself rather than manifesting a true presence, the presence of a really existing moral being.

Moral presence, authentic moral conviction, is essential in a leader (or if you prefer, a spokesperson) because what we as a society suffer from most acutely is moral entropy—the experience of floating in an ether disconnected from others and from active, meaningful alignment with the social world. If we can't connect to each other in compelling, meaningful, life-giving ways, we must endure what the poet Wallace Stevens called “the malady of the quotidian,” the routines of a passive everyday life in which we feel we are just going through the motions of living, merely watching the killing in Iraq, for example, and feeling a true moral agony at being unable to understand this killing as real, to engage with it, and to act to influence it. When we merely



watch the world, we suffer terribly from being unable to link up to it, encapsulated and imprisoned in our unmoored and floating minds.

George Bush does have moral presence, and it may lead him to victory even though most people find his presence disturbing and his moral direction flawed.

Uptight and anti-erotic, he is most at home when he is in angry pursuit of his idea of righteous vengeance. But he is genuine in the sense of actually being there: “He stands at Armageddon and he battles for the Lord.” And for the floating listener in need of a moral anchor, Bush “comes across,” even if the hand he extends is not the hand the listener wants to grasp. Never mind that most people do not agree with his simplistic good-and-evil worldview. For those trapped in a moral vacuum, he offers a way out, and an imperfect way out is better than no way out. George Bush does not render himself a ghost by positioning himself.

John Kerry will lose by five to ten points unless his constituencies come out to vote between 5 and 8 PM on election day. But people will not be pulled to the polls unless Kerry does the pulling with a moral presence more compassionate, more complex and clear-headed, and more embracing of the moral hopes of humankind than the presence offered by Bush.

We are all waiting for the John Kerry who risked his life to save others, who led the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, who as a young man courageously testified before Congress about the brutality and immorality of our violence toward the Vietnamese people, and who at one time gave as much as he could of himself to help us create a just and human world. Each time we listen to him we are hoping that this earlier John Kerry will emerge through the hologram, the handsome persona, the mouther of stentorian clichés, and by becoming present himself allow us to emerge into a group and become morally present to each other through the mediating role into which history has thrown him.

If he does this, he can't lose. If he doesn't, he can't win. □

Peter Gabel is associate editor of TIKKUN.

A Platform for Love...

From the Editors of TIKKUN Magazine

Despite the urgency of this electoral season, the official party platforms of the Democrats, the Greens, and other opposition parties are likely to do little more than rehash tired old visions of the past. In fact, no one expects a party platform to be inspiring or to give strategic direction. No one even bothers to read the platforms anymore because the candidates themselves are not seriously committed to using the platforms as their guide for what they will do in office. Instead, the party platform has become a model of political hypocrisy, the place where traditional constituencies are reassured that their concerns have not been forgotten even when all involved know that the candidate has no intention of raising these concerns and will most likely not address them even if elected.

The platform has become a dead document. However, the idea of the platform still captures the imagination. This hidden power offers grassroots activists an important opportunity. We can grasp the power of this dead form and bring it back to life by offering a visionary statement of what can be.

A Winning Strategy for Kerry

The need for transformative thinking is especially acute for the Kerry campaign now, when the understandable obsession with ousting President Bush from the White House has devolved into an "Anyone But Bush" mentality, pushing the Democrats toward increasing intellectual incoherence and cowardice. Guided by political analysts who have convinced the Democratic leadership that the vast majority of people on both sides will stick with preexisting proclivities, and that the party must move to the center to capture a small group of centrist swing voters, candidate Kerry has avoided taking any stands that might possibly "rock the boat." Instead of offering a real alternative, he has increasingly offered himself as "Bush lite."

In foreign affairs, Kerry has been unwilling to critique the foundations of the Bush policy in Iraq; instead, he has merely proposed ways to make the Bush policy more effective. Equally troubling, he has embraced the "Axis of Occupation" that was affirmed by President Bush when he gave Ariel Sharon the green light to incorporate into Israel significant parts of the West Bank.

At home, Kerry's criticisms of Bush's anti-terror strategy and the Patriot Act have been tepid. He has offered no new remedies for our ailing health care system or the looming Social Security shortfall, nor has he provided a non-isolationist alternative to outsourcing. Even the notoriously cautious campaigner Al Gore talked more about these issues in 2000 than John Kerry has, and he was a much more explicit advocate for environmental sanity besides.

Perhaps Kerry's resolute centrism will work. At the

moment, the president's popularity is waning due to the disillusionment generated in part by the mounting deaths and casualties inflicted upon U.S. troops by Iraqi rebels (now labeled "terrorists"), and also by revelations of torture and sexual humiliation that have been part and parcel of U.S. attempts to suppress the rebels. Yet Kerry's decision to lay low discounts the incredible power of the president to set the national agenda. All Bush needs to do is start the trial of Saddam Hussein in the fall, capture Bin Laden, begin armed conflict with Syria or North Korea, and/or (if you are a conspiracy theorist) allow terrorists to pull off yet another attack inside the United States, and he will stir up a mass psychology of fear and patriotic fervor that will make swing voters less likely to switch horses mid-stream.

The focus on reaching the undecided middle is based upon a mistaken perception of politics. Though it is certainly true that there is a group of undecideds in the middle, it is also true that 40 to 50 percent of the electorate regularly decides not to vote at all. Some of these people are content with the status quo, while others are so alienated by our government's policies that nothing would convince them to exercise their democratic rights. But there are also millions of potential voters—far and away enough to shift an election—who do not vote because they have not been moved by anything they've heard, have not felt that their vote could connect them with something they really believe in, and have not met people in their community who are fired up with a passionate belief that their candidate embodies a chance for substantive healing and transformation of this world.

We know these citizens can be mobilized by a Kerry

and Generosity

campaign that breaks through the tired and predictable rhetoric that the Democratic Leadership Council and the Washington insiders have been urging on him. This very large group of potential voters can be mobilized only through a strategy that fires the imagination and speaks to the most hopeful instincts in every American.

Such a campaign cannot be conducted in a superficial way: the candidate must truly believe that a politics based on kindness, love, and generosity is possible. Of course there are obstacles to building such a politics, but putting forward a vision that embodies a different way of thinking about the world, while acknowledging the obstacles, could bring a huge payoff. A candidate who managed to hold his normal Democratic Party base constituency (by speaking to the traditional issues), but who also went beyond that base to speak in a visionary way, could achieve remarkable popularity.

In what follows, we articulate some of the content of such a vision, which we call a "Politics of Love and Generosity," or a "Politics of Meaning," or an "Emancipatory Spirituality." However it is labeled, it is certain to provoke some degree of skepticism and resistance. Each of us has internalized a voice of cynicism and despair, based on previous experiences in which we dared to hope and were disappointed or hurt, so anything calling upon us to open ourselves up to love and generosity can remind us of those disappointments and make us feel wary that we might get humiliated by allowing ourselves to hope once again. And yet, each of us also retains some of that hope, so deeply at odds with what we have been repeatedly told is "realistic" in contemporary politics, and it is only by touching that hope that Senator Kerry can break through the despair that leads so many people to a cynical or depressive indifference—which in turn leads them to not even bother voting.

Our task is to argue otherwise—that love and generosity must be at the center of any politics. We acknowledge that each of us tends to think inside the box and fears asking ourselves what kind of a world we really want. Yet we all know that we will never get the world we want unless we explicitly articulate its dimensions and build strategies to achieve it.

"Let us not speak falsely now, the hour is getting late." For many of us, it is too late for a politics that lacks this visionary potential. Nor should we delay. A visionary, even "utopian" politics might be the most practical way of mobilizing forces to uphold and extend the progressive politics



that have been on the defensive for the past thirty years.

The platform that follows makes no attempt to cover every issue. Instead, we offer a way to think about what a platform of love and generosity would be, hopeful that in doing so we will stimulate some of you to bring these ideas directly to the candidates and to the media, and to begin a conversation with political leaders and policy makers who might be in a position in the coming years to implement some of the approaches we're breaking ground with here. We do not repeat here our support for inclusion of all those who have been left out of the material well-being of American society; we do not confront racism, sexism, and homophobia; we do not detail our support for civil liberties, environmental sanity, and an extension of human rights; nor do we lay out our ideas on economic justice beyond the Social Responsibility amendment to the Constitution. This is not because we don't care about these issues (we very much do), but we have dealt with them at length in *TIKKUN* for the past eighteen years and believe that existing liberal and progressive organizations will do a fine job of bringing them into the public arena. Our task, as we see it, is to offer new thinking in those critical areas where we present a unique perspective. Below, you will read a vision of American foreign policy (both global and in regard to Israel), health care, legal reform, and education that shows how we can implement, today, a New Bottom Line of love, generosity, kindness, gratitude, and celebration of the grandeur of the universe. □

Fighting International Terror and Creating Homeland Security

George Bush is intent on convincing Americans that we are in danger—and that the war in Iraq will protect us. The truth is that there is a danger. There are people who hate the United States. However, Bush has managed to increase the very international terror that he claims to be defending us against. The current Iraqi occupation has only intensified the hatred that people feel toward America and has helped recruit more terrorists.

Foreign policy discussions in the past year have too often centered on what ruler is in power, on military strength, and on the infamous Weapons of Mass Destruction. Yet what really creates peace or war is not conquering places or acquiring capital, but winning the hearts and minds of people. Peace only comes through trust. The best foreign policy is not driven by Defense Departments or even by State Departments but by policies that aim to build a world based on mutual caring and mutual respect.

The United States has a long way to go to win back the world's trust. We are the richest nation in a world in which one out of every three people lives on less than two dollars a day, and 1.3 billion people live on less than one dollar a day. Many of these people are near starvation. Yet the United States has organized global trade agreements that work to enrich the rich and further impoverish the poor. Millions of people around the world have demonstrated against these global pacts, but they do not have the power to effectively challenge the impact of American corporations backed by the U.S. army.

International trade arrangements destroy the market for many locally produced agricultural goods and handcrafted products, international companies come in and buy up or enclose land making it impossible to move animals to traditional grazing and water lands, and multinational corporations start to privatize essential natural resources such as water and sell them back to the population at rates that are prohibitive for those who live at subsistence levels. All of this contributes to the collapse of subsistence farming and village life—traditions that go back thousands of years. Villages then either get physically uprooted or become economically impossible to sustain, and people are forced off their lands and into slums surrounding major cities, where they live in horrific conditions and often witness their children choosing between starvation, crime, and prostitution.

The increasing global resentment toward the West is not only economic, but also cultural and spiritual. And for good

reason. This resentment is evident nowhere more strikingly than in the rising fundamentalist response to the ills created by globalization.

THE "GIFTS" OF THE WESTERN WORLD

Western societies are rightly proud of having created democratic institutions. And the institutionalization of human rights stands as a major advance in the history of humanity. We who live in the West have good reason to rejoice in these aspects of our society, to do all we can to preserve and extend these accomplishments, and to offer them to the rest of the world as well, because they rest upon universal values that are appropriate for the entire human race.

Yet we should also notice that Western societies have developed a particular kind of market culture based on competition, individualism, materialism, and selfishness, and that these values, which are not good for the United States itself, are not good for the rest of the world either. Market economies have championed a narrow notion of rationality: institutions are judged efficient, rational, and productive when they produce lots of money and power for those at the top. Anyone working in these institutions quickly learns that the most important thing they can do is to focus on "the bottom line" (that is, the amount of money or power being generated). We learn to evaluate others based on their "usefulness" in advancing our own individual goals. "Looking out for number one" becomes the frame through which all human relationships are measured. Keep such a society functioning for decades, and you begin to see the emergence of personality types that are self-absorbed, narcissistic, unable to care about others, and highly successful in the art of manipulation. Such people have developed the skills to "succeed" in the marketplace, but the very talents that are rewarded there make these people dysfunctional when it comes to building friendships, loving relationships, and families, and so we see a decline in family stability and a rapid increase in divorce, alienation, and loneliness (including loneliness within relationships, because people who are reared in such a society find it increasingly difficult to trust each other).

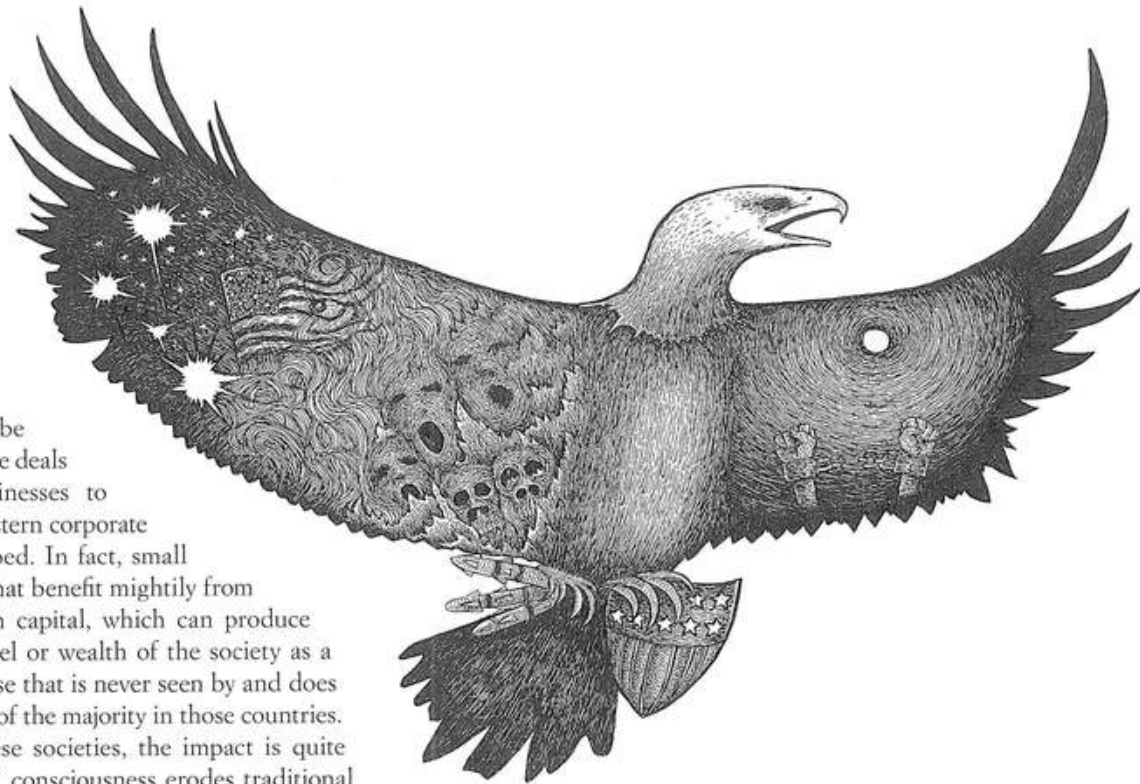
In advanced industrial societies, all of this individual suffering is buffered by the reality that global economic arrangements allow for an expanding wealth that gets divided, albeit unequally, in ways that provide material satisfactions that help distract us from feelings of loneliness and alienation. But there is no such buffer in most of the Third World. The

entrance of global capital into those societies provides a set of opportunities for a small domestic elite who are able to convince themselves that everyone in their society will be better off if they can make deals with international businesses to bring the marvels of Western corporate life to the underdeveloped. In fact, small middle classes emerge that benefit mightily from the infusion of Western capital, which can produce a rise in the income level or wealth of the society as a whole—though it is a rise that is never seen by and does not work for the benefit of the majority in those countries. For most people in these societies, the impact is quite different: “bottom line” consciousness erodes traditional tribal, communal, and familial sources of support that have kept these societies functioning. Increasingly, people are left to fend for themselves, without the cultural and institutional supports that existed for them for thousands of years.

THE ALLURE OF FUNDAMENTALISM FOR TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES

The response to global capitalism should not be the movement back to subsistence living currently embraced by some in activist and anarchist groups and known as “primitivism.” Life in village subsistence societies is often patriarchal, hierarchical, and oppressive, with a real scarcity of food, fuel, and shelter. However, we can understand and learn from the positive aspects of village life, particularly the pervasive sense of community and a value system that reaches past materialism to a sense of larger purpose and meaning. Such societies usually embrace an ethos of caring and mutual responsibility, articulated in religious and spiritual systems and lived out in daily life.

After contact with corporate “modernization,” many traditional societies are attracted to some form of ultranationalism or religious fundamentalism, which promise their followers a caring community based on higher values than the material. Fundamentalism, like some radical ultranationalisms, is an alternative to capitalism, but that fact does not mean it should be embraced. In fact, fundamentalism, like most forms of ultranationalism, often creates a community of caring only at the expense of some demonized “Other” (fundamentalist societies are often patriarchal and homophobic as well as prone to denouncing non-believers). Fundamentalists also take the emphasis on anti-materialism to an extreme—denying scientific inquiry, the value of bodily pleasure, and the value of privacy and independent thinking. Yet the appeal of fundamentalism cannot



be dismissed as simply and solely a rejection of democracy and a fear of freedom, nor as resentment or jealousy of Western material success. We must understand that at least part of its appeal is based on the hunger that people have for a framework of meaning and purpose that transcends the thinking of the competitive marketplace, fosters community, and affirms love and caring for each other, social solidarity, and a non-utilitarian orientation to the universe. All of this comes together in the way that fundamentalism in the Third World (and even, to a lesser extent, in the advanced industrial societies) becomes a form of resistance to the worst aspects of the globalization of selfishness that has been the public face of the international capitalist marketplace. The hunger for meaning is ignored by Western liberals, but it is the central need that fundamentalist communities fulfill, albeit in a distorted way.

All of these concerns are particularly obvious in the way that Islamic fundamentalism has fought to protect “its” women from the scourge of marketplace exploitation. Of course, much of this concern is motivated by the desire of many men to keep women securely within the bounds of patriarchal relationships. But that is not the whole picture. In Israel in the late 1980s and early 1990s fundamentalists burned down bus stop ads that featured scantily-clothed women in sexually provocative poses attempting to sell a product by associating it with that sexual allure. An antipathy to the Western commodification of women’s bodies led many women (including a small but significant number of former feminists) to be attracted to communities in which women were embedded in large families less concerned about immediate sexual pleasure than about long-term caring and commitment. Though Islamic societies have often imposed restrictive activities and dress on women, it is also

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true that in the past thirty years many women in both Jewish and Islamic fundamentalist communities have voluntarily put on the veil and covered their bodies as a way of saying: "No, I am not available to be commodified or turned into an object for the sexual pleasure or fantasies of random men."

When Western values are the values of me-firstism, materialism, and sexual commodification, it's no surprise that other countries are not so eager to receive the West as an honored guest. The values and cultural realities that accompany U.S. media and corporate penetration of the economically underdeveloped world, particularly the common-sense notions of "looking out for number one" and an accompanying ethos of materialism and selfishness are values that people quite reasonably resist.

Nor should we expect countries to take the United States seriously when we invade another country, in this case Iraq, ostensibly to bring "higher values" to the people. We certainly do not help our own cause when we occupy a country and, instead of establishing a democratic government, freedom of speech, and related rights, we replace native workers with the employees of global capital, shut down newspapers, allow torture in the prisons, and appoint a government that is only just barely held in place by 135,000 U.S. troops.

If we understand this larger framework, we can understand why at least some people would be attracted to Al Qaeda or other violent forms of resistance to the globalization of capital, and why—though at first their anger would primarily be directed against domestic elites who are local proxies and prostitutes for international capital (as Al Qaeda did against Arab elites)—they would eventually turn on the international sponsors of capital themselves (symbolized most powerfully by the World Trade Center and the Pentagon).

ISRAEL, ARAB ANTI-SEMITISM, AND GLOBALIZATION

If we understand this larger framework, we can also understand why the nearest example of a capitalist society, Israel, would generate so much anger, and why the people of the region would continually link their anger at the United States with anger at Israel.

Defenders of Israel claim that the anger directed at it stems from anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is an enduring legacy in Islamic societies, but one which rarely undermined the counter-legacy of goodwill and good relations that existed between most Jews and most Muslims for hundreds of years. Even when feudal Arab regimes sought to demean Israel and championed Palestinians who were fleeing their homes in 1947–48, fewer than 10,000 Arabs from the entire Islamic world responded to the call for volunteers to fight the newly emerging Zionist state and its army. Anti-Semitism itself was never strong enough in the Arab world to pose a threat to Israel.

Recent popular anger and resentment at Israel, while

always a feature of the propaganda machines of Arab elites, only grew to be a powerful popular reality after decades of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. This occupation—with its history of home demolitions, arbitrary imprisonments of tens of thousands of Palestinian men without trial or charges, humiliating body searches at endless check points that prevented freedom of movement, and other forms of collective punishment by the Israeli government against the entire Palestinian population—enacted in miniature the whole story of Western humiliation of the Arab and Islamic world. Israel's best interests lie in disentangling itself from the web of institutions and values that associate it with the globalization of capital, so that it can instead be identified with the globalization of spirit.

It is only when we understand these larger dynamics that we can possibly develop an effective counter-strategy to protect ourselves from the scourge of terrorism and protect Israel from future wars generated by the lingering anger from this historical moment.

To explain the anger at Western imperialism, globalized capital, and Israeli occupation is not to suggest that the actions of the terrorists are therefore "understandable" or acceptable. They are not. But the only way to develop a strategy to counter them is to understand the basis of their appeal, and then find a more effective way to address the legitimate part of that appeal and separate it from its hateful manifestation in terrorist activities.

A PRAGMATIC VISION

Sounds visionary? Well, yes. But it often turns out that the visionary approach is far more practical than the approaches of the pragmatists who led us into the war in Iraq where continued U.S. insensitivity and irresponsibility has generated far more hatred toward the United States than had ever existed there previously.

Approaching the world with a sense of respect for the values of others does not mean that we have to unilaterally dismantle our armed services (though some disarmament of a unilateral sort would be an important step). We should continue to have searches at airports, and we can continue to have a strong army. But let's get real: none of that is going to protect us! The military approach is a dead end or worse—it simply generates more terrorists. We could have learned this from Israel's failed strategy of occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. Instead, we copied its strategy, and as a result have managed to create alienation and anger at us from an Iraqi population that might plausibly, had we acted with a strategy based on generosity, have rejoiced in having been liberated from Saddam Hussein by the United States in association with an international coalition led by the United Nations.

The United States cannot succeed in "internationalizing" its foreign policy by making a few changes in tone or a few overtures to the United Nations (though that would help).

We need to make a sea change in our orientation to the world. That's what we did when we transcended the isolationism of the early twentieth century in order to fight the war against Hitler, and that is what is needed if we are to fight the war on terror effectively. This sea change is a change toward taking seriously our highest values and seeking to embody them in our actual activities in the world.

The first and most major element of such a change is to approach the world with a true spirit of generosity, love, and caring—and with a deep (not just rhetorical) recognition of the interrelationship between our well-being in the Western World and the well-being of every other human on the planet, and between the well-being of humans and the well-being of the planet itself.

You don't have to be a genius to detect the difference between programs, policies, and cultural artifacts that come from a place of selfishness and materialism and those that come from a place of generosity, love, and genuine caring for others and for the well-being of the planet. Let's be clear on this point: nothing that is suggested here will work to defeat terror if it is done solely or even primarily from the standpoint of American self-interest, unless it is clearly understood that American self-interest lies with the well-being of the entire human race and the planet. That is the key transformation of values that must take place: in order to protect ourselves from terror, we must internalize and successfully teach ourselves in our schools, in our media, and in our politics that the best self-interest program is a program that gives equal attention to providing for the best interests of the Other.

To get others to take this message seriously, we must take it seriously ourselves. That's why the Tikkun Community's call for A New Bottom Line in American society (so that institutions are judged efficient, rational, and productive not only to the extent that they maximize money and power,

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STRATEGY TO COUNTERACT TERROR

1. Let the United States initiate and take the lead in getting all the advanced industrial societies to participate in a Global Marshall Plan that would dedicate hundreds of billions of dollars each year for the next thirty years to the cause of eliminating hunger, homelessness, inadequate education, and inadequate health care in under-developed countries. Let the United States set up an international body of internationally recognized spiritual leaders, academics, health care workers, educators, and community organizers to supervise the expenditures and guarantee that they are not siphoned off by selfish national leaders and are used instead to promote creative strategies to achieve the goals cited.
2. Let the United States initiate a program of global ecological repair to undo the damage done by 150 years of environmental irresponsibility by the advanced industrial societies (both capitalist and socialist societies).
3. Let the United States require that every citizen give at least two years of national service to be spent in delivering services, providing training, education or otherwise assisting in the implementation of the Global Marshall plan.
4. Let the United States use the full weight of its resources and power to push Israel to end the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and to then fund the development of a Palestinian state that is economically and politically viable, while providing leadership in the creation of an international cartel committed to providing compensation to Palestinian refugees for their years of refugeehood (on a sliding fee scale according to current need).
5. Let the United States demonstrate in word and deed that it is not trying to "buy influence" but to respond genuinely to a new set of priorities, embodying a New Bottom Line of generosity and kindness.
6. Let the United States develop a new set of guidelines for international trade which promote and reward ecological safety and sustainability, workers' rights, respect for indigenous peoples and for the world's multicultural realities, and a clear commitment to promote the well-being of the least powerful people on the planet.
7. Let the United States adopt the Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which requires every corporation with an income of over \$30 million a year to get a new corporate charter every ten years, which would only be granted to those corporations that could demonstrate to a jury of ordinary citizens a satisfactory history of social responsibility not only in the United States, but in any other countries in which it operates, sells goods or services, or otherwise impacts life and the environment. Meanwhile, let communities around the world develop the questions and categories for an Ethical Impact Report that could be used by juries in focusing attention on what issues to assess and how to assess them when engaged in their deliberations about whether a given company should be allowed to continue to operate.
8. Let the United States implement this strategy in a new spirit, with a willingness to atone for past misdeeds, to approach other countries in a spirit of cooperation and repentance, and commit to learning from the histories and traditions of these countries lessons that might be valuable for us as we attempt to build a society based on generosity and open-heartedness. Without this kind of spirit, all the rest will be perceived as little more than bribery and will not work.

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FOREIGN POLICY (continued from page 39)

but also to the extent that they maximize love and caring, ethical and ecological sensitivity, and our capacities to respond to the universe with awe and wonder) is actually the key to our foreign policy.

Further, we must learn to think of our international representatives as ambassadors for this New Bottom Line. In practice, this means that Americans going to Third World countries must be selected for their humility, their capacity to recognize that we have as much to learn from other cultures as we have to teach them, and their openness to becoming stewards of the well-being of the Other rather than dictators or imposers of our cultural traditions. At the same time—and admittedly this is a difficult balance—we can't approach the rest of the world with an absolute ethical relativism: we know and insist upon the fact that people are better off when their basic human rights (both economic and political) are respected, and when their religious and spiritual traditions do not demean others. Yet we also know that we do not necessarily have the best answers for how to implement those insights, that we must be willing to learn from others about how those insights can be institutionalized in cultures that have existed elsewhere for thousands of years.

Learning from the Other also requires that we be open to questioning and challenging the individualism and materialism that have been so centrally institutionalized as part of modern culture. A higher premium on community, solidarity with others, and a spiritual orientation toward the world already finds articulation in some of the West's spiritual and religious traditions, but it has been marginalized out of the public sphere. In our encounters with the rest of the world, we need to develop a new openness to learning from them about the best methods for incorporating into our own thinking and social institutions approaches that reflect the wisdom on issues of community, solidarity, and spirituality that can come to us from the East and South, just as we offer wisdom about institutionalizing practices around human rights and political democracy.

RE-IMAGINING THE UNITED NATIONS

It would be wonderful if we could, with good conscience, call upon the United States to embrace the United Nations as the vehicle for this new global approach, but unfortunately the UN today embodies and reflects the ethos of selfishness and materialism that emanates from the West and which is embodied in the ethos of the elites of many Third World countries as well. The UN requires a moral transformation, so that instead of seeming to adjudicate between the various self-interests of ruling elites of the world, it becomes a body committed to the common interests of humanity. It's time to return to the original vision presented by Eleanor Roosevelt, a vision that saw the UN as the repository and articulator of the highest hopes and furthest advances in ethical sanity of the human race. Let the UN Security Council and the

General Assembly invite the world's great spiritual visionaries, artists, poets, and philosophers—people like Vaclav Havel, Nelson Mandela, Mikhail Gorbachev, Jimmy Carter, Vandana Shiva, the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Zalman Schachter Shalomi—and pay careful attention as these guests spell out their practical and visionary ideas for how the UN could act as a beacon of hope and a guidepost for transcending the narrow self-interest of the powers and principalities of the earth.

An important element in changing our approach to the world would be to require, as a condition for receiving public funding and using our airwaves, that our television news programs and newspapers, our movies and publishing industries convey to Americans the perspectives of others around the world (with sufficient detail so that Americans could understand what is reasonable in these alternative perspectives), as well as a deep education about the interrelationship between everyone on the planet and our collective impact on the well-being of the environment.

Ultimately, we are calling for a fundamental change of culture and a change of heart. That can happen just as quickly as America changed from a society oriented toward isolationism in the 1920s and 1930s to a society oriented toward internationalism in the 1940s, '50s and '60s; or just as quickly as we changed from a society with predominantly male-dominated assumptions and institutions in the 1950s and '60s to a society open and welcoming to the contributions and leadership of women in the 1980s and 1990s. Fundamental cultural transformations of this sort are possible. And they are the primary strategy to combat international terror.

To the extent that the United States is perceived as seriously attempting this new orientation toward the rest of the world, it will grow dramatically harder for those who preach hate to find a receptive audience. When clinics, schools, housing, and food are being provided by the West, and services are delivered by people who approach this task with humility and a sense of repentance for the mistakes that American arrogance has wrought in the past, anti-Americanism will cease to resonate with most people. To be sure, there will continue to be a need for an American army and an American border patrol, for searches when entering planes, and for screening of people who have shown a willingness to work with terrorist groups. Those programs and others should be retained and refined. Yet in implementing those programs we must be vigilant to not give the impression that we believe that most people in different societies or different religious communities are suspect or that we see their cultures as fundamentally evil, destructive, or prone to terror.

If we can approach the world with this new spirit of love and generosity, we will achieve precisely what the anti-terror warriors have not been able to achieve: genuine homeland security. □

A Letter on the Middle East to Senator Kerry

from the Tikkun Community National Advisory Board

THE TIKKUN COMMUNITY

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AN INTERFAITH MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, PEACE, GENEROSITY & ECOLOGICAL SANITY

Dear Senator Kerry,

We are writing to you because we are deeply disturbed at recent statements you've made indicating "100 percent" unqualified support for Ariel Sharon's plan to couple a withdrawal from Gaza with U.S. approval for Israel to incorporate large sections of the West Bank. While Sharon's plan may temporarily be on hold, the philosophy underlying his policies, frequently articulated by him, to hold onto major sections of the West Bank in perpetuity—in defiance of the will of the majority of the people who live in Israel—is a recipe for disaster, and should not be backed by you or the government of the United States.

We the undersigned are members of the National Advisory Board representing the 7,000 members of the Tikkun Community, an interfaith organization of American Jews and our non-Jewish allies who strongly believe that the security of Israel is imperiled by the continuation of the occupation of the West Bank and the persistent conflict that such occupation necessarily implies. Recent polls indicate that over 60 percent of American Jews would support an end to the Occupation. Most of them do not support the policies of Ariel Sharon. Those polls demonstrate the unfortunate fact that the Jewish community leadership, the people you are most likely to encounter when you visit Jewish settings, do not reflect the views of most American Jewish voters.

Senator Kerry, it is a moral error and political blunder to embrace so unconditionally the current policies of the State of Israel. Those policies are not only harmful to the interests of the United States—because their transparent insensitivity to the needs of the Palestinian people generates anger around the world, particularly in the Arab and Muslim worlds—but they are also harmful to the interests of the Jewish people (stimulating new levels of anti-Semitism) and of Israel (locking Israel into an endless cycle of violence and confrontation with a people that seeks its own national self-determination).

Senator Kerry, there is an alternative: the Geneva Accord negotiated by leading Israelis and Palestinians. The United States would make a far more serious contribution to Middle East peace if, instead of giving Ariel Sharon a blank check for Israeli expansion, it would actively support the Geneva Accord, which provides for a two-state solution that is respectful to the fundamental needs of both sides. Taking a stance in favor of the Geneva Accord or some similar two-state solution sensitive to the needs of both peoples would be an important first step toward giving substance to a perspective that, in our view, ought to be a central theme of your campaign: that the safety and security of Israel can be achieved only with a two-state solution where Israel lives in peace with its Arab neighbors—and thus that Israel's security cannot be achieved by seeking to dominate or control the Palestinian people. If American policies in the Middle East convince a significant group of people in the Arab world that we support domination and control and are not guided by a spirit of generosity and open-heartedness, we guarantee continued instability and conflict and danger to Israel, and to America itself.

Americans are legitimately fearful today of the growing anger we face from people all around the world. Yet we've learned all the wrong lessons from the experience of Israel-Palestine. After thirty-seven years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the people of Israel are less secure than they were when the Occupation began. The reality is that domination over the Other is not a path to security and peace. And we urge you to say so.

Instead, we need policy directions that convey a genuine sensitivity to the needs of the people of the Arab and Muslim worlds, delivered with an ethos of generosity and respect. In conjunction with this, you could announce your commitment to the United States playing a role in stimulating the creation of a Global Marshall Plan financed by all the advanced industrial societies and aimed at achieving these goals.

The key for the Kerry campaign is to articulate a vision of a world in which the ethos of cooperation and generosity replaces the ethos of domination over the Other as the primary method of achieving security. Liberals in the past have lost support in national elections because they have backed away from their idealistic views when challenged. But a powerful defense of an ethos of generosity as a path to security could be coupled with a strong critique of the

failures of militarism. And it is precisely this approach that might allow Americans to consider switching leaders in the midst of a war, which has rarely happened in the history of this country and which many voters will be reluctant to do unless you, Senator Kerry, provide them with a fundamentally different approach to foreign policy. Simply tinkering with the logistics of Bush's doomed foreign policy while seeming to share its same basic assumptions won't be sufficient.

It will be much easier to generate enthusiasm for a Kerry candidacy that projects a visionary approach than a Kerry candidacy that echoes the very right-wing voices in the Jewish world that got Israel into its current mess.

On both principled and pragmatic grounds, we urge you, Senator Kerry, to chart a visionary approach to foreign policy. We in the Tikkun Community invite you to meet with us to discuss the way that these directions might be articulated in the coming months. Rabbi Michael Lerner, Cornel West, and Susannah Heschel, national co-chairs of the Tikkun Community, have requested a meeting with you—please make that meeting possible and give serious consideration to the policies we are recommending, and which we believe to be both politically in your interest and in the best interests of the United States and Israel.

Tikkun is a Hebrew word meaning to repair, heal, and transform the world. The Tikkun Community was founded in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks to resist the idea that security is best achieved through dominance and control over others, and to stand for the idea that peace and security are best achieved through cooperation and meeting the legitimate needs of all. Currently there are seventy-five local Tikkun Community groups nationwide and over 7,000 individual members. Tikkun supports a balanced, even-handed, pro-Israel, pro-Palestine middle path to peace.

Cordially,
 Rabbi Michael Lerner,
 Professor Cornel West
 Professor Susannah Heschel
 (national co-chairs, The Tikkun Community)
 Robyn Lundy (Executive Director)
 Charlotte Talberth (National President)

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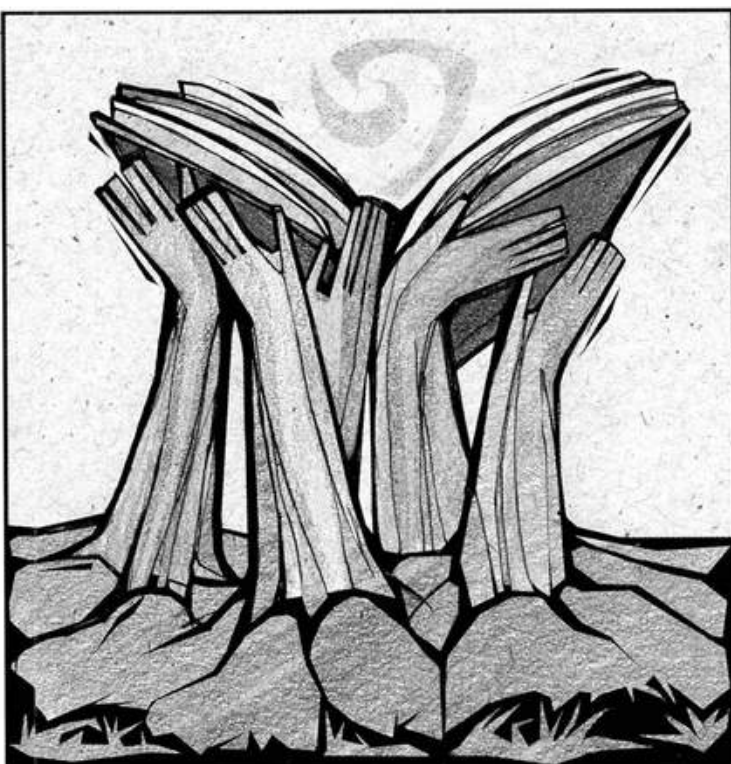
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 University of California, Santa Barbara, CA

Law and Justice

We seek a fundamentally new direction in the way our society shapes its legal assumptions and a transformation in the practice of law. We are both proud of the accomplishments of the American system of justice and concerned to rectify its misuse in some areas (e.g., the torture and humiliation that takes place in some of our prisons—not only in Iraq but also in the United States—and the administration of law through police forces and courts that retain de facto racist and classist elements). We believe that, in its fundamental orientation to the world, our legal system reflects a worldview and helps create a reality that undermines rather than builds the possibility of genuine community and human connection. The changes that are needed go far beyond those sought by civil liberties groups—though we support their efforts to achieve greater fairness, to overturn repressive elements of the Patriot Act, and to overcome the use of the legal system as an instrument of repression (as, for example, under the current misuse of law by Attorney General Ashcroft and his Justice Department).

When the Founding Fathers wrote the American Constitution and laid the groundwork for the development of our legal system, their main intent was to affirm the dignity of the individual against all forms of group coercion. As a result, they created a legal system that was focused almost entirely on protecting individual rights: to free speech, to the free exercise of religion, to assemble peacefully and seek redress of grievances, to have one's home protected from unreasonable searches and seizures, to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, to confront one's accusers if charged with a crime, and so forth.

This concern with individual rights extended also to the so-called private realm of the economy. Our Constitution protects the right to make contracts, the right to use one's property in any manner that one wishes so long as that use does not unreasonably interfere with the rights of others; the right to be justly compensated if the community determines it must take the individual's land for an important public purpose; and our law has come also to protect the right of people to freely associate through incorporation to pursue freely chosen private ends. The conception of justice that has largely shaped the development of American law since these beginnings has held that these various freedoms must be extended equally to all. This linkage of the idea of equality with equal liberty to compete in the marketplace has shaped the development of "equal protection" to include African-Americans, women, and others who in some way have suffered from prejudice that has restricted their "equality



of opportunity." The current controversy surrounding the issue of gay marriage is essentially about liberty and equality defined in this way: in seeking the right to marry, gays and lesbians are asserting that they should have the same individual rights and freedoms that are granted to others.

While we recognize and support the liberal achievements of American law and support the world's continuing efforts to secure the blessings of liberty for all of humanity, we nevertheless insist that our law's emphasis on the individual has also proved to be destructive. In defining liberty and equality in terms that emphasize the pursuit of individual self-interest in a competitive marketplace, and in linking the meaning of liberty and equality with the individual's need to be protected against others, the legal system has legitimized Fear of the Other as preeminent over Love of the Other, and has minimized and even suppressed the longing of each of us to live in a loving and caring community founded upon social connection and cooperation.

We therefore say that what is needed today is an approach to law and justice that seeks to reconnect the Self with the Other and to link the pursuit of justice with healing the distortions in human interaction that have led us to equate individual rights with the pursuit of self-interest at the expense of others and the natural environment. We need to develop an approach to law that is guided by Martin Luther King Jr.'s definition of justice as "Love correcting that which revolts against love"—a definition that begins with our connectedness to each other as social beings and points toward the creation of legal processes that increase empathy, mutual understanding, and compassion, rather than vindicating an

adversarial conception of rights. Such an approach should conceive of the legal arena as the central public space where conflicts are healed through reconciliation, and where all of us can witness individuals overcoming their selfishness and their fear of the Other by seeing the Other as equally deserving of love and concern.

There are many examples of how this new “post-liberal” conception of law and justice is emerging within our society. The greatest single example is South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in which the black majority of South Africa avoided much of the bloodshed that history would have taught us to expect following the dismantling of the brutal legacy of apartheid, by granting amnesty to those responsible for more than 22,000 acts of violence. In return they received public acknowledgment by the perpetrators of the wrongs they had committed under apartheid. The fastest growing legal movement in the United States is the Restorative Justice movement—an approach to crime and social injustice that emphasizes healing conflict through direct encounters between perpetrators and victims. Perpetrators must hear directly the suffering caused by their own actions and they are encouraged to accept responsibility, to apologize, to atone for their actions, and to seek forgiveness from those whom they have harmed. New developments in the related areas of Transformative and Understanding-Based Mediation are moving beyond the self-interest-based settlement-mediation model toward seeing conflicts as opportunities for people to grow through the achievement of empathy and understanding for others. The Collaborative Law movement is bringing together large groups of lawyers in Boston, Seattle, New York, and other

major American cities who are rejecting adversarial litigation of conflicts in favor of legal resolutions that legitimize mutual respect, sensitivity, and cooperation.

We believe federal, state, and local governments must do all they can to give public legitimacy to these new movements that are linking law to the creation of community. We call for a modification of evidentiary rules regarding relevance away from the narrow empiricism of the current “fact-finding” process and toward the telling of meaningful stories or narratives that place disputes into their social and personal context, thereby revealing more of the full human meaning of each party’s actions. The American Bar Association should modify its existing ethical rules governing the legal profession so that, in addition to having an acknowledged duty to the client and the court, a lawyer must also assume an ethical responsibility for the welfare of the broader community. In order to better accomplish this objective, the principle of a lawyer’s “duty of zealous representation” should be reoriented so that it no longer is limited to advancing the individual self-interests of clients, but also includes an ethical obligation to work toward promoting substantive social justice, harmony, and the flourishing of the well-being of the community.

The American legal system should adopt and recognize as a new principle of tort law a duty to care for others in distress. This duty would be broader than the historical duty to rescue, but would be limited by a reasonableness condition subject to common law interpretation. The purpose of this duty would be to create a new ethos of responsibility for those who are in personal and economic crisis—the homeless, the infirm, the elderly, and family members. □

Medicine

Medicine began to miss the boat a long time ago. It developed its “medical science” through the study of the anatomy of a corpse. Much important information was gathered, but deep philosophical mistakes accompanied the attainment of this knowledge. A human being is not a corpse; we are made of mind, body, and spirit and deeply influenced by our environment, so we need to rethink the philosophical frame in which the field of medicine arose.

For example, it’s sometimes helpful in medicine to compare a human heart to a mechanical pump. But a heart is fundamentally different from a pump—and, indeed, unlike anything we know of in the rest of the universe. A computer or a mechanical pump doesn’t experience compassion, and therefore doesn’t experience the wondrous transformation in function that can occur as a result. But a human heart can change! There are numerous studies showing that compassion and tolerance improve cardiac functioning, whereas the



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID REGAN

PLATFORM FOR LOVE AND GENEROSITY: MEDICINE

experience of anger, intolerance, or hostility worsens heart functioning. Stress reduction groups that have a positive impact are those in which the experiences of compassion and interconnectedness are generated.

In short, the ways our society thinks about the distribution of health services, the nature of and means of protecting health, and our relationship to the physical world are fundamentally flawed because our medical system fails to acknowledge that humans are spiritual/physical/emotional beings and that their health is a product of the interaction between these dimensions of our lives.

HOLISTIC HEALTH CARE

The World Health Organization defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” That well-being can only be achieved by a health care system that pays attention to all the dimensions of human life.

Let's start with support for a worldwide system of universal health care. Only a society with deep moral distortions would allocate health care on the basis of how much money the ill person has. There is no moral reason why someone born into poverty should have less opportunity for their basic health needs to be met than someone born into wealth. The underlying principle of our health care system should be: everyone equally deserves first-class health care because everyone is equally valuable and deserving of respect. The central value behind this principle is that human beings participate in God's holiness, and those who work to deliver health care and to create medicines and medical technologies are engaged in sacred work. Just as we do not ask individuals to pay when they need police or fire assistance, so society should provide first class health care for all, and also pay for the training and salaries of doctors, nurses, public health experts, as well as for the construction and provision of hospitals and community health care centers. Schools from grades one through twelve should provide health education, including a focus on diet, exercise, meditation, and other approaches to illness prevention and health maintenance.

Previous efforts at health care reform have failed not because they went too far, but because they did not go far enough. The large health care insurers and profiteers fight every attempt at minimal health care distribution reforms by buying television ads purporting to show ordinary citizens talking to each other about how misguided these reforms



are—as though the companies are really trying to champion the interests of ordinary citizens. Even when the Clinton administration proposed reforms designed to ensure the well-being of the health care profiteers and drug companies, it still faced crushing opposition from them. Since it takes enormous amounts of energy to fight for the most minimal reforms, we might as well use our precious resources to fight for the greater cause: a universal single-payer plan that places the sanctity of human beings at the center of the way we think about health care.

THE HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

What we take in—through our stomachs, our lungs, and our pores—has a powerful impact on our health. It's no news today that environmental conditions are central to our health. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the clothes we wear, the products we use to clean our bodies, and the

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food we eat have all become so filled with carcinogens and other poisons that we are constantly at risk. A healthy environment is one of the most fundamental elements in preventing illness.

Health care must necessarily address all these issues, rather than split them off into realms remote from the everyday practice of medicine. The consumer also bears the responsibility of buying healthy products once they become available. But don't blame the consumer who doesn't have that option, or has it only if they are willing to pay more for a healthy tomato than they could reasonably afford. Responsibility begins when the options are made available. When healthy food costs two or three times as much as unsafe food, those who cannot afford to buy healthier food are unfairly disadvantaged. Some upper-middle-class people tend to perceive themselves as saner than the rest of the population in what they eat, whereas in fact they are only richer.

Yet there are also consumption habits that need to be healed. Many people overeat, doing so to offset the emotional, ethical, and spiritual distress in their lives. They find momentary consolation, but it never lasts very long.

You can never eat enough to feed a hungry soul.

The solution is to address the spiritual hunger. Instead of selling dangerous diet pills or quick fixes, we need to provide the emotional, ethical, and spiritual nurturing people need so that they don't take their pain out on their bodies.

A healthy environment will be one in which people have meaningful work and live in families and communities suffused with love and solidarity which also allow for privacy and individual choice. It will be an environment in which people rejoice in each others' beings and support each others' emotional well-being, spiritual growth, and intellectual depth. A healthy environment will have healthy foods and unpolluted air and water, and it will have repaired the sources of global warming. It will have mass transportation and careful use of the planet's energy and resources. This environment will give people many opportunities each day to exercise their bodies, to meditate, to sing and dance, to engage in aesthetic creativity, to do physical labor as well as mental labor, to be with others in community and to be alone in moments of quiet, to celebrate the universe in community and to connect with God in privacy.

Cities will be organized in ways that allow easy access to food, recreation, and work without having to use cars; children will be able to play without fear of being run over; pollutants will not be poured into our air and oceans and water systems; sanitation will be provided to the 2.7 billion people on the planet without it; and clean drinking water will be provided to the 1.1 billion people on the planet without it. An ecologically sensitive health care system will be global, recognizing that the health of the entire planet is directly related to the health of any given individual. We need to develop a compassionate and caring attitude toward

all human beings and all of nature, recognizing our interdependency, insisting on the well-being of the whole as a precondition for the well-being of each part.

MEANING AS MEDICINE

To fix our health care system, we have to fix a society in which everyone is just out for themselves, because when everyone is out for themselves there is an inevitable loss of meaning in our lives. The need for meaning is as significant as the need for food or economic well-being, and it has significant physiological consequences for our health.

Spirit matters—because the deprivation of a spiritual dimension from our lives and the absence of a sense of meaning have drastic physiological consequences.

A society in which health care is available to some but not to others is a society in which the sphere of caring has been severely restricted. This has immediate health consequences. Conversely, if we live in a society in which people are taking care of each other—which would certainly manifest in adequate health care being available—the direct health benefits will flow not just from the availability of the care but from the framework of meaning that promotes our collective and mutual well-being.

Similarly, caring about the environment is good for our health, even when we are not yet successful in stopping the polluters or restraining those who are misusing the earth's resources. Our very concern and involvement with others in this issue produces a sense of purpose and meaning with its positive healing consequences.

We can think of health as a flowing of energy that may occasionally get blocked. Eating is an example of this flow of energy writ large. When people see that food is an act of giving by the earth and that we have a corresponding need to give back, they begin to approach a spiritual level of understanding. So eating foods that are products of exploitation of the earth or that were produced through demeaning and underpaid labor has a negative health consequence. The earth gives to us so that we can give in turn to others—because we are all fundamentally interconnected and interdependent. Our atoms are constantly being shuffled, there is a constant dance of sharing that occurs between humans and the natural world, but when we block this whole cascade through fear or greed, we interfere with the life-giving and nurturing qualities of the earth that are plentifully available and meant to sustain us.

Unfortunately, we have lost our sense of wonder and appreciation. That awe and wonder must be part of our process of eating, and, if it is not, its absence will have adverse health consequences.

In spiritually-oriented medicine, a doctor would try to instill an understanding of the systems-nature of our health: We would learn that on the one hand the health of one part of our body is linked to the health of other parts, and also that the health of our body is linked to the health of the

PLATFORM FOR LOVE AND GENEROSITY: EDUCATION

economic, political, and ecological systems outside the body. Doctors would support patients in developing meaningful lives and encourage patients to activate their capacity for compassion and deep connection with people (because it is in those moments that the deep healing begins). The initial taking of a history should include these dimensions, stretching from an individual's physical self to her interactions with her family, a description of her environment, and even to the meaning-quotient she finds in her relation to the world. These issues are not esoteric—they mean that the doctor has time to ask, How is your family? How is your drinking water? What have you been eating lately—tried any organic

vegetables? Do you have friends at work or in your community? Do you have time for yourself? Part of the task here is to communicate to patients information about the world that impacts their health: increased mercury levels found in fish; ozone alerts for the city; lead in the drinking water; a new farmer's market where organic foods can be found more cheaply; and so forth.

Ultimately, there is no health for the individual without health for all individuals and health for the entire planet. The caring world that we seek in this Platform for Love and Generosity is thus integrally linked with and the precondition for the promotion of global health. □



Education

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS PAPA

George Bush had a great sound bite—his education program aimed to leave no child behind! Most people intuited this to mean that every student got the basics so that they would be equipped to function in the competitive marketplace of the future—precisely what the Clinton administration had intended when they introduced the plan for extensive testing of reading and math skills.

Now that we've had many years of this approach, we've come to see its limitations. Teachers and schools are penalized for not "producing" enough results, so they've reoriented their educational system to "teach for the tests." Doing so has not had a dramatic effect on increasing basic literacy, but it has had the very bad effect of reaffirming the worst vision of education—as a task to mass produce a set of children, turning classrooms in mini-assembly-lines. The result

is that students who used to be introduced to the rat race of the competitive marketplace in high school are now learning to think in terms of “the bottom line” of “making it” in the competitive marketplace by the time they are in third grade. Not only are we undermining childhood, but we are also conditioning students to be more easily manipulated by the ethos of “looking out for number one” and “maximizing the bottom line” that are the dominant mantras of a corporate-dominated society.

We want our kids to have the skills that they need for life, and that means that they need to be equipped with an education that fosters their capacities to be caring and cooperative, to have a sense of responsibility, to learn how to make ethical and ecological decisions, to give love and joy at least as much attention as they give to getting the correct answer or knowing how to manipulate objects, to learn how to respond to the universe with awe and wonder, to experience genuine thanksgiving and gratitude for all that we have been given, and to know how to recognize the goodness in themselves and others.

These important life skills need not be counterposed to reading and writing and arithmetic, but they have been so dramatically undervalued in the past few decades of American education that it will take a conscious national effort to give them the centrality that they deserve. Anyone who has observed the rise in the use of drugs, profligate teen and pre-teen sexuality, and music that articulates nihilism and misogyny doesn't usually wonder whether our children are learning enough College Board words to do well on the tests as much as wonder whether they are learning any values worthy of our respect.

That's why we want to see a whole new orientation in education.

On the one hand, we want to see traditional skills taught in a way that recognizes the whole child. A whole child curriculum, however, already exists and is practiced in progressive schools across the country. In a whole child curriculum, the learning experience is project-based, so that students see how connected each aspect of their world is to every other. Math, in this setting, does not take place in math class, but as part of a unit on bread-making (measuring) or at the post office (adding and subtracting money for stamps) or, in higher grades, in a curriculum around building communal space (geometry, calculus) or the formation of shells (fractals). Students in these classes come to see *why* we learn as well as what we learn, and so gain a greater appreciation for the complexity and beauty of the world in which we live. They also end up performing better on standardized tests.

On the other hand, we want a curriculum whose success is measured by how many students have developed the skills to be caring, cooperative, generous, kind, ecologically sensitive, grateful, responsible, and capable of responding to the universe with awe and wonder. And yes, these skills can be taught and already are taught in some private schools

(one reason many parents want to send their children to such schools and ask for voucher money so that they can afford to do so). We want to see these kinds of values made central to our entire school system. We want to see mentor students assigned to younger students, and teachers providing supervision so that older students can learn how to care for another as s/he travels through the many years of public schooling. We want to see classes that focus primarily on teaching students to see the world with an attitude of gratitude and awe and wonder—and this can be fostered primarily by being in and working with nature, learning science with awe, and also by teaching poetry, fiction, film, video, and computer skills.

Similarly, we can reward students not only for their uniqueness and the ways in which they excel, but also for the ways in which they manifest their common humanity with each other. Encouraged to do papers and projects together, rewarded for their capacities to cooperatively develop imaginative term projects and follow them through to completion, taught to recognize the educational value in team sports and singing, debating, and artistic ventures, students can become ready to act cooperatively in facing the challenges of ecological crisis and economic survival that have been bequeathed to them by generations who had not yet adequately learned to cooperate and to see their own well-being fulfilled through the well-being of everyone else on the planet.

And let us get teachers who not only teach but also embody these values and who themselves are rewarded with real honor as well as enough pay. This is how you get a system that won't leave any students behind. □

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We gratefully acknowledge the gift of \$18,000 left to Tikkun by the late Harry Wasserman. May his memory be a blessing.

ON THE GROWING EDGE OF JUDAISM

Reb Zalman at Eighty

Or Rose

This column inaugurates a new series for *TIKKUN* on contemporary Jewish thought. It will include book reviews, interviews, and original essays on topics related to Jewish theology, broadly conceived. We are pleased to begin this series with a special interview with Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi (affectionately known as Reb Zalman) on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

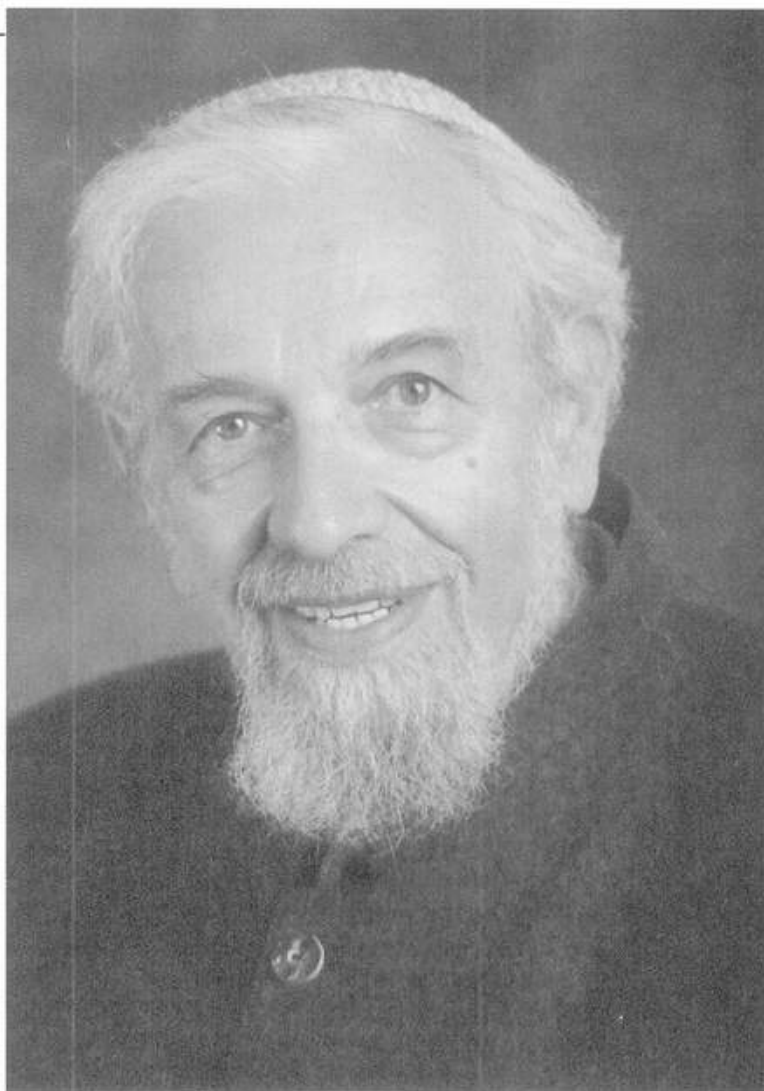
Raised in an Orthodox Jewish family in Vienna and educated by Lubavitch Hasidim in Antwerp (and later in New York), Reb Zalman arrived as a refugee to the United States in 1941. Since his arrival in this country, he has grown to become one of the most creative and influential figures in contemporary Jewish life. He is the spiritual founder of the Jewish Renewal Movement and a pioneer in the introduction of the Jewish mystical tradition (Kabbalah and Hasidism) into popular American culture. Reb Zalman has been an inspiration to the *Tikkun* community, mentoring Rabbi Michael Lerner (*TIKKUN*'s founder and editor) and several other prominent Jewish spiritual leaders, including rabbis Arthur Green, Tzvi Firestone, and Arthur Waskow. He has also been at the forefront of inter-religious dialogue, working closely with such renowned figures as Howard Thurman, Thomas Merton, and His Holiness The Dalai Lama.

This interview is dedicated specifically to exploring Reb Zalman's current religious thinking.

ROSE: What does the word "God" mean to you?

REB ZALMAN: I think it is important to begin this conversation humbly, recognizing that all of the ways in which I speak of God are inadequate. And yet, to avoid theological discussion is not an option, because like others I have a deep desire to understand the ways of the Divine. With that caveat, let me try to say something about the Unsayable.

In the past, many people spoke about God as an existent being, albeit "omni-omni"—the Man with the long flowing



beard sitting on His heavenly throne. The God I experience most often is not theistic, but pantheistic—God as the source of all life, as a constant, unending flow of energy that animates all of life. The terms "verb" and "process" best describe this reality.

I must say, however, that despite my pantheistic leanings there are still moments when I also experience God in more personal ways. This is particularly true when I *davven* [pray]. In saying the words "*Barukh Atah*" [Blessed are You], the God of "Thou" is present to me. While I am aware of the intellectual inconsistency this creates, I can't deny the power of these moments for the sake of absolute philosophical coherence.

Or Rose is the author of two recent books: God in All Moments: Mystical and Practical Wisdom from the Hasidic Masters (Jewish Lights), and Abraham Joshua Heschel: Man of Spirit, Man of Action (JPS).

ROSE: While the great religious traditions of the West have developed elaborate responses to life in a “theistic” world, they have developed relatively fewer responses to life in a “pantheistic” world. How do you think we can live most meaningfully and responsibly in a pantheistic reality?

REB ZALMAN: The first step is the realization that God’s energy flows everywhere; it is how God “gods.” We cannot control this energy; all we can do is recognize it and get in step with it, so that our very existence is in harmony with what is rather than at cross-purposes with it. This orientation should help us align ourselves to all of creation, so that we can truly see the uni-verse: the “uni”—the single tide of energy that ebbs and flows through creation—and the “verse”—the diverse array of manifest creations.

In practical terms, being in harmony with the universe entails a commitment to such endeavors as conservation and preservation of the environment—of nature and the animal kingdom—and a heightened understanding of the organic connections between people across the usual ethnic, racial, and religious divides.

ROSE: What is the specific place of Judaism in this paradigm? What particular contributions does it have to make to the ongoing process of *tikkun olam* [creating a world of wholeness]?

REB ZALMAN: For all of my universalism, I strongly believe that Judaism has unique gifts to offer the world. There are several things that come to mind, but let me focus here on just one of them: the Jewish concept of time.

Unfortunately, most of us in this country have bought into a concept of time as a standardized commodity, and the price we pay is consciousness. What we lose in this exchange is organic time. And the more we lose touch with organic time, the more automated we become. Time as commodity is out of step with time as it flows in nature. The Jewish notion of time is to bring these two aspects of time into sync with each other. Judaism says: sunrise, sunset; six days of work and the Sabbath; new moon, full moon; equinox and solstice. The full moon of the vernal equinox is Passover. The full moon of the autumnal equinox is *Sukkot* [the Feast of Tabernacles]. And the last phase of the moon in the last phase of the sun is Hanukkah.

These holidays come at their organic time, coinciding with the realities of nature. The rhythm of organic time is inherent in all of life. It is not something that exists only outside of us, but is also alive within us. There is an ebb and flow in our energy levels during the day and night; there are rhythms of digestion, and of the pulse and the heartbeat. Organic time is humming inside us. It is one of the many voices of God. Rebbe Nahman of Bratslav [d. 1810] called it “the voice of my Beloved” [a play on *The Song of Songs* 5: 2]—the pulse. If you want to know God, he said, “You need only listen to His voice within. You can always touch your pulse and say, ‘Oh, there You are.’”

ROSE: Having cited the great Hasidic master, Rebbe

Nahman of Bratslav, what do you think Hasidism has to teach us today?

REB ZALMAN: Again, there is far too much to say for one brief conversation, but let me make one basic point:

Of all the lessons of Hasidism, the most important one to me is the imperative to remain on the growing edge of the Jewish tradition. In its early days, Hasidism was a radical movement attempting to revitalize its relationship with God and with *Yiddishkeit* [the Jewish tradition]. The Ba’al Shem Tov [Israel b. Eliezer, d. 1760, the first great Hasidic master] modeled this passion for revitalization in his introduction into Jewish life of the quality of “*mamash*” (truly). While prior Jewish thinkers preached about God, he actually went out and showed people that God’s glory *mamash* fills the whole earth [Isaiah 6:3], and that people of all walks of life can experience the Divine. Conservatives want to be in the center where things are safe; but as with a tree, the center is dead matter. The Hasidim didn’t abandon the tradition, but they lived on the edge, seeking to renew it. We must do the same.

Renewal requires a careful look back into the past so that we know where we have come from, where we now stand, and where we might go in the future. But this exploration is not without risk—there is always a danger of being trapped and tyrannized by the past. People sometimes fall into the assumption that whatever was done back then was the “real thing”; if it was good enough for them, it’s good enough for us. Give me that old time religion! These are sentiments of fundamentalists. When we look back at our ancestors, our aim is not to be locked into the past. We want to use their experience and wisdom as reference points, as sources of guidance. Judaism is alive, and we are responsible for continuing to animate it.

ROSE: Please give me an example of how we might locate ourselves on the “growing edge” of Judaism today?

REB ZALMAN: Sometimes I think we Jews exist so that in every age we will be able to ask our eternal question: Is it kosher? Kosher, as I understand it, means clean, pure, and by extension, good for the natural processes of the universe. The opposite of kosher is *treif*, which means unclean, impure, polluted, and hence polluting. Kosher is energy efficient and productive; *treif* is wasteful and destructive.

In this conception, planetary concerns, and not simply the laws on the books, must govern the standards of *kasbrut* (kosher laws). For example, eggs are generally considered kosher, but what about eggs from chickens that are imprisoned in small cages? According to traditional Jewish law, all fruits and vegetables are kosher. But what about green beans or tomatoes harvested by ill-treated, underpaid, and exploited migrant workers—are these products kosher?

This approach to *kasbrut* is very demanding. It requires us to ask ourselves at every turn, “What does God want of us?” What is the best way to address the needs of the world? For this, we cannot simply look into the codes; we must

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attune ourselves to the ongoing revelation of Sinai.

ROSE: Since leaving the traditional world of Hasidism as a young man, you have explored deeply the teachings of several non-Jewish spiritual traditions. What have you learned from these encounters?

REB ZALMAN: When I was first ordained I felt that all religious *goyim* [non-Jews] were idolaters and non-Orthodox Jews heretics. In those years I still concentrated all my efforts on contributing to the restoration of traditional Judaism in America and the world. I knew that this could not happen by persuading people to outward observance. We had to meet their inner spiritual needs. Having been trained in the center of *Chabad* [Lubavitch] Hasidism with its emphasis on *hitbonenut* [contemplative meditation and prayer], I felt a missionary's drive to share these spiritual treasures with any Jew who would be interested. I sought to share this with them hoping that once I offered them spiritual nourishment, I could persuade them to live a "Torah True" lifestyle.

"Wisdom among the nations—believe it. Torah among the nations—don't believe it" (*Lamentations Rabbah* 2:13).

What of those who adhered to other religions? They were right only in as much as their religions encouraged them to observe the Seven Noahide Laws. Nonetheless, [I believed then that] all but the kernel of their religions was either *Avodat Kokhavim u'Mazalot* [Worship of Stars and Constellations], or worse, *Avodat Ellilim* [Idolatry]. The true spiritual treasures were among us Jews, and even among Jews mostly with the Hasidim, and even among the Hasidim mostly with the Lubavitchers whose *rebbees* [Hasidic masters] demanded of them great inner work, lengthy and intensive *davvenen* [prayer] and meditation on Hasidic teachings.

Imagine the surprise when I discovered, while teaching at a Lubavitch *yeshiva* [academy for traditional Jewish learning], some books that taught me that the *goyim* were also *ma'aminim*, real believers in the living God, and that Trappists also did "mental prayer," and that Hindus had *rebbees* like Ramakrishna. These discoveries and a later challenge from Revered Howard Thurman, Dean of the Chapel at Boston University, my black *rebbe*, threw me into turmoil. "Do you trust in the *Ruakh Ha'Kodesh*? [the "Holy Spirit" or "Divine inspiration"] he asked me.

Here I believed in the workings of Divine providence as Hasidism taught it—*hashgakhah pratit*, specific providence—in which even the fall of a leaf is ordained by God. And now I had to face a providential power that produced a Buddha, a Lao Tzu, great souls who were no less *neshamot klaliyot* [inclusive or root souls] than our *rebbees*. Were they an accidental "oops" of God? What about those Nazarene Hasidim who followed Jesus? Didn't the Bratslav Hasidim [followers of R. Nahman of Bratslav] also believe in a *rebbe* who no longer lived on earth?

My restoration theology started to break down and it

began to reorganize itself on another level. Meeting people like Howard Thurman, Thomas Merton, Timothy Leary, Richard Alpert [a.k.a. Ram Dass], Zen Roshis, Swamis, nuns and priests, ministers, and transpersonal therapists had a bearing on my emerging reality map. I changed from one who advocated restoration to one who instead espoused renewal: an ongoing process of staying at the growing edge of the Tree of Life [Genesis 2:9], where it is both juicy and in touch with my environment. I no longer saw the world in sectarian-ideological terms. I had been initiated into being an organismic thinker, a Gaian [from "Gaia," the Greek goddess of Earth] who is a Jew.

ROSE: And what does it mean to be "a Gaian who is a Jew?"

REB ZALMAN: It means, first of all, to realize that the earth is alive and that each of us has a role to play in healing it. Just as the human body cannot function to the best of its ability without the heart, the kidneys, and the liver each doing its job, so does the world need us—individuals and communities—to do our particular work. The world needs Jews to be the best possible Jews, just as it needs Muslims to be the best possible Muslims. But this also requires that we cultivate a synergistic relationship in which we are growing together, sharing the vital nutrients of our traditions with one another. Our very existence depends on it.

ROSE: I want to close our conversation by thanking you for the countless gifts you have given generations of religious seekers—Jewish and non Jewish—who have turned to you for guidance over the years. I bless you with many more years of health and creativity—*ad meah ve'esrim* ["until one hundred and twenty," the lifespan of Moses]! □

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Old Europe and American Jewry

Adam Sutcliffe

Zionism was born in Europe. The vast majority of American Jews trace their ancestry there, and a vibrant Jewish diversity remains there today. However, in part due to the steady drip of influence from neoconservatives, a reflexive anti-Europeanism is deepening its inroads into American Jewry, not only on the Likudnik Right but across the political spectrum.

The political and cultural rift currently dividing Europe from the United States is historically unprecedented in its depth and shows no signs of healing. The terror attacks in Madrid on March 11—"Europe's September 11"—might have been expected to bring the continents closer together. In fact they did the opposite. The overwhelming and immediate public mobilization in Spain, which brought eleven million people onto the streets the day after the bombings, contrasted dramatically with the quiet and privatized fear that swept America two years earlier. Three days later the Spaniards elected a Socialist government, which immediately pledged to withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq. This exasperated the Bush administration, was immediately criticized by John Kerry, and also provoked bafflement and resentment across a wide swathe of American public opinion. The Bush administration and its two remaining major European allies—Tony Blair and Silvio Berlusconi—are increasingly embattled in their home countries. It is only the support of a range of countries in Eastern Europe, where affiliation with America serves to offset fears of domination by Germany and Russia, that has saved the Atlantic alliance from plunging into a much deeper crisis.

Donald Rumsfeld's eagerness to dismiss the wimpy, self-satisfied freeloaders of "Old Europe" has received strident support from Likudnik neoconservatives in the United States. These partisans have been vocally promoting a view of Europe as an unreconstructed cesspool of murderous anti-Semitism. "The European Union, which finances



Arafat, blew up another bus today in Jerusalem," we learned on February 23 of this year from Democracy for the Middle East (DFME), a web-based organization founded in March, 2002 as part of the mounting campaign to promote public approval for military intervention in Iraq. The shameless deployment of Holocaust rhetoric is routine for DFME: European critics of Israel, they announced last May, "are once again working overtime to spread the kerosene for a holocaust," their "endgame" being to "so effectively dehumanize the Israelis that no one will take exception to an Islamist WOMB attack on Tel Aviv."

This is fringe mania, of course, and it might seem sensible simply to ignore it. (Consider, in contrast, the response when exaggerated or unsubstantiated charges are directed at Israeli policy towards Palestinians.) However, such hyperbolic allegations are now circulating with increasing slickness and boldness, and are contributing to a gradual but profound shift in the parameters of American discourse on Europe, particularly in relation to anti-Semitism and Israel/Palestine. Pro-Sharon neoconservatives try to dismiss discussion of their own influence within the Beltway as anti-Semitic—though Bush's recent unceremonious abandonment of almost all key elements of his "Road Map" in acquiescence to the concessions demanded by Sharon as political sweeteners to his unilateral withdrawal plan from Gaza is very difficult to explain otherwise. The Bush

ILLUSTRATION BY MARIO ZUCCA

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administration will hopefully not be of this world for much longer—but it is beyond Washington that aggressive anti-Europeanism, doggedly promoted by the Right, will have its most lasting impact.

Democracy for the Middle East and its allies are engaged in a ferocious media war, relentlessly charging with anti-Semitism those journalists and news organizations that they deem insufficiently sensitive to Israel's plight. *The New York Times*, NPR, and CNN are favorite targets, but most reviled of all is the BBC. This news source, to which growing numbers of Americans, exasperated by the superficiality of domestic broadcast news, have turned since the Iraq war, is "fashionably neofascist" according to DFME. They demand that it be closed down—a goal that Rupert Murdoch, proprietor of Fox News and nemesis of the BBC, would undoubtedly share.

The specter of European anti-Semitism captures attention in the United States—and with good reason. American Jews, as well as many non-Jews, are rightly aware of the long history of violence towards Jews and Judaism in Europe. The Holocaust is inescapably seared into Jewish collective consciousness. However, as Peter Novick showed in his meticulously researched book *The Holocaust in American Life* (1999), the form in which this consciousness has been expressed has always been shaped by the political context of the moment. In the Cold War 1950s there was surprisingly little discussion of the Holocaust or of European anti-Semitism: West Germany was a key American ally, and American Jews in any case did not delude themselves that their white ethnic neighbors had miraculously lost all traces of anti-Semitism on migration to the New World. In the 1970s and '80s, against an ongoing Cold War backdrop, Novick shows how Holocaust memory was influenced both by American Jewish anxiety over assimilation and by a racially charged domestic dynamic of "competitive victimhood." Only in recent years has this framework been largely displaced. The memorialization of the Holocaust is now widely institutionalized both in the United States and in Europe, and the trend towards increasing cultural celebration of multiculturalism and diversity has dampened Jewish fears of assimilating into disappearance. For the political Right, both Jewish and not, the Holocaust and its prehistory of European anti-Semitism have been primed for polemical use, and are now being deployed in the discursive battles of the new unipolar era of perpetual War on Terrorism.

The rising frequency of anti-Semitic incidents in Europe is real, and should be taken seriously. However, these incidents must also be understood in context. Jewish communities in France, Britain, and increasingly also Germany are sizeable, vocal, economically successful, and culturally flourishing. They are also far more comfortably integrated into European society than most other minorities. The rise of Jörg Haider in Austria has caused unease within Austrian Jewry, but no exodus. As Matti Bunzl has shown

in his recent book *Symptoms of Modernity* (2004), far from cowering in fear, Vienna's Jewish community has exploded into public visibility over the past decade, confidently taking its place as part of a publicly sponsored re-imagining of Austria's capital as a proudly diverse and multicultural city. Haider's populist rhetoric is tailored largely to rural and provincial voters who feel threatened by such post-nationalist cosmopolitanism. Despite his flirtation with neo-Nazism, the primary targets of his xenophobic politics are not Jews, but immigrants from Eastern Europe and Turkey. Viennese Jews remain for the most part very happy living in Vienna.

Similarly, racism in France, reflected by the enduring popularity of Le Pen's National Front, impacts on the everyday experience of resident Arabs to a much greater extent than it does for Jews. Much the same is true across Europe, where the most vulnerable victims of prejudice and discrimination in Europe are non-white recent immigrants, particularly those from the Islamic world. It remains essential to sustain a particular vigilance for anti-Semitism. The pointedly symbolic forms anti-Semitic violence often takes—vandalism of synagogues, desecration of cemeteries—are unique, and constitute a uniquely painful assault on identity and memory. However, despite this distinctiveness, it remains important to understand the recent increase in anti-Jewish incidents as part of a wider menace of increasing xenophobia. Anti-Semitism must be combated within this broader context, and in alliance with a rejection of the cultural and economic marginalization experienced by many minority communities in Europe today.

TIKKUN's recent focus on "The New Anti-Semitism" (November/December 2003) commendably offered a range of perspectives on this phenomenon, from Aimee Levitt's account of her insecurity as an American Jew in Paris (based on perceptions gleaned as a non-speaker of French) to Barry Lando's emphasis on the public alignment of the French Jewish leadership with Sharon's policies. An attentive reader of that edition would conclude at the very least that the existence of a "new anti-Semitism" is debatable. However, the widening circulation of this phrase reflects the success of right-wing Zionists in exporting elements of their perspective to the Jewish mainstream and even to the Left.

There's nothing fundamentally new about the complex mixture of fascination and disdain that has underpinned European ambivalence towards Jewish difference since the Enlightenment. As a uniquely transnational minority in a continent culturally defined by Christian universalism and politically divided into nation-states, the place of the Jews in Europe has never been straightforward, and never will be. These tensions have at times led to murderous calamity, but they have also generated a startling intensity of creative interaction, and have profoundly shaped both Ashkenaz and general European culture.

It is misleading and simplistic to describe currently prevalent European attitudes as anti-Semitic. "Holding Israel to

higher standards," for example—a frequent charge against European critics of Israeli conduct—stems at least in part from a tendency to idealize Jews rather than to denigrate them. Jews in Europe may often feel misunderstood, marginalized, stereotyped or exoticized—but these experiences come with the territory of being part of a relatively small minority, freighted in most Europeans' minds with a bizarre blend of historical baggage and contemporary ignorance. Being misunderstood, however, is far from the same thing as being hated.

European society is certainly scarred by racism, but nowhere is racial division and inequality as prevalent as in much of the United States. (Attacks on Jewish targets also occur in this country, of course: according to the database of the Stephen Roth Institute at Tel Aviv University, there were 1,599 reported anti-Semitic incidents in the United States in 2002, compared to 516 in France.) Violent anti-Semitism, though, is thankfully not a prominent element in the mix of current European racial tensions; and were it not for the ripples of tension emanating from the Middle East it would be even less so.

Unfortunately, it is useful for some in Jerusalem and Washington to view it otherwise. If Americans can be persuaded that Europe is irredeemably anti-Semitic, it becomes easier for both the United States and Israel to ignore European objections to their policies. It is no coincidence that, of all European countries, it is France that has been most intensively scrutinized for signs of anti-Semitism. France has the second-largest Jewish population in Europe—after Russia—but it is by far the most assertive European voice in advocating an alternative strategy both in Iraq and in Israel/Palestine. Anti-Semitism in Russia attracted a great deal of attention a decade ago. Now, however, there's little American interest in Putin's on-going wrangles with a number of Jewish business oligarchs, or indeed in human rights in Russia in general. In France, though, as Barry Lando noted in his *TIKKUN* essay, American Jewish leaders continue to pressure the French government to intensify their already tough stance on anti-Semitic attacks.

The Europeans have never played a significant role as mediators in the Palestine/Israel conflict. In many respects, however, they are more promising peace brokers than the United States. European governments have a very strong psychic yearning to contribute to peace in the region, and they are not subject to the intense pressure from lobbyists that blights American policymaking. For this same reason, however, neoconservatives and hawks both in Israel and America have been determined to minimize any European role in confronting the conflict. Over recent years they have been very successful in this. European-funded development projects in the Palestinian territories have been sapped by repeated damage or destruction of equipment in Israeli incursions, while Palestinians increasingly feel betrayed that

European murmurings of engagement have come to nothing. The crude tarring of European leaders as anti-Semitic has meanwhile undermined the possibility of the development of political trust between Europeans and Israeli and American Jews. This is good for Sharon and his allies, but for nobody else.

According to Yossi Klein Halevi in a recent edition of *Azure* (Winter 2004), anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism are so closely intertwined as to amount essentially to the same thing. This is not a new suggestion, nor is it entirely groundless. America and Israel certainly are often conflated in the minds of those who hate them both. Many commentators have noted that a reflexive hostility to modernity is a common characteristic both of anti-Semitism and of anti-Americanism. To claim that these prejudices are interchangeable with each other, however, is patently absurd—but it's a useful argument for convincing Americans that their enemies and Israel's enemies are one and the same. This blanket charge dishonestly preempts serious discussion of Likudnik influence in Washington, the mere notion of which is portrayed as a blatant sign of anti-American anti-Semitism. It also places all vigorous foreign criticism of United States policy under a double suspicion, guilty of anti-Semitism until proven innocent.

In Germany, Klein Halevi tells us, "neo-Nazis wearing kaffiyehs [Arab headdress] march in demonstrations together with radical leftists wearing kaffiyehs, chanting the same slogans against globalization, and waving the same Hezbollah flags." I went to several demonstrations in Germany before and during the Iraq war last spring, and I saw none of this. I did, however, speak to a number of Germans who, although opposed to the war, did not join demonstrations against it because they were worried that they might be infiltrated by neo-Nazis. Far from being culturally anti-American, the demonstrations I joined were pseudo-American. We sang Beatles songs in English, vigorously applauded reports of high attendance at anti-war rallies in the United States, and generally evoked the spirit of American campus protests against Vietnam. Both neo-Nazism and radical leftist anti-Semitism are very marginal in Germany, though not utterly miniscule. However, there is strong vigilance across a wide political spectrum against the resurgence of either extreme—so much so that fears of speaking in unison with extremists at times constrain the German expression of legitimate criticism of both Israeli and American policies. The conflation of anti-Americanism with anti-Semitism further cramps such criticism, which is exactly the impact that the conservatives who promote this conflation would like to have.

On May 31 of last year, Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida spearheaded a call by several leading philosophers for the core nations of Europe to develop a coordinated foreign policy "in order to counterbalance the hegemonic unilateralism of the United States." In newspaper articles

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published in France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, and Italy on the same day, Umberto Eco, Gianni Vattimo, and others supported their argument. The sole non-European adherent, Richard Rorty, contributed to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* a powerful American argument for greater European weight in world affairs. For American opponents of Bush's Iraq war, he wrote, "the acquiescence of European statesmen in American unilateralism would be a tragedy." America will use "every trick in the book," he warned, to try to prevent Europe from developing sufficient unity and self-confidence to question American hegemony. If Europe does not provide a counterweight, however, then the United States is likely, even under Democratic presidents, to become only more domineering and self-interested in its dealings with the rest of the world.

Over the past year there has been no sign of the emergence of a common European foreign policy, nor has there been any softening of American unilateralism. Most Europeans would welcome with eagerness and relief a new, more responsive and dialogic American administration—but how ready will America be to listen to Europe? John Kerry has pledged to bring the United States back into "the community of nations," and hopefully he will soon have the chance to try to do so, but this process will not be easy. The neoconservative portrayal of the Old Continent as saturated in anti-Semitism will not end with the Bush regime. This is just one of many polemical strategies that reinforce American insularity and defiant self-interest, but it is a particularly potent strategy, and one that threatens in particular to enduringly warp Jewish perceptions of Europe, and American Jewish politics more widely. The simplistic equation of anti-Americanism with anti-Semitism locks together patriotic traditions of American exceptionalism with Jewish fears of vulnerability and allegiances to unreflective brands of Zionism, forming a closed cycle of mutual reinforcement. Such cycles are hard to break—particularly when powered by such a charged force as memories and fears of anti-Semitism.

History dictates that it is inevitable, and also to some degree appropriate, that American Jewry should have a heightened sensitivity to European anti-Semitism. Heightened perceptions, however, need not lead to distorted perceptions. Ashkenazic Jewish culture is intensely European, and much of European culture has been profoundly stamped by Jewish influences. Zionism, in its desire to erase the marks of Jewish minority existence in Europe, has always resisted this. It is also not surprising that in the aftermath of the Holocaust, Jews in both Israel and America largely turned their back on Europe. The perpetuation of this hostility into the twenty-first century, however, has



many detrimental effects. Despite the apocalyptic predictions of books such as Bernard Wasserstein's *Vanishing Diaspora* (1996), the widespread perception that Jewish life in Europe is moribund has not become self-fulfilling; the vitality and diversity of European communities has thankfully prevented this. However, Jewish life in Israel and America is itself diminished by a lack of respectful interest in the complex but often exciting challenges encountered by European Jewish communities as they continue to evolve within the societies of which they have long formed a part.

The most serious peril in Jewish anti-Europeanism, though, is political. As Habermas, Derrida, Rorty, and others compellingly argued last year, an assertive Europe offers the best hope of saving the world from unrestrained domination by a unilateralist America. A serious European counterweight would also strengthen political diversity within the United States, possibly also saving America from itself. Factions in both Washington and Jerusalem believe that Israel's salvation lies in protection by an almighty America, able and willing to impose "democracy" not just on Iraq, but ultimately on all of Israel's neighbors. This plan is already sliding towards disaster. Even the most well-meaning Democratic president will be unable to build a peaceful Middle East—to say nothing of a just Middle East—without harnessing the energies of a broad international coalition. America will need not only European money and troops, but also European vision and political engagement. This is particularly true in Israel/Palestine, where the Manichean rhetoric of Bush's War on Terrorism has been a gift to Sharon, and has left the United States' credentials as an arbiter in tatters.

Those who want Europe to remain either supine or totally marginalized will continue relentlessly to besmirch uncooperative European media sources and politicians with charges of anti-Semitism. These allegations have the potential to sway many, both within the Jewish community and outside it. If we want to return to an international order based on respectful multilateralism and negotiation, however, then it is vital that Europe in 2004 is not conflated with Europe in 1944. It is very easy to manipulate the Holocaust for polemical ends, but much harder to confront this practice. For non-Jews it is particularly difficult: simply to question an allegation of anti-Semitism can bring this accusation onto the questioner. It must therefore be the particular responsibility of progressive Jews, at a time when mendaciousness and brazen distortion reigns in Washington like never before, to counter the abuse of Jewish history by propagandists for continued Israeli aggression and perpetual American empire. □

The Threat to Academic Freedom in Israel-Palestine

David Newman

In 2002, a letter was published in the British newspaper, the *Guardian*, calling for a blanket boycott of the Israeli academic community. The letter's authors, two academics at Britain's Open University, offered the boycott as a legitimate means for the academic community to protest the continuation of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the denial of Palestinian rights to self-determination, and the hard line retaliation of the Sharon government against the Palestinian terror and suicide bombings inside Israel. The proponents of the boycott argued that the situation was similar to that which occurred in South Africa during the apartheid period; they suggested that an academic boycott, along with sports and cultural boycotts, could have a similar impact in Israel.

In reality, the call for an academic boycott has had a limited effect. Israeli academics continue to participate in international research and conferences and they still publish in peer journals. But there is another, perhaps greater, threat to the integrity and quality of academic research and freedom of expression that has emerged in recent years—it is a growing McCarthyism, both in Israel and North America, that opposes any expression of critical social or political thought. This is aimed at silencing the Israeli liberal Left in their critique of Israeli government policy vis-à-vis the Occupied Territories and the fate of the Palestinians. It is a campaign that has gained in strength in the post-9/11 era (in the United States) and the post-Camp-David era (in Israel) as the right wing has grown in self-confidence at the expense of a confused and disoriented Left.

THE ACADEMIC BOYCOTT

The *Guardian* letter urging an academic boycott did have some legs. It spawned a petition which was signed by an additional seventy academics. In the following months, similar calls for a boycott were put forward amongst French academics, while a number of American universities raised the issue of disinvestment in Israel. In some cases, such as at U.C. Berkeley, there was a noticeable increase in anti-Israel

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activity on campus accompanying these calls, while at some Canadian universities such as Concordia in Montreal and York in Toronto, Israeli politicians and pro-Israel pundits (Netanyahu at Concordia and Daniel Pipes at York) were prevented from speaking. Some academics refused to attend scientific seminars and conferences in Israel, while some international academic organizations postponed symposiums in Israel until a later, unspecified, date.

Two cases of attempted boycott achieved prominence. The Egyptian editor (based at Manchester University) of an international journal fired two Israeli members of her editorial board because of their national affiliation. In another case, the British editor of the international journal, *Political Geography*, refused to process a manuscript which had been submitted by an Israeli academic. Ironically, in the latter case, the paper had been submitted by Oren Yiftachel of Ben Gurion University, an Israeli professor of geography who is generally considered to be one of the most critical voices against the Occupation and in favor of Palestinian rights. The paper had been submitted jointly with a Palestinian scholar, Asad Ghanem of Haifa University, who

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL WERTZ

suddenly found himself a target of the attempted boycott. The manuscript was later processed by the American editor of the journal, who made it clear that it was not the policy of the journal to engage in such a boycott, that the editorial board had never been consulted on this issue by the British editor, and that he (the British editor) had acted on his own personal instinct. But following the publication of this story as a major feature in the *Guardian* newspaper, this incident became a rallying cry to all those opposed to such a boycott, including many right-wing Israeli politicians and academics who would not normally have desired to see the critical writings of Yiftachel and Ghanem published in any form.

The attempted boycott brought in its wake a counter-petition from many amongst the international academic community. Within the space of a few weeks, a counter-boycott website had attracted more than 14,000 signatures from universities throughout the globe, including many prominent scientists who, while stating that they opposed the policies of the Israeli government and supported the immediate end of occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian State, equally opposed the attempt to tamper with freedom of expression. Some even went so far as to equate such blanket boycotts with similar sorts of activities practiced during the Nazi regime.

The calls for an academic boycott were immediately seized upon by the Israeli and Jewish right wing to accuse the boycotters of anti-Semitism. The fact that the boycott petition emanated from Europe, rather than the United States, was for many of them proof that Europe remained a hotbed for latent anti-Semitism, even amongst the educated and intellectual sectors of society. Of greater significance, however, was the fact that many left-wing Israeli academics who were also very critical of Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories opposed the boycott on the grounds that it would cause irreparable harm to those who constituted the voice of protest inside Israel, who worked closely with Palestinian academic and human rights organizations, and who promoted joint Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and scientific activities. The academic community was among the first to undertake pro-peace activities in the past and continues to be in the forefront of pro-peace, anti-occupation dialogue. The implementation of a blanket boycott would, they argued, severely damage those groups and activities which the boycotters, in principle, supported.

Overall, the attempts at boycott have had a minimal influence on Israeli academic activities. Israeli scientists continue to participate in international conventions, to receive presti-

gious research grants, and to be invited to universities and research institutions throughout the world. At most, there has been a significant downturn in the number and size of international conventions being held in Israel itself, with some being postponed to later dates. However, this is due more to fear amongst participants of traveling to a volatile area where they could be affected by chance violence (which also explains the almost total collapse of the Israeli tourism industry during the past two years) than to any ideological pro-boycott conviction.

ACADEMIC DISCOURSE IN ISRAELI LIFE

Israeli academics are closely involved in the public and political debates inside Israel. They often appear on TV with politicians. The political petitions which are commonplace in the weekend editions of Israeli newspapers are often composed, and signed, by university faculty. Many academics write regular opinion columns in the popular press, promoting specific arguments relating to the peace process. Notable among these have been Professor Zeev Sternhell (a political scientist) and Professor Barukh Kimmerling (a sociologist) from the Hebrew University, both of whom have advocated anti-occupation and post-Zionist discourses in the liberal newspaper, *Haaretz*.

Because many of these columnists are anti-Occupation and pro-peace, it is common to suggest that most Israeli academics are leftists. The truth is that the Israeli academic community, like any other, is characterized by a diversity of political opinion—faculty are equally rolled out by politicians to show

The political atmosphere in both the United States and Israel during the past two to three years has brought, in its wake, an emerging McCarthyism aimed at preventing pro-peace and left-of-center academics from expressing their opinions.

their support of left-wing, centrist, right-wing, and security-oriented discourses. Independent research institutes not affiliated with the universities have been founded to promote specific political discourses. The most notable of these is the Shalem Institute, funded by the Lauder family, whose attested objective is to promote a pro-nationalist, pro-Zionist discourse amongst its research faculty. Of Israel's five universities, one of them—Bar Ilan University—is a religious university and has a far higher proportion of faculty supporting a rightist discourse. Bar Ilan's BESA (Begin-Sadat) Center for Strategic Studies, set up and funded by a member of the Canadian Jewish community, Mr. Tommy Hecht, has the professed aim of presenting an alternative analysis of events to that offered by the more centrist Yaffe center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University. The Ariel College, a right-wing institute established in the West Bank settlement of Ariel, has been pressing for full university sta-

tus from the national Council for Higher Education, and is supported by the right-wing Minister of Education Limor Livnat.

By contrast, there are two major centers for peace studies: the Truman Institute at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and the Steinmetz Center at Tel Aviv University. Both of these centers promote and support peace-related research, and their findings are often used by politicians on the Left to advance their own specific political agendas. While the "peace industry" has become a major source of funding for research activities in the post-Oslo period, the Truman Institute was a pioneer in the field, promoting contacts between Israeli and Palestinian scholars as far back as the early 1980's, in a period when such relationships were almost unheard of. Until the onset of the Oslo Accords, Israeli law forbade the meeting of Israeli citizens with known members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, which often precluded any form of political contact at all. Meetings between academics at bona fide international workshops and conventions became one of the most common conduits through which Israelis and Palestinians met with each other, exchanged ideas, and created a common discourse. A third leftist center, the Givat Haviva Institute, promotes Israeli-Arab dialogue and cooperative research and tends to attract faculty who are pro-peace in their orientation, much in the same way the Shalem Institute and the Ariel College attract faculty whose political orientations are to the right.

The only organized group of Israeli academics with a clear political orientation is the extreme right-wing Professors for a Strong Israel. Members of this group advocate policies which are far to the right of the present Likud government, including the transfer of Arab-Palestinian citizens out of Israel and opposition to any form of peace accords or territorial withdrawal—even the limited Gaza disengagement proposed by Sharon. Some of their articles appear on extreme right-wing websites, including those associated with the illegal Kahane organization.

The Israeli parliament (the Knesset) has a number of members who emerged from within the academic community. The most notable of these are Dr. Yossi Beilin, a historian, one of the architects of the Oslo Peace Accords, and the recently elected leader of the new Yachad Party which will replace Meretz at the next elections; and Professor Naomi Chazan [featured in this issue on page 23], a political scientist, expert on Africa, and the former director of the Truman Institute at the Hebrew University. At the other end of the political spectrum, Dr. Yuval Steinitz, a philosopher from Haifa University, has recently been appointed as chairman of the influential Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee

of the current Israeli government, while Moshe Arens, former Defense and Foreign Minister and Ambassador to the United States, was a professor of aeronautical engineering.

THE NEW MCCARTHYISM:

The political atmosphere in both the United States and Israel during the past two to three years has brought, in its wake, an emerging McCarthyism aimed at preventing pro-peace and left-of-center academics from expressing their opinions. This is reflected both in the right-wing takeover of most of the main media outlets (often on the back of their criticism of the media for being too left wing and pro-Oslo), as well as in a concerted attack against faculty who express their views in media and other forms of popular debate.

In the past, academic political activity in Israel has had the kind of free rein one would expect in a democracy.

Though politicians have been known to express their dissatisfaction with what some of them perceive to be excessive intervention of faculty in the public debate, the academic system itself—particularly the promotion system—has been relatively free of any direct political intervention (although the lack of transparency in the decision-making process relating to academic promotions makes it difficult to know how undercurrents of political sympathies may, or may not, influence the decisions). There have been a small number of well-publicized cases where political intervention in the process

has been more blatant. For example, specific members of the Israeli academic community who are known for their strong political critiques of Israeli government policy, over and beyond what are normally considered acceptable levels of criticism, such as revisionist historian Professor Ilan Pappé at Haifa University and education professor Haim Gordon at Ben Gurion University, have been targets of much political and public criticism. In the case of Pappé, there was even an attempt to formally censure him for his activities which, it was argued, discredited the name of his university. While the accusations against him dealt with a series of procedural matters, it was commonly believed that the underlying factor behind the attempt at censure was Pappé's outspoken political positions—including his support of the proposed international boycott of Israeli academic institutions.

The attacks on left-of-center views have come from two sources: from within academia itself and from political circles. The critiques focus on two areas of discussion: first, support for what is euphemistically known as "post-Zionism" debate; and second, support for the peace process despite the return of terror to the streets of Israel.

*The calls for an
academic boycott were
immediately seized upon
by the Israeli and Jewish
right wing to accuse
the boycotters of
anti-Semitism.*

In the former case, well known academics such as Kimmerling and Sternhell (at the Hebrew University) and Oren Yiftachel and Uri Ram (at Ben Gurion University) have been at the forefront of the so-called "post-Zionist" debate, which posits Israel as a "State of all its citizens" rather than as a nationally defined Jewish State in which one national or religious group has preferential status. This has become the core of post-Zionism, drawing on notions of post-nationalism as a framework for a critical analysis of Israeli statehood and society. Critique of this post-Zionist approach has come not only from the right wing, but even—in some cases most specifically—from the left-of-center, liberal academic establishment, including some of Israel's best known professors of history, political science, and sociology. This Left has traditionally based its critique of Israeli society and institutions within the accepted framework of the *raison d'être* of the Jewish State, while the post-Zionist critique takes the debate beyond these accepted discourse boundaries. As such, the more traditional Left see their own analytical hegemony being challenged by a younger, more globally influenced, more critical group of scholars.

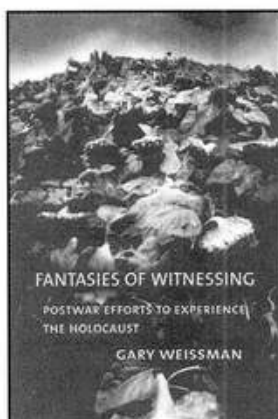
Much of this debate has taken place within the framework of what has become known as the "Humphrey Seminar," a weekly interdisciplinary colloquium at Ben Gurion University. Organized by the Humphrey Institute of Social Research, it attracts upwards of forty participants—faculty and research students—from almost all the social science departments in this university.

The critique of this new post-Zionist analytical approach has been adopted by many politicians, including some government ministers, most notably—and most dangerously—the current radical Minister of Education in the right-wing Likud government, Limor Livnat. She has attacked critical scholars for being anti-ideological and anti-Israel and, as such, has attempted to use her political influence to intervene in the free academic debate which has traditionally taken place in Israel. Some of the younger scholars have been warned that their future promotion, especially their tenure process, could be affected by their involvement in the critical political debate. In some cases, right-wing academics and media polemicists have

used their own forums to "name" the so-called anti-State academics, to accuse them of accepting research funding from anti-Israel organizations (of which the European Community tops the list).

In one case, a young political philosopher and human rights campaigner from Ben Gurion University, Dr. Neve Gordon, was accused by an extreme right-wing polemicist from Haifa University, Dr. Stephen Plaut, of being a supporter of Norman Finkelstein, whose book, *The Holocaust Industry*, led many on the Right to associate him with Holocaust deniers. When Gordon decided to sue him for libel, Plaut subsequently disseminated articles attacking Gordon on the Internet, including on some extreme

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right-wing Kahanist sites. Morton Klein, the head of the Zionist Organization in America, also weighed in against Gordon by writing to the President and the Rector of Ben Gurion University questioning the continued employment of Gordon and protesting his libel case which, Klein argued, was an intervention in the civil liberties of Plaut because it denied Plaut's right to freedom of expression! Klein's letter included citations and sources taken from extreme right-wing websites including the outlawed Kahane organization.

Writing under assumed names, Plaut has a long history of attacking, labeling, and targeting left-wing scholars in Israel. One anonymous article appeared under the name of Socrates in the *Middle East Review* of 2001. He is joined on the pages of the neo-conservative magazine *Azure* by fellow right-wing polemicist Alek Epstein, who has accused much of the Israeli sociological community of having been overly involved in political and post-Zionist critique at the expense of qualitative academic research and teaching within the wider field of sociology. Extreme websites such as the outlawed Kahane site have become full of right-wing polemical attacks on anything seen as constituting a liberal critique of Israel or Israeli government policies. American neo-conservative academic Daniel Pipes is responsible for the creation of a website which asks students to report on any lecturer perceived as being critical of Israel. Pipes' hardline positions on Islam and his blind support for the Bush Administration and its policies, along with his critique of Israeli peace plans aimed at the eventual creation of two States, have pushed him into a position of prominence in the post-9/11 era. He has recently been named by President Bush as a member of the advisory board of the United States Institute of Peace.

This overt political intervention in academic freedom of expression came to a head with a letter sent by right-wing Minister of Education Limor Livnat to Ben Gurion University President Professor Avishay Braverman, in which she stated that she would not be attending the annual meeting of the university's Board of Governors since the university continued to employ faculty who, she argued, were anti-Israel. Livnat singled out an article by Dr. Lev Grinberg which was published in Belgium and which used the term "symbolic genocide" to characterize the Israeli government policy of political assassinations, such as that of Sheikh Yassin in Gaza. This attempted intervention on the part of the Education Minister resulted in a strong letter of protest on the part of the Israeli Association of Civil Rights, as well as a number of petitions signed by Israeli academics, supporting the refusal of university heads to cave in to these political demands. Self-appointed super-patriots in

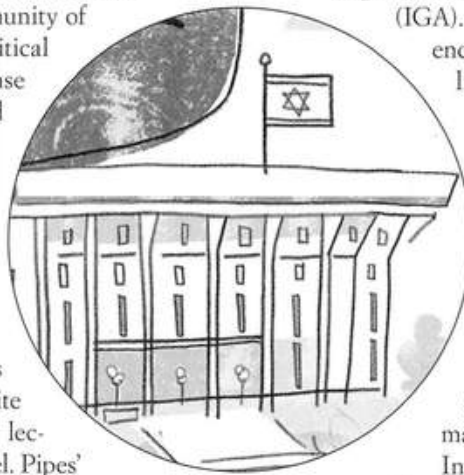
the United States have written to donors and supporters of the university, urging them to withhold their support as long as these "seditious" members of the faculty are not fired. Such pressure has not been applied to faculty members at the same university who adopt extreme far-right positions, reflecting perhaps on the political preferences of some of the more activist elements of the North American Jewish community.

This form of right-wing critique has strong roots. A decade ago, Haifa University professor of geography, Arnon Soffer, attacked me and my Palestinian colleague, Ghazi Falah, for having undertaken joint academic research in the pre-Oslo period. Soffer even distributed a "secret" letter to the Israeli geographic community recommending that we be expelled from the Israel Geographical Association (IGA). In a later lecture at the annual conference of the IGA, Soffer described some liberal geographers as being no more than "pen mercenaries" in the service of foreign interests. Soffer regularly lectures to the National Security Council, composed of the military and defense elites of the country, and is known for his doomsday demographic predictions for the country if Arab birth rates continue to increase at their present pace, thus eventually outstripping the Jewish demographic majority in the country.

In the post-9/11 era in the United States, and in the post-Oslo period in Israel, attempts to silence the voices of criticism have become even stronger. Barely a week goes by without an anti-academic opinion column in one of the country's newspapers. The *Jerusalem Post* has become the home for writers representing neo-conservative and extreme Republican perspectives on Israeli society, with alternative opinion columns relegated to a marginal position or ceased/stopped altogether. In some ways, this is seen as a counter-balance to the liberal opinions reflected in the country's main quality and intellectual paper, *Haaretz* (in some ways the equivalent of *The Guardian* or *Le Monde*). But it has become increasingly polemical, radical, and threatening in the past eighteen months—using the collapse of the Oslo peace process as a reason for supporting the Sharon government, opposing any form of Palestinian statehood, and attacking all of critical, alternative analyses of Israeli society or the peace process. Liberal and critical authors who are not Israeli or Jewish are, more often than not, simplistically labeled as anti-Semites, while others are referred to as "self hating Jews."

Israel still enjoys a relatively free and open public and academic debate. But the forces of McCarthyism are at work in their attempt to silence alternative opinions.

(continued on page 65)



The Secret Life

Linda Zisquit

I go where I love, and where I am loved, into the snow.
—H.D.

Most of my poems begin in the cracks of my life where opposing forces collide, in the tensions I experience between ritual and desire, tradition and freedom. In poetry I am free to play with the material of my life, to use whatever I find that helps me see my way through the disorder to some coherence. Yet anxiety and doubt often inform the pleasurable process.

A magpie is a bird that steals whatever it can. Poets have been accused of behaving like magpies, pilfering and collecting from every source possible to make a poem. Akhmatova wrote, “If only you knew from what rubbish / poetry grows, knowing no shame.” My use of the Jewish sources is like a magpie’s: I steal without permission. While one of the deep confusions in my life is a conflicted relationship with the sacred in Judaism, it is often a line or phrase quoted from religious texts by my husband or my teacher that provides those hooks on my senses where a poem begins. But if the text is God-given, then my pursuit is heretical. This is my confession: I use Jewish texts for my own needs. And worse, I often do it secondhand, taking the spark that flies from someone else’s scholarly interpretation to light my way. As a midrash searches for multiple levels of meaning in the text, I seek through poems to unfold something in me.

I’ve identified with Biblical figures for all the wrong reasons—not as my guides, but to entwine their stories of instability and ambivalence into my secular search for self-knowledge. I’ve struggled at their crossroads to open my eyes and identify my own moral blindness, as if crisis in my life were analogous to theirs, and the material of the text were my free and open territory. Is this sacrilege?

Though Abraham is promised blessings of land and seed, and welcomes many guests into his tent, according to midrash he sees himself as alienated (*ariri*), a restless wanderer, without children or friends. And it is this existential condition of emptiness that, paradoxically, is also described

Linda Zisquit’s third book, *The Face In The Window*, and her expanded translation of Yona Wallach’s work are due out soon from Sheep Meadow Press. She teaches in the Bar Ilan creative writing program and runs Artspace, an art gallery in Jerusalem.



as wakefulness (*er*); it is what keeps Abraham’s eyes open, asking questions. Breaking barriers of time, space, gender—is it an act of exceeding hubris to enter a poem through the lens of Abraham’s inner landscape to view my own? Even here, at my creative center where I am most free, I question the nature and limits of what I do.

I grew up in the United States in a nonreligious Jewish family. I’ve been married to a religious man for over thirty years, most of that time in Israel, where we’ve raised five children. I write poetry and teach. I run an active art gallery. For the past twenty years I’ve also attended a class in the weekly Torah portion given by Aviva Zornberg, a brilliant scholar who has become my friend.

For weeks I have been doing archeological digging, sifting through piles of notebooks of my secret life to find where my poems started. Embedded organically between

LITERARY REVIEW

notes on Abraham, Jacob and the sons of Aaron, I found the beginnings of what became poems.

After Years of Feasting and No Sacrifice

I can see how Abraham answered.
Even the plodding walk up a mountain,
the slow-motion-holding-back
of a soul anxious to encounter
what luminous task awaits it.
After these things,
how could I not have suffered
hot oil behind my eyes,
the smack across my face to wake me?

This is Abraham's inner landscape. His life is rich and full. He has just prepared banquets for many guests. Then he is tested. "And it came to pass after these things that God did try Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only one, whom thou lovest, Isaac, and go into the land of Moriah; and bring him up there for a burnt offering...."

This was also my inner landscape. I had lived a charmed life, with everything I wanted and more, with friends and feasts and no considerable losses. Then, when an important relationship came to a sudden end, it seemed inevitable that suffering must follow such privilege, the way "after these things ... God did try Abraham," who followed the terrifying directives as if in a trance to receive what was his due. Before these things, he goes ahead in faith and love; after these things, with distress and anxious questionings.

Another Fire

It is quiet now.
I can see you
from this spotted land,
free to look
into your face
from this place without hope
where nothing touches me
erased.
Even if you move about
as if I am not,
pass through me as though
I were invisible
and you no longer
remember,
I am waiting
for another fire
to illumine
the astonishing blanks
of our attachment.

At the time I wrote this poem I was experiencing the effects of being cut off: a punishment of disintegration, of losing a part of the self when someone with whom there had been closeness refuses to acknowledge one's existence—a loss of hope. It feels like an absolute decree, a judgment of one's worth, to no longer be alive for another person. To no longer be seen or spoken to. To be afflicted with leprosy, cut off from human society. As Jonah said to God, "I've been driven out from before your eyes." And as the psalmist says in Psalm 88, "I thought myself among the dead / whom you no longer remember." Yet in that limbo some internal transformation enables hope, even if it is only the hope to see clearly what has been lost.

At Sinai, the people experience something passionate. Then Moses leaves and seems to have abandoned them; they cannot wait for him any more, cannot bear the difficult uncertainty, assume he's dead, and build the golden calf. There is something in the act of creating the calf—in the possibility of committing a sin—that has to do with a repression of memory. It didn't take them long to forget. It doesn't take much to give in to an unbearable situation, like the sons of Aaron who couldn't wait outside in the yard to bring in their strange fire. When Moses returns, he is alienated from them. He places his tent outside their camp; they can see only his back. There is power in seeing the back of someone perceived as upright, who is always welcome by God, especially in light of the individual shame each of them experiences.

The next poem, from a sequence called "Unopened Letters" ("A dream which is not interpreted is like a letter which is not read," Rabbi Hisda, *Sefer Bereket*), was written during one of my searches for a sense of cohesion, to try to find a way to be more conscious of my repetitious patterns of behavior, to unearth things repressed that have consequences. In contrast to my personal sense of alienation, the man whose back I refer to is someone I know well, whose uprightness is a constant source of inspiration and challenge:

from Unopened Letters

Because passion is the absence we speak
I am seeking another silence
to trace my transgressions,
step outside the frame of experience,
inform a book with divinity.
I know that dark descends.
As I know the back of an honest man.
From the way he stands he is faithful,
free, face to face (with God?)
A mere back, yet I envy his
connection, so real the projection
of my loss. I stand in my own rejection,
remember what closeness would be like,
and know the faces I've lost.

LITERARY REVIEW

It's not the same as death, to lose someone otherwise. The dead are said to be forgotten from the heart after a certain period. But you can't receive comfort for the loss of someone who is alive. "I'll go down a mourner to the grave," Jacob says when he's given Joseph's bloody coat. Yet there's a paradoxical hope in nihilism—a brokenness and hope; the absence of someone carries the most potent sense of desire's reality.

A Word Before the Last, About Loss

"For I will go into the grave unto my son mourning"
(Genesis 37:35)

Precisely because you are alive
there is no comfort in this world.
Because wherever you are not
I search, and where I hear your step
you have not been or left a mark.
So the roads are trampled by one,
not two. And the past is maimed
by remembering more. Just as
an old man cannot live at peace
clutching a rag of stripes as proof
without a swish of snakes underneath,
without imagining profoundest dis-ease
that follows him—a body
of bones, a soul clanking around—
it is asking for comfort where
there is none, possessing the one
thing alive that has no end.

In 1987 I heard the following midrash from Kohelet Rabbah about the seven vanities that correspond to the seven worlds that a person sees: A one-year-old is like a king, ensconced in a tortoise shell, everyone hugs and kisses him. A two- or three-year-old is like a pig who puts his hands in dirt and everything he finds he puts in his mouth. A ten-year-old jumps like a goat. A twenty-year-old is like a neighing horse, prettying himself and looking for a wife. He marries, a saddle is put on him, and he is like a donkey. He has children—he becomes as daring as a dog to bring sustenance for himself and his children. He ages—he is like a monkey. According to Kohelet, there's nothing more at the end but a monkey's life.

I wrote a poem during the first Intifada, when it seemed that we, a young country, had "grown old before our time / folding our hands / without a smile / or a piece of bread / like monkeys, our faces / unrecognizably human." Later the same midrash came to play in another poem. I was trying

to speak with a man, a painter, to work with the attraction I felt without losing myself to it. I needed to be alert to worlds that I'd already lived through, not to repeat mistakes, to be vigilant. I was also trying to tell myself that in the end we are left with nothing but what we've seen; yet as soon as we look up again, there is more desire, we go on wanting. "She" is the Russian poet Marina Tzvetayeva whom I invited as company in this poem.

from Blue is Distance

She knew what is over
is over only after
it has been transformed.

Not through living,
the cruel tongueless
loss of a man,

or the spell
under which that world
was defined—
but later, at her desk,
the purest return.

We fall through seven worlds
only to keep
our eyes open.
A column, alert.
desire cut back
to the bone.

And just when I am done,
luminous desert
stretched like a canvas
over my past—

I look up from this
whiteness
to see your gesture
across the sky.

Two of my early poems, "Istehar Returning" and "Posit," were written during those days in America before we came to Israel, when I was a young mother with two small children and couldn't bring myself to tell my parents what we were planning, when I almost couldn't bear to tell myself that we would be leaving. And perhaps in these poems I use biblical figures in the more traditional way, turning to Istehar and Rachel for guidance and strength in facing the hard work of separation. I remember feeling scared and ambivalent. And I needed to connect with something larger than myself, to share the burden of this personal decision with demands of history. I needed to open to the idea that the smallest chance occurrences can determine one's direction.

Istebhar Returning

"Because she kept herself aloof from sin, she was placed among the seven stars in the constellation of the Pleiades, that men may never forget her."

—Legends of The Bible, Louis Ginsburg

I seem to enter the world again
from a fixed point.
Memory dust, thirty years,
learning to speak.

Flying ineffable vowels
stretch across me.
If I learn them as words
I will return

to domesticity, to bliss,
to pitchers on the morning
table, children's voices
at the brim of sound.

I watch the curtain rise
outside my window.
Breath must be of angels
straining the air.
What new thing will I touch
and call my own?
How will I know to leave them
when it's time?

Posit

"Ten measures of beauty came down into the world; nine were taken by Jerusalem, one by the rest of the world."

—Tractate Kiddushin

"Ten parts of suffering came down into the world; nine were taken by Jerusalem, one by the rest of the world."

—Avot d'Rabbi Natan

Had Rachel not looked up
Jacob would not have seen her.
There would have been no water,
no winding dream,

no tribe or unrelenting
portion of sadness
dispersed on his land, his Jerusalem,
and I would not have promised

to gather them home. But Rachel
saw him and he loved her.
She was barren and she suffered
and she followed him.

So I have this heaviness
to bear. Her life before him
had also the dailiness of lives,
an hour at which she would rise and go

to the well. Then out of the blue
her future came crashing against her lids
when she looked up, those hours changed,
and I was moved to his, another well.

As soon as I started developing into a young woman, I felt my mother's intense fears for me in the dangerous world where girls and boys meet. She couldn't relax till I was home, even when she knew I was safe. At some point, I started seeing myself in terms of her worst fears. The word *kadesha* (harlot) appears in the narrative of Tamar and Yehuda after their meeting at the crossroads, when Yehuda sends out his servant to find the *kadesha*, the prostitute to whom he'd given his ring and other tokens. That in fact she was no prostitute but rather his daughter-in-law Tamar, a strong woman with a clear sense of her role, has always given that word a positive force for me. While working on translations of Yona Wallach's poetry, I discovered that Wallach had been labeled *kadesha* by critics for her powerful poems exploring sexuality. After my mother's death I wrote a long sequence of poems in conversation with her; I talked to her about things I never could when she was alive. I liked the way "kaddish" and "kadesha" seemed to illumine each other. "Kadesha" is one of the opening poems in my new collection, "The Face in the Window":

Kadesha

Once
in burning summer
on a night fierce with sirens
and still air
I let Rachmaninoff
pound the walls and open doors,
I sat on the step and could not
contain the sounds
to obey her, I couldn't stay
inside.
Through the dark
I drove along Buffalo streets
till the blinking strobe-
light of a man's apartment
beckoned, and not sure
of anything but her don't,
I parked and stepped off
the hardrock of one life
onto the slope of the next.

The fragments of Biblical narrative that feed my poems feel closer to my inner reality and its contradictions than

the traditional cycle of ritual that permeates our family life and pressures me with its demands to prepare for Shabbat, to light candles before the siren and still manage to write a line. Not mature enough, perhaps, to allow those strictures to tame me, still I follow them for the family's sake and out of a sense of their ultimate rightness, but I argue and kick and scream at the confinement. At frustration with time's limitation. And that's where I go to write—to the cracks that result in the walls of our house and the walls of the self. And to the wilderness of attractions and distractions outside that I always see in opposition to the tradition, part Puritan that I am—not Puritan enough to be obedient, but enough to see myself guilty against its rule. My Authorities of Necessity—mother, religion, husband—whose rules I have balked at and bolted from, interact in my poetic struggle for freedom, creativity, and possibility.

Can the Bible be used like Greek mythology, as a vehicle to explore what troubles human beings; to tackle questions of fate and human responsibility, moral blindness and choice, the power of art, divine and mortal knowledge? For me, life and text seem intertwined, illumining each other. But can the text be used as life is, to make art?

After long enough time spent chafing against the strictures that govern my life—ties to my husband, to family, to Jewish law—I come to accept the reality of a life marked by its collisions and divisions, and the weight of working with opposing forces at the center. Much of my work is situated in the space between, and in the company of dangers like compartmentalization and disintegration that lurk there. Poems come out of personal crisis, breaks in the domestic whole; I use the Jewish sources to reach understanding, to find forgiveness through the system against which I judge myself harshly but toward which I ultimately turn.

When I assigned my writing class a "How to" poem, this is the one I wrote with directions to myself:

How to Resist Temptation

Read the notes from the morning's class
On the *Sota*
and the winds of folly that blow through
the secret place
where God is asked to vacate
and no witness sees.
Don't mention it to a soul.
Try to imagine the ink in which all of his names
are erased
and the swallowing
and the fumes that rise
through the mouth of flesh.
Then take a human step
back.

It is terrible hubris to think that *insight can remake us* (Bidart), especially insight gained through someone else's

scholarship. But that's often how I start, or grope to proceed, with a hook from my sources, unschooled as I am in the scholarly procedures of Jewish study; it's where confusion in my personal history and questions about morality and authority take me, in my life and in my work, with all the apprehension and mystery that going somewhere unknown (like Abraham) can arouse. □

THREAT (from page 60)

Voices calling for the trial of the "Oslo criminals" (meaning Shimon Peres and Yossi Beilin) and posters in the streets calling for "Transfer Now" (meaning the transfer of Palestinians out of Israel—a play on the slogan "Peace Now") have become an accepted part of public discourse, where once they would have been labeled as radical and fringe. This, in turn, reflects the way the Israeli (Jewish) public has moved from the left to the center and from the center to the right during the past three years, influenced greatly by the increase in Palestinian suicide bombings and acts of violence against Israeli civilians. The threat of an academic boycott is used by these nationalist and self-appointed guardians of Israeli patriotism as a means of pouring even more scorn upon anyone who would be critical of Israel, serving to weaken the cause of liberal and/or post-peace critiques. Just as it is not easy for an American academic to be critical of U.S. policies in a post-9/11 environment, so it is not easy for Israeli academics to be critical of anti-Palestinian policy following the collapse of the Oslo Agreements and the return to terror and mutual violence.

Boycotting the Israeli academic community only plays into the hands of the right-wing critiques. The fact that a small number of misguided left-wing Israeli academics have supported the call for such a boycott has only added unnecessary fuel to the fire. But what is really at stake is not the limited success of the boycott, but the real threat facing critical social perspectives on Israeli society in general, and academia in particular. It is important that this growing right-wing McCarthyism be combated, that letters of support for the principles of academic freedom be sent to supporters and leaders of Israeli universities and academic institutions, encouraging them to stand firm and not give in to the pressures of the radical Right. If the field of criticism is left vacant for the right wing and its constant barrage of letters and protests, then it will win the battle over public discourse. Rather than becoming involved in an unethical boycott, it is important for left-wing members of the Israeli academic community to be supported, rather than shunned, by their colleagues throughout the world. Otherwise they will become increasingly isolated within a hostile political environment. It is incumbent upon the international academic community, as well as the progressive members of the Jewish community, to be as active in upholding the right of academic freedom as are the right wingers in their attempt to destroy it. □

A Crisis in Self-Identity

Paul Buble

No careful observer of the American news channels, the daily press, or the policy-oriented journals, no listener to National Public Radio or the BBC, and certainly no reader of *TIKKUN*, is unaware that the neoconservative world has entered a severe and perhaps terminal crisis. The sight and sound of William Kristol alone, sweating bullets as he attempts to answer painful questions, is enough to remind us of the thunderous self-congratulations of April, 2003, and the projection of a heroic Bush administration acting like the conquering Roman legions, laying all the known world before it. The "Project for a New American Century" hatched by Paul Wolfowitz, Michael Ledeen, and others is a terrible flop, and with it the claims made for a new global Jewish identity at the right hand of the powerful.

Paleo-conservatives were the first to jump ship; other varieties have followed, so many that Kristol sometimes suggests he and his minions would be better off as hawk Democrats—but without the social programs that equally defined Jewish Cold War leaders and their own pet intellectuals.

Now it's too late to go back. Neoconservatism? In the board rooms of mega-million dollar Jewish institutions, powerful men (and a few women) are saying they wish the word had never been coined. We hear them savaged in the *Forward* (where, arguably, Cold War Jewish liberalism made its first stand), which editorially describes the Bush gang as a "blundering administration with an exaggerated notion of its own powers and a horrifying unwillingness to face the costs of its fantasies" (May 14, 2004).

Thus a vacuum of self-definition yawns, not an aperture but a gulf the size of the Grand Canyon. Israelis are terribly trapped in it, more so it seems with every passing week. But Jews in America, home to the mass culture machine as well as the most powerful nation on earth, will be central to any refurbished vision of muscular Judaism that takes shape.

What's really most needed, however, is an antidote to these increasingly dangerous fantasies of power and glory. *TIKKUN* has been striving to provide that answer, through

dialogue and hard thinking, since its first issue. I wouldn't attempt to boil down that contribution, because the message is no simple thing, and its evolution is ongoing, especially, (from my local observation) with the eager participation of a new generation of idealistic young Jews. But it can be safely said that in the depths of Jewish self-consciousness, reaching back thousands of years of history, exilic and other, a spiritual truth looms large. The world is meant to be repaired, even when those who set about the work are cursed and condemned by the powerful. That task cannot belong with any kind of exclusivity to Jews; but Jews have a special and crucial role in it, if they will only recognize that role.

That's one track. My own work goes to another, I would wish to say parallel, but that would make the relations between the two simple when they are actually complicated. Immigrant Jews arriving in the United States during the 1890s-1910s were not just fortuitously placed to create the engines of popular culture. They had been prepared by centuries in Europe to do just that, for the moment to arrive. If there is such a thing as an essential Jewish-American identity, this is where we find it—not in upward mobility, not in real estate, not in the power of a voting bloc, but in what we call culture. America gave Jews the chance to participate in a society open enough for us to redefine ourselves, while (as Whitman would have said) writing the lyrics that ordinary folks sang as they worked and played, making the movies, creating the comic books, packaging and performing the stage acts, and so much else whose volume alone would defy delineation.

My argument is fairly simple and it goes straight back to Yiddishkayt, the linguistic logic of eight hundred years. Yiddish, the "mongrel tongue" (according to its Jewish critics, urging variously Hebrew, German, Russian, English or again Hebrew to replace it) absorbed elements around it as the Jews of the shtetls and city neighborhoods absorbed goyishe culture into their own popular culture. The "Gypsy" musicians who played at assorted events across the pale and beyond were later on likely to be Jews, as the song-pluggers of regional music in Tin Pan Alley (lamentably including the mock-African American music of Al Jolson) were likely to be Jews. The rabbis might have warned against or even forbidden this kind of crossover. Yet the Jews drawn to popular culture were not to be restrained.

(continued on page 76)

Paul Buble has co-edited, with Nicole Schulman, a comic-format history of the Industrial Workers of the World for its centenary in 2005; a Traveling Wobbly Show will tour to reach young people in particular.

The Bible and Our Topsoil

Ellen F. Davis

In what could accurately be termed a disaster of biblical style and proportion, industrial agriculture in this country is taking away soil faster than it is producing food. We lose 2.5 tons of topsoil for every ton of grain or hay harvested, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is a disaster, because topsoil, like oil, is a resource that is renewable only in a *geological* timeframe. But unlike oil, topsoil is essential for human life. As multiple historical examples attest, no community, nation, or empire has ever survived depletion of the topsoil on which it depends for food. This is a disaster in *biblical* style, because the way the Bible narrates the early history of the world suggests that, from the beginning, poor choices about eating have damaged the fundamental link between humankind and fertile soil.

The first story about humanity uses Hebrew wordplay to establish both the linkage and the damage. "And YHWH God fashioned the human being (*adam*), dust from the fertile soil" (*adamah*; Gen. 2:7). But when the first couple decides to eat against the rules that God has established, they get kicked out of the garden, and even the soil turns against them. The once pleasant work of producing food becomes a bitter struggle against thorns and briars. The first eleven chapters of Genesis, that quick and dirty history of early humankind, is, from one perspective, the story of humanity's progressive alienation from God and fertile soil.

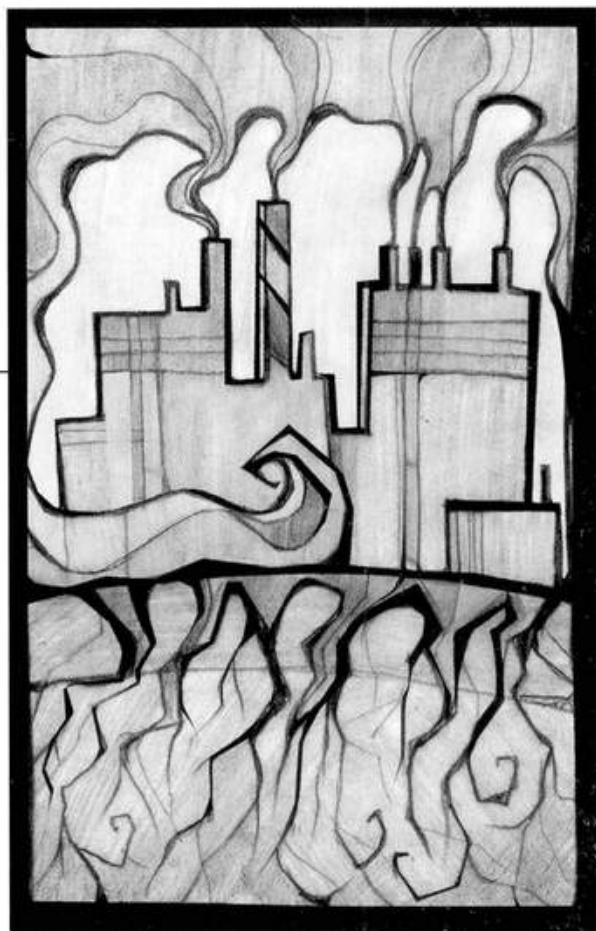
In the next generation, the farmer Cain makes the soil drink the blood of his brother, Abel the herdsman. This may be read as a short reflection on human cultural history. The Bible does not shy away from the recognition that there is an element of violence latent in the practices of agriculture, which began in the Middle East some ten thousand years ago. (Indeed, the Middle East is even now living through the last stage of the struggle between herders and agriculturalists: in Iran, tilled fields have in this generation been laid down across grazing routes that nomads had followed for millennia.) "The curse of Cain" is well known, but what is often forgotten is that the fertile soil is identi-

fied as its source. So the first murderer becomes a wanderer, driven simultaneously "away from the face of the fertile soil" and "away from [God's] face" (Gen. 4:14). Tellingly, Cain is also the first city builder. This is another highly condensed account of cultural history, since it was settled agriculture that gave rise to another Middle Eastern invention, the city. Interestingly, Cain's son and his city both have the same name: Hanokh (Enoch). The word itself connotes training, culture. Is there here an ironic suggestion that civilization as we know it is the "offspring" of those who are willing to commit violence, both against their fellow humans and against the soil itself?

The story of the tower of Babel mocks the great urban culture of Babylon rising out of the Tigris and Euphrates flood plains, which were disastrously over-irrigated even in ancient times. Therefore the centers of Mesopotamian civilization moved steadily northward through the centuries, to escape the creeping salinization that destroyed the soil near the old capitals on the Persian Gulf. The Israelite story makes fun of a people so deluded that they take their eyes off the ground and build a tower "with its head in the heavens The heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth he gave to human beings" (Ps. 115:16). Forgetting their own proper domain, the Babelonians laid it waste.

Against this background, God's assurance to Abraham acquires fresh urgency: "In you all the families of the fertile soil (*adamah*) shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3).

(continued on page 76)



Ellen F. Davis is associate professor of Bible and practical theology at Duke Divinity School. She is the author of *Getting Involved with God: Rediscovering the Old Testament and Who Are You, My Daughter? Reading Ruth through Image and Text*.

From Waste to Wonder

Steps to a Spiritual Ecology of Living

Natan Margalit



There are no words
which, in themselves, are
useless. There are no actions
which, in themselves, are useless.

But one can make useless both actions and words by
saying or doing them uselessly.

—Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz

THE WASTE CULTURE

Not long ago, as I was composting the rinds and peels collecting in my kitchen, my mind wandered to the words of a mystic rabbi who claimed that whenever any event happened in the world, it surely has a reason for existing—that it is up to us to find the spark of holiness even in our greatest mistakes. Those things that we'd like to hide from, tuck away, and forget, he said, must be held up to the light, because there is something in them, some energy which could hold the key to our happiness and fulfillment, that is calling to be redeemed.

We live in a waste culture. Gangsters "waste" their rivals; partiers who drink too much alcohol get "wasted." A recent book by Kevin Bales identifies the shocking reality of the contemporary slave trade as the story of "disposable people."

Natan Margalit divides his time between teaching at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and writing. He is working on a book on the theme of waste to wonder. He may be reached at natmargal@aol.com.

Another book, *Wasted Lives*, by sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (reviewed in this issue), explains how our present economic system makes

classes of people—the poor, the unemployed, the elderly, the cultural "other"—into "human waste."

We take for granted the idea that there always has been and always will be waste. Yet waste is in the eye of the waster. Waste is whatever we define as needing to be thrown "away." There is what we need, and then there is the other, the unnecessary, the waste. We define who we are by what we are not. We use waste to deny the reality of what we don't want to see and feel.

Modern culture has multiplied the quantities and categories of waste. As we vainly attempt to shield ourselves from all contingencies, troubles, and inconveniences, we separate ourselves off from our world and one another. It is time to look at waste and ourselves in a new way.

THERE IS NO "AWAY"

The environment, our bodies, emotions, our history, health, time, and space—all are tied together as part of the garment of light and energy which is creation. According to the radical spiritual monotheism found in Jewish sources, all created phenomena are united by keeping a spark of God; all are manifestations of holiness, even though that holiness may be difficult to perceive in the moment.

This emphasis on the unity of all is the beginning of an

eco-theology that says that if everything is part of God, nothing is “waste.” The idea of “waste management” is that there is a place “away” where foul, useless things can be tossed. The concept of waste implies that something could be absolutely useless, as if it were outside the realm of the holiness called creation. To be outside of the holiness of creation is to be outside of God. In that sense, the very idea of waste as something that could exist outside or “away” from God is a kind of idol worship. Thus, the concept of waste is antithetical to a monotheism that posits an omnipresent God. With this understanding, Jewish environmentalism and Jewish spirituality come together to form an organic and holistic eco-theology moving from waste to wonder.

As I toss my rinds into a makeshift chicken-wire bin and cover the smelly mess with hay, I realize that the same principle which operates in my kitchen-to-compost-to-garden cycle also operates in the spiritual and psychological processes that operate in our minds and bodies and souls. We know that ecological systems work in energy and nutrient loops in such a way that nothing is ever lost. The death of one creature means the fertilization of another; the out-breath of a plant is the in-breath of an animal. In a spiritual understanding of the world, such as is found in the kabbalistic and hasidic masters, every event, every thought, contains a spark of God and has a purpose for coming into the world. Similarly, from contemporary psychology and holistic paradigms of health, we know that feelings and thoughts which are buried in the sub-conscious do not go away, but continue to affect us until they are uncovered, at which point they can actually add to our energy and self-understanding. This same ecological and spiritual understanding applies to the political realm: There is no country that is so irrelevant, so “powerless,” that it can be simply ignored, dumped upon, considered waste. And it applies to the physical mass of the earth itself: There is no place “away” for all our garbage to be dumped. The oceans are not big enough for our chemical waste; the atmosphere is becoming saturated with carbon from our cars and industry, threatening us with disastrous climate change. The world is One, and there is no sense in this dumping on the “Other.” There is no “away.”

THE ROOTS OF AN ILLUSION

If there is no reality in nature or in spirit to the concept of waste, how did it ever get started?

Without attempting to uncover an historical answer, Jewish tradition gives us some narratives which hint at the beginning of the waste culture we currently inhabit. Egypt, Sodom, and the Tower of Babel, all are cultures portrayed

in the Hebrew Bible as being obsessed with controlling their environment. The peoples of these places thought they could conquer death through technology and social problems through totalitarian control. Their economic systems, based on the umbilical chord of the rivers and bolstered with the technology of irrigation and massive building, encouraged their propensity to act like gods. (For a detailed study of these ancient cultures in the context of ecology, I recommend Evan Eisenberg’s excellent book, *The Ecology of Eden*.)

Egypt, for example, is pictured in the Bible as the perverse corruption of the image of the womb. In one verse, it is actually pictured as the womb from which the Israelite nation was born: “Has any God taken a nation out of the innards of another nation?” Yet, it is a womb which will not serve its natural function of letting the infant go out into life, but rather tries to hold on, becoming a tomb. Egypt is like the womb which Jeremiah speaks about in his despair, as he laments ever being born into this world, wishing “that my mother might be my grave, and her womb big [with me] for all time” (Jeremiah 20:17).

It is Egypt’s need for perfection, its need to hold onto an illusion of complete control, especially through technology, that makes it into a place of death rather than life. The shocking example of this is found in the story in which the angel Gabriel appears before the heavenly court and gives evidence that the Israelites need to be freed from slavery: an Egyptian brick has been found encasing an Israelite baby. This image, in which the brick replaces the womb and becomes a tomb, encapsulates the biblical picture of Egypt. It is anti-life, even as its pharaohs, with their pyramids and mummification rites, grasp for eternal life.

What does this narrative have to do with waste? Waste is invented when humans, who inhabit a messy, unruly, physical, social, and psychological world, try to be gods and control this world absolutely. At this, we can only fail. We can only create an illusion of a perfect world, at best a temporary bubble of perfection. But in order to maintain this illusion of control, the unruly parts of life which don’t fit the picture are tossed outside. The category of waste comes about through the narrowing of consciousness: putting that which we don’t like, that which we can’t control, out of sight, out of mind.

We have inherited this culture of hyper-control, and our particular culture in the contemporary United States has honed it to a fine art. Pretending to be gods, we “waste” the rest of the world that doesn’t fit our picture, even as we depend on it to provide us with raw materials, cheap labor,

*Pretending to be gods,
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for our products.*

and markets for our products. Those in the upper and upper-middle classes can count on a medical system that tries to defy and deny death through more and more expensive technology and drugs, even as this advanced medicine is not available to millions without insurance. We eat food with little idea of where it comes from, clothe ourselves with materials made who-knows-where by who-knows-who, and get our energy with the unconscious flip of a switch from who-knows-what coal or nuclear power plant. Our media and “mainstream” culture do not encourage us to look into the sources of our wealth. The opposite is true. We are encouraged to be lulled into a consumer’s haze of TV, media hype, and endless talking heads arguing within a narrowly defined limit of the “normal.” The “normal” culture we inhabit doesn’t allow much reflection on the sources of our wealth or the places where we dump our waste. This comfortable bubble of affluence is itself a waste culture, our modern Egypt.

FROM WASTE TO WONDER: LIVING IN THE PARADOX

How do we get back to a world without waste? The trick is to live in the middle of a paradox: to realize that we live in a world which is imperfect as well as perfect. That is, we must learn again that everything is a part of God, that everything has a spark of the divine, but also that on this particular level of divine manifestation these sparks are often an impossible, unpredictable mystery. We must learn to let go of our obsession with control, and open our eyes to wonder. Living in this paradoxical, perfect/imperfect world takes skill, practice, patience, and knowledge. Spiritual traditions can provide us with some of the tools to move from waste to wonder. For example, one way that the Jewish tradition guards against the illusion of perfect control is what I call the wisdom of “rough edges.” You almost never find a true four-cornered square in the Jewish tradition. The square is the symbol of complete human control. Culture. The cultivated field. The perfectly woven cloth. In a talmudic joke, the Rabbis imagine a “square snake,” and immediately reject the idea as absurd: there are no square snakes. The wild, untamed, and dangerous (but also wise, clever, and mysterious) serpent is the opposite of the square, male-dominated control culture.

In the biblical institution of *peah*, fields of grain are always left with the corners unharvested, open and wild for whoever wants to come and take. The same is true for our bodies—the corners of the beard (called *peot*) are left wild, connecting our bodies and the fields as two fertile surfaces, two areas of expression, areas of nature where we leave our mark of culture. As with fields and bodies, so also, according to the law of *tzitzit*, our four-cornered garments must be modified with fringes. The four corners again cannot be simply square but must have flowing tassels, breaking up the illusion of power in the square weave of the textile. The

fringes themselves are, according to tradition, made up of a portion tied in specific knots, but then the rest left to fly in unbounded freedom.

Someone who knows Jewish tradition may well ask, what about *tefillin*?—the leather phylacteries that Jews wear on their arms and head while praying. These are perfect squares. True enough, but they are balanced by the straps which hang down, like the side curls or the fringes, flowingly connecting the head with the body, winding around the arm in gentle patterns, and forming Hebrew letters on the hand. The square is always softened and modified with something open, untamed, and free.

We are taught over and again in subtle, suggestive reiterations that we don’t have complete control. We are taught that life is better lived by controlling what we can and leaving the rest up to God. This is a basic principle of “waste to wonder” because it is the obsession with control which drives us to create the category of waste in the first place. When we train ourselves to live with the balance of control and spontaneity, empowerment and freedom, autonomy and relationship, we learn to accept the world as it comes to us, changing what we can and dealing with the difficult parts as they come. It is only when we adopt an illusion of total control that we try to hide the unpredictable and uncontrollable from our eyes, creating waste.

ROUGH EDGES OF THE WORLD

Jewish tradition takes the same theology of “rough edges” out to the garments of the world. In kabbalistic thought, the world and all that fills it are understood to be the many garments of the divine. The world only exists because it is clothed in these garments, not fully seen, not fully understandable. We may yearn for the pure light of God, but we don’t scorn the garments—they are our world, they are us.

That necessary covering can at times become too thick, hiding the light too much—this is the *kelipah*, the shell of the world. The *kelipah* is the Kabbalah’s way of understanding evil—the sparks of divinity are trapped within the shells. It allows us to deal with the difficult, ugly, or dangerous parts of the world, knowing that they need to be put away, covered—for a time—but still not thrown away, or given up completely for lost. The holy sparks in the *kelipah* are actually from a holier place than the uncovered sparks, and it is ultimately in unlocking their power that the world will be redeemed.

The principle of covering is the flip side of the “rough edges” principle. When we’ve decided that we invite the wild, the rough, and the unpredictable back into our world, what do we do when it is too rough to handle? Once we know that the very existence of this world involves a covering of the divine light, we realize that covering is not in itself a sin. It is the cost of living in a material world. Covering, or putting on garments, is another aspect of living in this world, not an ideal dream world. It says some things cannot

WASTE

be seen or absorbed or tolerated in their raw, exposed state. But that doesn't mean that they should be rejected as utterly evil and destroyed as waste. It simply means that they need something to wear before joining the party.

The example of composting again provides the connection between the ecological realm and the spiritual. Covering is the secret to successful composting. Trying to save and re-use the rotting scraps of our kitchen leftovers is unpleasant and dangerous if you leave the material exposed. You'll attract flies, smell up your yard, and probably give up the whole project and go back to filling garbage bags headed for the landfill. When we cover the composting material with some sawdust or grass clippings, it puts a separation between us and the smells and bacteria gathering in the composting process. It protects us from the danger, but the compost remains a useful part of our world; we haven't tossed it out of sight and out of mind. Compost is the opposite of waste, but only because we cover it.

It is the same with our inner lives. We have experiences which fill us with shame or rage or unbearable pain. These are driven from our consciousness, covered and hidden, because they need to be, for our sanity. But if they remain covered for too long they will begin to harm us, causing psychological or physical damage. Dreams, therapy, ritual, or simply living life and encountering experiences provide opportunities for these feelings to resurface, sometimes in disguised symbolic forms, when they can be re-told, re-lived, and reintegrated into one's life narrative. The covering process is as important as the uncovering.

On the Jewish Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, we participate in this dance of covering and uncovering. The name *kippur* is derived from the word "to cover." As one friend might say to another, "I'll cover for you," God covers the Sin, relieves you of the guilt. Yom Kippur is therefore a two-way street: our main job on Yom Kippur is to uncover, reveal, admit, and acknowledge our mistakes, failures, and wrong turns. But we are only given the strength to uncover all these painful realities because of the promise that God will "cover" them. They become part of the greater unity, absorbed into the whole, and no longer need to be carried within one's individual personality. The composting analogy is also appropriate here: when we admit and bring to light our sins on Yom Kippur they do not magically disappear. Instead, they become loosed from their frozen, unconscious stuckness. They are uncovered, covered again within the forgiveness of God, and then they go through the process of "decomposing," loosening, freeing, transforming into new, useful forms.

The essence of not wasting is remembering the divine spark within us and within everything in the world. Covering then brings us to a puzzling paradox. Even though

holiness is all around us, when that holiness is overexposed it is dulled, cheapened, and ultimately profaned. Much of our waste culture is the result of this reducing of the world to a materialistic, utilitarian dullness. When the divine spark is forgotten, things, even people, can be tossed away, discarded without a thought. Thus, coverings, garments, are there to guard the mystery and awe surrounding holiness, even as we acknowledge the holiness in everything. This is the paradox that the rabbis point to when they ask how God

can dwell in the Holy of Holies, but also in the whole world. We need the Holy of Holies, hidden behind the walls and screens and curtains of the Temple, to remind us of the awesomeness, the special, ungraspable mystery of holiness. But we must then take that awareness and let it inspire us to see the holiness in the everyday world.

Each of us is a Holy of Holies. We sometimes need to guard our privacy and acknowledge the vulnerability of our soul.

The rabbinic saying is that blessing only rests on that which is hidden from the eye. This is part of the paradox of living in this world: Within hiding is revealing. Rabbi Mordecai Yosef Leiner of Isbica taught that those places where our creative potential is greatest, the places where we can create life, are always also the most vulnerable places. This is our sexuality, but also the soul, the individual genius, the sense of fertility, which needs to be wisely protected, revealed only at the right moments, and not abused or cheapened by commercialization or violence, so that it can bring forth life, the eternal life which dwells in creativity and truth. Like the Holy of Holies, which is the source of life for the whole people, the individual soul, while it sometimes needs to be exposed and seen, also needs its times of covering and privacy to remain holy.

FROM WASTE TO WONDER: PATTERNS OF WISDOM

In these and other ways, Judaism may be a resource for the movement from a waste culture to a culture of wonder. This culture seeks a dynamic balance and invites plurality of voices. If by saying there is one God we mean that everything participates in God, there is nothing which is completely outside of God and we must see how the multiplicity and seeming confusion fit together. The Other can never be completely *other*; it becomes our task to find the proper balance between borders and openness, between covering and light, which may illuminate the whole.

If we have the wisdom and humility to live with rough edges and give up on total control, to deal with the difficulties and dangers as temporary coverings of the light, to learn to appreciate the garments of light which make up our world, and to seek the beauty of patterns formed by those many garments, we can move from waste to wonder. □



Wasted Lives

Joshua Jelly-Schapiro

■ *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts* by Zygmunt Bauman. Polity Press, 2004.

Once upon a time, Michelangelo was asked how he attained the unparalleled balance and beauty of his sculptures. His recorded answer: "Simple. You just take a slab of marble and cut out all the superfluous bits."

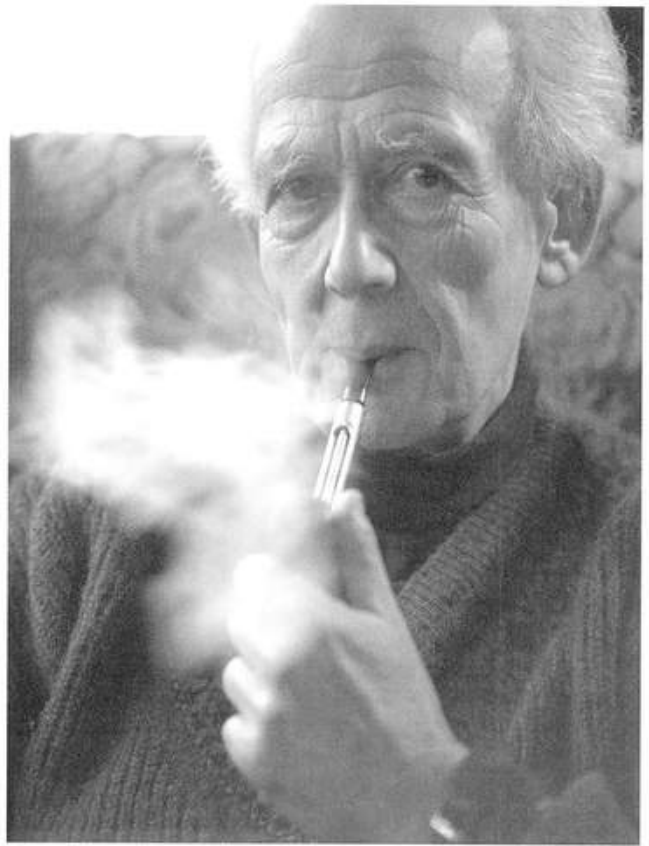
This Renaissance anecdote is related by Zygmunt Bauman near the outset of his new book *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts*. It is presented by Bauman as an expression of the paradigmatic model of creation in the modern age, according to which the excision of wasteful material affords the formation of a more perfect whole. For Bauman, what characterizes the modern is the hubristic belief in the perfectability of virtually everything through sheer human ingenuity and endeavor—whether the raw material is a block of marble, a society of human beings, or an individual life.

The problematic complexity at the heart of Michelangelo's paradigm becomes most apparent for Bauman in the particular mode of whittling down inherent to storytelling. For stories, by their very nature, never tell the whole story. That is, whatever resonance stories hold does not come of their exhaustive relation of facts or re-creation of events. Rather, stories gain their power in our lives by their

considered and self-conscious illumination of some details and feelings at the expense of many others.

It seems clear that Bauman has sought to apply this observation to his own work. As befits a sociologist who counts fiction masters like Italo Calvino and Jorge Luis Borges as his greatest influences as a writer, Bauman has long eschewed the traditional mode of practicing his academic discipline. He has sought to write not so much theoretical essays as social stories about our current world. He has always tried to explore the interstices of ethics, politics, and culture, at once recognizing the limitations of storytelling and attempting to accrete the extraneous bits thrown off by the master narratives of our day to build an impression of a "liquid modern age" which resists easy definition.

As has been oft-noted by reviewers, the essential meaning attached to social theory by Bauman has always been to help human beings make sense of their individual lives, and to envision alternatives to the deleterious elements of our current collective state. Though he is perhaps best known as a



sociologist of modernity and an excavator of modernity's shadowy analogs, his work has always defied easy classification. He builds arguments based neither on statistical data nor qualitative research, but on the polemical logic of his own erudition and personal experience—an experience marked by the firsthand knowledge of many of the most cataclysmic events of the last century that only a Polish Jew of his generation could possess.

Long after being forced to flee the land of his birth as a dissident Jewish intellectual and a proponent of "Marxism with a human face" behind the 1960s' Iron Curtain, Bauman first came to prominence in Western Europe and America for his meditations on the Holocaust (which he himself had lived out in Stalinist Russia). In *Modernity and the Holocaust*—which was a great success upon its release in 1989, particularly in Germany—Bauman argues that modernity itself, with its ever-expanding drive toward technological order, instrumental rationality, and bureau-

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER HAMILTON

Joshua Jelly-Schapiro, a 2002 graduate of Yale, lives in Northern California, where he is a writer, activist, and youth soccer coach. A native of Vermont, he recently returned from a year spent in Cuba doing work on education and community development.

cracy, was at least as much to blame for the Holocaust as any particulars of German nationalism. In the prolific years since that book, the moral question that so informed it has dominated all his work on ethics and politics: What is it about modernity, with its expansion of technology, bureaucracy, and social networks, that makes moral responsibility disappear?

As Bauman himself recently put it to interviewer Madeleine Bunty "The real problem is why, under certain circumstances, decent people who are good husbands, neighbours and so on, participate in atrocities. That's the real heart of the problem. There are not so many psychologically corrupted people in the world to account for all the many atrocities around the world. So that was my problem: people who, under other circumstances, would be exemplary members of society, participate in monstrous things—though it's difficult to say if they become monsters"(The Guardian, April 5, 2003).

Concordant with approaching these weightier questions of evil and monstrosity, Bauman has also devoted considerable energies to exploring the less flashy manifestations of social maladjustment. In this respect, it is tempting to draw parallels between Bauman and Herbert Marcuse, that talisman of the New Left whose intellectual project consisted of unifying the great theoretical universes of Marx and Freud—that is, in historicizing and contextualizing human alienation within the larger arc of human history, and describing the particular character that alienation may take under late capitalism. In following analogous concerns, Bauman has long been a penetrating critic of the self-help and counseling booms so endemic to life in the overdeveloped world, through which women and men become convinced that they can find biographical solutions to problems that are in fact much more systemic than individual. And though Bauman has perhaps never attained the popular notoriety

of a Marcuse in this country, there can be few living social theoreticians as highly regarded as he, especially in Europe. No doubt one reason Bauman has been so celebrated in the academy is that he has been able time and again to make social theory seem relevant to present social reality—a feat of some consequence in a field populated by innumerable left-of-center thinkers perpetually anxious about the political exigency of their work.

Since retiring from the University of Leeds in 1990, Bauman has written even more earnestly of the problems of our planetary present. To Bauman's critical eye, the unraveling of our capacity for fulfilling human relations is indelibly tied to the insecurity (both existential and economic) of individual human beings in a world governed by neoliberal capitalism. In such a

What is it about modernity, with its expansion of technology, bureaucracy, and social networks, that makes moral responsibility disappear?

context, where privatization in all realms is the norm and "freedom" is defined essentially as the freedom to consume, any notion of a public good is increasingly foregone for the vulgarities of private interest. Inevitably, personal relationships are increasingly formed with an instrumentalist eye to maintaining as much "flexibility" as possible. We perpetually seek to keep our options open, forging friendships akin to business networks, coming to fear those very things we once instinctively sought—deep, lasting, loving relations with those in our community and world. The elite of the world, those

responsible for administering the capitalist world system, are always aware that they can both communicate with and physically move to the other side of the planet at the drop of the hat, and almost subconsciously come to blame all societal problems on the refugees, immigrants, and outcasts without a foothold in the system of which they are both the administrators and the most richly rewarded beneficiaries.

This underclass, with a place neither as producers nor as consumers within the present global system, has become the human waste of modernity, and it is to their plight that Bauman turns his considerable analytic and expository gifts in his most recent work. Expounding upon a thesis first sketchily advanced in these very pages(see TIKKUN, Sept/Oct. 2002), Bauman contends in *Wasted Lives* that there are three historical branches of modern industry that have been particularly fundamental to the creation of human waste. The first of these is the "production and reproduction of social order"; the second, the multiple versions of "economic progress" to which humanity has been subjected over recent centuries; the third, the inexorable march of capitalist globalization.

Absolute social order, no matter the particular fantasy from which it springs, is necessarily selective, in that it requires the cutting off, the expulsion, the segregation, the cleansing, of that "human material" which is surplus to its requirements. Here, one thinks not only of those sacrificed to the ovens in the Nazi vision of a final solution, but also of those disposable lives unnecessary to the Stalinist vision of collectivization by force. Yet it is not just totalitarian societies that produce the unnecessary: one thinks also in this regard of the urban poor in the United States who have no place in a post-industrial economy and are condemned to lives in our ghettos and prisons. One thinks of those minority populations in countless nation-states—whether Kurds in Iraq, Africans in South Africa, or Bosnians

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in Serbia—who have been deemed surplus to the forging of the desired nation, and so herded into contained areas or summarily exterminated. And one thinks of the Palestinians living in and around Israel whom messianic Zionists wish would simply disappear, so as to enable the realization of the order that only a purely homogeneous Jewish state could provide.

As regards the waste-creation belied by the phrase “economic progress,” one need look no further than the neoliberal version of development that puts all its faith in “free trade” and free markets. Fundamental to the stability of the capitalist free market is the presence of the unemployed and underemployed, who create the possibility of a labor market that will always favor employers at the expense of the employed. Such a system relies on the intrinsic logic of market efficiency, working to maximize productivity and profit while excising those livelihoods and “parts of human raw material” that have nothing to contribute to the new streamlined order of the day. As all those workers in the industrialized world who have lost their jobs due to downsizing, mergers, or mechanization can attest, this manner of creating human waste is the hardest of hard realities. Likewise those millions in the global south whose traditional means of subsisting have become incompatible with “progress,” and who live in countries where well over half the population survives only by engaging in the “informal economy.”

It is in contemplating the avenues of survival open to such people that Bauman arrives at his third major process by which “wasted lives” are produced. This process is the relentless march of globalization, or the unification of the entire world into one global capitalist economy. The policies of trade liberalization that enable this process have, for at least the last decade, been the most prominent recurring theme in discussions

of “development” and “modernization” across the world. Of course, as recent global protest movements and the collapse of the latest World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings in Cancun attest, such policies have largely functioned only to exacerbate the concentration of resources in the world’s wealthiest countries at the expense of the already impoverished societies of the global south.

In short, there exists a fundamental split at the heart of the current phase of global capitalism between those with a foothold in the system as consumers and those persons who subsist



on its margins. This truth is perhaps emblemized by the manner in which workers in the industrialized countries today are conceived of first not as workers, but as consumers. In the global north, when there are economic hard times, workers are not urged to be more productive, but rather to use their credit cards more. This truth raises the false edifice of the entire system into stark relief, based as it is in the use of resources that don’t exist, fed as it is by the collective hysteria of consumerism, focused as it is at every level on instant gratification rather than sustainability of any kind.

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As the most violent century in human history slips into the past, Bauman’s work serves to remind us that the modern impulse to forge a perfectly ordered society has far too often led to the creation of surplus human populations who must be dealt

with in some manner, most often a violent one. It is the disposal of this “surplus humanity”—whether in the death-camps of Nazi Germany, the gulags of Stalinist Russia, or the underdeveloped wastelands at the edges of the world capitalist system—that Bauman identifies as the inevitable bi-product of all totalizing plans for modernization. Yet far from propagating a misanthropic hopeless resignation in regards to all aspirations to perfectability, Bauman never loses track of his own utopian humanist vision. It’s just that he remains insistent that such a socialist state can never be reached by

coercive measures, whether those entailed by fascism, blueprint communism, or today’s “end-of-history” gospel of neoliberal militarist capitalism. The only source for such a future is our engagement with what he calls the “pre-ontological space of ethics”—that is, through the collective reawakening in ourselves of all those moral instincts that consumerism so often encourages us to forego.

Bauman once wrote of contemporary society: “the ‘public’ has been emptied of its own separate contents; it has been left with no agenda of its own—it is now but an agglomeration of private troubles, worries, and problems” (*In Search of Politics*, 1999). As the public becomes privatized, the lives of the excess are no longer noticed; they, with all their particularities, disappear. The creation of a world in which “human waste” will once again become a moral and ethical profanity requires the reawakening of the very notion of the “public,” as a collective with *public* troubles, *public* worries, *public* problems. It is this shift that remains the urgent and necessary precondition for both individual and collective liberation. Today, it must be clear to all of us that whatever the means we find to bring it about, enacting this reawakening, this profound political change, may be essential to the very future of the species on earth. □

The Kabbalah of Women

Rami M. Shapiro

■ *The Receiving: Reclaiming Jewish Women's Wisdom* by Rabbi Tirzah Firestone. Harper San Francisco, 2003.

Every once in a while a book comes along that changes everything. *The Receiving: Reclaiming Jewish Women's Wisdom* by Rabbi Tirzah Firestone is one of these books.

The title of the book, "receiving," is the literal English translation of the Hebrew word Kabbalah. The wisdom reclaimed in this book is the Kabbalah of the seven women rebbes or sages on whom the book focuses.

The Receiving, then, is not about Kabbalah; it is a kabbalistic text. Rather than recast the same old kabbalistic myths, maps, and jargon in her own image, Rabbi Firestone has reclaimed a lost wisdom: the Kabbalah of women. With a combination of scholarly thoroughness, ease of style, and a wisdom all her own, Rabbi Firestone has released the spiritual genius of seven Jewish women sages in such a way as to challenge the very core of male dominated kabbalistic thinking.

Conventional Judaism and the Kabbalah taught by the men who control conventional Judaism is a paradoxical thing: a male dominated spirituality obsessed with feminine energies. *Torah* (instruction), *neshamah* (soul), *chochmah* (wisdom), *Halachah* (law), *Shechinah* (God's Presence), and *Kabbalah* (receiving) are all words of

feminine gender, pointing to a quality of truth and power that men can only imagine and never truly embody. The irony and mystery of Judaism is that while women were kept from power, the Feminine defined the ideal Jewish man, Jacob-called-Israel, the God-Wrestler, the archetypal Jewish spiritual warrior.

When Jacob becomes Israel he says to his brother Esau, the archetypal masculine: "My lord knows that the children are tender, and the nursing flocks and cattle are upon me I will make my way at my slow pace according to the gait of the drove before me and the gait of the children," (Gen. 33:13-14). The way of Israel is the way of the nursing and the nursed, the way of the wounded warrior, the integrated soul that knows the marriage of masculine and feminine forces within and seeks to effect that unity without.

As powerful a transformation as this is, it is still counterfeit as long as the men strive to be feminine at the women's expense. The Kabbalah of men is abstract, theosophic, and intellectual. Images of the body and human sexuality that play such a central role in classical Kabbalah are symbols for the disembodied and asexual. The men's Kabbalah is a way of letters for the lettered; it is a masterful menu for

people terrified of tasting the meal. Women's Kabbalah is something else entirely: "The woman's way is a communion with the Divine born not of letters but of the tangible wholeness of life. It is a knowing that has long been discounted and neglected... but it has never gone away."

It may not have gone away, but until now it was so deeply hidden as to be all but silenced. That is what *The Receiving* has changed: Rabbi Firestone has given voice to the long silenced Kabbalah of women.

If we Jews are to awake to the presence of God, we must—men and women alike—reclaim Jewish women's wisdom. This is very different than opening the doors of the male dominated synagogue, and phallus focused halls of rabbinic power to full female participation. While right and necessary, this is not enough. The real work is not only to bring women into the men's world, but also to encourage men (and those women who have forgotten women's spiritual wisdom) to follow the wise women of Torah into their world.

As Rabbi Firestone says: "Whole-



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ness and balance are the ultimate goals of the Jewish mystical tradition. Each of the stories of the seven women mystics recounted in this book brings forth an element that has been lost and must be reclaimed for the tradition to be whole. Likewise, each of their lives can teach us about a specific *yichud*, a unification between severed opposites,

such as Eros and spirituality, shadow and light, earthiness and transcendent life. And all of us are working, at many varying levels, both directly and indirectly, to create unifications in our own personal lives, to sew up the torn fabric of our own stories, and the pieces of our fragmented world. Herein lies the key to our healing."

The Receiving is not a woman's look at Kabbalah; it is the Kabbalah of women. By reclaiming the stories and teachings of these seven powerful women rebbes, and recovering the wisdom which they embody, Rabbi Firestone brings us to a place of healing and mystical union. This book deserves to be read, digested, and lived. □

THE BIBLE AND OUR TOPSOIL (from page 67)

The materiality of that vision of blessing is noteworthy. Abraham represents those who understand that God's blessing is ineluctably connected with topsoil; it is the indispensable medium for communication of God's goodness to all the peoples of the world.

This striking account of the world's history and vision for its future could only come from a people like the ancient Israelites—that is, an agrarian people occupying an ecological niche they knew to be precarious. Their semi-arid land was (and remains to this day) habitable over the long term only when water is harvested and used sparingly. In ancient times a growing population quickly deforested the steep highlands around Jerusalem, and the heavy winter rains were always potentially damaging to the exposed and tilled soil. Erosion and desertification were the enemies against which the Israelite farmer fought steadily. The biblical writers

recognize that the land of Canaan represented a fragile blessing. No wonder, then, that in so many places, from Deuteronomy to Hosea to Psalms to Proverbs and more, they cite the condition of the soil as the best index of the health—or the erosion—of the relationship between Israel and its God.

All this is to say that the Bible could never have been written on our own broad and fertile continent. Having such a large margin for error, we North Americans have always had trouble seeing soil as a blessing whose continuance depends on our observing and accepting the way God set things up in the first place. There is an implicit caution written into the biblical description of agriculture as it was meant to be: "And YHWH God took the human being and set him in the garden of Eden to *work* it and to *observe* it" (Gen. 2:15). That short, rich phrase could equally be translated, "to *serve* it and to *preserve* it." Ancient

Israel understood that we are not free to act upon the fertile soil without regard for its inherent character; we are charged to serve its needs as well as our own. Yet we Americans have acted as though our abundantly fertile soil is not a blessing but a birthright, and we have treated it as carelessly as Esau treated his (Gen. 25:34). Like that biblical archetype of the person who has no ability to look to the future, we have sold our "birthright" for what meets our immediate hunger: cheap food.

So we in this country could never have written the Bible, yet a lot of us read or hear or even quote it with regularity. What if we started listening for its pervasive, yet subtle and incisive commentary on our relationship to the earth's topsoil? If we did that in our synagogues and churches—who knows?—maybe today's sad statistics on soil loss would become a hot religious issue. That is the kind of heat that would generate hope for the future. □

A CRISIS IN SELF IDENTITY (from page 66)

How can popular culture make a Jewish identity? Like a spiritual identity, an identity forged by and through popular culture has to be worked on, discussed rather than dismissed the way Jewish literary intellectuals used to dismiss films (until television came along, and "cinema" could be appreciated). Rebellious pop musicians in Israel, at times the voice of peace and of a generation against the power brokers of Israeli politics, supply a bit of an answer. But most of it has to come from our end; Americans are going to

be the key producers of a global popular culture and, yes, Jewish culture, for a long time to come.

I make the argument (in *From the Lower East Side to Hollywood: Jews in American Popular Culture*) that it is at the cutting edge, both of politics and of form, that the Jewish creative ferment is most clearly visible. In a previous column I pointed to Tony Kushner and Harvey Pekar as exemplary at two ends of the artistic spectrum, supposedly "high" and "low" but now increasingly breaking down those artificial distinctions. The creative genius is a collective

genius, and that is perhaps the most important point of all; the ability to see oneself through others, and others through oneself, is another element, one that everybody recognizes in the great Jewish screenwriter or director or actor. To see ourselves in the music, film, comic that we love is something that we all do. To rethink it in Jewish terms is a pleasure that we need to indulge. More observations to come. Reader and popular culture fan, could we hear what you enjoy and appreciate as Jewish culture? □

Culture Wars of the Jews

Naomi Seidman

■ *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, edited by David Biale. Schocken Books, 2002.

As a graduate student at Berkeley in the 1980s, I had a front-row seat for the culture wars that wracked university campuses during those years. At the shrill extremes of the debates, radical multiculturalists dismissed the canon as the writings of a pantheon of Dead White Men, while grouchy conservatives published bestselling treatises piously extolling the "timeless value" of the "Great Books." It hardly needs stating that Jews participated on both sides of the debate; how could it be otherwise? Prominent among the defenders of the canon and decriers of the rigid correctness of multiculturalists were the two Blooms, Harold and Alan. On the other side was the predictable panoply of Jewish champions of various progressive causes. But it was not entirely clear, especially at first, what the ruckus had to do with Jews per se, or with Jewish Studies as an academic discipline. Were (dead male) Jews to be included in the category of Dead White Men? Were we, rather, the multicultural Other?

As evidence of that *Zeitgeist*, I remember trying—feebly—to defend Freud from the grave charge of being a Straight White Man (not to mention Dead) to a feminist theory class



outraged by his misogyny. I would not have such trouble now: While it is incontrovertible that Freud is dead, after the work of Sander Gilman, Jay Geller and Daniel Boyarin, among others, it can no longer be forthrightly asserted that he was white, straight, or even precisely a man.

For all the effects of multiculturalism on the research of individual scholars, Jewish Studies programs remained largely quiet in the face of the Culture Wars. But not entirely: Hillel Halkin, for instance, played the grouchy conservative in a *Commentary* essay entitled "The Feminization of Jewish Studies," a title that seemed to imply not only that feminism had made some inroads into Jewish Studies, but also that these threatened the (presumably masculine) nature of the field itself. Halkin helpfully provided a summary of the "trend" he was

describing and pinpointed its location on the American map: "Heavily influenced, like all the liberal arts, by postmodernist thinking; skeptical of traditional Jewish categories of analysis; ranging from non- to anti-Zionist in its attitude toward Israel while strongly affirming Diaspora Jewish identity; and, above all, openly embracing feminism and feminist 'theory,' it does not yet have a name. One is tempted to call it the 'California school,' since several of its leading representatives... teach at institutions in that state." Israeli literary critic Dan Miron's attack on the anti-Zionism he perceived in Hebrew literary criticism from what he more specifically called "the Berkeley school" followed shortly after Halkin's, suggesting that if there was a trend of the sort Halkin had described, the countertrend was itself beginning to take shape. Most recently, David Roskies published a critique in *Commentary* of the new volume edited by David Biale, *Cultures of the Jews*, in which Biale (who, as Roskies notes, teaches at the University

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of California) is described as conforming to the orthodoxies of the academic Left. Noting “the deliberate use of the plural—Origins, Diversities, Encounters, not to mention the “Cultures” of the title,” Roskies argues that “Biale’s program was of a piece with the worldwide academic trend to unseat traditional modes of scrutinizing the past—including the disciplines of intellectual, economic, political, and military history—in favor of an approach emphasizing the quotidian, the forgotten, the native, and the downtrodden.” Lost in this approach, Roskies writes, is “the value of approaching Jewish history the old-fashioned way, by looking closely at great men, great texts, and great ideas.” Taken together, Halkin, Miron, and Roskies depict Jewish Studies in the Bay Area as a hotbed of sexual radicalism, trendy theory, anti-Zionist propaganda, and attempts to undermine traditional Jewish values.

For someone who teaches Jewish Studies in the Bay Area, and subscribes to the feminist and cultural-studies approaches decried in these critiques, the description of a “Berkeley school,” complete with a “manifesto” (as Roskies calls the essay by Biale on his approach to Jewish cultures), is perhaps more flattering than insulting. However tempting it is to accept the notion of such a “school,” it hardly bears close scrutiny. Whatever the political leanings of my own Hebrew professors at Berkeley—and they spanned the spectrum—we covered the canon taught in more conservative programs even as we were educated to approach canonicity with a critical eye. Biale and Boyarin, to take two central candidates for leaders of the “Berkeley school,” have trained a generation in the rigorous study of what can only be called the “great texts” of the Jewish tradition. That *The Cultures of the Jews* won the National Jewish Book Award for 2003 suggests that Halkin, Miron, and Roskies may be fighting a culture war of their own making.

If Halkin, Miron, and Roskies

present Berkeley Jewish scholarship as more extremist than it is, they also demonstrate that the trends exemplified by “the Berkeley school”—feminism, cultural studies, critiques of the canon—can hardly be avoided even outside the Bay Area. For all his distrust of academic “trends,” Miron has been a pioneer in examining the exclusion of Hebrew women from the literary canon, while Roskies himself has helped loosen the traditional boundaries of literary studies in recent work, subjecting the epigraphs inscribed on the gravestones of Yiddish writers, for instance, to the scrutiny traditionally awarded to published literary works. The rhetoric of these would-be cultural warriors, in other words, exaggerates the gap between mainstream Jewish Studies and the radicalism of Berkeley Jewish scholarship. But why? Does studying the native and the downtrodden pose a threat either to the great men or to their East-Coast defenders? Certainly there are enough scholars devoted to the study of Judaism as a history of “great men, great texts, and great ideas.” Why go on the attack because some attention is also devoted to the quotidian and the forgotten?

Cultures of the Jews, ostensibly an eminent product of the “Berkeley school,” might provide us with an entry to this puzzle. The preface to the volume and nearly every one of the chapters put forward the claim, criticized so severely by Roskies, that Jewish cultures are plural—since they inevitably arise from an interaction between Jews and their various cultural environments. Biale goes further, rejecting the notion of cultural “influence” in favor of understanding Jews as “one organ in a larger cultural organism, a subculture that established its identity in a complex process of adaptation and resistance.” If this sounds radical, it is worth remembering that such an approach is laid out explicitly even in the writings of an old-school scholar like Jacob Katz: “While it is true that the Jewish people can be treated by

historians as a single social unit,” Katz writes, “its dispersal inevitably implies that each section of this social unity was simultaneously a part of a broader gentile society.” Yiddish expresses the same thought, somewhat ruefully: *vi es keristelt zikh, azoy yidelt zikh*, or “as it goes in the Christian world, so it goes among Jews.” If this insight is native to Eastern European Jewish culture, which is generally seen as relatively isolated from its environment, how much more so would this be true for rabbinic culture in the Hellenistic city, or the Jews of Golden Age Spain or Mendelssohn’s Berlin?

If more conservative scholarship sometimes views this cultural interpenetration with the implicit disapproval registered in the term “assimilation,” *The Cultures of the Jews* finds this “acculturation” (the preferred, less judgmental term) endlessly fascinating. And indeed the writers revel in the new vistas opened by a cultural approach, lavishly providing us, in generous detail, with “thick descriptions” of a Jewish world more various than historians have allowed us to glimpse. Even the preface begins not with a broad overview of the question of culture but rather with a close examination of a curious cultural artifact, a small silver casket fashioned sometime in the fifteenth century as a wedding gift for an Italian-Jewish bride to hold the keys to her linen closets and decorated with “three scenes of a Jewish wife fulfilling her cardinal religious duties: separating the bit of sacrificial hallah from the rest of the dough, lighting the Sabbath candles, and immersing herself in the ritual bath.” A facing page provides us with a photograph of the casket, while Biale continues with a tour-de-force “reading” of this artifact that—without dissolving its mute mystery—confirms the ability of forgotten material artifacts to convey cultural significance as richly as great texts. But perhaps Roskies would take more exception to Biale’s examination of the Greek imagery that adorns the Jewish burial chamber

at Beit She'arim, in the light of which, Biale suggests, "it is impossible to maintain the popular conception of rabbinic Judaism flourishing in splendid isolation from its Greco-Roman surroundings." That Jewish women might have imitated their Christian neighbors is a marginal comment in Jewish history; that the rabbis were buried in chambers adorned with "idolatrous" motifs demonstrates how cultural studies might rudely intrude on the domain Roskies reserves for "great men." The problem, then, is not that Biale wastes our time with trivial aspects of Jewish life, but that these trivialities should shed so powerful a light on what both Roskies and Biale would view as the traditional Jewish canon.

The threat to traditional notions of Jewish identity posed by Beit She'arim—or by Biale's book, to put it differently—is less extreme than this example might suggest. As Biale and other contributors to the volume emphasize, Jewish culture is at once a product of "acculturation and cultural segregation." Yiddish, for instance, began as a Jewish dialect of German, but was preserved outside Germany with "ever-more distinctive markers of difference from surrounding culture." And differences among Jewish communities, far from endangering the notion of a common "Judaism," are themselves viewed as part of the fabric of Jewish life. The integrity of and indeed the obligation to fulfill *minbagim* (local customs) is inscribed within Jewish law itself, so that Jewish diversity is recognized, even mandated, at the very core of Judaism. It is also the case, as some of the contributors demonstrate, that Jewish identity could transcend cultural borders, not only through a shared set of great books and ideas, but precisely on the level of "forgotten" folkloric practices; Shalom Sabar's chapter "Childbirth and Magic," for example, proposes that the system of folk beliefs about childbirth evince a perhaps stronger degree of Jewish unity across periods and

geographical locations than even "the accepted 'high' culture of Jewish law."

The battle around Biale's book elegantly recapitulates the problem at the heart of the book: what is authentically Jewish? Roskies argues that Biale and the other contributors ignore what is closest to the Jewish bone in favor of borrowed academic trends, that the volume, in its approach as well as its contents, is evidence that Jews are imitators of foreign culture rather than faithful purveyors of their own great ideas. To put Roskies's argument nearly

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as crassly as Roskies himself does: *The Cultures of the Jews* is not a Good Jewish Book, it is a sad (self-hating, assimilationist, belated) mimicry of "goyish" academic trends that have no place in Judaism.

But the same charge might be filed against Roskies, that the very terms of the argument he is making are second-hand goods, borrowed from a cultural battle carried out largely outside Jewish Studies. Not that his argument has no Jewish roots: the notion that the study of Judaism should occupy itself with the great Jewish ideas (ethical monotheism) rather than embarrassing marginal phenomena (Kabbalah, Hasidism) is the hallmark of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (scientific investigation of Judaism) approach. As most scholars now recognize, the *Wissenschaft* scholars were as motivated by a need to defend Judaism from Christian attack as by "authentic" and "internal" Jewish impulses; that is, the very positing of Judaism as essentially the expression of ethical monotheism spoke as much to what the *Wissenschaft* scholars shared with

their non-Jewish peers as it did to the inner dynamics of Jewish religious creativity. It could be argued, in fact, that the very notion of "great men" and "great ideas" is foreign to Jewish culture, which has more typically concerned itself with a shared textual heritage and practice rather than doctrines shaped by gifted individuals. Of course, from the cultural studies perspective opened by Biale, such conceptual borrowings may simply be inevitable, a demonstration that the very fight against "assimilation" ends up mobilizing non-Jewish tools in its cause.

So why the vitriol? What cultural forces are expressing themselves in this mini-culture war of the Jews? Unlike the "real" disputes over land and political power playing themselves out in the Israel/Zionism arena, the attacks on Berkeley seem trumped-up, a kind of cultural reflex rather than a real struggle of competing interests. What the phenomenon calls for, in the wake of these attacks and counterattacks, is a cultural analysis not of Jews, but of Jewish Studies professors. After thirty years of steadily growing Jewish Studies programs, perhaps these exchanges represent an urge by such scholars as Halkin and Roskies to shake up an intellectual community that has grown too comfortable. Or perhaps, rather, the desire implicit in Roskies' review—to see this loose-knit confederation of academics take sides—represents a desire for community, for the solidarity of an embattled camp, even if the field as a whole is thereby split. Such a development might be useful, encouraging "the Berkeley school" to cultivate its reputation for dissent. If we are seeing the beginnings of a Jewish culture war, I hope the battles will not be buried entirely in learned footnotes and played out only on tenure committees. Perhaps they will help those of us in the academy find a larger voice, and capture the attention of an American Jewish public that Jewish academics have rarely succeeded in reaching. □

TIKKUN OLAM

Sulha

Azriel Cohen



I grew up terribly afraid of all Palestinians. Over many years that changed. The process began with my reflections on the phenomenon of anti-Semitism and the realization that many people with strong anti-Semitic beliefs never had personal relationships with Jews. I began wondering if I too might have inaccurate perceptions about people I had never met.

Today, living in Jerusalem, I often meet Jews who express generalizations about Palestinians. When I ask them if they have any direct relationship with Palestinians, I am almost always met with the answer “No, but I know all there is to know about them.” Outside of Jerusalem, I meet many well-intentioned people deeply sympathetic to the Palestinian cause who tell me what Israelis and Israeli society on the whole are like. Their perceptions are usually far from accurate. It is simpler to put entire populations into the categories “dangerous” and “evil” rather than deal with the complexities of others and the imperfections within ourselves that cloud our vision. Sometimes we hurt ourselves by marginalizing and even demonizing those who could be our most valuable allies within other groups. That doesn’t mean we should be naïve and open ourselves to people and situations that are in fact dangerous. Instead, we must learn to discern between what is safe and what is dangerous based on reality, not based on “stuff” we are carrying with us.

One path towards clarity is the gentle testing of our beliefs through direct experience. Encounters with the “Other” do not need to focus on the topic of conflict, and in fact such a focus can be counterproductive, as it keeps people fixated on the problems. It is vital to develop the capacity to turn our attention towards that which is healthy and unaffected by conflict, both within ourselves and around us. Otherwise we can drown.

This approach is central to several peace initiatives I have been involved with. In 2001, I co-founded

Peace Begins With Myself—a program which brings Palestinians and Israelis to Thich Naht Hanh’s Plum Village in southern France. “Being peace” is seen as necessary for “making peace,” and the training includes how to eat, walk, and speak mindfully.

Another project, The Sulha Way, currently planning its fourth annual gathering this summer in Israel, was founded by Argentinian poet and musician Gabriel Meyer with Christian Arab Elias Jabour. The project is designed to offer participants the experience of being together in a safe, enjoyable context that integrates components present in other peace projects. “Sulha” means “reconciliation” in Arabic; it is an indigenous process used within the Arab world to reconcile individuals and groups.

The Sulha Way blends creativity and global spiritual leadership along with elements of local culture to produce large experiential peace gatherings. About 5,000 people are expected at this year’s three-day gathering, which begins on August 17.

Meyer, animated and intense, explains that the project will “do shiatsu on the planet by massaging its stress points, beginning with the Holy Land. The release of the tension of the Holy Land has the potential to relieve the rest of the planet.”

While much energy is spent critiquing peace efforts, I believe we might benefit from focusing on their positive aspects. There are over 200 peace projects currently active in the Holy Land. Perhaps no initiative will provide the ultimate messianic solution, but each project may be a puzzle piece. Competition prevents seeing the bigger picture that all these pieces might be creating. Together we might discover a synergy that brings about changes no single project could accomplish, but in order to do that we need to deal with our own fears that others might have parts of the answer that we do not.

As each soul experiences the world uniquely, each soul will experience conflict uniquely and so each soul will have unique insights into making peace.

How would the peacemaking landscape look if we were to embrace, in a non-competitive way, every unique contribution to peace?

For more information go to www.metasulha.org. □

Azriel Cohen (azriel@earthville.org) is an artist, transcultural facilitator, and founder of the Dharamsala Ohr Olam Project in India. His exhibition of paintings of East and West Jerusalem is currently on display in Budapest.



Travel to the Holy Land with the Tikkun Community for our

Solidarity Visit with Israeli and Palestinian Peace Makers August 13-20, 2004

It's not too late to come—it will be an amazing week with Rabbi Michael Lerner, TIKKUN Managing Editor Deborah Kory, and some of the most inspiring figures in Israel and Palestine.

Tentative Itinerary for Tikkun Trip to Israel-Palestine

Every element may change. We may not have access to certain parts of the West Bank and Gaza, and new developments may force us to change our itinerary. This is our intended plan—but you must have a spirit of adventure and openness to what will unfold.

Day One: Friday, August 13: Arrival

First night will be spent at a hotel in Jerusalem. We will have Jewish Renewal Shabbat celebration at a synagogue in Jerusalem and eat dinner together. Shabbat teaching from Rabbi Michael Lerner.

Day Two: Saturday, August 14: Jerusalem

Jewish Renewal Shabbat celebration at a synagogue in Jerusalem. Study *Parshat Re'eh* with Rabbi Lerner and Rabbi Mordechai Gafni. Visit the old city, including the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and Al-Aqsa Mosque. Meet with Jeff Halper from the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) and tour with him around East and West Jerusalem. Meet with Machsom to visit an Israeli check-point and observe house demolitions and land confiscation. Dinner with Rabbi Arik Aschermann of Rabbis for Human Rights and/or a representative from Coalition of Women for Peace. Overnight in Jerusalem.

Day Three: Sunday, August 15: Ramallah

Morning prayers in a Christian Church. Meet with members of Ta'ayush. Cross the Qalandia Checkpoint and drive to Ramallah. Meet with President Yasser Arafat and tour his destroyed compound. Meet with Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, cofounder of the Palestinian National Initiative. Meet with representatives from the Addamir Prisoner Support Center and hear about Palestinian political prisoners. Meet with Jean Zaru and other members of Sabeel, the ecumenical Palestinian Center for Liberation Theology. Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.

Day Four: Monday, August 16: Bethlehem

Start the day with a presentation about land confiscation and the Wall. Tour Jerusalem and see the Wall. Meet with Tommy Lapid of Sharon's government, Shimon Peres of Labor, Israeli journalists, and leaders of the IDF. Visit Azza refugee camp and meet the

Mayor of Beit Sahour, Mr. Fuad Kokaly. Meet with Sami Awad and the Holy Land Trust staff, who will tell us about Holy Land Trust activities and non-violence issues. Visit the Greek Orthodox housing project in Beit Sahour that is about to be demolished by the Israeli military. Visit an Israeli settlement near Bethlehem. Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem Hotel.

Day Five: Tuesday, August 17: Hebron

Drive to Hebron and meet with the Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) who will accompany us through the Old City of Hebron. Meet with representatives of the Palestinian Land Defense Committee. Visit the Tombs of the Patriarchs and the Ibrahimi Mosque. In the afternoon, meet with Hisham Sharabati, a human rights and peace activist in Hebron. On the way back to Bethlehem, stop by Ephrata settlement with Ardi Geldman. Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.

Day Six: Wednesday, August 18: Sulha

Visit Gush Shalom near Tel Aviv as well as Yossi Beilin or Yachad leaders. Drive to the Sulha, a spiritual, musical, interfaith gathering that aims to heal and build trust by organizing community-oriented gatherings between Arabs and Jews in their own towns and villages. We will spend the day and night at the Sulha gathering, just outside of the town of Binyamina.

Day Seven: Thursday, August 19: Nazareth

Visit Ain Hod, an unrecognized village near Haifa. While in Haifa, we will meet with Re'ut-Sadaka, an Arab-Jewish organization. Continuing on, we will visit Nazareth and meet with Mohammad Zidan from the Arab Institution for Human Rights. Dinner and overnight in Nazareth.

Day Eight: Friday, August 20: Departure

In the morning, we will get together for an evaluation of the trip right before departure (some will stay on for Shabbat in Jerusalem; others are free to plan individual trips or head back to the States).

To register: go to www.tikkun.org, call 510-644-1200, or email Kory@tikkun.org

*Tikkun (te-kün) ... to heal, repair, and
transform the world.
All the rest is commentary.*

תיקון

THE TIKKUN COMMUNITY



PHOTOGRAPH BY DANA VAN BLAIR

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