

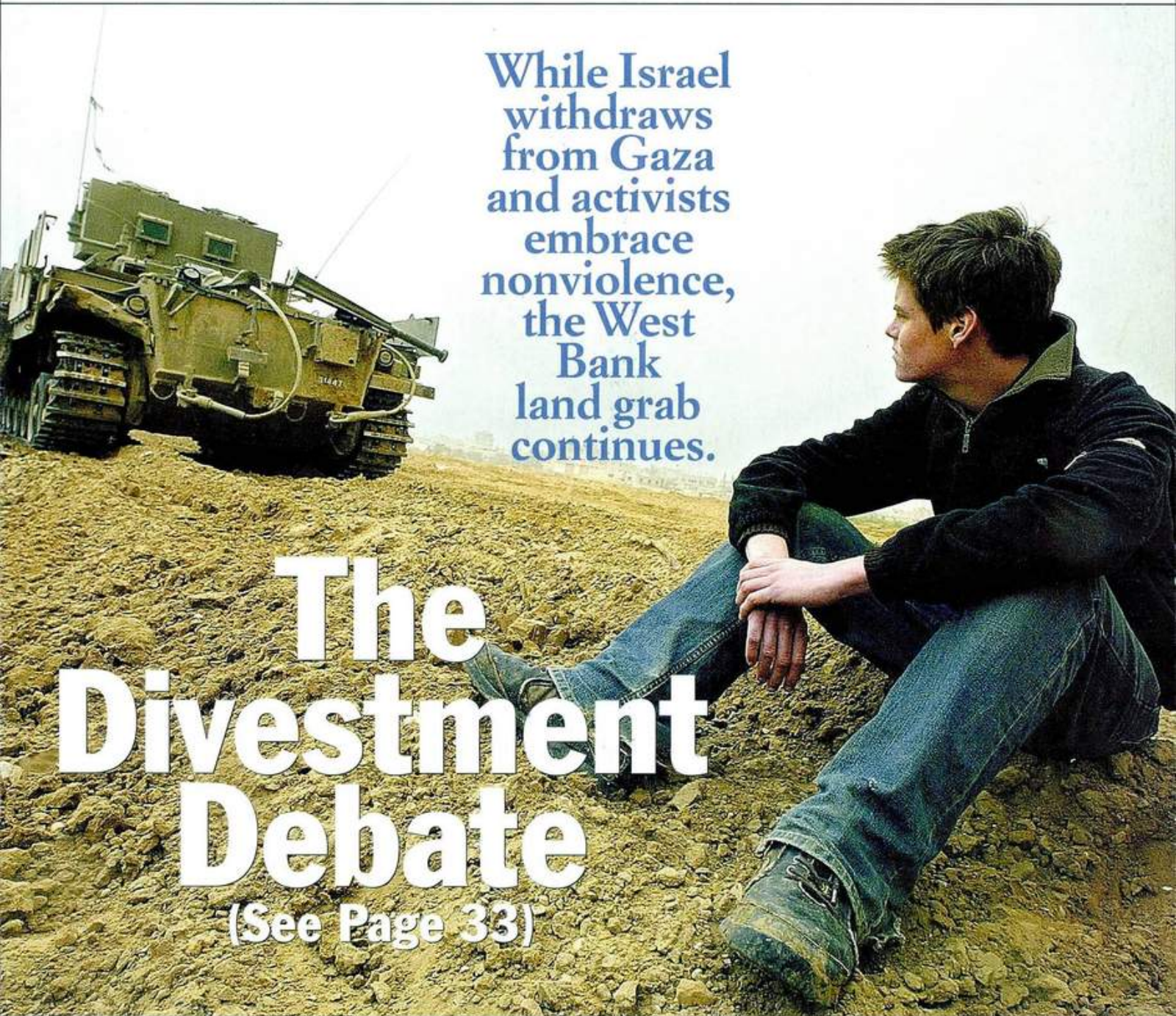
A Critique of Politics, Culture & Society

TIKKUN

NORMAN FINKELSTEIN | Beyond Chutzpah
JULIA BUTTERFLY HILL | An Interview
ZION RIDDIMS | Rastas, Jews & Reggae

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

MARCH/APRIL 2005



While Israel
withdraws
from Gaza
and activists
embrace
nonviolence,
the West
Bank
land grab
continues.

The Divestment Debate

(See Page 33)

\$5.95 U.S. \$8.75 Canada



Corporate Universities | **How Zionism Killed Yiddish**
Suicide Bombings | **Ethnic Impersonators**
Corrupt Kashrut | **Reviews: Judith Butler, Amos Gitai**

Ararat from the Flood

I

now the man in the ash-covered coat
turns again our way, still crowing fire

& now something hovers over the still ashes—
it comes for the dove, for the sparrow

it comes amid the green airburst of spring
while sparrows wheel above the feeder

and in Iraq the few, the proud, are vandalizing Ur,
birthplace of Abraham, poetry, the wheel

as it comes, earnest doves in the streets of our cities
block traffic for a few crumbs of peace

with their block-letter signs and their wonder,
their chants and their heartbreaking satyagraha

meanwhile, the branches, terrible with crows,
are breaking, chance bombs explode indifferently

indifferent, too, the buildings as they crumble,
the pictures aflame on the walls, the birds

II

now begins the sohbet between pulverized stone
and flesh, obscene terror and indecent empire

“lift the stone and you will find me” is what
the fliers of the missing say and say

“I have been away from my own soul,”
said Moulana Rumi, that rapt flyer, his words

still wrapped in the spring winds that arrive
masterfully one morning, vivant and scented

observe this scene: there are mournful symbols
and depleted morals everywhere we turn—

in the sparrows last seen in the lilac's bare branches,
the doves amid the shit and seed beneath the feeder

it is more than we can bear: Paula on CNN,
Black Hawks and Kalashnikovs, Saddam and Bush

today the bushes remain loud with birds:
what must happen to make us change our lives?

—Brooke Horvath

TIKKUN

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

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by Brooke Horvath.
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Sikkum

TIKKUN RECOMMENDS...

HINDUISM: Origins - Beliefs - Practices - Holy Texts - Sacred Places

Vasudha Narayanan, Oxford University Press, 2004

This is a short primer on one of the world's ancient religions—still alive and inspiring to a billion people today. In concise but clear language, Narayanan explains the concepts of karma, dharma, reincarnation of souls, paths to liberation, and the caste system in the Indian sub-continent.



KINDNESS IN A CRUEL WORLD: The Evolution of Altruism

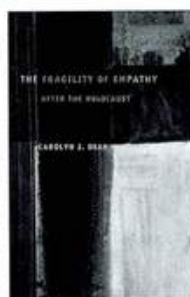
Nigel Barber, Prometheus Books, 2004

THE FRAGILITY OF EMPATHY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

Carolyn J. Dean, Cornell University Press, 2004

A major source of depression in the contemporary world is the widespread belief that we are surrounded by selfish people who are unlikely to care for others. Nigel Barber's presentation of "the evolution of altruism" is a useful antidote to the countless media stories of "bad Samaritans" who don't intervene on behalf of those who are being hurt or assaulted. Without denying the reality of cruelty, Barber gives an upbeat and easily accessible map with which to re-read contemporary social reality—from crime to road rage to child abuse—without falling into despair about the human condition.

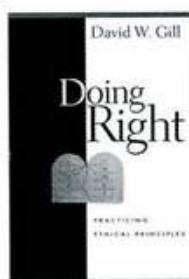
But before we get too satisfied with human goodness, we are brought back to the struggles of the contemporary world by Carolyn J. Dean's contemplation of the exhaustion of empathy in post-Holocaust thought. Dean insists that we confront the dark side of empathic identification: the pleasurable submission to the self-shattering forces of eroticism and desire. The indifference to suffering that we notice in others may be just as present in those who provide the critique of indifference!



DOING RIGHT: Practicing Ethical Principles

David W. Gill, InterVarsity Press, 2004

The hunger for goodness in a world filled with wars, poverty, and suffering finds expression in a revived focus on the individual doing "what is right." David Gill, a Christian evangelical, turns to the Ten Commandments to build a powerful and often quite original interpretation of Christian ethics. Unlike Christian moralists who avoid social context, Gill insists on a world of justice and a God that is not merely tribalist or national. For those inclined to dismiss Christianity as outdated, patriarchal, or authoritarian, Gill's serious encounter with the difficult issues of life will be a powerful corrective—and a challenge to those of us who come from different spiritual or religious traditions to produce our own answers to the difficult ethical issues addressed here.



HEALING THE HEART OF CONFLICT: 8 Crucial Steps to Making Peace with Yourself and Others

Marc Gopin, Rodale, 2004

If only the diplomats and policy makers of the world were to read and internalize the wisdom Rabbi Gopin articulates here. Though written in a deceptively simple "self-help" style, Gopin's insights are powerful tools that have too often been ignored by those dealing with global conflicts. His advice to "skillfully listen to everything, every cue, that may help you enter the world of those around you, especially those in conflict with you" might have provided a very different and far more effective way to deal with global terror than the futile wars chosen by the United States.



SYMPTOMS OF MODERNITY: Jews and Queers in Late Twentieth Century Vienna

Matti Bunzl, University of California Press, 2004

The nation state, professor of anthropology and history Matti Bunzl tells us, was invented in the late nineteenth century as "an ethnically homogenous and intrinsically masculinist entity, a narrative whose cultural coherence depended on the systematic abjection of Jews and homosexuals." Bunzl's study of the emergence of Jews and gays into cultural prominence, then, is also the story of the undermining of the integrity of the nation state. As Europe becomes unified, post-modernity's commitment to diversity has made it easier for both groups to "come out" and affirm their own subjective identities.



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Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

In "The Fear of Gay Marriage" (Jan/Feb 2005), Peter Gabel tells us that "the radiance of confident love turned outward ... will eventually heal the fear of love." Though I have found Gabel's articles in TIKKUN consistently brilliant, provocative, and stimulating, I fear his solution is little more than warmed over 60s countercultural "lets all love each other" fantasies that do not succeed in healing the fear of love. If anything, the fear of love got deeper when confronted with the "radiance of confident love turned outward." The traumatic response it generated on the part of the rest of American society still fuels the psychological basis for the Reagan/BushI/BushII counter-revolution that has brought us the current surge toward democratically sanctioned fascism (e.g., in the form of Attorney General Gonzales, the torture at Guantanamo, the imposition of our rule in Iraq, and the dismantling of social security sought by the current Administration).



Michael Lerner falls into this same error when he imagines that what underlies the Right's victory is something decent in them—whereas what I see, and what Tony Campolo's article in the same issue of TIKKUN made even more plausible—is an upsurge of *thanatos*, the death instinct. It is this death instinct that hates the loving energy of gays and lesbians, energy that must not be misunderstood

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

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as merely instrumental (for the sake of raising children or for the sake of getting domestic benefits) and is really about love itself. What Gabel and Lerner don't get is that this is a life-and-death struggle between love and the fear of love, and that unfortunately love needs something more than love to conquer the fear of love—it needs power, which the fear of love is already amassing and which we are not.

JOHN FITZGERALD

Peter Gabel Responds:

I'm in favor of the loving spirit emerging in the space between people that we call "social space" and giving rise to a popular majority that could win State power and support and the extension of loving energy through legislation, court decisions and enlightened public policy. That was the erotic basis of the legal reforms emerging from the New Deal, the Civil Rights movement—really all social movements that were able to employ what John Fitzgerald calls "power" in the service of love.

But there's no way for the loving spirit to actually emerge and win State power

except by its own radiance outward—that is, by ricocheting from person to person based on its own moral authenticity and its capacity to generate a common confidence that what we all really long for is precisely the mutual recognition, affirmation, and validation that is carried by this love itself. Furthermore, without the felt presence of this loving energy and this fundamental devotion to the well-being of the Other (or better, of each other), social reforms backed by State power are soon perceived as just bureaucratic regulations that interfere with the free operation of a self-interested market, a nuisance to be "gotten off of our backs" so we can pursue our fearful, individualistic destinies.

The only power that can defeat fear is the power of love itself expressing itself in a social movement of humanity, and that social movement, when it arises as it has repeatedly done throughout history, by its own presence tends to emulsify fear—first in ourselves and then outward in concentric circles to good-hearted people everywhere who are always secretly hoping that a loving world is possible and who are touched by a public movement that confirms their hope. It's true—as in the case of

the Reagan/Bush I/Bush II reaction against the 60s—that such movements also paradoxically heighten the fear within us and inflame the most fearful among us. And it's also true that love has yet to find the path that can allow it to win out in real history—so far, it's eventually been defeated every time.

But that's what TIKKUN and spiritual politics is about—creating a new link between the political development of community and an explicitly expressed and understood manifestation of our spiritual connectedness that affirms that human fulfillment through loving affirmation is itself a central objective of transformative politics (i.e., that it's not just the economy, stupid). Prior social movements have not understood this well, and so have tended to create a kind of erotic panic, based on a terror of humiliation, that corrodes the movement from within and plays into the hands of the most fearful (outside the movement) who want to crush the movement at any cost. What we're about in TIKKUN is advancing the effort to improve our capacity to manifest in historical reality, with ever increasing confidence, a movement toward each other that more

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We're looking for interns for the summer and beyond to help with Tikkun Magazine and the Tikkun Community at Tikkun's National Office in Berkeley, California.

Interns can learn and do Tikkun Olam (Healing and Repairing the World) at Tikkun in many ways. You can help with:

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Building the business and publishing dimensions of the magazine, including advertising, promotion, printing, distribution, public relations.

Growing the Tikkun Community through development, outreach, and events locally, to our national community, and to college students.

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LETTERS

successfully overcomes the legacy of fear that we call alienation and more consciously releases the spontaneous longing for authentic recognition and love that is always trying to ricochet into existence if it can sense a safe way of doing so. It's not "power over" but "healing through" that is the work of love upon the fear of love.

To the Editor:

Tony Campolo's "The Ideological Roots of Christian Zionism" (Jan/Feb 2005) gave me a much deeper appreciation of the dangers and obstacles that face liberal and progressive movements in the United States—not only in changing U.S. policy toward Israel, but in getting the U.S. to take seriously the environmental threat that our global capitalist system has helped create. I was on the verge of despair until I realized that the very existence of this author, himself an evangelical, but a progressive evangelical (I didn't even know that they existed!), was a reason for great hope.

SANDRA KATZ
New York City

To the Editor:

George Vradenburg's "Reforming Capitalism" (Jan/Feb 2005) captures precisely where I am in my own thinking. Vradenburg wants the kind of powerful reforms that TIKKUN calls for—including a serious move for a New Bottom Line in the economy. Yet at the same time he describes himself as a strong supporter of corporate capitalism, and insists that the New Bottom Line is consistent with progressive thinking within the corporate community itself. I know that there are a handful of progressive capitalists, but as far as I can see, very few would agree with the notion that when push comes to shove and people have to make a decision about what policy to follow, they should try to maximize love and caring more than corporate profits.

Does Vradenburg know any corporations that are willing to operate by a New Bottom Line of this sort? Or that would be willing to support TIKKUN's Social Responsibility Amendment? I'd sure like to meet them! I've been in the financial world for twenty-seven years, and I don't know many of my colleagues who think this way. More of them should be reading TIKKUN, I wager.

SANFORD LEVINE
Los Angeles, CA.

To the Editor:

I am in deepest agreement with you concerning the contemporary need for rekindling a religious/spiritual Left. I say rekindling because prior to the emergence of the Tikkun Community, I was among those who increasingly believed that the religious Left was the only meaningful Left remaining.

Some years ago I read in a *Nation* article a comment ascribed to Richard Nixon, from the early 1970s. He observed that America had a spiritual hunger, and whoever could feed that hunger would gain the hearts and minds of the citizenry. While I never considered RMN particularly prescient, his comment turned out to be a prophecy that is being fulfilled. The Jerry Falwells, Pat Robertsons, Ralph Reeds, Focus on the Family, Concerned Women for America, and others who have emerged over the past twenty-five years are not flukes.

Nature does abhor a vacuum and is indifferent to whatever may fill it. I would like to participate in the conversations about how not to be dismissive of the religious Right, and instead acknowledge the ways in which they actually have attended to America's spiritual hunger.

FRANCES WOOD
Atlanta, Georgia

To the Editor:

It seems obvious to me that we don't need more religion in politics but less. What we really need is a greater emphasis on ethics and morality in politics without religion and spirituality (whatever people think they really are) being involved. Such a secular stand, I believe, could attract many more voters to [candidates who promote] progressive individual and community values.

JON MOE

To the Editor:

The last thing in the world we need is a religious Left. We need a rational Jewish Left that relates to our prophetic tradition, but to call it "religious" is to already destroy it. "Religion" is the opiate of the people. It always has been and always will be. We need a morality based on our culture and our tradition (the radicalism of Jewish workers.) Once you inject "religion" into it, it's only more voodoo, more empty promises, more New Age blather.

The Enlightenment freed Jews from

the burdens of the medieval world and gave them the first promise of a secular life and a secular interpretation of their heritage. To throw it out because the settlers in the West Bank, hiding behind religion, are threatening Israel with civil war and Bush is threatening America with Armageddon is to capitulate to the darkness within.

We will never win the fight on their turf because we are neither hypocrites nor haters, neither bigots nor crusaders. I am glad I am part of the "reality-based" crowd. There's idealism I can relate to and good works, but to dress it up in the sanctimoniousness of religion is balderdash.

I have always marched with Jews, and I never ask them about their "religion." I am happy to share just being Jewish with them. As far as I am concerned, when it comes to incantations and holding hands—"fahgeddabout it," as they say in New York.

SILVIA TENNENBAUM

To the Editor:

Thank you for your wonderful insight. I've read plenty of op-ed pieces "Monday morning quarterbacking" what went wrong on November 2. Some I agree with and some I don't. You hit upon a core flaw in the Democratic Party mindset, and I sincerely hope they listen.

The first Democrat that came to mind upon reading your piece was Jimmy Carter, the first "born again" President and, ironically enough, a Democrat. Unlike the militaristic, hateful, narrow-minded thugs currently identified with the Christian far Right, here was an evangelical who truly practiced what he preached.

MARK GRUDZINSKI
Chicago, IL

To the Editor:

I take exception to your assertion that the Left dismisses spirituality! That is a gross generalization. Almost everyone I associate with is certainly left of center and almost without exception belongs to a synagogue or another other place of worship. Only atheists and maybe some affirmed agnostics might dismiss a spiritual side to life. Maybe John Kerry could have made some of the points you suggested, but I don't think that would have been a turn-off to any Democrat or anyone else wanting to rid this country of Bush.

SUSAN LEININGER

An Inaugural Call for Freedom

George Vradenburg

President Bush has issued an inspiring call to support the growth of democratic movements in every nation and to end tyranny throughout the world.

The cynics and so-called realists will snicker and contrast the reality of tyranny in many countries with the soaring idealism of this second inaugural address. Some will no doubt say that the President is being deceitful or perverting the language of freedom to



our challenge is to hold him to his words. This inaugural address has set a standard—a high standard—against which this Administration's second-term policies can and should be measured.

There are three very visible, immediate steps the President could take to demonstrate the seriousness of his efforts.

First, he could explicitly implement a policy not to sanction the use of tor-

The Inauguration

Michael Lerner

For those of us raised on dystopian novels such as George Orwell's *1984* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, President George W. Bush's second annual inaugural address sounded eerily familiar. Calling for an expansion of freedom and liberty, an end to oppression and tyranny, and putting the common good above individual needs, Bush used words that were the legacy of the 1960s to mask policies that seek to increase American economic and political power, justify wars that have killed tens of thousands of innocents, shower the wealthy with tax breaks while dismantling what's left of the welfare state, undermine the basic civil liberties guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, expand the use of torture, and further erode environmental protections. The Vietnam War experience of bombing the village to "save it" from the Communists now has expanded to virtually leveling an entire modern city (Falluja), killing thousands of people and making a hundred thousand more into refugees to protect Iraq from its own Sunni inhabitants who are now labeled insurgents because of their refusal to accept the American imposed regime.

There's a reasonable debate about how to assess this deceitful use of language. On the one hand, one might argue that Bush empties the meaning from words sanctified by generations of struggle, thus disempowering the American people. On the other hand, one might argue that in affirming concepts whose liberatory potential remains strong, Bush has created a common framework from which critique of his policies can more successfully emerge. This is not the crude fascism of Nazi totalitarianism, but rather a smooth appropriation of some of the best ideas of social democratic ideology, employed on behalf of authoritarian ends.

It's no longer just religion that can be appropriated to use the language of love in the service of hatred and oppression. Bush shows how any progressive ideal can similarly be used as political cover for policies that destroy the values for which generations of Americans have fought and sometimes died.

Yet our task has to go beyond outrage at this perversion of language.

The anti-war movement—along with the greater American Left—should be carefully nuanced in our critique of the U.S. occupation of Iraq. However correct our criticisms of the ineffectiveness of military intervention are—the stupidity of unilateralism, the brutality of America's killing of tens of thousands of Iraqis, the lies about weapons of mass destruction that manipulated Americans into going to war—it's hard to deny the fundamental value of replacing a regime based on power with a regime based in part on democratic

process. But in Iraq we see the perversion of democratic process, when democracy is put in place to mask a military occupation, economic exploitation, and the mobilization of the Shi'ite majority while bombing into oblivion the homes of the Sunni minority.

This highlights the limits of formal democracy—as though elections are the highest goal of human life. They are not.

The reason we are passionate supporters of democracy is that it normally encourages the self-realization of human beings, allowing us to be more fully the highest manifestation of our capacities to be loving, conscious, self-determining, and cooperative beings. This is the substantive aim of democratic process. It is time for us to champion these substantive goals, rather than to allow democratic forms to be used in the service of subversion of what democracy is meant to promote.

Love, generosity, and open-heartedness *now*! Without ever compromising on our firm commitment to democracy, free speech, and elections, it is time to make clear that our movement cannot be only about self-determination, as though any possible outcome would be fine with us as long as it was arrived at through elections. Rather, our ethical commitment not only includes but goes beyond democratic processes and leads us to fight for a world based on loving and caring for all, which can be measured in four specific ways by:

- the degree to which we can ensure that everyone has enough food, clothing, shelter, education and healthcare, employment, relaxation, intellectual and cultural stimulation, and retirement;
- the degree to which we communicate recognition of the uniqueness of each individual and foster his or her own special talents, capacities for wisdom and pleasure, and ability to care for others;
- the degree to which we use our natural resources in ways that equally satisfy the needs of everyone *and* preserve the environment;
- how effectively we can transcend nationalisms and ethnic rivalries and recognize that our own well-being and that of our own country depends on the well-being of everyone on the planet. The Unity of All Being *now*!

Ethical and Spiritual Values Ought to Be Paramount

We seek a purpose for our lives that transcends money and material well-being and roots our lives in a higher meaning. We want a world in which human hubris is checked by a new humility, where utilitarian attitudes are



balanced by a profound awe and wonder at the grandeur of creation. We want a society with a New Bottom Line of love and caring, ethical and ecological sensitivity, reverence for the sanctity of being, and joyful thanksgiving for everything with which we have been blessed. Nonviolence, kindness, and compassion are the indispensable and concrete means to achieve the world we seek. Forgiveness of the transgressions of others, an empathic understanding of people's needs, and a commitment to finding ways to fulfill them are the only acceptable building blocks for this forthcoming society.

President Bush said that the source of our vulnerability lies in regions of the world in which resentments simmer and are susceptible to ideologies which feed hatred and excuse murder, and that this can only be cured by the force of human freedom. But when Bush's concept of freedom means the deeper penetration of the global economy by Western capitalist and materialist values, with their ethos of selfishness and materialism, the resentments will only grow deeper.

The only way to protect America is to first eliminate global poverty and inadequate education and healthcare (we call for a Global Marshall Plan dedicating 5 percent of the GNP of the advanced industrial societies for the next twenty years), to replace individual self-interest with a New Bottom Line of caring and love, to develop an international plan to reverse the destruction of the environment, and to foster a spirit of generosity, open-heartedness, empathic recognition of others, and joyful celebration of the holy.

It is only by asserting these values and envisioning the loving world which they portend, that we will be in a better position to critique the Bush Administration and their ideological allies in both major parties.

Acehnese men carry their belongings from a tsunami-devastated area.

The Tsunami

Last January, I was asked to represent the Jewish community on CNN's *Larry King Show*. As part of a roundtable of world religious leaders speaking about our traditions' perspectives on the moral meaning of the tsunami, I discussed my Tikkun Mail article, "Where was God in the Tsunami?"

Tikkun Mail is read by hundreds of thousands of people around the world. Many of the people who both read the original tsunami article and who watched me discuss its details on television responded favorably to my point that our conceptions of God have evolved over the course of history, and that today we need to let go of anachronistic ideas such as the tsunami being a punishment for our sins by a big-man-in-Heaven, judgmental, authoritarian God. Similarly, many viewers felt engaged by my description of God as the Force of Healing and Transformation in the universe, and my claim that seeing God as an "all-powerful, all-knowing superman" has deeper roots in Greek than in Judeo-Christian theology (without denying that there have been periods in which Greek thought became hegemonic in shaping Jewish and Christian theology).

In both Judaism and Christianity, there are examples of God as the opposite of all-powerful: God as suffering with human beings. In Judaism, this is expressed in the rabbinic notion of the *Shechinah*, or divine female presence, going into Exile with the Jewish people. (Earlier Biblical strands of God's vulnerability are demonstrated best by my teacher Abraham Joshua Heschel in his essay on "The Theology of Pathos" in his celebrated book, *The Prophets*.) In Christianity, the crucifixion is sometimes understood as a supreme affirmation of divine vulnerability—God participating in human pain. Deepak Chopra, also a participant in the CNN roundtable, strongly supported my call for a new conception of God for the contemporary world.

Unfortunately, people were far more engaged in discussing how much to blame God for the tsunami than in responding to my major point: that the terrible suffering engendered by it was drawing far more media attention than a report issued two weeks earlier by UNICEF which showed that *over 29,000 children die every single day* from poverty-related diseases and inadequate healthcare and nutrition, and that these deaths—over ten million a year—could be prevented. It proved far easier to focus on blaming God than to grapple with the changes in the world economy that could eliminate poverty, provide healthcare, and save millions of lives each year.

Similarly, the tsunami itself would have been far less disastrous had the funding for early-warning systems advocated by former Vice President Al Gore not been defeated by Congress during the Clinton era. Clearly, even if God didn't exist, people would have to invent Him in order to have *somebody to blame* for our own failure to take responsibility for each other's well-being.

Social Security?

I'm sure you're not surprised that we don't support President Bush's proposed economic reforms. We believe that they are yet another cover for dismantling one of the last vestiges of the American welfare state first created by President Roosevelt's New Deal legislation during the 1930s.

The principles of tikkun olam require that we take care of the well-being of every single person on this planet. Offering food (through food stamps), housing (through block grants), and lifetime security (through programs like Social Security) are the least we can do. Yet, even as we believe in ensuring material security, we know that the only real security comes from being part of a loving and caring community.

The liberal/progressive world has been too afraid of "values" to talk about their work in this way. Instead, New Deal and Great Society programs focused on "objective caring"—showing their concern for others through the delivery of money or benefits—ignoring the need to simultaneously foster "subjective caring"—the experience of feeling cared for by a loving community. Liberal social programs worried about how to deliver benefits, but never about how to make people aware that these benefits were a manifestation of a collective caring for each other. Government workers who administered these programs were never rewarded for showing subjective caring, or for worrying about how to convince the recipients that what stood behind these benefits was a community that sought to provide for our security through organizing society in a caring way.

Without this concern, benefits appeared to be simply money coming to individuals from the government. Without the sense of a caring community, it was inevitable that many would see themselves as lone individuals whose real security came from how much money they had available. And if security comes from money alone, then Republican ideas about the free market will sound attractive. Just as people play the lottery despite the bad odds, many Americans believe they will be the winners in the stock market roulette at the basis of the Republican proposal for individual social security accounts. That's a fantasy, of course, but the bigger fantasy is that we can get by on money alone.

Real security comes from the amount of love and trust that pervades society. Erode that trust and sense of mutual commitment, and not too long thereafter the "objective caring" in the form of material support for the needy also begin to erode. Democrats and liberals imagined that material rewards were what was "real" and all the talk of building a sense of solidarity and mutual caring sounded too subjective, too weak, "couldn't be measured," was really "not what people cared about." They thus set the stage for the Republican assault on the twentieth century welfare state. Here, as in every other corner of liberal/progressive politics, the failure to give adequate attention to what we call "mean-

ing needs," to our hunger to be part of a caring community with higher goals than the accumulation of money and power, leads ultimately to the dissolution of liberal social programs as the individuated consumer seeks to maximize his or her own well-being in the only way socially validated: seeking more wealth for oneself without regard to the consequences for others.

This was the same error in the Clinton Administration's ill-fated health plan and in so many of the liberal programs now vulnerable to conservative attack. Spiritual politics isn't a luxury to be discussed after we've been able to satisfy people's material needs—it is actually the most effective way to preserve and extend material benefits and to make them sustainable.

Spiritual Politics: Making It Real

We'll be holding our first national conference to launch a movement for progressive spiritual politics July 20–23rd in Berkeley (cosponsored by the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of California). This conference is not meant to be a mass event, but an inaugural gathering for people who wish to be serious activists in building this kind of movement. If you are such a person, please send me an email telling me about yourself, your activism, your spirituality, your connection to the Core Vision of The Tikkun Community or to my article "After the Fall: Why the Democrats Need a Spiritual Left" (available for free download at www.tikkun.org). Or tell me about your reactions to my book *Spirit Matters: Global Healing and the Wisdom of the Soul*. Registration fees for the conference are on a sliding scale, from \$100 to \$300 based on income (reduced prices for dues-paying members of The Tikkun Community). It will be an amazing event. Please make sure every progressive person, every spiritual teacher or religious leader or activist in their church, mosque, ashram, or synagogue social action or peace group, knows about this gathering—have them contact us at campus@tikkun.org.

Meanwhile, congratulations to:

- Tikkun Community Co-Chair Susannah Heschel for her excellent article on prophetic politics as a critique of religion, which appeared in the December 2 "Looking Back, Looking Forward" post-election forum in *The Nation*.

- Jim Wallis for his new book on *God's Politics*. Wallis has been a beacon of hope, showing that there really is a progressive voice among Evangelical Christians! Wallis will be speaking at the Spiritual Activism conference this summer!

If you haven't signed up yet for your free subscription to Tikkun Mail, please do so at www.tikkun.org. And, while you are there, you might also join to provide support to the Tikkun Community. □

Tikkun at its Best

Joel Schalit

I've always been fond of the axiom that nothing exists within a vacuum. This idea returned to me again and again as we put the finishing touches on this issue, the third edition of *TIKKUN*. I've had the pleasure of working on over the past half year. Moving from our historically exceptional coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict to articles on ecology, labor, and theology, to reviews of books, music, and film, *TIKKUN* continues to bear witness to some of the most important events of the present. And, in time-honored *Tikkunista* fashion, we provide a wholly unique perspective from which to view them.

Because *TIKKUN* has staked out forward-thinking positions over the years, we have often been accused of being rash, thoughtless, or, well, worse. We expect as much feedback about this issue's controversial discussion of divestment from Israel. The fact is, when it comes to being a Jewish-identified publication, breaking our own community's taboos by introducing such subject matter is a huge part of what has made *TIKKUN* so special over the last nineteen years. We are not afraid to take chances, and we don't take any of our decisions lightly. Everything we emphasize in our pages is subject to debate amongst our staff and our community of readers. And, we take nothing for granted. As both a progressive political magazine and a microcosm of a larger community that shares our concerns, we have a responsibility to critically interrogate every possible sacred cow in



order to maximize every possibility for social justice. Even if it means asking the kinds of questions that make all of us uncomfortable.

That's why it's insufficient, to paraphrase the time-worn left-wing slogan, to just speak truth to power. Before we do so, we have to speak about what we believe to be the truth amongst ourselves. When *TIKKUN* is at its best, it is a conversation starter, a place to begin dialogue rather than end it. For example, in the January/February edition, we ran an article by noted Marxist scholar Bertell Ollman about "resigning from the Jewish people" because of

the author's outrage at Israel's policies in the Occupied Territories. Clearly, we editors had no intention of resigning from the tradition ourselves. Our point was to document the degree to which the Israel/Palestine conflict is exasperating all of us to a point of profound despair. Such expressions have to be taken seriously. This is our editorial philosophy.

The same logic holds true for our recently expanded cultural coverage—the idea here being that current events are not the only news source for political education. Film and music are too. To that end, we'd like to introduce new contributor Shai Ginsburg, who makes his *TIKKUN* debut with an article on the North American DVD releases of Amos Gitai's *Kedma* and Mohamed Bakri's *Jenin Jenin*, two absolutely stunning films about the Arab-Israeli conflict produced by two of Israel's best directors. Ginsburg unpacks the continuing tragedy both features document from their respective positions in the Jewish and Palestinian communities. Similarly, in a review of French singer Serge Gainsbourg's posthumously released album of reggae remixes, Music Editor Ron Nachmann shines a thoughtful light on an equally significant artistic production by the late, great Jewish singer. An utterly contemporary reggae reconstruction of Gainsbourg's work, *Mauvaises Nouvelles des Étoiles*' multicultural character gives a musical voice to *TIKKUN*'s own sense of its placement in a diverse and ideally harmonious world. We can't think of a better way to help conclude this issue of the magazine. □

Van Gogh, European Purity, and the “Muslim Problem”

Naeem Mobaïemen

“The next time they build gas chambers in Europe, it will be for Muslims.”

—Shabbir Aktar, *Guardian*, February 27, 1989

Keep banging on the wall of Fortress Europe

This is a 21st century Exodus

They got a right—listen not to the scaremonger

Who doesn’t run when they feel the hunger

From where to what to when to here to there

People caught up in red tape nightmare

—“Fortress Europe,” Asian Dub Foundation

Through his tragic death, Theo Van Gogh has become the catalyst for one of his last wishes—the demonization of Europe’s Muslim population. Van Gogh, who wrote fierce diatribes against European Muslims, recently created controversy with the short film *Submission*. The film’s images of Koranic verses plastered over a naked woman inflamed Muslim passions in Holland. The subsequent events have proven tragic to all sides. An enraged Dutch-Moroccan man shot Van Gogh to death, and Dutch neo-Nazis responded with spasms of violence targeting Muslim mosques. A cycle of hatred, familiar from Europe’s recent past, has begun again.

Following the murder, the Dutch Muslim community issued loud condemnations. Statements also came in from American Muslims, the most recent recipients of global Islamophobia. But statements of disavowal were not enough for those who are exploiting this tragedy to further a racist agenda. The murder has provided an excuse for the simmering xenophobia that lurks beneath Europe’s genteel surface. Fiery anti-Muslim demagogue Pim Fortuyn also exploited these tensions (he famously said “The Netherlands is full”) before his assassination by an animal rights activist. Appropriately enough, Van Gogh was an admirer of Fortuyn and had just finished a documentary about him.

Submission claims to be a film championing Muslim women. Women’s rights within Islam are, of course, a long-debated topic. There are myriad crises in the way that Muslim peoples and countries treat women, but many of

these issues are linked to culture, misogyny, poverty, and, above all, male fear of female advancement—not religion. Religion is the excuse, but in fact there is very little in Islamic texts that condones ill treatment of women. But Theo Van Gogh had little patience for such nuanced discussions. Instead, *Submission* is a jumbled attack on abuse of Muslim women that makes no distinction between distortions of religion and actual theology.

Longtime readers of Van Gogh’s weekly column in the Dutch newspaper *Metro* know very well that his intention is not to reform male chauvinism but rather to express crude bigotry. While overt anti-Black racism is no longer acceptable in public forums (though it may simmer under the surface), the European racist can take comfort in attacking Muslims, against whom any level of bile is still acceptable. In his columns and interviews, Van Gogh called Muslims “goat f**ers” and “Allah’s Pimps,” and Islam a “retrograde and aggressive” faith. His latest book, which lampooned Muslims as backward obscurantists, was defiantly titled *Allah Knows Best*. His collaborator on *Submission*, right-wing Dutch-Somali MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali, was equally florid, calling the prophet Mohammed a “pervert” and a “tyrant.” Theo Van Gogh’s attacks were not limited only to Muslims. He blithely attacked Christian and Jewish symbols, once saying, “It smells like caramels—they must be burning Jewish diabetics.”

All of these prejudices found full expression in *Submission*. The film came about through Van Gogh’s collaboration with Ayaan Hirsi Ali, an “ex-Muslim” who now denounces her former religion. Telling the story of a Muslim woman who is pushed into a forced marriage and then raped by her uncle, the nine-minute film intersperses a voice-over with images of Koranic verses on a praying woman. The woman is completely naked; only her face is covered with a veil. Across her breasts, navel, and thighs is a thin, diaphanous cloth, through which text from the Koran is clearly visible on her body. “All praise to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds,” says the text that scrolls across her throat and breasts. Nude to the camera, she repeatedly bows down to pray—even reading a Sura from the Koran at the beginning of the film. The camera lingers with a fetishist’s eye over her nakedness, at one point zooming in on her raised finger (used during prayer to indicate the oneness of God).

Naeem Mobaïemen is editor of *shobak.org* (*Outsider Muslims*) and director of *Muslims or Heretics*. *Submission* (2004) was written by Ayaan Hirsi Ali and directed by Theo Van Gogh.



European fascination with the veiled (and unveiled) Muslim woman is nothing new. During the colonization of North Africa, the eroticization of the “harem woman” was a trope of European art and literature. Van Gogh’s film is a modern version of the same colonial male fantasy: a vision where the European male is the only liberator of Muslim women. The nudity in the film adds nothing to a critique of Islam, but it applies a calculated slap to the face of Muslim piety. There are many valid critiques of women’s status in different Muslim societies, each with its own specific colonial history. Such work is already being spearheaded by Muslim theorists, activists, and academics like Fatima Mernissi, Asma Jahangir, Asma Barlas, Sachiko Murata, Leila Ahmed, Amina Wadud, and Kecia Ali. But for Van Gogh to acknowledge or incorporate the work of these brave Muslim feminists would be to recognize Muslims as people capable of reforming themselves.

Though Van Gogh’s work was irresponsible, damaging, and filmed with contempt, nothing can justify his murder. Just as Van Gogh was intolerant of Muslims, his murderer was intolerant of free speech. In many ways, he is the flip side of the Dutch racists. By pushing society into chaos, Van Gogh’s killer hoped to spark a conflagration between the Netherlands and its Muslim immigrants. In the weeks following the murder, there were fire-bombings and attacks against twenty mosques and two Muslim schools. During the Bosnian conflict, Shabil Aktar wrote, “The next time

they build gas chambers in Europe, it will be for Muslims.” While that comparison may be excessive, anti-Muslim hysteria, eerily similar to the Judeophobia of the 1930s, is steadily rising in Europe. Already there is talk of developing a national database that will track the “risk profile” of immigrants in the Netherlands. The Dutch government has also said it will close all mosques teaching “non-Dutch values.” Exactly what “Dutch values” are is left unclear.

Of course, not all the trends are negative. A proposal to require mosque imams to give sermons in European languages instead of Arabic has been supported by local Muslim leaders. In another positive development, Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende urged the European Union to work harder on integrating ethnic minorities. Citing the frenzy of reprisal attacks, he said, “The strong reactions and counter-reactions after the death of Van Gogh show there is tension in our society. In Europe, we have to learn from one another in the area of integration of minorities.” While Balkenende is a rational voice, equal numbers of voices are pushing for extreme measures. In a Dutch government with prominent right-wing demagogues like cabinet ministers Rita Verdonk and Gerrit Zalm, and Members of Parliament Gert Wilders and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, there is a strong possibility that excessively zealous legislation will be pushed through. The American experience, where decades of civil liberties gains were eliminated in the post-9/11 hysteria, can serve as a blueprint for European right-wingers. All this signals a scary trend that is likely to continue if the European Right seeks to battle what they call the “enemy within.”

Beyond the controversy and the senseless murder, the bigger issue for Europe is how to confront anti-Muslim racism. Dr. Tariq Ramadan has argued that European Muslims are simultaneously a distinct entity and part of the European fabric. But Europe continues to treat Muslims as permanent outsiders—unassimilable and hostile to “European values.” Even Ramadan is seen as a threat—*L’Express* ran a hysterical cover story in October with a picture of a Ramadan event and the headline, “The Man Who Wants to Bring Islam to France.”

Talking about Europe’s continued marginalization of its Muslim citizens, Abu Risha Al-Mawali wrote, “Muslims are not the Borg. There is no central hive-mind where all Muslims are controlled. I tire of Muslims always having to apologize for their very existence.” Unlike America, which is an immigrant nation at its core, the European psyche is still obsessed with notions of purity. Muslims are seen as foreign bodies that are contaminating Europe. The most strident voices against “foreigners” come from Europe’s best-known cultural figures, who have made this ugly racism fashionable. Best-selling French author Michel Houellebecq has made a career out of literary complaints about “French women who

only sleep with Algerians and Moroccans." Former sex symbol Brigitte Bardot has been fined four times by French courts for inciting racial hatred, including making statements about France being overrun by "sheep-slaughtering Muslims" and opposing interracial marriage. In England, former Labor MP and BBC presenter Robert Kilroy-Silk caused an outrage after he called Arabs "suicide bombers, limb-amputators, women repressors."

The most piercing voice comes from Italian legend Oriana Fallaci, who came out of a ten-year exile to write the post-9/11 diatribe *The Rage and the Pride*. Calling Muslims "vile creatures who urinate in baptistries" and "multiply like rats," Fallaci mourned their invasion and violation of her native Florence ("Terrorists, thieves, rapists. Ex-convicts, prostitutes, beggars. Drug-dealers, contagiously ill"). After the book became a runaway bestseller in Italy, she expanded her critique to encompass all of Europe and its "kindness" towards Muslim immigrants: "Europe is no longer Europe. It is a province of Islam, as Spain and Portugal were at the time of the Moors. It hosts almost 16 million Muslim immigrants and teems with mullahs, imams, mosques, burqas, chadors."

These cultural commentators have helped to create an environment in which far-right and neo-Nazi politicians like Frank Vanhecke and Filip Dewinter (Belgium: Vlaams Blok), Nick Griffin (UK: British National Party [BNP]), Jean Marie Le Pen (France: National Front), Paulo Portas (Portugal: Popular Party), Jorg Haider (Austria: Freedom Party), Frank Schwert (Germany: National Democratic Party), Pia Kjaersgaard (Denmark: People's Party), and the late Pim Fortuyn (Holland: Lijst Pim Fortuyn [LPF]) have entered the mainstream of European politics. The slogans of all these parties display an eerie similarity—from "France for the French" (National Front) and "Austria for the Austrians" (Freedom Party) to "Our Own People First" (Vlaams Blok). Among the parties, the BNP has one of the oldest heritages, arguing in the early 1990s, "We have no objection to Muslims having their own places of worship—provided they are in Muslim countries and not in Britain."

In Germany, although "guest workers" began arriving after World War II to rebuild the nation, for the last forty years they have been denied citizenship due to "bloodline" laws. A recent bill to overturn this law led to fights in parliament, with one politician saying "dirty Muslims" had no

right to citizenship. These themes were echoed by Pia Kjaersgaard, who warned: "[Muslims] must not be allowed to integrate into Danish society." Filip Dewinter agreed, saying, "We must stop the Islamic invasion. I think it's, in fact, impossible to assimilate in our country if you are of Islamic belief."

The key factor that drives fears of Muslim immigrants is the plummeting birthrate among white Europeans. Similar to Israel, it is the demographic time bomb that is the specter haunting Europe today. The Dutch government estimates that by 2010, at present rates of immigration, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht will have Muslim majorities. Recent opinion polls have shown Islam, immigration, and integration to be the top three concerns for the

Dutch voter. In addition, Turkey's potential entry into the European Union accelerated the fear that Europe's borders, which kept it white and Christian for centuries, were finally crumbling.

Much of this paranoia came to a head during the heated debates surrounding Turkey's admission into the European Union. In an incendiary speech, Internal Market Commissioner Frits Bolkestein compared the European Union to the Austro-Hungarian empire that defeated the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century. To Bolkestein, the entry of Turkey meant "the liberation of Vienna in 1683 would have been in vain!" Similarly, other politicians have made paranoia about "Muslim hordes" a central feature of their

platforms. The electoral success of these parties is leading to a massive rightist shift of European policy on immigration. In a European Union moving toward continent wide, "harmonized" immigration policy and centralized detention centers, even the smallest European countries can exert tremendous influence.

Politicians, writers, and filmmakers are only giving public and vocal expression to Europe's simmering xenophobia. Much more prejudice hides below the surface, waiting to explode. The frenzy of violence after the Holland tragedy revealed the monsters lurking in Europe's backyard. Theo Van Gogh's tragic death should be mourned, and his killers apprehended. Muslims must work vigorously to root out the tiny band of extremists in their midst who are distorting the message of Islam. But Europe must also look inward and heal itself in order to integrate its Muslim peoples. That is the correct reply to those who want to throw up the walls of Fortress Europe. □

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The Occupation's Spillover Effect

Norman G. Finkelstein

In some quarters anger at Israel's brutal Occupation has undoubtedly spilled over to an animus toward Jews generally. But however lamentable, it's hardly cause for wonder. The brutal U.S. aggression against Vietnam and the Bush Administration's aggression against Iraq engendered a generalized anti-Americanism, just as the genocidal Nazi aggression during World War II engendered a generalized anti-Teutonicism. Does it really surprise if the cruel Occupation by a self-declared Jewish state engenders a generalized antipathy to Jews? "All cases in which the Jews are made collectively responsible for the policy of the Israeli government," [a report on anti-Semitism by the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia entitled] *Manifestations* solemnly opines, "represent a form of anti-Semitism." Accordingly, Spain is reckoned anti-Semitic because "The mass media often confuses Israel and the Jewish community." But if many Jews themselves repudiate any distinction between Israel and world Jewry, indeed, if they denounce such a distinction as itself anti-Semitic; if mainstream Jewish organizations lend uncritical support to every Israeli policy, however criminal, indeed, abetting the most virulent tendencies inside Israel and muzzling principled dissent outside Israel; if Israel defines itself juridically as the sovereign State of the Jewish people, and Jews abroad label any criticism of Israel anti-Jewish—the real wonder is that the spillover from antipathy towards Israel to Jews generally hasn't been greater.

"Anyone who does not distinguish between Jews and the Jewish state is an anti-Semite," [Author Phyllis] Chesler avows in [*The New Anti-Semitism*], but in the same book she avows that "American and Diaspora Jews" must understand that

Adapted from Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History, by Norman G. Finkelstein, forthcoming from the University of California Press. © 2005 by the Regents of the University of California. Norman G. Finkelstein teaches Political Science at DePaul University. His books include The Holocaust Industry (2000); A Nation on Trial (1998; with Ruth Bettina Birn), named a notable book for 1998 by the New York Times Sunday Book Review; and Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict (1995).



Israeli settlers and supporters of the settlement movement hold an Israeli flag during a demonstration in front of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, Monday Jan. 10, 2005.

"Israel is our heart and soul ... we are family" (her emphasis). Likewise, Italian journalist Fiamma Nirenstein professes [in Ron Rosenbaum's anthology *Those Who Forget the Past: The Question of Anti-Semitism*] that

"Jews everywhere should consider their being identified with Israel a virtue and honor," and should insist that "If you're prejudiced against Israel, then, you're against the Jews." It would seem to be anti-Semitic both to identify and not to identify Israel with Jews. "Iranian anti-Semitic propagandists make a point," according to [Gabriel] Schoenfeld, "of erasing all distinctions among Israel, Zionism and the Jews." Yet, in an article for *Commentary* magazine, which Schoenfeld edits, Hillel Halkin asserted: "Israel is the state of the Jews. Zionism is the belief that the Jews should have a state. To defame Israel is to defame the Jews" So are Halkin and *Commentary's* editor also anti-Semitic?

Just as it's too simple (and convenient) to label accusations of Jewish responsibility for Israeli policy anti-Semitic, so it's too simple (and convenient) to label the notion of Jewish power anti-Semitic. Jews now rank as the wealthiest ethnic group in the United States; with this economic power has accrued substantial political power. Their leaders have wielded this power, often crudely, to mold U.S. policy regarding Israel. These leaders have also utilized this power

in other realms. Under the guise of seeking "Holocaust reparations," American Jewish organizations and individuals at all levels of government and in all sectors of American society entered into a conspiracy—this is the correct word—to blackmail Europe. It was on account of "Jewish money" that the Clinton administration went along with this shakedown operation, providing—even to the detriment of U.S. national interests—crucial support for it at every juncture [for more on this, see the Appendix to *The Holocaust Industry*].

And who can seriously believe that the pro-Jewish bias of the corporate media has nothing whatever to do with the influential Jewish presence at all levels of it? "It's undoubtedly true that there are prominent Jews among the producers, directors, studio executives, and stars in Hollywood," Abraham Foxman concedes [in *Never Again?*]. "It's even true that, proportionately, there has always been a relatively prominent Jewish presence in the movie, TV, and record industries." But, he continues, "The Jews who work in Hollywood are there not *as Jews* but as actors, directors, writers, business executives, or what have you," concerned only with "the bottom line" (his emphasis). His proof? "This explains the paradox that no anti-Semitic conspiracy theorist has ever tackled—how it is that the supposedly Jewish-controlled movie industry has produced so few films dealing with overtly Jewish characters or themes." Is that why Hollywood has produced a mere 175 films on The Holocaust since 1989 [according to David Sterritt's article "The one serious subject Hollywood doesn't avoid," in the *Christian Science Monitor*]?

Legitimate questions can surely be posed regarding when and if Jews are acting as people who happen to be Jewish or acting "as Jews," and, on the latter occasions (which plainly do arise), regarding the actual breadth and limits of this "Jewish power," but these can only be answered empirically, not *a priori* with politically correct formulae. To foreclose inquiry on this topic as anti-Semitic is, intentionally or not, to shield Jews from legitimate scrutiny of their uses and abuses of formidable power. In an otherwise sensible treatment of the new anti-Semitism, Brian Klug [in *Patterns of Prejudice*] maintains that "it is a form of anti-Semitism" if an accusation against Jews mimics an anti-Semitic stereotype, such as the idea of Jews being "powerful, wealthy...pursuing [their] own selfish ends." Yet, if Jews act out a Jewish stereotype, it plainly doesn't follow that they can't be committing the stereotypical act. Can't they commit a [negative] act even if it conforms to a Jewish stereotype? It is perhaps politically incorrect to recall, but nonetheless a commonplace, that potent stereotypes, like good propaganda, acquire their force from containing a kernel—and sometimes even more than a kernel—of truth....

In *The Holocaust Industry*, [I] posited a distinction between the *Nazi holocaust*—the systematic extermination of Jews during World War II—and *The Holocaust*—the instru-

mentalization of the Nazi holocaust by American Jewish elites and their supporters. A parallel distinction needs to be made between *anti-Semitism*—the unjustifiable targeting of Jews solely for being Jews—and "*anti-Semitism*"—the instrumentalization of anti-Semitism by American (or other) Jewish elites. Like the Holocaust, "anti-Semitism" is an ideological weapon to deflect justified criticism of Israel and, concomitantly, powerful Jewish interests. In its current usage, "anti-Semitism," alongside the "war against terrorism," serves as a cloak for a massive assault on international law and human rights. Those Jews committed to the struggle against the real anti-Semitism must, in the first instance, expose this specious "anti-Semitism" for the sham it is. "[T]here are no patent remedies and quick solutions available" for anti-Semitism, the authors of *Manifestations* conclude. "[I]t is not possible to formulate a once-and-for-all strategy, which is effective everywhere." This writer begs to differ. Tell the truth, fight for justice: this is the time-tested strategy for fighting anti-Semitism, as well as other forms of bigotry. If, as all the important studies agree, current resentment against Jews has coincided with Israel's brutal repression of the Palestinians, then a patent remedy and quick solution would plainly be to end the Occupation. A full Israeli withdrawal would also deprive those real anti-Semites exploiting Israel's repression as a pretext to demonize Jews—and who can doubt they exist?—of a dangerous weapon as well as expose their real agenda. And, the more vocally Jews dissent from Israel's Occupation, the fewer will be those non-Jews who mistake Israel's criminal policies and the uncritical support (indeed encouragement) of mainline Jewish organizations for the popular Jewish mood.

On the other side, the worst enemies in the struggle against real anti-Semitism are the philo-Semites. This problem typically arises on the European scene. By turning a blind eye to Israeli crimes in the name of sensitivity to past Jewish suffering, they enable Israel to continue on a murderous path that fomented anti-Semitism and, for that matter, the self-destruction of Israelis. The philo-Semitic application of this special dispensation to American Jewish elites has proven equally catastrophic. As already noted, Jewish elites in the U.S. have enjoyed enormous prosperity. From this combination of economic and political power has sprung, unsurprisingly, a mindset of Jewish superiority. Wrapping themselves in the mantle of The Holocaust, these Jewish elites pretend—and, in their own solipsistic universe, perhaps even imagine themselves—to be victims, dismissing any and all criticism as manifestations of "anti-Semitism." And, from this lethal brew of formidable power, chauvinistic arrogance, feigned (or imagined) victimhood, and Holocaust-immunity to criticism has sprung a terrifying recklessness and ruthlessness on the part of American Jewish elites. Alongside Israel, they are the main fomenters of anti-Semitism in the world today. Coddling them is not the answer. They need to be stopped. □

On the Psychology of Suicide Bombing

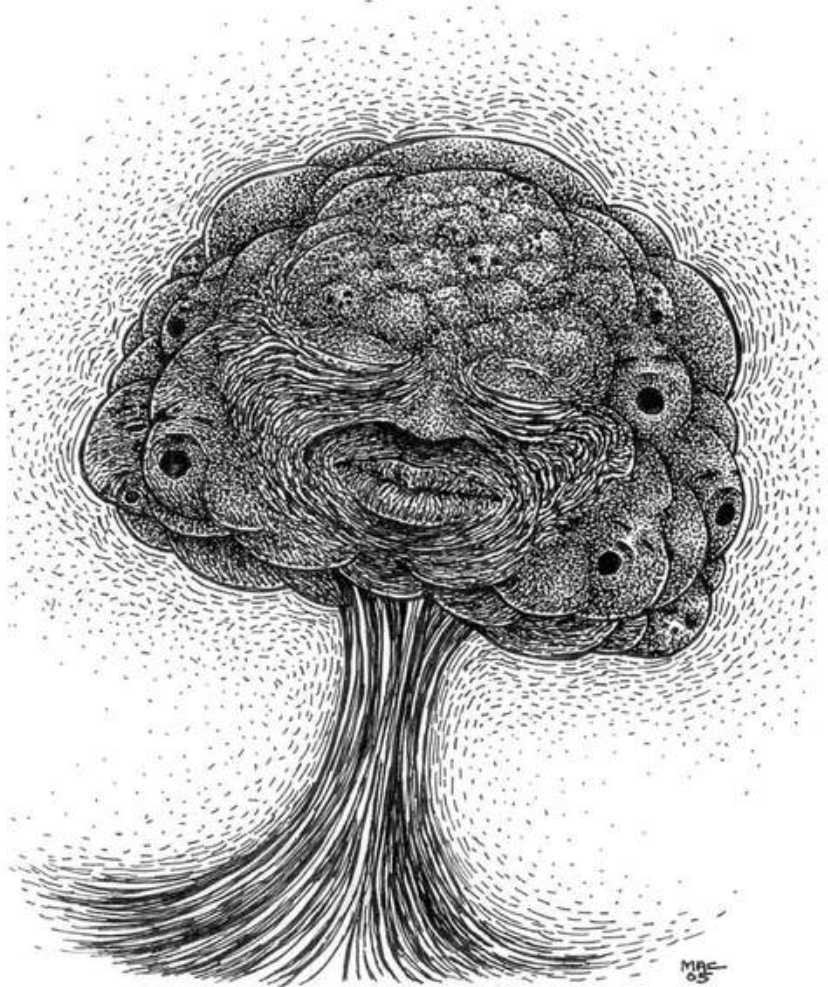
Neil Altman

The choice of suicide bombing as a method of warfare appears to entail factors beyond straight-forward military efficacy: there are obvious, if puzzling, cultural, psychological, and religious factors that must be taken into account if we are to understand the phenomenon. I propose that suicide bombing should be taken as a communication as well as an attack; if we allow ourselves to register our own complex psychological responses to suicide attacks we will be in a better position to communicate with those for whom suicide bombing seems an attractive option.

Some time back I remember someone proposing that these attacks should be called "homicide bombings" rather than "suicide bombings"; the emphasis on "suicide" directs our attention away from the fact that these are attacks on other people. Yet, the proposal never caught on; the fact that the attacker arranges that he *must* die, more inevitably than any other victim, compels our attention. We have no term in English for this phenomenon: "murder-suicide" refers to cases in which someone kills another and *then* kills himself. The suicide is *secondary* to the murder. In suicide bombings this is not so. The suicide is as important as the murder.

It is the suicidal nature of these bombings that calls on us to understand them as much more than an effective mil-

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itary strategy. While there are military reasons for suicide attacks, such reasons are not sufficient to require suicide. For example, those who orchestrate such missions may fear that if the attacker is caught alive, he may provide information about the people or organization who enlisted him. Yet the same goal could be obtained by providing attackers with poison pills to take upon capture. What is striking about suicide attacks is that they appear to require more than military reasoning to go forward.

In searching for an explanation, many turn to religious motivations. It has come to the attention of most people in

the West in the wake of the September 11 attacks that Muslim suicide attackers believe that with their action they become martyrs in a holy war, thus eligible for rewards in heaven, the attention of heavenly dark-eyed virgins, and the like. One might think that here is an adequate explanation for suicide bombing in itself for those who take this idea literally and seriously. But I propose that it does not: for one thing, such an explanation does not account for the actions of heterosexual female suicide bombers. Furthermore, if the attacker did succeed in escaping, there would be no obvious disadvantage. He would only live to make further attacks, in one of which he would certainly be martyred. So we must conclude that religious motivation is not sufficient to require suicide as an essential element to the attack.

What we must always keep in the forefront of our understanding is that the suicide bomber is killing himself in order to kill others. Suicide bombing is, in that sense, an interactive, interpersonal act. The suicide bomber is not satisfied with either killing himself alone to make a point (as Buddhist monks have been known to do) or with killing others while preserving himself (in typical military fashion). The bomber is seeking to actualize or dramatize a *psychological* situation occurring in an interpersonal and intergroup context. He does so for an audience, an audience consisting of those who he feels are responsible for his death, a psychological death that in a sense has already occurred.

What is the nature of the psychological death, the murder, that has already occurred at the time of the suicide bombing? Extreme shame, extreme humiliation, can be experienced as psychological death. People will kill and die for their honor or their self-respect, because to lose their dignity can be experienced as a fate worse than death. The word "mortification," which has come to refer to states of humiliation, means, literally, to be rendered dead. Humiliation also leads to rage, the kind of blind rage that ignites a firestorm that feeds on itself and eventuates in a scorched earth in which everything is destroyed. Here is an explanation for the Palestinian suicide bomber. Palestinians feel that they have been rendered helpless by having their land forcibly taken away, by being confronted with an overwhelming military force. Jessica Stern, in her recent book, *Terror in the Name of God*, quotes Hassan Salameh, a Hamas leader: "I feel that my people and I have been murdered in the soul by the Israeli occupation." Believing himself to have already been killed by Israelis, the Palestinian suicide bomber acts to throw his own death back at his oppressor in an act that is at once retributive and communicative.

Violence cycles in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in part because the phenomenon of rage fueled by humiliation is not foreign to the Jewish victims of suicide bombings. Behind Jewish fear of resurgent anti-Semitism lies both fear of being slaughtered in a literal sense, but also of being ren-

dered helpless, humiliated, as they/we were in the Holocaust. Israelis have an insatiable craving for military superiority in their need to be assured that they will never again be rendered helpless. Both sides are so blinded by their own feeling of being humiliated—or their fear of being humiliated—that they have become incapable of recognizing the psychological dynamics of their adversary (dynamics that in some respects are remarkably similar), and so they are unable to deal effectively with each other.

For the suicide bomber, humiliation is only part of the equation. Feeling utterly powerless, and faced with Israeli blindness to his sense of victimization, the Palestinian suicide bomber restores his sense of agency by taking control of his own death. Jessica Stern points out that the early Christian martyrs' embracing of their own deaths increased the prestige of the Christian faith. One martyr, Saint Perpetua, was reported to "take the trembling hand of the young gladiator and guide(d) it to her throat." By taking control of the knife, she refuses the humiliation of being helpless and demonstrates her commitment to a higher cause for which she will embrace her own death. Likewise, by killing himself, the suicide bomber undoes the indignity of having been helpless to prevent his death at the hands of another and turns the tables by killing that other. At the same time, he attempts to force on the Israeli consciousness the knowledge of the fact that he has been murdered psychologically and that they are being held responsible.

Insofar as there is a communicative intent, even an unconscious one, behind suicide bombing, there is a degree of hope behind such an act. An act, even a desperate and self-destructive one, that is intended to communicate one's experience constitutes a reaching toward—rather than a definitive turning away from—one's adversary. However, because suicide bombing is an extremely desperate and dysfunctional way of seeking to force a sense of responsibility on one's adversary, this form of communication is much more likely to backfire than to succeed. The reason is that people typically resist feeling guilty with all their power. The knowledge that one has killed another person or contributed to their killing produces the highest degree of pain that a caring human being can experience. The psychoanalyst Melanie Klein and her followers call this kind of pain "depressive anxiety" because depressive feelings arise when loving and hating feelings co-exist, when one feels that one has hurt someone one loves.

If one cannot tolerate such depressive feelings, one reverts to what Klein called the "paranoid schizoid" position, in which people are either all good or all bad. This state of affairs the Kleinians call "splitting." For one in the "paranoid schizoid" position, love and hate cannot co-exist. If one hates someone else they must be all bad, while the self is experienced as all good, so guilt does not arise. From the Kleinian point of view, to be able to tolerate the complexity of experiencing oneself and others as both good and

bad is the highest and most difficult psychic achievement.

The Palestinian suicide bomber is trying to create depressive feelings in the Israeli public by convincing Israelis they are guilty for his psychological death. Unable, however, to handle the guilt of having committed a psychological murder, the Israeli public tends to retreat to the paranoid schizoid position, disavowing this guilt by making the suicide bomber alone the guilty party.

The Israeli refusal to accept any degree of responsibility for the suicide bomber's death wish leads to a cycle of humiliation and thus to further bombings. The sense of humiliation is enhanced greatly by a failure on the part of others to recognize and respond with concern to one's feelings. In psychotherapy, the therapist learns that she inevitably, though inadvertently, provokes feelings of shame to the point of humiliation in patients. The discrepancy in the degree of exposure each person undergoes can itself be shame-inducing. It can be humiliating for the patient to feel that he needs the therapist more than the therapist needs the patient. Yet, that response can lead to a good outcome if the psychotherapist understands that the act of recognizing and accepting the patient's sense of humiliation reduces the power of those feelings.

It may seem like a simple act to recognize feelings of humiliation. But when one is the perceived perpetrator, this act may be among the most difficult we are called upon to make. The humiliated one usually will not simply call one's attention to the shaming impact of what one has done. Instead, he will try to turn the tables, will try to humiliate the perceived perpetrator, will attack the perceived perpetrator with a great rage. In order to get behind the retaliatory attack, the recipient of these feelings needs to be able to tolerate the feeling of guilt and destructiveness. But it is not simply a matter of accepting the other's view of oneself as bad. To feel *only* guilty is to engage in splitting (I become all bad, rather than partly bad) as much as to feel *only* fully justified in what one has done. The trick is to acknowledge the feelings of the other, including the plausibility of the feeling that one has injured the other, while maintaining a sense of caring about and loving the other and doing one's best to provide for the benefit of the other. If the therapist can speak to the patient from the depressive position, there is a chance that the patient can be helped toward the depressive position as well. If the therapist cannot tolerate depressive anxiety, there will eventuate only an attack-counterattack vicious circle. A precondition for anything constructive to occur is that limits are set on the level of destructiveness that can occur, so that the ability to process feelings is not obliterated on both sides.

The current sense of despair about the Middle East reflects the near-impossibility either side has of recognizing and validating the feelings of humiliation of a person or group that is trying to kill you. Yet there is no other way forward to a durable peace in Israel and Palestine. Can we

imagine that Israelis and Jews can empathize with Palestinian humiliation and convey that recognition, while realistically setting limits in whatever way is possible, without denying the fear and hatred that flow inevitably from knowing that Palestinians dream of killing you as an Israeli? Can we find a way to sort out the realistic setting of limits from destructive retaliation? Can we imagine that Palestinians can transcend their sense of having been psychologically murdered by Israelis in order to understand that Israelis are acting out of fear of being murdered themselves by them and others in the world?

It would seem naïve to hope this psychologically sophisticated response can happen, yet there are a few precedents. In the film *My Terrorist*, an Israeli woman finds a way to see the point of view of a Palestinian man who had tried to kill her. Years later, she visits him in prison and finds it within herself to see his perspective. He, in turn, no longer wishes to murder her, and of course his being in prison creates the kind of limits on destructiveness that makes communication possible. Those of us whose lives are not immediately threatened, or who have not lost loved ones, may be in a position to perform this empathic function on behalf of those whose pain is too great, if we can do so with simultaneous understanding of those whose fear and hatred is so strong as to rule out empathy for their attackers. □

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Academic Entrepreneurs: The Corporate Takeover of Higher Education

Henry A. Giroux

With these two pieces by Henry Giroux and Svi Shapiro, TIKKUN begins an intensive look at what it means to work in the United States today. The pieces will be more prescriptive than descriptive, outlining what a New Bottom Line for labor—and especially for the professions—would be. We start this issue with education: while Henry Giroux critiques the corporatization of academia, Svi Shapiro takes a look at how to reform elementary school education. Next issue, look for articles on unionization and outsourcing. To learn more on TIKKUN's New Bottom Line for the Professions initiative, go to www.tikkun.org.

Under a Bush Administration that seems increasingly intent on corporatizing the public sphere and shifting wealth from the working poor and middle class to the rich, too little attention has been given to the condition of the American university and its professors. Usually considered an elite class due to their educational condition and the practice of tenure, professors and their work within universities have largely been ignored. However, given the university's key role in public life as the protector and promoter of democratic values, it is worthwhile to take a look at how public policy is changing the conduct of American higher education.

In a country in which corporations such as Halliburton and Bechtel rapaciously profit from the war in Iraq, the Food and Drug Administration appears more concerned about the financial well-being of the pharmaceutical industry than the health of the general public. While the Bush Administration extends massive tax cuts to the rich amidst increasing poverty, hunger, and job losses, the university offers no escape and little resistance. Instead, the humanistic knowledge and values of the university are being excised as higher education becomes increasingly corporatized. Such corporatization affects not only the culture of the campus, but also the very content delivered by the university, as academic labor is increasingly based on corporate needs rather than either the demands of research for the public good or education designed to improve public life. In the

corporate university, academics are now expected to be "academic entrepreneurs," valuable only for the money and prestige they bring and not for the education they can offer. Sacrificed in this transformation is any notion of higher education as a crucial public sphere in which critical citizens and democratic agents are formed, capable of addressing the anti-democratic forces that now threaten democracy in the United States under the Bush Administration.

The University as a Brand-Name Corporation

Anyone who spends any time on a college campus in the United States these days cannot miss how higher education is changing. Strapped for money and increasingly defined through the language of corporate culture, many universities seem less interested in higher learning than in becoming licensed storefronts for brand-name corporations—selling off space, buildings, and endowed chairs to rich corporate donors. University bookstores are now managed by big corporate conglomerates such as Barnes & Noble, while companies such as Sodexho-Marriott (also a large investor in the U.S. private prison industry) run a large percentage of college dining halls, and McDonald's and Starbucks occupy prominent locations on the student commons. Student IDs are now adorned with MasterCard and Visa logos, providing students who may have few assets with an instant line of credit and an identity as full-time consumers.

In addition, housing, alumni relations, health care, and a vast array of other services are now being leased out to private interests to manage and run. One consequence is that spaces once marked as public and non-commodified—

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places for quiet study or student gatherings—now have the appearance of a shopping mall. Commercial logos, billboards, and advertisements plaster the walls of student centers, dining halls, cafeterias, and bookstores. Everywhere students turn outside of the university classroom, they are confronted with vendors and commercial sponsors who are hawking credit cards, athletic goods, soft drinks, and other commodities that one associates with the local shopping mall. Universities and colleges compound this marriage of commercial and educational values by signing exclusive contracts with Pepsi, Nike, Starbucks, and other contractors, further blurring the distinction between student and consumer. The message to students is clear: customer satisfaction is offered as a surrogate for learning, “to be a citizen is to be a consumer, and nothing more. Freedom means freedom to purchase,” as Jennifer L. Croissant put it in *Academe*.

Why should we care? Colleges and universities do not simply produce knowledge for students; they also play an influential role in shaping their identities, values, and sense of what it means to become citizens of the world. If colleges and universities are to define themselves as centers of teaching and learning vital to the democratic life of the nation and globe, they must acknowledge the real danger of becoming mere adjuncts to big business, or corporate entities in themselves.

And the danger is real. Commercial deals are no longer just a way for universities to make money. Corporate branding drives the administrative structure of the university. College presidents are now called C.E.O.s and are known less for their intellectual leadership than for their role as fundraisers and their ability to bridge the world of academe and business. Venture capitalists now scour colleges and uni-

versities in search of big profits to be made through licensing agreements, the control of intellectual property rights, and investing in university spin-off companies. Deans are often hired from the ranks of the business community and evaluated on the basis of their ability to attract external funding and impose business models of leadership and accountability. The dean at my former university completely collapsed the distinction between scholarship and grant-getting by handing out distinguished professorships to academics who secured large grants and did very little in the way of either making

important theoretical contributions or publishing widely recognized scholarly work. What is missing from the space of the corporate university is any perspective suggesting that, at the very least, university administrators, academics, students, and others exercise the political, civic, and ethical courage needed to refuse the commercial rewards that would reduce them to becoming simply another brand name, corporate logo, or adjunct to corporate interests.

Public Policy and Corporate Education

The Bush administration willingly supports the corporatization of higher education, both through overt statements and by reinforcing the conditions that make such corporatization possible. Reductions in grants for students, pressure on students to use their education as job-training, and the replacement of government grants with corporate funding all are speeding the process.

As the Bush Administration cuts student aid, plunders public services, and pushes states to the brink of financial disaster, higher education increasingly becomes a privilege rather than a right. Many middle- and working-class students either find it impossible financially to enter college or, because of increased costs, have to drop out. As the *Chronicle of Higher Education* recently reported, young people from poor and disadvantaged families face even more difficult hurdles in trying to attain a college education because the Bush Administration has decided to cut Pell Grants, the nation's largest federal student aid program. In addition, because Congress changed the federal needs-analysis formula, more than 90,000 disadvantaged students have been disqualified in 2005 from not only receiving Pell Grants but also state financial aid. As a result, universities can not balance their budget through tuition increases or

federal grants. Instead, they turn to corporate money and self-branding to balance their budgets. Students become "customers" of both the university's own brand and of corporations who sell to them directly through university deals.

Although higher education has never been free of the market, there is a new intimacy between higher education and corporate culture, characterized by what Larry Hanley in *Found Object* has called a "new, quickened symbiosis." The result is "not a fundamental or abrupt change perhaps, but still an unmistakable radical reduction of [higher education's] public and critical role," as Masao Miyoshi has argued in *The Cultures of Globalization*. What was once the hidden curriculum of many universities—the subordination of higher education to capital—has now become an open and much celebrated policy of both public and private higher education. As the line between for-profit and not-for-profit institutions of higher education collapses, the tensions between democratic values and market interests blur and the distinction between education and job training collapses.

An even closer symbiosis of corporate and university culture takes place among faculty who traditionally have sought outside support for research. As government grant money dries up, such researchers increasingly must turn for support to corporate funders. At the same time, as universities increasingly begin to pattern themselves after multinational business, they are more willing to allow corporations who sponsor research to influence the outcome or place questionable restrictions on what can be published. *The New England Journal of Medicine* reported that "medical schools that conduct research sponsored by drug companies routinely disregard guidelines intended to ensure that the studies are unbiased and that the results are shared with the public." Hence, it is not surprising to find, as the journal stated, that "studies reported by the tobacco industry reported pro-industry results [and that] studies on pharmaceuticals were affected by their source of funds as well," according to a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article by Lila Guterman.

In some instances, corporations place pressure on universities to suppress the publication of those studies whose data questions the effectiveness of the wares, threatening not only academic integrity but also public health and safety. For example, Canada's largest pharmaceutical company, Apotex, attempted to suppress the findings of a University of Toronto researcher, Dr. Nancy Olivieri, when she argued that the "drug the company was manufacturing was ineffec-

tive, and could even be toxic," as reported by Katherine S. Mangan in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The University of Toronto not only refused to provide support for Dr. Olivieri, they also suspended her from her administrative role as program director, and warned her and her staff not to talk publicly about the case. It was later disclosed that "the university and Apotex had been for some years in discussions about a multimillion-dollar gift to the university and its teaching hospitals." (Derek Bok discusses in *Universities in the Marketplace*.)

The Academic Entrepreneur

As corporate culture and values shape university life, academic labor is increasingly being transformed in the image of the new multinational conglomerate workforce. While corporate values such as efficiency and downsizing in higher education appear to have caught the public's imagination at the moment, this belies the fact that such "reorganization" has

been going on for some time. The modern university once was governed by faculty, with the faculty senate naming the university president. That era of faculty control is long gone, with presidents being named by boards of trustees, and governing through hand-picked (and well-paid) bureaucrats rather than through faculty committees. John Silber, the former president of Boston University, best exemplifies this trend. Faculty power had rested in the fact that most faculty were full-time, and a large percentage of them had tenure, so they could confront administration without fear of losing their jobs. One of the first steps taken by the newly corporatized university in the 1980s was to limit faculty power by

hiring fewer full-time faculty, promoting fewer faculty to tenure, and instituting "post-tenure" reviews that threaten to take tenure away.

The American Council of Education reported in 2002 that "[t]he number of part-time faculty members increased by 79 percent from 1981 to 1999, to more than 400,000 out of a total of one million instructors over all," and that the "biggest growth spurt occurred between 1987 and 1993, when 82 percent of the 120,000 new faculty members hired during that period were for part-time positions." In fact, more professors are working part-time and at two-year community colleges now than at any other time in the country's recent history. The American Association of University Professors reported in 2004 that "44.5 percent of all faculty are part-time, and non-tenure-track positions of all types

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account for more than 60 percent of all faculty appointments in American higher education." Creating a permanent underclass of part-time professional workers in higher education is not only demoralizing and exploitative for many faculty who have such jobs, it also de-skills both part and full-time faculty by increasing the amount of work they have to do. With less time to prepare, larger class loads, almost no time for research, and excessive grading demands, many adjuncts run the risk of becoming ineffective.

As power shifts away from the faculty to the administrative sectors of the university, adjunct faculty increase in number while effectively being removed from the faculty governance process. In short, the hiring of part-time faculty to minimize costs simultaneously maximizes managerial control over faculty and the educational process itself. As their ranks are depleted, full-time faculty live under the constant threat of either being given heavier work loads or of having their tenure contracts weakened or eliminated through "post-tenure reviews." These structural and ideological factors have a chilling effect on higher education faculty and undermine the collective power faculty need to challenge the increasing corporate-based, top-to-down administrative structures that are becoming commonplace in many colleges and universities. The ease at which tenured faculty can now be replaced has been demonstrated in recent years by major universities such as Penn State, which fired lesbian, feminist, drama professor Nona Gerad for writing derogatory emails in which she complained about the lack of resources for her program, criticized the performance of some of her colleagues, and staged a play that a right-wing donor found offensive because of its partial nudity and sexually explicit language!

Such academic downsizing has been legitimized through a notion of professionalism that bears little resemblance to its once stated emphasis on quality teaching, creative research, and public service. Professionalism now positions and rewards educators as narrow specialists, unencumbered by matters of ethics, power, and ideology. No longer concerned with important social issues, democratic values, or the crucial task of educating students about important historical, cultural, social, and theoretical traditions, corporate-inspired notions of professionalism now shift the emphasis from the quality of academic work to a crude emphasis on quantity, from creativity and critical dialogue in the classroom to standardization and rote learning, from supporting full-time tenured positions to constructing an increasing army of contract workers, and from emphasizing rigorous scholarship and engagement with public issues to the push for grant writing and external funding.

A stern critic of what he called the "cult of professionalism," the late Edward Said, condemned its sham quietism, obsession with specialized languages, cult of elitism, expertise rooted in all the obvious gendered, racial, and class specific hierarchies, and its bogus claim to objectivism. Said was

especially critical of those intellectuals who slipped into a kind of professional somnambulism in which matters of theory have less to do with a conscious challenge to politics, power, and injustice than with either a deadening scholasticism or a kind of arcane cleverness—a sort of narcotic performance in fashionable irony—that neither threatens anyone nor opposes anything. He was extremely disheartened by the rise of the cult of professionalism in higher education, and he viewed such a turn as an unacceptable retreat from one of the primary obligations of intellectual work to address serious social issues in order to lessen the hatred and violence that often marked human social relations.

But the cult of professionalism did more than resurrect a trendy retreat into the realms of arcane discourse and weightless theory; it also inspired fear and insecurity in academics terrified about maintaining tenure, getting it, or for that matter simply securing a part-time position. Pressured by the harsh lessons of financial deprivation, overburdened work loads, and the loss of power in shaping the governance process, many faculty live under the constant threat of either being downsized, punished, or fired and are less concerned about the realm of high theory than about accepting the new rules of corporate-based professionalism in order to simply survive in the new corporatized academy.

A Strategy to Retake the University

As full-time academic labor is outsourced to temporary or contract labor, the intellectual culture of the university declines as overworked graduate students and part-time faculty assume the role of undergraduate teaching. Undergraduate teaching in many universities is now largely being done by graduate students and contingent faculty who have no role in the university governance process, are detached from the intellectual life of the university, rarely have time to engage in sustained scholarship, and appear largely as interchangeable instructors acting more like temporary visitors than faculty committed to full-time and secure positions. Power now resides in the hands of a new cadre of corporate-oriented trustees and administrators who actually define themselves largely as academic entrepreneurs and C.E.O.s than as educational leaders.

As the power of higher education is reduced in its ability to make corporate power accountable, it becomes more difficult within the logic of the bottom line for faculty, students, and administrators to address pressing social and ethical issues. This suggests a perilous turn in American society, one that threatens both our understanding of democracy as fundamental to our basic rights and freedoms, as well as the ways in which we can rethink and re-appropriate the meaning, purpose, and future of higher education. Situated within a broader context of issues concerned with social responsibility, politics, and the dignity of human life, higher education should be engaged as a public sphere that offers students the opportunity to involve themselves in the

NEW BOTTOM LINE

deepest problems of society, to acquire the knowledge, skills, and ethical vocabulary necessary for modes of critical dialogue and forms of broadened civic participation. This suggests developing educational conditions for students to come to terms with their own sense of power and public voice as individual and social agents by enabling them to examine and frame critically what they learn in the classroom as part of a broader understanding of what it means to live in a global democracy. At the very least, students need to learn how to take responsibility for their own ideas, take intellectual risks, develop a sense of respect for others different than themselves, and learn how to think critically in order to shape the conditions that influence how they function in a wider democratic culture.

But more is needed than defending higher education as a vital sphere in which to develop and nourish the proper balance between democratic values and market fundamentalism, between identities founded on democratic principles and identities steeped in forms of competitive, self-interested individualism that celebrate their own material and ideological advantages. Given the current assault on critical educators in light of the tragic events of September 11 and the conservative backlash against higher education being waged by the Bush administration, it is politically crucial that educators at all levels of involvement in the academy be defended as public intellectuals who provide an indispensable service to the nation. Such an appeal cannot be made in the name of professionalism but in terms of the civic duty such intellectuals provide. Noam Chomsky has rightly argued in *Profession* that "the social and intellectual role of the university should be subversive in a healthy society ... [and that] individuals and society at large benefit to the extent that these liberatory ideals extend throughout the educational system—in fact, far beyond." Said took a similar position, arguing in the *Nation* that academics should engage in ongoing forms of permanent critique of all abuses of power and authority, "to enter into sustained and vigorous exchange with the outside world," as part of a larger project of helping "to create the social conditions for the collective production of realist utopias."

Following Chomsky and Said, I believe that intellectuals who inhabit our nation's universities should represent the conscience of this society because they not only shape the conditions under which future generations learn about themselves and their relations to others and the outside world, but also because they engage pedagogical practices that are by their very nature moral and political, rather than simply technical. And at its best, such pedagogy bears witness to the ethical and political dilemmas that animate the broader social landscape. Such pedagogical approaches are important because they provide spaces that are both comforting and unsettling, spaces that both disturb and enlighten. Pedagogy in this instance not only works to help students think critically about the issues affecting their lives and the world at large, but potentially energizes them to

seize such moments as possibilities for acting on the world, engaging it as a matter of politics, power, and social justice. The appeal here is not merely ethical, it is also an appeal that addresses the materiality of resources, access, and politics, while viewing power as generative and crucial to any viable notion of individual and social agency.

Organizing against the corporate takeover of higher education also suggests fighting to protect the jobs of full-time faculty, turning adjunct jobs into full-time positions, expanding benefits to part-time workers, and putting power into the hands of faculty and students. Protecting the jobs of full-time faculty means insuring that they have the right to academic freedom, are paid a decent wage, and play an important role in governing the university. A weak faculty translates into a faculty without rights or power, one that is governed by fear rather than shared responsibilities and susceptible to labor-bashing tactics such as increased work loads, contract labor, and the suppression of dissent. Adjunct or part-time labor must be given the opportunity to break the cycle of exploitative labor and within a short period of time be considered for full-time positions with full benefits and the power to influence governance policies. Within the universities and colleges today, power is top heavy, largely controlled by trustees and administrators and removed from those who actually do the work of the university, which includes the faculty, staff, and students. Moreover such struggles must consider addressing the exploitative conditions under which many graduate students work, constituting a de facto army of service workers who are underpaid, overworked, and shorn of any real power or benefits.

The challenge for faculty in higher education is both structural and ideological. On the structural side, faculty, students, and staff need to organize labor movements and unions to challenge the corporatization of the university. Universities have enormous resources that can be mobilized to oppress faculty, exploit staff, and deny the rights of students to a decent education. To fight against such power demands a labor and student movement capable of exercising enormous power collectively in both influencing and shaping academic policies. Such movements must connect to local communities, reach out to national and international organizations, and develop multiple strategies in taking back the universities from the corporations. I want to stress here the need for multiple interventions extending from anti-sweat shop movements to taking control of academic departments to organizing larger faculty structures and organizations. At best, faculty and students must unionize whenever they can in order to speak with a collective voice and the power of collective opposition.

Ideologically, faculty must find ways to contribute their knowledge and skills to understanding how corporate values, identities, and practices create the conditions for devaluing critical learning and undermining viable forms of political

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Education and Moral Values: Seeking a New Bottom Line

Svi Shapiro

There is, today, an extraordinary disconnect between the education we offer our young people and what they need in order to cope with an increasingly violent, materialistic and selfish world. Despite the recent "rediscovery" of our society's crisis in moral and spiritual values, few voices can be heard questioning whether the education we provide our children offers them the knowledge, attitudes, and understanding that might really enable them to deal with the toxic values that increasingly distort their lives. We need, in short, a new bottom line for education.

The real curriculum of our children's lives is their subjection to the constant influence of a culture that turns every aspect of life into a commodity. Whatever else students might hear or learn pales besides the incessant drumbeat of avid consumerism, the pervasive message that *I buy therefore I am!* As the recent trend in makeover TV shows demonstrates all too clearly, my psychological well-being is now attached to the clothes I put on, the contours of my body, and the desiring gaze I evoke in others. The young, like all of us, learn that identity is shaped and secured by the marketplace which, more than anywhere else in our society, promises that the buying (and selling) of goods and self is the only means to achieve popularity, sexual acceptance, pleasure, emotional release, and meaning.

The culture of money and consuming is joined at the hip to the culture of winning and losing. We dress 'right' to be accepted into a social group. What we own is the marker of our success. We are in a constant state of hyper-awareness of not only what our friends and peers have, but also of the wider circles of the rich and the famous. Our emotional life becomes permeated by jealousy of others and self-doubt concerning our own apparent inadequacies or failures. In short, our culture of consumption encourages an obsessive focus on the self. The consequence is that we build an emotional world in which meaning is sought in smaller and

smaller circles of concern. It becomes ever more difficult to find purpose and meaning in the larger world since others only exist for us as instruments with which to leverage our own emotional needs.

It is no wonder that in this increasingly privatized world young people feel alienated and disconnected from social and political events and issues. Even war and terror feel no more real to many young people than an episode of *Friends* or *Survivor*. When what is real to me is circumscribed within the small circle of my emotional life and the intimates who seem to shape it, everything else is reduced to the fleeting images of the electronic screen.

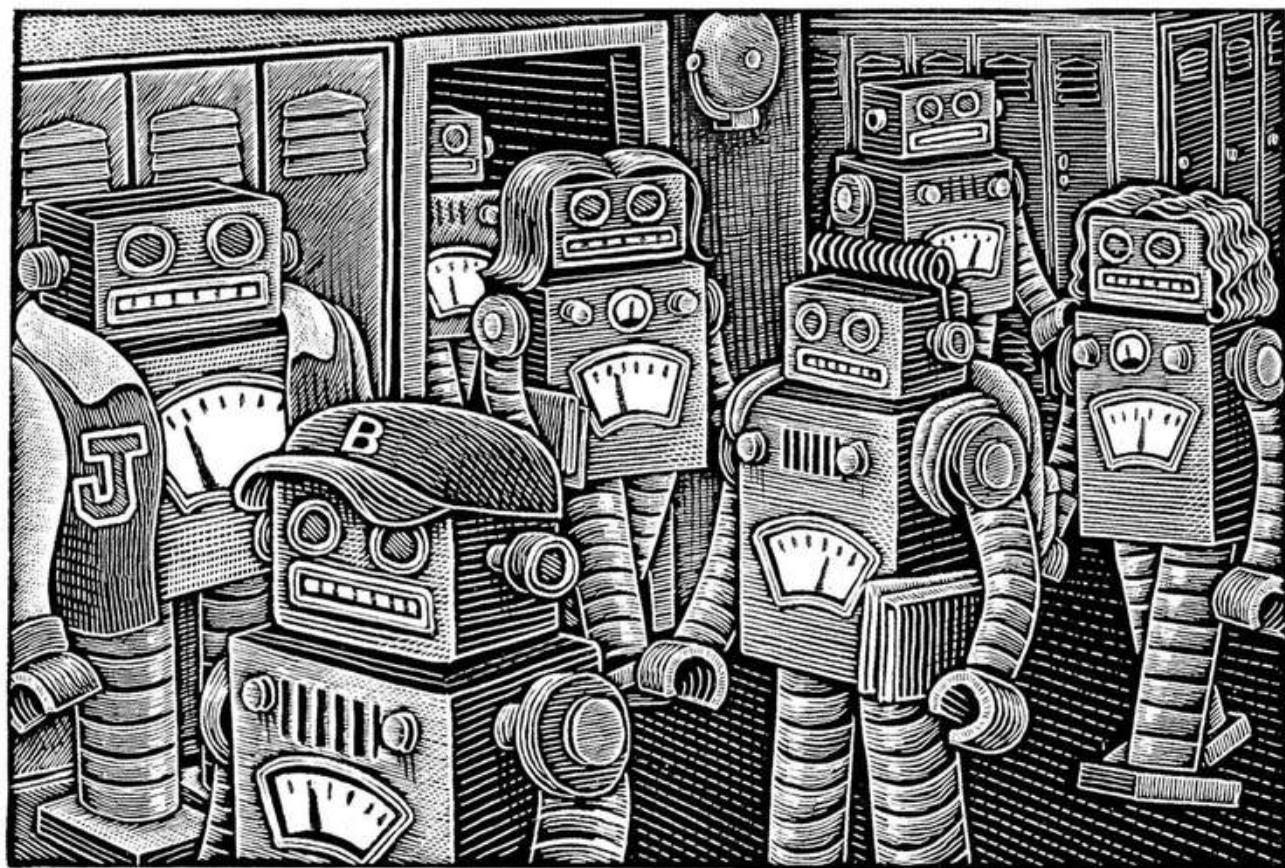
The Failure of Educational Reform

We all see a world that is growing more violent, materialistic, and selfish. The Right's answer to the frequently proclaimed crisis of education has been reforms like "No Child Left Behind." We may well ask, however, how such reforms help our youngsters break out of their me-centered focus on competitive consumption. In what way has all the attention to test results, performance standards, and accountability of teachers contributed to making our children more thoughtful, sensitive, and questioning human beings? In our anxiety about attaining reading and math proficiency, where do we find a similar concern for the development of our children's imagination, or appreciation for the wonder and beauty of life in all its forms? And, as the demands grow to make schooling an adjunct to the world of work, where are the voices that call for education to be a source of joy and pleasure?

The so-called reforms of the Right only exacerbate the problem of values they purport to solve. Education today exists in a state of disembodied suspension—disproportionately concerned with drilling into students' heads abstracted information that is good fodder for testing and grading but far removed from life concerns and moral challenges that would make learning truly meaningful. Indeed, current educational reforms encourage a me-first competitive spirit and reduce complex human questions to yes/no answers.

Instead of the misdirected reforms that have preoccupied policy makers, we need an educational policy that can reconnect our children's education to the moral crisis of our

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world. We desperately need young people who are able to challenge the wastefulness of the earth's precious resources and our ongoing destruction of planetary life; who are able to question the extent of poverty and injustice in the world; who respond critically to the degrading and violent nature of so much human behavior; and are encouraged to consider who are the primary beneficiaries—and the losers—are in our global economic system. Our educational concern should be to encourage students to reflect on the spiritual emptiness of a culture so preoccupied with materialistic goals and superficial measures of human worth.

We should want young people who can engage in the profoundly important quest for the way to live a life of purpose and meaning that is neither materialistic nor shallow. The education we offer must speak honestly to the brutal manner in which human beings have so often dealt with human differences and the need to find ways to address conflicting relationships through nonviolent and non-dominating means. Schools need to be places that can manifest relationships that do not emulate the usual hierarchical, competitive, and individualistic forms—places where young people learn of the value of caring and cooperative relationships based in mutual respect and equality. Integral to this kind of institution is the encouragement of a democratic life in which students can learn the meaning of shared respon-

sibility in the determination of their day-to-day life together. Nor should we shrink from raising our students' awareness of the dissonance, in the larger society, between our democratic ideals and the actual realities of a system that places so much power in the hands of privileged elites and unaccountable interests.

Put most simply, our choice is between an education that is mainly about having one's ticket punched—an instrumental process devoid of any real intellectual, ethical, or spiritual engagement—or a journey through which we can discover something about the meaning and significance of our connections with and responsibilities to others, as well as to the planet that is our home.

Challenging the Status Quo

Why has education followed this deadening path of rote testing and ethical disengagement? The hegemony of familiar ideas is supported by more than unthinking habit. Powerful interests shape the public discourse of education. There has never been a time when the federal government has been more instrumental in setting the agenda for public schools across the United States. Against all of the traditions of local or state control of educational standards, the central government has now become the primary force in setting expectations and goals for schools.

Any attempt to resist these goals places school administrators in jeopardy, as budgets are threatened and schools are "named and shamed" through accusations of failure and lack of accountability.

Such direct political pressure on schools is only one part of a larger ideological crusade that involves economic elites and corporate interests working in tandem with politicians. It has become a fundamental assumption in public discussion that education is, first and foremost, a vehicle for producing suitably trained human capital. This assumption, taken up and reinforced by numerous commissions, task forces and think tank reports, has constantly emphasized the belief that schools' first responsibility is to ensure that new generations of workers have the skills and personal dispositions needed by employers. Of course this has meant shaping the curriculum and practices of schools in a way that promises to meet these expectations, producing a stifling, regimented, top-down system for educating kids. After two decades of relentless demands that schools be about generating productive and competitive "human capital," it is hard indeed for parents, teachers or plain citizens to talk about education as a vehicle for nurturing the kind of human beings that our moral crisis really demands.

All of this leaves us no easy solace as to the immediate possibility of moving in the direction of a life-giving education that would nourish the ethical, spiritual, and social concerns of young people. Perhaps our radical hope is best nourished by the model of the ancient Hebrew prophets who knew the necessity of articulating loudly the ways in which we were falling short of our own highest ideals and did so regardless of whether they were heard by one or by many. They raised their voices in protest at the injustice and insensitivity they saw around them without concern for whether or not this represented a pragmatic or immediately realistic course of action.

A transformative vision is always impelled by a deep set of convictions about the meaning and purpose of human life. These articles of faith are almost always present but we rarely feel invited or even able to articulate them in our rational, materially-oriented, analytic world. We assume we must keep such thoughts tucked into the shadows of our identity as we go about our daily activities. Yet, if we are to talk of changing the way we educate kids, of transforming our competitive, violent, and greedy society into one that is loving, just, and kind, where else are we to go to find the energy that sustains such a vision except to our deepest well of faith? While the "spiritual" is by its very nature hard to define with any precision, it offers us a shorthand way to intimate those deep human impulses, mysterious and unfathomable in all their origins, that animate our yearning for love, compassion, justice, and connection.

Each of us must find our own particular path to the radical hope of our deepest and most powerful convictions—certainly rooted in our life's experiences and encounters,

and in the narratives of possibility and faith we have each imbibed. For myself the Jewish path has been formative. And I want to sketch out here some aspects of this Jewish vision and sensibility that have nurtured, for me, a contrary view of education.

Elements of a Jewish Pedagogy

1. *The Shofar of Awareness.* The sound of the *shofar*, or ram's horn, heard in the synagogue during the days of *Rosh Hashanah*, the Jewish New Year holiday, has a mysterious and startling quality to it. For children, its piercing, staccato blast breaks the monotony of prayers, bringing with it amusement as adults try to coax the appropriate musical sounds from this obdurate instrument. It produces a sound like no other, at once a plaintive cry and a shrill demand for alert attention. But its real purpose during that time of serious reflection is to awaken us from the tendency to sleepwalk through our lives; its sound is intended to shake us out of the habitual routines of our existence that lacked adequate moral and existential consideration.

The work of teachers is always to help their students break through the sense of "this is the way it is" with its fatalistic acceptance of unkind, unjust, and degrading human behaviors. To live life with awareness means to see oneself and others as possessing the power of choice—to refuse, to question, to posit alternatives. It is what Paulo Freire called *conscientization*: the encouragement to live life with thoughtfulness and attentiveness and the capacity to see "reality" as humanly constructed and always one of a number of possible ways of living. Behind the symbolic notes of the horn are the real sounds of human beings living their lives with awareness, responsibility, and the willingness to be ethically discerning.

2. *Rabbinic Truth.* Jewish experience teaches that whatever is the ultimate "truth," the truth for each generation has to be won through the hard work of intellectual interrogation and critical reason. The text (whether in words that are spoken or written) provides no comforting certainty of established understanding—rather, it challenges human beings to elicit meaning from situation to situation, and from generation to generation. While many of us now associate Talmudic discourse with the arcane and the esoteric, this is to miss its essence. Jacob Neusner has noted that far from a sterile intellectualism, the Talmud was a document created by the intellect devoted to morality and sanctity, and one that took for granted humanity's primary capacity to think. It was a continuing effort to figure out how a community might live in a way that was dependent on the force of argument and practical rationality.

This readiness to question truth is what it means to honor the extraordinary human capacity to think. But more than this, the search for what is at least partially true needs to be connected to the search for a purposeful and moral way of life. Education should always be about challenging

those “truths” that are dangerously deceptive or misleading. Put another way, the development and use of our critical reason is not about solving make-believe puzzles for a test or quiz (as it usually is in school), but about creating or recreating a community’s cultural practices in the face of all those things that are destructive, damaging, or dehumanizing. While our understanding is shaped by the social context in which it arises, each generation can and must find new layers of significance and insight into the purpose and quality of our lives. All of this requires that we be accepting of the uncertainty of our always-unfinished understanding, while at the same time restlessly committed to putting what we know to work in order to make a better world.

3. *The Calendar of Survival and Possibility.* The Jewish calendar reminds us again and again that a relentless barbarism has been the underside of history. History has been a constant struggle against oppression and persecution. But history is a record of both savage human brutality and people’s resistance to physical and spiritual annihilation. This is the repeated saga played out in the observances of Jewish holy days like Passover, Chanukah, Tisha B’Av and Yom HaShoah. In all of them, injustice and brutal oppression are the repeated refrains.

Strikingly, in this telling of Jewish history, survival and redemption are ultimately the achievements not of individuals but of a people. Judaism deals with the fate of a community not of a person alone. The meaningful life is inseparable from the quest for a more socially just world. In this sense, the purpose of education is always linked to the critical spirit that seeks a full and liberated existence for all human beings. Education must help us root out and challenge all those inequities that privilege some human lives over others in order to help us resist the imposition of demeaning and exploitative relationships.

In this context the Passover *Seder* becomes much more than a retelling of long-ago historical events. Its purpose is clearly to interrogate our present world to find in it current forms of enslavement and suffering, *but to do that from the vantage point of hope and possibility about a world in which exile and injustice have ended.* The injunction to remember

is clearly an ethical and transformative one: “You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 22:20). The extraordinary pedagogy of the *Seder* (one aimed especially at children) manages to fuse a celebration of survival, the demand to see the oppressions of our present world, and the imaginary re-envisioning of a world of wholeness and justice. In all of this there is our own personal and collective responsibility for social change.

This lesson of hope is the very opposite of the cynicism and despair that afflicts so many young people. It is the antithesis to the “why bother” mentality, the ennui expressed in “whatever,” or the jadedness of “been there, done that.” There is, instead, the fierce assertion that the realities of a world that seem so solid and unmovable can indeed crumble; things can change, and we can be agents of transformation.

4. *The Language of the Body.*

There is, in Jewish experience, a strong emphasis on the connection between one’s internal life and how one acts in the public world. The modern concept of praxis, the unity of thought and action, has always seemed to me to be foreshadowed in the prophetic demand that the spiritual life not be something purely personal but instead be lived out in our pursuit of a more just and compassionate world. Understanding that is divorced from how we live is a form of idolatry. Judaism, in its daily prayers, even provides an appropriate moment of reflection and appreciation for the most mundane aspects of a human being’s daily existence, including those bodily functions that permit

life to continue. These draw our attention to the extraordinary, if taken for granted, dimensions of what it means for us to be embodied creatures.

In contrast to this, education, as Paulo Freire famously asserted, suffers from “narration sickness.” This condition describes not just too much talk by teachers and too little participation by students in the classroom, it also means pedagogy that suffers from an over-emphasis on the cerebral at the expense of human feeling. Knowing, in our schools, focuses overwhelmingly on analysis, problem-solving, and memorization of information. In many ways, suc-

Given our distorted sense of what constitutes significant learning, it is hardly surprising that all that is concerned with the aesthetic—the exploration of feeling, subjectivity and the senses—should play so little role in education. Of course those whose business it is to shape our wants and needs have no such reluctance—advertising is a relentless “education” of the body and human desires.

cess in education is defined by one's capacity to be successful at learning tasks that are disembodied, as we tend to reward an intellectual capability that is divorced from passionate concern, sensitivity towards others, or awareness of our interiority.

Given our distorted sense of what constitutes significant learning, it is hardly surprising that concern with the aesthetic—the exploration of feeling, subjectivity, and the senses—should play so little role in education. Of course those whose business it is to shape our wants and needs have no such reluctance—advertising is a relentless “education” of the body and human desires. Educating students in self-understanding and awareness would mean enabling young people to critique the way their emotional lives are influenced and their bodies “inscribed” with the desire for commodified solutions to human concerns. Sherry Shapiro has pointed to the way understanding our embodied lives can enable us to grasp the social forces that influence and shape the most visceral dimensions of our identities. She notes:

A language that emerges from our bodily living speaks of a kind of rationality distinct from one that is intellectually rooted. It demands that we listen to our bodies, feel our emotions, release our passions, and reunite our critical powers of thinking with our feelings in hopes of a fuller humanity.

Our education needs a new sense of balance. Intellectual development must be accompanied by emotional development. We might ask how it would be if schools recognized not just the smartest kids (or at least those who are best at playing the academic game), but students who are compassionate, have a profound sense of justice, and are concerned for the well-being of others. My interest here is not a new form of competitive ranking. It is the recognition that our technological advances as a nation are not matched by the extent of our sensitivity and concern for others. Our obsessive focus on getting ahead and our view of knowledge as an instrument has depleted the attention we need to give to understanding ourselves better and to figuring out what it might mean to live our lives with authenticity and meaning. As we make education a place of feeling, community service and social action will become something more than a necessary way to enhance a college application. They will be, instead, a way of living out an education that unites body with mind, thought with action, and passion with understanding.

5. *The Sabbath of Being.* The Sabbath in Jewish tradition represents a temporal space—for stillness, reflection, appreciation of relationships, and, most of all, appreciation of the deep mystery of creation. It offers us a short period that provides a contrast to our production-driven culture's notion of time with its demand for a frantic way of life in which “doing” is everything and “being” is regarded as having little useful value and in which our instrumental

view of the world means that we live always in anticipation of our future achievements, rather than allowing ourselves to be fully present to the moment of our existence. Sometimes in class I amuse students with that Buddhist-inspired quip that says “don't just do something, sit there.” It is probably not surprising that capitalism's spiraling obsession with work, and the increasing compulsion to spend and consume, has made many individuals more receptive to the Sabbath concept—the need for time to “just be.”

We are in desperate need of a change in consciousness that will allow us to see nature as something other than a limitless set of inert resources that can endlessly feed our system of production and profit-making. Environmental report after report tells us that we are driving ourselves to destruction, even extinction. At the very least, our dominant culture of doing and using must be balanced by one of appreciation for being that will lead us to care for the precious and sacred beauty of creation. Today, to a very great extent, school is the embodiment of the culture of production; doing, performing, showing is the very axis of school life. We so much need there to be opportunities that can cultivate the *Sabbath consciousness* of stillness, reflection, and appreciation for what is. Making a space in our education for such things might at least provide a window into the possibility of another way of being in this world.

Between Fundamentalisms

Our world is now stretched between the poles of two fundamentalisms. The “religion” of the untrammelled free-market is rapidly turning every dimension of our lives, needs, desires, and purposes into matters of money and materialism—a world in which every aspect of our being appears as nothing but an entry on a profit and loss sheet. In response to this we witness the growth of intolerant and authoritarian faiths that offer a defense of spiritual and moral values but do so in ways that often demean and diminish non-believers and see the world through the lens of a dogmatic certainty. Neither path offers the means to address the deepening moral crisis in ways that can bring about a more loving, compassionate, and meaningful human existence.

It is in this context—of great danger yet still of extraordinary human possibility—that we must examine what it means to educate our children for the twenty-first century. We need to remind ourselves again of the distinction between *schooling* and *education*. Schooling can be made fairer and less subject to the advantages and disadvantages of race, social class, gender, immigrant status, and so on. We can distribute resources more fairly, be less culturally biased in our teaching and testing, and certainly open up more opportunities for those who have been disadvantaged to find new possibilities in their lives. Make no mistake: all of this would be a good thing for both individuals and for our

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society as a whole, but none of this, in itself, would bring us much closer to what it might mean to educate for the challenges of our new century.

To educate our students for tomorrow's challenges we need something far more transformative in our thinking. We must reconceive education as a field that is not just about the learning of skills, the capacity to solve problems, or the ingesting of information. We need to think of the education we give our children as a process that addresses mind, heart, and spirit. In other words, as a process that forms us as mature individuals and as people who live in relationship with others. Do we really need more kids who know how to play the grading and testing games that schools now encourage? Do we really doubt that what we need instead are human beings who have the capacity to meet the extraordinary challenges and demands that are before us as a civilization?

We know something about the education that this transformative vision will entail. We recognize that it must engage students in terms of the totality of their beings, not in the shrunken and limited ways that our schools now demand. It means to take seriously the quest for citizens who can discern truth (or at least what is truer) from the distortions and deceit that surround us in our culture—students, in other words, who can think critically and can problematize the knowledge and meanings they are presented with in their everyday world. It means to take very seriously the goal of an education concerned with the ethical quality of our lives and our society, central to which is the quest for a global culture that ensures the dignity and well-being of each and every person. And, finally, it means an education that can affirm the spiritual dimension of our existence—one that awakens in each person the sense of beauty, wonder, and preciousness of all life on our planet and the interdependence that makes continuation of this life possible.

The task before us and our children, to transform the world of so much unnecessary suffering, hurt, indignity, and injustice is too great for any one person to address. It is clearly a task that must employ the minds and bodies of many of us if change is to come. We must teach the value of participation in the task of *tikkun olam*, the repair and healing of our world, without either succumbing the sense of futility that may come from minimizing what we can do or exaggerating the contributions that one individual may make. The first leads to cynicism and the second to hubris. More realistically, in our work with young people, we may emphasize the teaching of Rabbi Tarfon who asserted that "it is not your duty to complete the work, but neither are you excused from participating in it." We must teach the young that, while we should have a realistic appreciation of the limits of what may be possible, the only justifiable purpose of education in our time is that of bettering the world we have all been given. All the rest is mere commentary. □

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agency. Academics, as Imre Szeman has put it in the *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, need to figure out how corporate power, culture, and values "constitute a problem of and for pedagogy" and need to be attentive to the oppositional pedagogies put into place by various student movements in order to judge their "significance...for the shape and function of the university curricula today" as well as their rhetorical and material impact on public spheres. Within the last few years, protests on and off campuses have picked up and spawned a number of student protest groups, including the United Students Against Sweatshops, with chapters in over 200 schools, the nationwide 180/Movement for Democracy and Education, and a multitude of groups protesting the policies of the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund. The challenge here is for faculty to learn as much as possible from these student movements about what it means to deepen and expand the struggle for establishing pedagogical approaches and labor movements that can be used to mediate the fundamental tension between the public values of higher education and the commercial values of corporate culture, on the one hand, and fight against the more crucial assaults waged against the welfare state and other public goods on the other hand. If the forces of corporate culture are to be challenged, educators must consider enlisting the help of diverse communities, interests, foundations, social movements, and other forces to insure that public institutions of higher learning are adequately funded so that they will not have to rely on corporate sponsorship and advertising revenues.

The language of the emerging corporate university radically alters the vocabulary available for appraising the meaning of citizenship, agency, and civic virtue. Within this discourse everything is for sale, and what is not has no value as a public good or practice. It is in the spirit of such a critique and as an act of resistance that educators need to break with what Pierre Bourdieu in *Acts of Resistance* has described as "new faith in the historical inevitability professed by the theorists of [neo] liberalism [in order] to invent new forms of collective political work capable of" confronting the march of corporate power. This will not be an easy task, but it is a necessary one if democracy is to be won back from the reign of financial markets and the Darwinian values of an unbridled capitalism. Academics can contribute to such a struggle by, among other things, defending higher education for the contribution it makes to the quality of public life, fighting through organized resistance for the crucial role higher education can exercise pedagogically in asserting the primacy of democratic values over commercial interests, and struggling collectively through a powerful union movement to preserve the institutional and ideological conditions necessary to provide both faculty and students with the capacities they need for civic courage and engaged critical citizenship. □

Interview with Julia Butterfly Hill

Brian Awehali

Julia Butterfly Hill brought international attention to the plight of the world's last remaining ancient forests when she climbed 180 feet up a 1000-year-old redwood tree and refused to come down. Her historic 738-day protest of the environmental destruction caused by clear-cutting culminated with a negotiated agreement that provided permanent protection for the tree ("Luna") and a nearly three-acre buffer zone.

*Following her tree-sit, Julia became the author of the national bestseller, *The Legacy of Luna* and co-author of *One Makes The Difference* (both published by HarperSanFrancisco). Julia also founded the nonprofit organization, Circle of Life (www.circleoflife.org) to promote sustainability, restoration, and preservation of life. The child of a preacher, she has worked to link her strong sense of spirituality to environmental and social justice activism.*

BA: Why do you think it's important to unify spirituality and political activism?

JBH: My experience in my activism has been that grassroots activism is the roots, spirituality/faith/religion is the branches, and we've been missing the trunk. The spirituality/faith/religion organizations are really insular, focused on defining who your community is and taking care of that community. For example, the New Age movement is really about working on yourself, and the idea that the world will be enlightened as you become enlightened, except that they never step out into the world.

BA: You've been very successful at talking about radical

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social activism in faith-based and spiritual communities. How do you reach them?

JBH: One of the things I always remind people of is that if you want to talk about radicals, talk about Jesus and God. Go back to the beginning. God's original intention was to hang out in a beautiful garden with two naked vegetarians. That's a pretty radical guy, right? And Jesus was the original hippie. His whole message was about living simply, doing away with material goods, doing away with all the value we place on material goods, and living a life where unconditional love is a verb versus just a mouthpiece.

And it was so radical that they murdered him for it. That's how radical it was. And to this day, it's still that radical.

BA: Do you think that religious texts—the things people use as touchstones—need to be updated, because they haven't moved sufficiently with the realities of the planet?

JBH: A lot of people still live with me as the woman who lived in a tree. I lived in a tree from 1997 to 1999. It's 2005 now. And I'm clear that my commitment is to taking what I learned *then* and seeing how it applies *now*. I feel the same about Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam and you name it. Every faith-based tradition I've studied has powerful, enduring truths. But the problem is that we take those powerful truths and we keep them stuck in the time in which they were translated, and say that *that* is the whole truth, instead of letting the truth grow from the historical context and continue to grow as life does.

I think that's why a lot of activists can't relate to [religion]. They see it as this dead and dying thing. Sadly, we've done that with a lot of powerful, powerful truths in various religions.... We've stuck [them] in a stagnant pond. When I see this dead and dying pond, I know that we can create a system that's going to bring new water in and let old water move out, and I'm committed to the restoration of that pond. I know that there's life there, and I refuse to give up on it.

BA: Do you feel the fundamental thing missing there is that God, in that generative sense, is change and always has been?

JBH: For me, when you look at Christian traditions or the three families that came out of Abraham, they're all based on "In the beginning there was nothing but God. And then life evolved from that space." And if that's the truth as you see it, then it means that life is not only a gift from God, it's a gift *of* God. A lot of my interactions have been with people saying, "You need to worship the creator, not the creation, Julia." But if they read their text—their own text—there was nothing but God in the beginning, and then God created. So *everything*—the trees, the flies, the frogs, the mosquitoes—I *hate* mosquitoes—even the mosquitoes are a form of God. And that's *hard* to take on, but I'm willing to try!

BA: Did God create George W. Bush?

JBH: Absolutely. I'm also clear that there's a part of Bush that lives in each and every one of us. That's why it's so easy to be angry at him. Because we see a piece of ourselves. He's an extreme example of pieces we have within all of ourselves which, if we're not careful, we can fall into. We all have moments of being closed-minded and fundamental around our beliefs.

I mean, look at the activist movement! Holy cow! The kinds of ways the activist movement gets up on its pedestal and says it is right and everyone else is wrong and allows no space for diversity and creativity and even, dare I say it, differences in ideology?

BA: Oh no! (laughing)

JBH: Yeah! Our activist movement, sadly, in many ways mirrors Bush and the White House!

....There's the whole activist movement of pointing fingers outward, outward, outward and refusing to look at the three fingers that point back every time we point out. [We are] not doing the healing work that we need to do, what we need to do within ourselves. It's clear that the wounds that exist on the planet and in our communities only exist there because they already exist within ourselves.

It's not possible to create holistic-healing planning on our planet and in our communities if we're not including ourselves in that process. And it's not possible to make that happen if we're only

looking at ourselves and we're not looking at the greater systems and the greater world. So to me, it's not just powerful, it's absolutely vital to our success that we build a bridge between the two.

Because if we don't, we're literally killing off what it is we're trying to make happen in the world. It's not possible to make it happen out there if it's not at the same time happening in here, within ourselves. That's why war doesn't work. War doesn't create peace because it's violent. It's killing off what it's trying to create. And in turn, [if] we get really elitist and up on our pedestal about how bad war is, we turn that on each other. I've been in completely abusive meetings about how to do a peace action.

BA: I want to get clear what you mean. What is the relationship between an inward-turning spirituality and an out-

It's not possible to create holistic-healing planning on our planet and in our communities if we're not including ourselves in that process. And it's not possible to make that happen if we're only looking at ourselves and we're not looking at the greater systems and the greater world.

ward-pointing activism? How can they be interconnected?

JBH: My understanding of it is that either one without the other is not whole, healthy, and complete. And because of that, neither one without the other can ultimately accomplish its goals. It can get them momentarily, but they're not going to last.

I call it spiritual activation. Pardon the metaphor, but [it's] the caterpillar turning into the butterfly. The caterpillar's got a pretty comfy life, right? It just hangs out on its food source. It's prey to some birds and things, but usually it's pretty camouflaged, so its success rate of living is pretty high.

There's no reason why it would go through the process of transformation. And then it has this inner calling, and the first thing it does is take its innermost depths and spin itself in them. And it creates a space where there's no running away. In industrialized countries we have all kinds of ways of running away. Shopping, theaters, eating out....

There's no running away when you're spinning yourself in your innermost self. You're just getting real with what's going on. And as you start to get real with what's going on, you begin to liquefy. And people are afraid of the liquefaction process. In the spiritual and religious communities, they're afraid of it, and if they're in activist communities, they're afraid of it.

Because in the spiritual and religious communities, they would be mandated to hold themselves accountable for what their actions are manifesting in the world. And the majority of what's happening under the auspices of faith-based traditions are not manifesting the mission and vision of what they proclaim.

With the activist communities, it's about getting real with the fact that we can point fingers all we want, but if we're

Books by Tikkun Authors

THE GENEVA ACCORD By Michael Lerner

Presents and analyzes the one proposed political solution to the Israel/Palestine conflict both sides can agree upon. Lerner counters progressives and conservatives who critique the two-state-solution approach. North Atlantic Books ■ \$10

HEALING ISRAEL/PALESTINE By Michael Lerner

A bold, balanced, and concise history of Zionism for progressive Jews who want to find a way to be both pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian, with a clear blueprint for a final peace settlement. North Atlantic Books ■ \$14

SPIRIT MATTERS By Michael Lerner

The foundational text of the TIKKUN philosophy: The critically-acclaimed call for stronger spiritual values that outlines what a New Bottom Line would look like in every aspect of American society. Hampton Roads Publishing ■ \$19

THE BANK TELLER By Peter Gabel

When human connectedness and our aspirations for love and recognition disappear, we need Tikkun. A spiritual philosophy that challenges the

Hinduism and Ecology

Christopher Key Chapple

The word "Hindu" derives from a Persian way of characterizing the variety of traditions and cultural practices that can be found on the other side of the Indus River, the great Himalayan cascade that now bisects Pakistan. "Hindu" describes persons practicing Vedic ritual or worshipping Krishna. "Hindu" also describes the shared customs of Jains, Sikhs, and Zoroastrians.

The excavations of early Indian civilization reveal a dynamic, multicultural society in constant trade and contact with Mesopotamia. It flourished over 5,000 years ago and remained largely unchanged for two millennia. The seals, insignia, and ruins from this era indicate a veneration of female energy that has endured in the form of goddess worship, as well as a respect for animals that can be seen throughout India. The iconic heroes and heroines of this ancient culture were often depicted in poses resembling modern-day meditation.

At least 3,500 years ago, collections of songs known as the "Knowledge Hymns" or *Vedas* circulated first in northwest India, then spread east through the Ganges River plain and then south through the Deccan to the very tip of India. These hymns include praise of the earth goddess, the sky gods, and the great seers and philosophers who originated sacrificial rituals and brought some order to society. In an unbroken oral tradition, these chants passed from generation to generation up to the present.

From the wisdom of the *Vedas* arose several philosophical schools and traditions of worship. Perhaps the most compelling image can be found in Indra's attempt to harness the thunder and the rain, necessary for the replenishment of life in India's critical monsoon season. Gentler images include the description of two birds on the same tree, one always active, the other looking on wisely and dispassionately. India still grapples with its extreme weather and places great value on the aspect of being human that allows one to sit and reflect.

Widely popularized 1,300 years ago, the spiritual philosophy known as Tantra arose as a marriage of these concerns.

Christopher Key Chapple is Professor of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University and author of a dozen books, including Hinduism and Ecology (co-edited with Mary Evelyn Tucker) and Reconciling Yogas.

Tantra speaks of an intimacy between the human body and the cosmos. Meditation reveals that the earth stands in relationship with our sense of smell, located in the human nose. The scent of snow on the distant mountains, the fragrance of flowers bursting forth following the rains, the musky smell of fertile humus remind us of our reliance on Mother Earth.

Meditation also establishes the connection between the water we drink and the saliva that allows us to digest our food. Meditation unveils the power of our eyes to connect with the radiance of the sun and perceive form, beauty, and color. Meditation brings us into a quiet realization of the

power of the wind that circulates in our bodies as breath. And meditation on the power of hearing provides an orientation in space. Our five great senses interact with the five great elements, fueling the motion to be interpreted and understood by the mind.

The mind seeks to grasp meaning and purpose. A mind sullied by greed will attempt to gather as much of the material world as possible. However, no matter how much one acquires, it can never be enough. A mind liberated from greed moves with power, always in touch with the deeper spiritual aspect that lies within a human in harmony with the cosmos.

When one finds that connection and can reach deep within before moving outward, then the imprint on the earth becomes light, even luminous.

Yoga seeks to enhance and bring out this acknowledgement that regardless of what a human being might accomplish in this lifetime, the world, the earth, will continue. By appreciating the movements of the body and the breath, by culturing oneself through the ethical practices of nonviolence and truthfulness, one moves into the world with ease and grace.

Ritual, quietly observed, perhaps in a salutation to the sun, or the kindling of a flame, or the careful arrangement of flowers, promotes a deep link with the earth goddess, the god of the breath and wind, and the vast expanse of the heavens. Through Yoga, one realizes the connection between oneself, other people, that which is below, and that which is above.

For one attuned to the ritualism and artistry of the Hindu tradition, the practice of religion cannot be separated from an appreciation of the earth. Hindu ecology makes us catch our breath and enter into that special moment where our senses become filled, our mind becomes stilled, and we dwell, even if for just an instant, in a state of perfection and gratitude. □

**A new
series on
sacred
ecology**

Divestment and More: A Strategy Exploration

Michael Lerner

This is thinking in progress—not a final commitment on my part, and definitely not “the official position of the Tikkun Community.” Rather, it is an attempt to share some of my own thinking and provoke an exploration of strategies. I know very well that there are members and leaders

Let me situate this within the current realities and the debates going on inside the peace movement in post-Palestinian-election 2005.

There are some hopeful signs in Israel in the post-Arafat

THE DIVESTMENT DEBATE

Let's reiterate Tikkun's basic moral perspective here: The Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is morally wrong—as well as destructive to the best interests not only of the Palestinians but of the Israeli people, Jews around the world, and world peace—and should be resisted, publicly challenged, and morally condemned. We call upon the Israeli people, our brothers and sisters, whom we love and care about, to engage in massive nonviolent civil disobedience against the Likud/Labor government until it immediately and unconditionally withdraws from not only Gaza but also the West Bank or until Israel implements the Geneva Accord through negotiations with the Palestinian people.

There are a lot of very decent people in Israel, but there is little chance that they will mobilize around demands for immediate withdrawal, much less participate in the nonviolent civil disobedience needed to awaken Israelis from their moral slumber. Just as we in the United States have so far been unsuccessful in building a large movement for massive, nonviolent civil disobedience against the war in Iraq because not enough people have been able to separate the war from their anxiety about terrorism, so in Israel the Left can't get enough people to distinguish between withdrawing from the Territories and exposing themselves to Palestinian terror. And given the relative frequency of Palestinian terror attacks, it is much harder in Israel to get ordinary, decent human beings to take personal risks to oppose the Occupation.

Though we proudly salute Israelis who refuse to do their IDF service by enforcing the Occupation, and see these "refuseniks" as representing the best in the Jewish tradition of remaining true to ideals higher than blind nationalism, it's hard to see evidence that their principled stand will spread, particularly now that the rest of the Israeli Left has mobilized so powerfully against right-wing refuseniks who said they would not implement orders to remove settlers from Gaza. Many Israeli leftists take the stance that the best way to preserve the country from civil war is to give formal loyalty to the IDF, as in "see, we served when we didn't agree with the army's policies, so now the Right should do the

same." It's an argument that actually has little power, but it helps explain why so many peaceniks have not become part of the refusenik movement.

Staying within the "consensus" is the highest value for many Israeli peaceniks, which also explains why so many of them, and their allied organizations in the United States, have never really sought to develop or nurture within the Jewish people a spiritually-based compassion for the suffering of the Palestinian people, seeing that as too "idealistic." Instead, they often talk about peace as though their prime motivation is to get rid of Palestinians by giving them their own state (a way of thinking that then has made it hard for them to build a movement against the Wall, which similarly aims to "get rid of" those pesky Others), or to protect a Jewish demographic majority in Israel.

This is one reason why a secular peace movement badly needs to be supplemented by a spiritually oriented peace movement in Israel, which could speak the language of Torah and from that vantage point insist on Israelis recognizing the humanity of the Palestinians. Unfortunately, the tremendous antagonism on the part of most Israelis to Judaism—generated by the Orthodox establishment, on the one hand, and the narrow focus of people in the Israeli religious peace camp on the other (for example, the Meimad party's focus on proving that they are "really Orthodox" rather than reaching out with a spiritual message that merges peace politics with a spiritually alive vision of Judaism)—has made it very hard for a creative, politically progressive spiritual voice to emerge. Instead, and in some ways repeating the problem of anti-political, New Age spiritual tendencies in the United States, those spiritual people in Israel who have felt uncomfortable with the oppression of Palestinians have contented themselves with a spirituality that avoids politics or confines itself to one-on-one or small group dialogues rather than organizing a political force that could directly challenge the Occupation itself. What is most striking about the courage of Rabbi Arik Ascherman's Rabbis for Human Rights organization is how few other religious people have joined with him when he actually engages in acts of civil disobedience.

For all these reasons, Yossi Beilin's peace-oriented Yachad party and the Geneva Accord will remain without great public support in Israel unless one of two things happens: a massive commitment on the part of the Palestinian people and its leadership to nonviolence in principle (not just as a tactic, but as a principled commitment) or a massive effort by the United States and Europe to impose a settlement.

Israel and the Jewish people are locked in fear, partly inherited from the Jewish experience of persecution throughout the ages, which culminated in the Holocaust, partly as a result of cynical manipulation of that fear by American and Israeli Jewish leaders and right-wing strands in Zionism, partly due to the poli-



AP PHOTO/KEVIN FRAYER

cies of surrounding Arab states for the past fifty-seven years, and partly because of acts of terror against Israeli civilians that continued after Israel offered peace at Oslo.

Undermining this fear is the single most important task for anyone who wishes to see Israel develop a constituency for a more generous solution with the Palestinian people than the unacceptable offers that a Likud/Labor coalition is likely to offer.

Breaking through that fear requires the Palestinian people to be able to convince Israelis that the terror they have already experienced will not intensify but diminish dramatically after the creation of a Palestinian state. That can only be achieved if Israelis believe that there is a genuine change of heart among Palestinians, not simply a tactical "Let's pretend we are nonviolent until we get a state of our own and then we will strike back with greater capacity to show our vengeance for all that they did to us."

This is why principled nonviolence is so critical. A principled nonviolence must seek to communicate to the Israeli people that the Palestinians, while rightly angry at what has been done to them, still affirm the humanity of the Israelis and recognize them as people whose right to life and security deserves to be preserved.

This, of course, is an "outrageous" demand to make on an occupied and oppressed people: that they reassure their oppressors that despite all the human rights violations of the Occupation, the oppressed can still recognize the humanity of the oppressor! Yet this is precisely the brilliance of the strategies of Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela—and it reflects the difference between what I call being "right" and being "smart." Too often the Left wants to be right, too infrequently does it seek to be smart.

To understand this difference, let's review the debate that took place between Martin Luther King Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) and Huey Newton's Black Panther Party. The Panthers ridiculed King's talk of nonviolence, pointing to the fact that whites had been using violence against African Americans for 400 years and that their own northern inner-city African-American communities were still being occupied by white police forces that daily harassed African-American men, and insisted that African Americans had a "right" to self-defense. King's SCLC responded by pointing out that as long as the oppressed used violence, their fight would take place on the terrain of the oppressor whose force and violence was far greater than anything that could be mobilized by the oppressed. The oppressor has an unconscious but powerful fear that once the boot of oppression is lifted from the neck of the oppressed, the oppressed will use their freedom to act in precisely the way they were treated and strike back harshly at the oppressor. So, argued King, it was the task of the oppressed to reassure the oppressor, because otherwise the oppression would never be lifted. "Sure, it's not fair," acknowledged King's SCLC followers, "but it's smart. And we prefer to choose smart and end the oppression rather

than choose to remain oppressed and simply continue our discourse of pointing out why we are 'right' while remaining oppressed."

So, no, it's not fair, but it is smart to try to reassure the oppressor that the oppressed see their humanity. It is this that gave Mandela, King and Gandhi their power. True, the African National Congress also waged an armed struggle on the periphery in South Africa, armed in part by Soviet/Cuban client states. But in a post-Cold War period in which there is no countervailing force to supply arms and military/political cover to liberation struggles, the Palestinians have no viable military strategy. The Israelis have shown that they can sit out anything in the way of violence that the Palestinians can throw in their direction and can match it with far greater violence and far greater disruption of daily life in Palestine. For Palestinians, this armed struggle/terror strategy is not working, except to generate resolutions of support from international bodies that have no intention of following through with concrete action. Thus, for the Palestinians, being smart is the only reasonable option. That's why a principled nonviolence is not only morally correct but also the most sensible political strategy.

But it's no more likely to happen among Palestinians, given current circumstances, than among Israelis. In the late 1980s when some Palestinians activists preached nonviolence, they were either arrested or deported by Israeli authorities. Nonviolent demonstrations in Palestine have taken place in the past few years—and they've been ignored by the media or have lost their dignified quality when Israeli troops have met nonviolence with violence. At this very moment, Sami Awad and other nonviolent trainers are receiving enthusiastic responses in several Palestinian villages. If this is news to you, you probably haven't yet joined The Tikkun Community (which you can do right now at www.tikkun.org), because we have sent out many documented accounts of such demonstrations and reports from Israeli peace-movement eyewitnesses to the brutality visited upon nonviolent Palestinian demonstrators (and occasionally also on their nonviolent Israeli supporters) by Israeli border police or the IDF. Moreover, Israel has consistently used moments of relative calm between the two sides to assassinate people it labeled militants rather than to build on the possibility of truce, so many Palestinian militants would reasonably fear for their lives at this point, were there to be unilateral nonviolence coming from the Palestinian side.

Of course, the greatest problem militating against significant numbers of Palestinians adopting nonviolence is the misery that the Occupation imposes on the daily lives of the Palestinian people, backed up by the violence of the occupiers. While I believe that the Herculean effort to build a nonviolent movement in Palestine would be the smartest and quickest way to undermine the Occupation, I also understand why this kind of thinking is unlikely to resonate with most people living in conditions of harsh occupation.

A Statement from the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) concerning actions of the 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) regarding Israel and Palestine and outreach to Jewish people.

One of the deep and abiding commitments of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is to reconciliation and good relationships with people of all faith communities. In light of this, some people have raised concern about certain actions taken by the 216th General Assembly, held June 26–July 3 in Richmond, Virginia, related to both outreach to Jewish people and Israeli and Palestinian relations. Therefore, I am sending this message to both Presbyterian leaders and to ecumenical partners and colleagues from other faith communities with the hope that it will clarify the actions of this assembly and the ongoing commitments of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

As Christians, we experience the transforming power of God's love in Jesus Christ. Therefore, we do not hesitate to make joyful witness to the hope that is in us, and to work and pray for the restored and reconciled creation to which we and all people are called. We make every effort to discern God's presence in the world and to "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream" (Amos 5:24). It is out of this faith and commitment, and with careful reflection, that the commissioners to the 216th General Assembly took a number of actions concerning our relations with the Jewish community, as well as the situation of Israel and Palestine.

1 Presbyterians' concerns about appropriate forms of Christian witness to Jewish people in general and to the new church development project, Avodat Yisrael, in Philadelphia in particular led to a two-part action.

■ First, in response to overtures from four of our presbyteries—regional governing bodies—the General Assembly mandated a study to "examine and strengthen the relationship between Christians and Jews and the implications of this relationship for our evangelism and new church development." The focus of this action is to re-examine our theological understanding of Christian-Jewish relationship and to discern whether this particular form of outreach contradicts that understanding or violates our intention to do

evangelism in a spirit of respect, openness, and honesty.

■ Second, the Assembly did not adopt a proposal to suspend the availability of national funding for any other such projects. Here it is important to note that primary decisions regarding the funding of new church developments are made at the presbytery (regional) level of our denomination; in nearly all cases, national funding for such work is made only to complement funds already committed by presbyteries and synods with the understanding that presbyteries take the lead in determining the appropriate projects.

2 The Assembly declared that Christian Zionism is not consistent with the basic values of Reformed theology because it makes use of idiosyncratic interpretations of scripture to undergird a certain reading of current events, and to generate support for specific political goals that do not bolster work toward peace and potentially endanger Palestinian and Israeli people.

3 The assembly called for an end to Israel's construction of the "separation barrier."

■ While fully aware of our interest in Israel's security, the major reason for this action was the Assembly's concern of the impact of the structure on the economic, social, and religious life of Palestinians.

■ The Assembly action used the word "wall" because it has become a general reference for the physical structure being put in place.

■ It raised legitimate questions, corroborated by Israel's Supreme Court and the International Court of Justice, regarding the route of the wall.

■ In previous Assemblies, the church has called for an end to the occupation, as the principal cause of the conflict.

Presbyterians are calling for an end to this barrier in the belief "that the best hope for security for both Israelis and Palestinians may be found in laying down all forms of aggression on both sides, ending the Israeli occupation, and finding ways to build bridges of peace rather than walls of

separation. Good neighborly relations, rather than mutual isolation and suspicion, are urgently needed between Israel and its neighbors in Palestine and the Middle East."

4 The Assembly authorized exploration of a selective divestment of church funds from those companies whose business in Israel is found to be directly or indirectly causing harm or suffering to innocent people, Palestinian or Israeli. It did not approve a blanket divestment from companies that do business in Israel, as is being reported in some places. This action was taken in response to an overture from the Presbytery of St. Augustine, representing the churches in northeast Florida.

- The Assembly asked the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee, the denomination's permanent committee that develops socially responsible investment guidelines, to initiate a process to look into companies investing in Israel and to bring recommendations re: phasing in selective divestments to the General Assembly Council for action in March 2005.

- Although the decision to "initiate a process of phased, selective divestment in multinational corporations operating in Israel" may be presumed by some to invite comparison of Israeli policies with those of apartheid South Africa, the Assembly has not asserted any moral equivalency between the two. The two situations are distinct. The focus of this action is to explore use of a proven tool of economic pressure to motivate real change in Israeli policies and movement toward peace.

Again, the Assembly's action calls for a selective divestment, and not a blanket economic boycott, keeping before us our interest in Israel's economic and social well-being where these do not inflict suffering on Palestinian or Israeli people.

5 These actions are rooted in a longstanding commitment to the secure existence of Israel and the Israeli people, in a similar commitment to the security and existence of Palestinians in their own state, and in a passionate vision of negotiated peace as the only viable way forward. The Presbyterian Church (USA) has consistently supported the existence of Israel within legitimate and secure borders, and prayed for its security and well-being. It is, however, the conviction of the Presbyterian Church (USA) that "the security of Israel and the Israeli people is inexorably dependent on making peace with their Palestinian neighbors, by negotiating and reaching a just and equitable solution to the conflict that respects international law, human rights, the sanctity of life, and dignity of persons, land, property, safety of home, freedom of movement, the rights of refugees to return to their homeland, the right of a people to determine their political future, and to live in peace and prosperity."

6 It should be noted that this action was taken as part of a larger commitment of the PC(USA) to human rights and social justice all around the world. It should be further noted that the Presbyterian Church (USA) is not singling out Israel and Palestine alone for observation and critique. The PC(USA) regularly publishes an annual report regarding human rights around the world, and has spoken specifically about issues of justice related to North and South Korea, Rwanda, Taiwan, Central American states, and many others, including the United States. Assembly actions regularly make comment on issues of religious liberty in many countries, including other Middle Eastern countries. The PC(USA) believes that, through such actions, important perspectives and informed glimpses of difficult situations are made available to the church and the wider community to inform responsible engagement with the world.

7 All of these actions are consistent with the commitment of the Presbyterian Church (USA) made in 1987 in "A Theological Understanding of the Relationship between Christians and Jews", "never again to participate in, to contribute to, or (insofar as we are able) to allow the persecution or denigration of Jews." That document also reminds us "both Christians and Jews are called to wait and to hope in God. While we wait, Jews and Christians are called to the service of God in the world." This calling includes "ceaseless activity in the cause of justice and peace."

As I made clear in a statement of May 28, 2002, "Palestinians are called, once and for all, to cease striking terror in the hearts of Israeli Jews by stopping attacks on noncombatants while they are carrying out the activities of their daily lives or the celebrations of their peoplehood. Israelis are called, once and for all, to cease striking terror in the hearts of Palestinians by stopping military operations that assault harmless people and disable Palestinian infrastructures. It is time to stop activities that increase hatred and mutual recrimination and that destroy hope, security and trust.... Acts of hate and terror inflicted on innocent children and youth, women and men of Israel and the larger Jewish community must be unequivocally condemned and vehemently abhorred. This is in no way inconsistent with speaking out about the political and military violence of the Israeli government or the militant activities of Israeli settlers."

I encourage Presbyterians to maintain their relationships with people of other faiths, with sensitivity to the fragility of trust in the present climate of violence and terror. I also encourage all of us to seek opportunities for respectful conversation with Jewish neighbors about disagreements regarding Israeli policy and forms of public policy advocacy for Israeli-Palestinian peace. □

THE DIVESTMENT DEBATE

How can we break through the impacted thinking on both sides? Both sides need empathic recognition of their own unique history. Israelis and Palestinians both need to feel that "the other side" and the world community acknowledge their history, the legitimacy of their interpretation of their history, and the pain that they have been going through, and that these others are not interested in blaming them or demeaning them, but only in compassionately finding a solution to end the struggle. The crucial element for a breakthrough is empathy, a willingness to recognize the Other, not simply in formal resolutions or political agreements but in a new open-heartedness, a spirit of generosity and caring, a willingness to stop playing the "blame game" and really let into one's own heart the humanity of the Other.

None of that is possible, say the cynical realists, until the Occupation itself has ended. That's why a political settlement must come first, they tell us. Well, I'm the last one to want to stop that from happening, but it isn't happening, and it won't happen just because Israel removes some settlers from Gaza—not unless that move is perceived as stemming from a new spirit of generosity, contrition, and atonement on the part of Israel. That spirit is not going to emerge in Israel without a similar development from Palestinians. This is the cycle that can only be broken by one side or the other embracing a whole new politics of compassion and empathy—and there is no significant force in either Israel or Palestine currently seeking to place such qualities at the center of their politics.

Now, consider the plans of some on the Left both in the United States and Europe. They talk about a one-state solution or a right of return. And they call for a boycott of Israel's academic institutions and a campaign to disinvest in Israel similar to that which led to changes in South Africa.

These kinds of interventions are exactly the opposite of what is needed today. They actually play directly into the hands of the most right-wing elements in Israel, which can use these fledgling efforts to remind Israelis of the "truth" that they supposedly know: that everyone is against them, that the world is filled with irrational hatred of the Jews, and that the only solution is for Jews to use all their power and smarts to resist the pressure from the rest of the world. In short, these are interventions that promote fear rather than hope and make it even less likely that an Israeli government that was willing to back a Geneva Accord-style solution could come to power.

One Secular, Bi-National State

I have always opposed the discrimination policies of the Israeli government against its Arab citizens. I also oppose religious coercion and believe that the religious parties should be prevented from using the mechanisms of state power to impose religious practices on the Israeli population. Not only are those policies anathema to human freedoms, they also

guarantee that most Israelis will continue to hate religion and never discover the deep spiritual wisdom of a Judaism freed from the fundamentalists, nationalists, and cynical realists who today dominate Jewish religious institutions.

But the call for a bi-national state is actually a call for the elimination of Israel. And most Jews believe that the Jewish people need a state to protect them from the still existing anti-Semitism that has led to genocide against the Jewish people within the living memory of many Jews. I have argued that some of the policies of the State of Israel have actually intensified pre-existing anti-Semitism and have generated anger at the Jewish people from many who had no previous history of anti-Semitism. But though that is true, I do not argue that there is no longer a need for a state to provide security for the Jewish people. In fact, the unfair way that criticism of Israeli policies is being played out today (see the argument below about divestment) shows that Jews are not being paranoid when they see sections of the world's population using double standards and directing anger at Jews out of proportion to the actual sins of the Israeli government. This intensifies Jewish fears that without a state specifically created to protect the Jewish people, we might again be vulnerable to the horrific assaults on us that happened periodically when we had no state.

Given that perception, the call for a bi-national state is a total nonstarter. For an Israeli population too scared to allow the implementation of the Geneva Accord, a bi-national state would be unthinkable: with current population trends, the Jews would soon be a minority dependent on the good will of their Palestinian neighbors. We've seen how well that worked out in the former Yugoslavia, and it would be likely to result in similar inter-ethnic conflict that would be just as terrible.

Should the world seek to impose such a state on the Jewish people, the most frightened and frightening elements of the Jewish people would come to the fore. Rather than accede to external pressure, a significant constituency would call for using Israel's atomic weapons to resist, even at the cost of repeating a Masada-like suicidal war that would create havoc and mass destruction. Rather than accede to a path that many Jews would perceive as passively suicidal, these Jews would want to go down in a way that permanently taught the world the price of hurting the Jews. Until Jews have overcome that kind of thinking—by experiencing fairness and good treatment from the world for such a long time that they no longer fear the way they would be treated without a state—the idea of imposing a one-state solution is unwise and will go nowhere.

Ultimately, I believe not in the one-state solution but the no-state solution. The greatest danger facing the human race is that the scourge of nationalist wars will continue to divert our attention from the immediate survival need of the human race: to band together to repair the destructive environmental impact of 150 years of global industrialization. So

whereas in the short run I see no political possibility of overcoming Jewish nationalism enough to go to a one-state solution, the long-term goal is not to fuse Israel and Palestine together but to remake the entire political geography of the world around geo-environmental political entities whose primary task is to coordinate investment and production for the sake of creating a global economy aimed at repairing the world's environment.

In this context, I hope for the preservation of the cultural richness and diversity of the world's religious and cultural heritage, and the elimination of current nation-states, which often perpetuate senseless national struggles like that of Israelis and Palestinians. So, if you are talking short term, focus on the Geneva Accord and its two-state solution, in which Israel gets to retain some of the settlements in the West Bank close to the pre-1967 border (the "Green Line") in exchange for giving the Palestinians an equal amount of land from what is now Israel. And if you are talking about the long run, forget about one state and instead go for what the world really needs: no states.

Right of Return

If Palestinians were to have a right of return in principle, then in principle they could at any point end the existence of a Jewish state by flooding it with Palestinian returnees and their progeny. So, no Jewish state is going to agree to an unlimited and unspecified "right" of return, though the Geneva Accord and other plans already accept the notion that in the context of a full peace accord, any refugees who so choose may return to live in the Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza, thus returning to Palestine though not to the part of Palestine in which some of their families once lived. The Geneva Accord also provides for massive economic compensation to refugees for their years of refugee status. What it does not provide, and no Israeli government will agree to, is for refugees to have the legal "right" to return to the homes in which they once lived (many of which no longer exist). The current owners of those homes or those who live in apartment buildings constructed in places where there once might have been a single house would have a case that they had now been made refugees in order to accommodate the needs of previous refugees. This is simply not going to happen. Thus, while refugees have a strong case for compensation, they have a much weaker case for demanding back the specific place or home that they left or were forced out of, because to implement such a demand would disadvantage others who had nothing to do with the original wrong committed against the Palestinians some fifty-seven years ago.

One reason why the right of return is problematic is that the notion of "original inhabitant" is so fuzzy. In the case of



the land of Israel, as in the case of most countries in the world, the people who inhabited the land fifty or even 150 years ago were people whose claim on the land originated through successful armed conquest of yet previous "original inhabitants." The Palestinian Muslims derive largely from people who conquered the land by force from other inhabitants approximately 1,300 years ago. The previous inhabitants were often people whose ancestors were moved into the land by Greek and Roman imperialism to replace Jews who were forcibly evicted. The Jews in turn had forcibly evicted previous tribes, who in turn had evicted previous conquerors, and so on into the distant and unrecorded past. If conquest gives one a right to the land, how long must Israel hold it until it has that right irrespective of previous groups and their claims? If it doesn't, why do the Arab conquerors have a greater claim?

That is why I hold to a view expressed in Torah: that no one has any "right" to the land, not Jews, not Arabs, no one. "*Kee lee kol ha'aretz*," God tells Moses, "the entire land is mine." So we need a just resolution of claims that does not involve validating a "right" to ownership.

What deserves attention is finding a way to reconnect families that have been separated and providing for housing, employment, and compensation for refugees, just as the Geneva Accord tries to outline.

Legalistic answers really miss the point. Some progressives have taken to arguing that "the right of return" is a legal right guaranteed by the United Nations and therefore no one can force the Palestinians to give it up. Conversely, in a legalistic framework, some Israelis point out that if such a right of return exists, it only exists after the war has been ended, and in this case a state of war still exists. Both sides miss the point: in a final settlement agreement each side can give up rights that it claims for the sake of reaching peace. Just as we believe that Israelis, while holding on to the Wailing Wall, should give up their "right of return" to their ancient Temple Mount (where now sits the Al-Aksa Mosque) for the sake of an agreement that Muslims can live with, so we believe that Palestinians should give up their

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"right of return" to those portions of Palestine that will be under Israeli control after a two-state solution has been created and should only seek return to the Palestinian state.

As Palestinian negotiator of the Geneva Accord, Yassir Abed Rabbo, explained in defending the view that Palestinian return should be to the new Palestinian state and not to the parts of pre-1948 Palestine that are part of Israel, to insist on a right of return is to insist that Israelis accept the notion that their own state would soon have a majority of Palestinians. The point of a peace agreement is for there to be a Jewish state living in peace with a Palestinian state, not two Palestinian states, one created by treaty and the other by birth demographics.

Yet I do want to acknowledge that there is something terribly sad and troubling about this conclusion. We need not deny that what Palestinians did to Jews in trying to prevent them from returning to their ancient homeland in the years before 1948 was morally unacceptable. But we do need to simultaneously acknowledge that what was done to Palestinians in not allowing them to return to their homes after the hostilities had ceased was immoral. The pain of the Palestinian refugees has to be understood viscerally and not just legalistically.

These are real human beings, some of them still living with the keys to the homes from which they fled or were forcibly evicted in 1947–49. Their tragic circumstances must be acknowledged more fully by the Jewish people and the world. Yes, I believe that it is important for the Palestinians to accept a two-state solution and not to undermine the possibility of it being achieved by making a demand for recognition of their "right" to return—a demand that is heard by Israelis as tantamount to ending the existence of a Jewish state, to which Israelis will not accede in the foreseeable coming decades. But I also believe that we must find a process to let Palestinians know that we really hope, not just as lip service but as something real, that the kind of trust that can develop between Israeli and Palestinians living in peace with each other in two separate states for the next ten to fifteen years will make it possible to open this question up again at a later time.

So, what we really need to say to Palestinians is this: return by Palestinians to live in peace with Israelis is something we support, not because of some argument about legality and not because it can be forced on the Israeli people through boycotts or divestment campaigns (it cannot), but as a manifestation of our common humanity. The way to achieve that return, to the extent that it will ever be achieved, is to build the kind of trust and open-heartedness between both peoples that makes such a return feel safe and not simply a new stage in an ongoing war. Accepting this means going through a stage in which two states live in

peace and real cooperation for some period of time. So take the demand for return out of politics! Don't let the militants use this demand as their argument for why they are not backing a two-state solution like Geneva. Instead, understand that this is something that can only be achieved in a very different way—a path that will only be opened up through acts of mutual reconciliation and kindness, never through acts of power and coercion.

And to Jews and Israelis we say: stop saying that Palestinian return is unthinkable. Instead, listen to the stories of the refugees, open your hearts to their pain and suffering, and start to figure out ways to provide for the reuniting of families in the short run. Realize that most Palestinians will not seek to return to the State of Israel once they have been living in a Palestinian state, but that their demand for return is a demand that their suffering be seriously acknowledged. Act from generosity and open-heartedness, build a path of kindness rather than a path of toughness, because it is only kindness that Palestinians will ever understand, not harshness and insensitivity.

It is not easy to maintain the Progressive Middle Path with a true sense of balance. One reason why it's sometimes hard to build coalitions with other anti-Occupation groups is that we often find some of our potential allies sliding into excessive anger at Israel or to insensitivity or indifference to the well-being of the Palestinian people.

It's not helpful to building a "middle path" if you appear in public with people who talk about Israel with a harshness and mean-spirited anger (even though it's not hard to understand why people get angry when they really "get" the details of what it's like for Palestinians living under the Occupation). Or we find other potential allies talking as though the highest goal is to protect the best interest of Jews, as though Palestinian well-being is a mere afterthought. So, showing genuine caring for both sides—the essence of our Progressive Middle Path—is not so easy when you are building coalitions, and yet it is precisely this balanced spiritual path that is so desperately needed.

Apology to the Palestinians for the Tragedy of Exile and Losing Their Homes

Some Palestinian activists respond to criticisms of the Right of return demand by saying, "Not that many people would exercise this right, so Israel has nothing to worry about. What we seek is a public acknowledgment by Israel that it was taking on moral responsibility for having wrongfully evicted Palestinians from their homes and for preventing them from returning all this time." If that is true, then that should be the demand, and it should not be expressed

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through the language of a "right of return," which is a total nonstarter and backlash generator.

The demand for an apology is not easy to agree to because it seems to require a false statement: that Israel is implicitly taking on all responsibility for the tragedy that happened to the Palestinian people in 1948. As I've shown in my book *Healing Israel/Palestine* (North Atlantic Books, 2003), a one-sided blaming of Israel distorts the reality. The Palestinian leadership played an extremely irresponsible role in the 1930s and 1940s, using the power that oil had given to the Arabs to push the British into refusing to allow Jews to come to Palestine at the very moment when they were being murdered by the millions in nearby Europe.

Even after the war, when the Nazi genocide was fully understood by the world, Palestinians refused to let Jews reunite with family members living in Palestine and refused resettlement to hundreds of thousands of Jews living in displaced persons camps in Europe. This, combined with a Palestinian refusal to accept a UN partition plan (which would have given them a far greater part of Palestine than the state they could win if the Geneva Accord is to be adopted), in addition to their refusal to accept any notion of a Jewish state in Palestine alongside their own Islamic society, and the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, which resulted in the death of 1 percent of the Israeli population (and the subsequent flight of hundreds of thousands of Jews from Arab lands), generated tremendous anger amongst Israelis. These events inspired in them a willingness to believe that if those Palestinians who had left in 1948 were allowed to return, they would constitute an ongoing threat to the new Israeli state. In this, the Israeli fear matches that of Palestinians who do not want Israeli settlers to remain in a newly formed Palestinian state but rather to return to the Jewish state behind the Green Line.

But this argument about why an apology on Israel's part would be unfair to demand is itself making a political mistake, insisting on what is "right" as opposed to, as I've been arguing for, subordinating that to what is "smart." It would be smart for Israel and the Jewish people to acknowledge disproportionate responsibility for what happened to the Palestinian people, to apologize, and to acknowledge that the State of Israel has a responsibility to be supportive of the new State of Palestine beyond what is in Israel's "national interests." Israel needs to atone for what it did in causing the Palestinian refugee problem. Such an admission would go a long way toward breaking the ice and beginning the process of atonement and reconciliation, which is central to the possibility of peace. And since Israel has the greater power, it has the moral responsibility to "go first," even if it has no assurance that Palestinians will reciprocate. It may take generations for Palestinians to be able to accept their own role in co-creating the current mess—in part because for so many decades they have in fact been the

side that experienced far greater suffering and hence far greater outrage.

One step in this direction would be to develop the groundwork for a Truth and Reconciliation process—an important component of the peace process that we seek.

Divestment in Israel: Global or Targeted?

The Presbyterian Church's decision to explore targeted divestment in firms that directly contribute to Israel's capacity to enforce its Occupation of the West Bank has been responded to by much of the Jewish community and by Israel as though the Presbyterians are calling for a general boycott of Israel and firms doing business with Israel. But that is not what it calls for.

A general boycott or global divestment would be counterproductive and morally mistaken. It would be counterproductive because it couldn't possibly get the support to actually make a serious-enough impact on Israeli economy to destabilize a right-wing, Occupation-supporting government.

Analogies to the campaign for divestment in South Africa are completely misleading. Apartheid in South Africa was universally detested by Americans, so even right-wing President Reagan had to argue that he would find other ways short of divestment to achieve the same shared goal: an end to apartheid. In the case of the Occupation of the West Bank, significant numbers of American Jews, Christian Zionists, and others believe that Israel is morally justified in holding on to the West Bank as a way of protecting itself from Arab intransigence. As long as that is the case, divestment would never gain the popular support needed to pressure Israel, and would instead be merely a demonstration of the lack of American support for pressure to change Israeli policy.

Moreover, right-wingers would likely intensify their economic support for Israel, and they tend to have more economic power than many who advocate divestment (there are far more right-wing American Jews who would make economic sacrifices to ensure that Israel did well than there were pro-Apartheid South Africans living in the U.S. and willing to fight for the moral legitimacy of the apartheid regime during the anti-apartheid struggle). Unlike apartheid, which targeted all African Americans, Israel's policies in the West Bank do not target Israeli Arabs and are the product of a national struggle, not a racist desire to oppress all people with Arabic blood. There is plenty of racism in Israel, but it was there before the Occupation and will probably remain after the Occupation—so the issues should not be rolled into one. There are plenty of reasons to be outraged at the Occupation of the West Bank; there is no reason to muddy the waters by making the false claim that racial hatred is at the core of Israeli oppression of the Palestinians.

There's also a moral reason to oppose any general divestment campaign. Why should Americans, looking around the

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world at various levels of injustice and oppression, pick Israel as the one area that it seeks to punish for its injustices? The oppression of the Tibetans by China, the murder of hundreds of thousands of people in Rwanda, the genocide in Darfur, the long history of oppression of women in Saudi Arabia and Iran, the denial of civil liberties in Egypt, the occupation of Chechnya by Russia—these are only a few of the many cases of atrocious behavior on the part of the states of the world. Yet when one goes to public gatherings of the Left in Europe or the United States or even to a global gathering like that which took place with the United Nations conference in Durban several years ago, none of these other oppressive regimes gets any attention, and all the anger is directed against Israel. Even the United States, which is reputed to have been responsible for the deaths of over 100,000 people in Iraq over the past fourteen years, is not the subject of a proposed boycott of its products.

If Israel were listed as one of thirty or forty countries targeted for divestment or boycott, we'd have to agree to that as morally legitimate even if politically futile. But when Israel is singled out, as though by implication its sins are worse than that of the other great human rights violators, one can only conclude that this is a remnant of the anti-Semitism that has faced the Jewish people through the ages. And as long as that anti-Semitism continues, the Jewish people have every right to want the same kind of national state and strong army that other states seek to protect their own people. So the very way that Israel becomes subject to disproportionate criticism validates the continued need for a Jewish state.

Please don't say, "Well, the Jewish state is causing this anti-Semitism." Why isn't Russia causing global anti-Russian-ism by its behavior in Chechnya or China creating anti-Chinese-ism by its behavior in Tibet? What would you say to those who would argue that anti-African-American feelings in the world today are a response to the horrible genocide in Rwanda? The special anger reserved for Israel is a legacy of hatred that needs to be cured, and a progressive movement that has the odor of this kind of anti-Semitism has no chance of ever speaking to the hearts of the Israeli people. Yet without speaking to their hearts, not much will change for the situation of the Palestinian people.

And yet, I do support a more limited form of divestment—the kind supported by the Presbyterians, targeted against specific firms that actively contribute to the enforcement of the Occupation (Caterpillar producing special D-9 bulldozers to destroy Palestinian homes comes to mind). In this case, the attempt is not to hurt the economy of Israel and force it to do something the Israeli people haven't been convinced to do but rather to hurt specific corporations that are engaged in supporting a specific immoral policy of Israel (namely, the Occupation). I think that local Tikkun Communities should join with the Presbyterians, do what we can to counter the false and misleading charges that

these targeted campaigns are anti-Semitic, and initiate these kinds of targeted divestment campaigns ourselves. We should also boycott products that have been grown or produced in the Occupied Territories. As a step in this direction, we should insist that the U.S. government require labeling of all products from Israel that have been grown or produced, in whole or in part, in the Occupied Territories. And we should explore pushing for divestment in any firms that produce military goods that are used to enforce the Occupation. There is a side benefit to the Jewish people of this latter point: Israel Military Industries (IMI), which supplies bullets to the U.S. Army; Rafael (a missile manufacturer that supplies air to ground missiles to the U.S. Air Force); Tadiran (a military electronics manufacturer that supplies various electronics to the U.S. military); and Israel Aircraft Industries, which supplies aircraft parts to the U.S. Air Force are all part of the Israeli military link to the war in Iraq. Ending that connection to an immoral war in Iraq would be a benefit to the Jews around the world.

So, I support targeted divestment of the sort I've described above as a tactic. But not as the center of a strategy.

The heart of a workable strategy must involve finding a way to show the American people, the Jewish people, Israelis, and Palestinians a vision of what peace would look like in details sufficient to be plausible. A Left that lacks such a vision and only talks about what's wrong with Israel is more of an obstacle than an ally to the process needed to put peace and reconciliation back on the agendas of both peoples.

Another way to put this: the focus of our activity needs to be positive, showing that there is a real way to change the situation, rather than negative, directed at punishing Israel for its activities. As Yossi Beilin made clear in an interview in *TIKKUN* some fifteen months ago, if peace-oriented Israelis find that the primary way the United States and other groups are dealing with Israel is through external coercion in the form of divestment or boycott campaigns, the nature of Israeli politics dictates that the Israeli peace camp will have no choice but to denounce those external coercions and move to solidify with the Sharon government. Many of us who want to end the Occupation will split from a movement that gives more energy to fantasizing about coercive techniques than to organizing public support for a Geneva Accord-style solution. Pressing for boycotts is not only fanciful in that this direction will not in the foreseeable future gather enough public support to generate an economic impact but it is divisive and counter-productive.

A smart strategy pushes people who were not yet on your side to join with you; a dumb strategy creates a split so that people who were with you in principle feel that they can't be with you when you are advocating it, and so the discussion shifts to debating the strategy when it needs to be focused on convincing people to end the Occupation.

And that's why even the limited divestment strategy that

I support, and the debate it has already engendered, should not be allowed to overshadow the far more important educational campaign to promote a new spirit of generosity and open-heartedness and a Progressive Middle Path. We in the Tikkun Community are inviting Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, orthodox atheists—anyone who wants peace—to join with us in challenging the way the media and the U.S. government understand the possibilities in the Middle East.

How? Here are some concrete steps: (a) Come to Washington each year as part of our Teach-In to Congress (this year it will be around September 19 and 20) aimed at convincing policy makers that there is another voice that they need to contend with besides the AIPAC cheerleaders for the Occupation. (b) Seek endorsement of the Geneva Accord or the Tikkun Resolution for Middle East Peace by local city councils, labor unions, local branches of political parties, universities, religious institutions, and professional associations. (c) Create teach-ins, local forums, and study groups to provide the intellectual foundation for a change in opinion. (d) Get explicit endorsement for a Geneva Accord-style solution and our Progressive Middle Path to be part of the platform of the anti-war demonstrations, the political parties, and the discourse of the liberal and progressive world.

The United States could take some powerful steps right now. It should unequivocally embrace the Geneva Accord or something very close. It should tell Israel that the solution the United States seeks will involve an end to the Occupation of at least 95 percent of the West Bank, a dismantling of the most violent settlements (such as those in Hebron and Kiryat Arba), and massive financial reparations to the Palestinian people.

If every time Israel put forward some time-stalling measure the United States were to call it that and demand an end to the Occupation, and if we began to implement selective divestment strategies such as I've suggested above, the message would soon get through to the Israeli people that they must change their direction. And if that were coupled with a clear commitment to Israel to preserve the safety and security of its pre-1967 borders, with the minor border adjustments proposed in the Geneva Accord, and to preserve the Jewish character of Israel, we would see a turn-about and far greater support for peace among Israelis who have felt depressed, dejected, despairing, and ultimately disinterested in politics because of their (mistaken) certainty that nothing is ever going to change.

Right now, few public-opinion shapers are willing to consider this kind of approach. The vote of Congress last year to support the construction of the Separation Wall (400 in favor to 9 against), shows how very far we are from getting

our Progressive Middle Path accepted by the policy makers. It is foolishness in the extreme, then, to watch as people on the Left seem to take ever more extreme stands and to adopt strategies that are ever less likely to win a constituency, at precisely the moment when a Progressive Middle Path is so badly needed.

It is frustrating to see groups that basically agree on the solution still finding reasons to not work together, allowing organizational rivalries to predominate over the obvious need for solidarity and working together. If the Right can get together to form AIPAC, why can't we at least get groups together to share in the Middle Path strategies we've suggested? Once again, people on the Left are more interested in arguing about fine points of difference than in creating an effective way of working together.

We are grateful for the existence of Jewish groups like Jewish Voice for Peace, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, Peace Now, and the Israeli Peace Forum, all of which play a valuable role and deserve our support. We've differed from them only in trying to create an organizational framework in which Jews and non-Jews could work together and mobilize together, and in which the issue of Israel would not be divorced, for example, from a larger global commitment to peace and social justice even in areas where there are no Jews! These differences, however legitimate, have had a bad consequence: a lack of strategic cooperation.

So once again we want to invite all other groups to join with us in a jointly sponsored annual Teach-In to Congress, because together we can bring numbers to Congress equal to those brought yearly by AIPAC to support the Occupation. When the peace groups don't cooperate on strategic planning of this sort, we become less powerful and impactful than we need to be.

I share with many other activists the frustration of watching the pain of the Palestinian people continue and deepen. I fear that we may watch that happen once again as the hope generated by the withdrawal from Gaza turns into despair when the Likud/Labor coalition fails to produce a reasonable solution. But the appropriate response is not to *do something* to show how outraged we are, but to *do something smart*. And when dealing with a struggle between two people, each of whom has legitimate grievances against the other, and each of whom has acted in ways that are morally unacceptable and cruel, there is no alternative but to go through the painful steps of educating both sides to a more caring, open-hearted, empathic, and generous approach to the other. This is not being passive. This Progressive Middle Path pioneered by the Tikkun Community will in the long run be the only path that actually leads to the kind of reconciliation that might be sustainable. □

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to form AIPAC, why can't
the Jewish Left form a
progressive alternative?*

Divesting From the Occupation

Mitchell Plitnick

Divestment from Israel is a very touchy subject, but one that needs to be part of any strategy aimed at ending the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Rabbi Michael Lerner, in his own article on the subject, makes many excellent points as to why to support a limited form of divestment and why divestment can backfire if done improperly.

As Rabbi Lerner points out, the outcry over the Presbyterian Church's (PCUSA) intention to investigate limited divestment has been misguided. The PCUSA has been attacked for proposing full divestment from Israel. In fact, it is merely divesting from businesses that profit from or perpetuate the Occupation. This is precisely what needs to happen more broadly. What we need is a clearer explanation as to why it is necessary.

The Need for Outside Pressure for a Just Peace

Pace is going to require concessions. Neither side has been able to triumph by force, but Israel remains much more powerful than the Palestinians. So, Israel needs a reason to make the sorts of concessions that will be necessary for a just and lasting peace for both peoples. Governments do not make such concessions out of kindness or recognition of what is fair. They make such concessions because of pressure. Right now, there is no such pressure, and we in the United States can't do very much to create such pressure within Israel. We must look at what we are capable of doing here.

Economic pressure has to be one option we explore. At some point, more than talk is going to be needed if Israel is to make the painful concessions peace will require. The Geneva Initiative may be the best that can be achieved right now, although it falls short of full Palestinian sovereignty. But Israel, even including the Labor and Meretz parties, is not ready to make those concessions. And anything less is a non-starter. Any hope for progress rests on the creation of some outside pressure on Israel. And such pressure can only be effective if it comes with guarantees of Israeli security. That would seem to indicate that American pressure, along with its continuing alliance with Israel (an alliance that is clearly unshakable at this point anyway), is the best way for-

ward. Groups with some significant dollar power, like the PCUSA, labor unions, and investor groups can lead the way to such pressure through selective and considered divestment from businesses profiting from the Occupation.

Why Targeted, Rather than Full Divestment?

We also have to look at what is effective and just. Many activists have drawn a parallel between Israel and apartheid South Africa. This has led to calls for full divestment from Israel. But the analogy fails on many levels, especially when it comes to divestment. The South African divestment campaign came at the end of many years of activism and education that turned the vast majority of the American population against the apartheid government. Most Americans do not understand the devastation of the Occupation, but are well aware of attacks on Israeli civilians. The South African divestment campaign was aimed at bringing down that government, which is not what this movement is supposed to be about. We're supposed to be trying to end the Occupation. So, calls for full divestment à la South Africa are inappropriate, although they are not usually anti-Semitic, as is often alleged.

A Clear Message Feeding into a Strategic Program

It is not enough to say that a tactic is not meant to target the Israeli or the Jewish people; our tactics themselves have to be truly and visibly guided by that principle or we will sacrifice both the moral high ground and a great deal of potential support.

A targeted divestment program must be part of a larger strategy, as Rabbi Lerner suggests. Where I would differ with him is that, in my view, the ultimate goal for American Jews is to be the force that pushes the Jewish and Israeli leadership into the concessions needed to bring a just peace to the region, while ensuring the safety of Jews in Israel and elsewhere. Our education must be geared toward action. That action must push Israel into the necessary concessions, just as the Occupation, along with the American and Israeli governments, has pushed the Palestinians into the concessions they have made. They conceded 78 percent of what was Palestine under the British Mandate, and have shown themselves willing to make more concessions in the Oslo agreements and the Geneva Accords. Now Israel and the United States must respond in kind.

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Israelis and Palestinians can create their future themselves and are far better qualified to both model that future and create it. We need to enable them to do it, not show them how. We need to build our movement on a foundation of moral principles and around a plan of action. The plan needs to involve activism in media and government as well as programs like the campaign to get the Caterpillar Corporation to stop allowing its bulldozers to be used for home demolitions in the Occupied Territories. It needs to be a plan that pressures Israel in real ways, without trying to devastate the country and bring down the government.

Our fundamental moral principles must respect and preserve the rights of everyone in the region. We must not be reluctant to condemn attacks on Israeli civilians just as harshly as those on Palestinians. And we must keep our perspective. Israel is doing terrible things in the Occupied Territories, but painting Israel as worse than other countries is disingenuous and in some cases anti-Semitic, although this last is the exception rather than the rule.

Not long ago, I was at a local rally protesting an AIPAC dinner. One of the chants that went up was "2-4-6-8 Israel is a racist state." I couldn't help but stare at the chanters in dismay. A crowd of Americans chanting these words about Israel just sounded so absurd. Our government is devastating Iraq and continues to occupy Afghanistan, and there are many more examples of racism in our foreign policy. Our own legacy of racism is well known, and it persists to this day. Israel, even behind the Green Line, has serious problems with racism, and they're getting worse, not better. The problem is most severe regarding Arabs, but extends also to Mizrahi Jews and foreign workers. But for Americans to hurl this accusation at Israel given our own problems with racism here reinforces the idea that Israel is held to a higher standard than other countries.

We must talk about the horrors of the Occupation. We must not let the suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank be obscured. But that doesn't mean that we should ignore the damage the Occupation does to Israeli Jews. More important, we should not ignore the pivotal role our own government plays in the Occupation. The United States provides the political cover for the Occupation by limiting the role of the European Union and United Nations in mediating the conflict. It provides the diplomatic cover for it by vetoing resolution after resolution in the UN Security Council. And it provides the weaponry and funding for it

through massive aid, loan guarantees, and sweetheart deals on arms. As Americans, we have the most credibility when we talk about our own government and corporations.

Improving Our Messaging

It still isn't easy. As the Presbyterians' situation shows, even divestment and boycotts that explicitly target the Occupation will be painted as attacks on Israel and even as anti-Semitic. But we can also draw lessons from the Presbyterians' experience.

We progressives have a pretty poor record on getting our message across in a productive and effective manner. The Presbyterians helped the pro-Occupation forces paint their decision as anti-Israel when they said that the Occupation was the root of the conflict. This allowed the other side to say that the Presbyterians were blaming Israel for every-

thing. It was also an inaccurate statement—the Occupation may be the cause of much of the current violence, but the conflict existed before the Occupation, and issues will remain after the Occupation ends. Ending the Occupation is the most important step that can be taken toward a just peace. But even after its end, Israel, the Palestinians, the United States, the international community, and the Arab states will still have much work to do to create a peace that can endure.

The Presbyterians also announced their divestment decision at the same time as they announced a renewal of funding for two parishes that explicitly

proselytize Jews as part of their mission. This was the result of two different branches of the church's assembly operating independently of the other, but it reinforced the case that the Presbyterian divestment decision was based on animosity towards Israel and the Jewish people.

Economic pressure on Israel will have to be part of any program for peace. But it can only succeed if we effectively communicate our ideas and if those ideas are grounded in concern for Palestinians and Israelis equally. We need to move beyond supporting one side or the other. We need to push our own government toward a peace that is just for both sides. But we can only be effective politically if we are thoughtful in how we present our ideas and strategic in our planning. These are the very theories that are the basis for Jewish Voice for Peace's operations. We can build an American movement for a just peace in the Middle East because it is in the interests of Jews and Arabs everywhere for there to be one. □

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No to Targeted Divestment!

David Gordis

I am sympathetic to much of the thrust of Rabbi Lerner's position and to his broader hopes for the Middle East and for the world. I'm not, however, in agreement with the specific suggestion of joining the Presbyterian initiative for "limited and targeted" divestment.

The reasons for my lack of support for such a move are actually articulated by Rabbi Lerner when he raises some of the moral and political objections to divestment (to which he does not really adequately respond). For example, Lerner asks why liberals and progressives should support divestment specifically in these Israeli corporations and not in other worldwide corporations who are no less (and sometimes more) contributory to the pathology the world faces?

The strong negative response to the Presbyterians' divestment initiative is a good predictor of the response that the Tikkun Community will face if it follows this path. It will make it easier for those who are generally unsympathetic to Tikkun's views to be dismissive of the important positive thrusts of your "Progressive Middle Path," which seeks to show compassion for both Israel and Palestine.

There are certainly many who are hostile to what Michael Lerner says about just about anything, and who would exploit a suggestion like going along with the Presbyterian divestment suggestion as another indication of his hostility to Israel. For them, what Lerner suggests here is irrelevant, and they will certainly fail to notice the many aspects of this article that show how strong the Tikkun Community's commitment really is to the well-being of Israel.

But there are a significant number of others who are generally sympathetic to nurturing whatever can move the world generally, and the Middle East specifically, forward in the direction of a just peace and a healing based on an openness to hearing other people's narratives, and the need for substantial change in attitude and behavior on both sides. The hope that there is a possibility for movement in that direction in the context of political changes on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian divide may be faint, but it is



there. At this moment it needs nurturing and sympathetic support. The kind of one-sided call for divestment that Lerner himself critiques in the essay risks alienating this group for whom Lerner's divestment suggestion would take center stage and prejudices this significant group, concerned just as Lerner is both for Israel's security and for peace and justice, against the overall vision that informs Lerner's often eloquently articulated vision. To marginalize Tikkun with this constituency is a disservice to the important ideals you articulate.

As Lerner points out in his essay, it's not enough to be right; it's also necessary to be wise and, in this case, to assess the impact of a proposed initiative. I really see no case made for any effectiveness of such a move, and the costs would be very high in terms of losing the "listening ear" of moderates or potential moderates.

Moreover, the overall trajectory of Lerner's piece, including the projections of what Sharon/Peres will or will not offer the Palestinians, while sadly likely to be proved accurate, is not well-timed when even the faint hopes for change brought about by political developments on both sides need to be fanned and nurtured rather than snuffed out by unmitigated pessimism. Remember the pessimist's definition of an optimist: "An optimist is a person who feels the future is uncertain." I'd like to be an optimist, even if only according to the pessimist's definition!

AP PHOTO/VINCENT THIAN

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Jewish Felons: The Problem of Criminality in Observant Communities

Joel Cohen

Sunlight is the best disinfectant.
—Justice Louis D. Brandeis

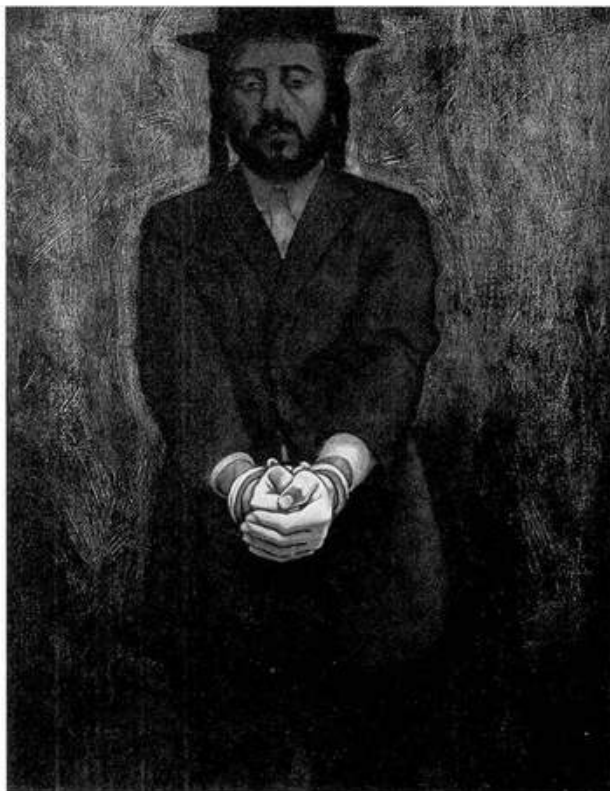
As a prosecutor and, more recently, a white-collar defense attorney in New York, I have witnessed a disturbing rise in crime among Orthodox and Hasidic Jews. When I broach the subject with Jewish friends, they say that writing about this subject will be “a disgrace to the name of God,” viewing the *writing* on the issue as the disgrace and ignoring the underlying conduct. They see Jews, particularly observant Jews, as a community that outsiders focus on in search of scandal and feel that exposing the problem will add fuel to the fires of anti-Semitism. I feel that this reasoning is wrongheaded: To ignore crime within our ranks does us a great disservice, both because it weakens us as a community and because tolerating it suggests to the outside world that Judaism does not promote a righteous moral compass.

A Growing Problem

There is no shortage of high-profile Jewish crime. Take the infamous New Square scandal, in which four Hassidim were convicted for defrauding the government of \$11 million by setting up a fictitious yeshiva to receive federal student aid money. Or the case in Williamsburg, New York, in which the rabbi of a Jewish day school stole 6 million dollars from the Board of Education over several years by falsely identifying more than eighty individuals as school employees.

The problem in the observant community, however, is not merely occasional, nor does it often make headlines. Daily, in metropolises around the country, yarmulka-wearing criminal defendants appear before the bar of justice. In the early 1970s, a particularly imaginative criminal defense lawyer in New York City successfully sued the U.S. Bureau of Prisons to provide kosher food for one or two of his incarcerated clients. The sad truth is that these days, kosher food has become as commonplace in many penal institutions as it is on airlines.

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Today, every day in the minimum-security camp at the Otisville Federal Correctional Institution in Rockland County, New York, there are sizeable minyanim, three times daily. A full-time rabbi attends to the congregation's spiritual and religious needs. Daily religious classes are offered. Shabbat and holiday meals are provided. There are so many observant inmates—inmates who were ostensibly observant at the time of their arrest, not those who “found God” after they broke the law, thereby increasing the numbers—that such provisions are now available at a number of other federal penal institutions. Anyone practicing in the justice system of a large urban metropolis with a significant Jewish population—New York, Los Angeles, and Miami, for example—has seen a similar trend.

These observant defendants are not typically charged with street crime or narcotics trafficking. The most common charge is fraud: against businessmen and run-of-the-mill

citizens alike, most frequently involving victims outside of the Jewish community; against the government; against insurance carriers; against banking institutions; health care fraud; money laundering; and stock swindling.

Perhaps most disturbing is a new breed of fraud involving observant community leaders, sometimes rabbis themselves, and intended to benefit the community itself, such as fraud against government spending programs for education and health care. The perpetrators in these cases don't typically profit personally, but the government and the intended recipients of these government programs are no less defrauded of funds designated for a particular use. And more often than not, the community, including its lay and religious leaders, stands up for the perpetrators by defending, or at least excusing, their behavior. For example, following the convictions of four Hassidim in the New Square scandal, Hassidic leaders defended President Clinton's pardon of these individuals on the grounds that the stolen funds were funneled back into their community rather than into their own pockets.

The Key Question

Why is fraud so common in the Orthodox and Hasidic communities? Perhaps Judaism itself concentrates too heavily on technical observances designed to honor the Kingdom of God and not enough on a code of conduct honoring and respecting each other. Maybe the religion, *as taught*, isn't sufficiently concerned with ethical precepts particularly with regard to faceless government bodies or individuals outside the fold. Even more disturbing, perhaps criminal, or merely unethical, behavior is simply not inconsistent with religious observance.

Whatever the reason, the ultimate question is simple: Do the religious obligations of Orthodox and Hasidic communities require their members to behave ethically in their everyday behavior, including in their dealings with everyone of every faith? Several responses to this key question will invariably invoke talmudic niceties, such as, "What do you mean by ethical behavior?" Responses of this nature highlight a root problem: talmudic exercises that can be used to rationalize misbehavior. Yet, these rationalizations find little support in the teachings of the Torah itself. Indeed, the Torah contains an explicit injunction against maintaining two weights, one large and one small—the biblical equivalent of two sets of books—declaring it an "abomination to God" to act with such weights corruptly (Deut. 25:13-16). How did we stray so far from such a clear anti-fraud philosophy of the Torah to the present-day efforts by some to defend fraudulent behavior with hyper-technical talmudic logic?

Consider this example: Money laundering did not violate American law until 20 years ago. Nor did it violate any specific biblical law, or post-biblical law, ever. But it now violates American law and is a very serious offense. Some,

however, argue that even a serious violation of American law, such as money laundering, that is not also criminalized by the Torah does not require the observant community's condemnation (e.g., "Our Higher Authority doesn't itself forbid it"). Without question, a whole category of secular laws criminalizes conduct not proscribed by the Torah. And, in many instances, the proscribed conduct would not violate the morality of the Jewish religion or, for that matter, the state. Indeed, many are so-called victimless crimes.

It may even be that particular criminal statutes are discriminatory in their enforcement or affirmatively harm certain segments of society. This is not true, it is worth noting, of money laundering, insider trading, or criminal tax laws, which may be onerous in the extreme and sometimes unfair in their application, but not discriminatory, e.g., they were not enacted to "get" Jews.

There are certainly times when we are justified in disobeying the law. To invoke the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, there may be times when "if there is nothing worth dying for, there is nothing worth living for." Some laws imposed by a secular government are so inappropriate—indeed, perhaps, although rarely, anti-Semitic—that the good citizen's duty is to take the consequences and civilly disobey them in protest. Such laws are rare in post-World War II America. But engaging in civil disobedience to protest the repugnant law is not the same as simply breaking the law for monetary gain. If a law-abiding Jew disobeys a law to protest its unfairness, fully recognizing the consequences of his protest, one can argue that he remains an observant Jew.

Still, civil disobedience aside, if a statute exists on the books, there is a halachic consequence to violating it, however victimless or onerous it may be. This is true, however, even if the law is seen as designed to protect the financially entrenched against the outsider, and thus is itself immoral. Some observant communities have argued, for example, that the education finance regimes do not fairly address the financial needs of Jewish parochial schools, thus requiring *extralegal* machinations to level the playing field. "Extralegal," here, though, really means illegal.

Jewish law, handed down through the generations through Maimonides, pronounces that "the law of the land is the law." In other words, an act criminalized by a secular government is also prohibited by the Torah simply by virtue of existing under the secular law of the society in which we live. If we truly believe in that fundamental concept—for observant Jewry it should be as binding as a law appearing *verbatim* in written Scripture—it hardly matters that the particular law is not ethically based, does not violate a specific precept of the Torah, or may even be of questionable social value. If the Jewish or observant Jewish community believes that the law was enacted largely because that community does not have an adequate voice in government, it should get out the vote—not defy the law.

Finally, some may suggest that certain Jewish groups who emigrated from Eastern Europe were victimized there by anti-Semitic regimes, which makes their disrespect for secular rule of law understandable. This argument raises a bizarre affirmative action defense that seeks immunity from the laws of the United States for wrongs that the United States had nothing to do with. Regardless, the previously victimized community should take no solace in such an explanation, as there is simply no comparison between Poland in 1939 and America in 2004.

The Community's Response

It is astonishing, sometimes, how the observant and Hasidic communities react to criminal charges by a superficially observant defendant. Often, those communities assume that anti-Semitism is the driving force behind an unfounded prosecution or that the defendant is being prosecuted (or persecuted) more severely because he is Jewish. Even after a guilty verdict or plea (which should remove any lingering doubt about guilt, as well as any claim of a frame-up), his community will frequently write supportive letters to a sentencing judge suggesting that this is simply aberrant behavior for "an otherwise observant Jew." And that may be true—sometimes. For some, psychological or compelling financial reasons may induce one-time criminal episodes, contrary to how the individuals conduct otherwise exemplary lives.

But what about the habitual offender who leads an otherwise pious life? He is a regular attendant at minyan; he is meticulous in his kashrut observance; he joyfully sanctifies the Sabbath; he gives charity generously. He also, because it is simply the right thing to do, treats his employees well and is a dedicated and respected leader of the community. Nevertheless, he engages in fraudulent business practices, over and over—but he *only* cheats the government, non-observers, or non-Jews. Should the religious community that he comes from still stand behind this individual as an observant Jew or "an otherwise observant Jew"?

To be sure, this man deserves the emotional support of his family, friends, and even his community when he is in trouble with the law. We are a people proud of the traditions of forgiveness and repentance. Clearly, the members of his religious community, if they have something favorable to say to a judge about him, should come forward and not abandon him when he has fallen on hard times for his waywardness—especially if he demonstrates true acceptance of responsibility and contrition.

But his community also deserves something in these cases. It deserves the outspoken and unequivocal condemnation of the conduct as being contrary to religious observance. And for this condemnation to have any real impact on that community, it must come from lay and religious leaders within the community itself, who must acknowledge that religious observance is flatly incompatible with fraudulent behavior.

Only with the open denouncement of wrongdoing from within the particular observant community can the community hope to demonstrate and protect the Torah's commitment to honesty in one's interpersonal dealings as being at least equal to, if not greater than, its commitment to technical observance of mitzvot. Indeed, frequently, the community and its rabbis stand behind the seemingly flexible rule that Jews may not testify against other Jews in a secular court, notwithstanding the seriousness of the offense—hardly a position calculated to encourage the denouncement of wrongdoing or scandal.

Thus, advocating leniency for an observant felon precisely because of his so-called piety as an "observant Jew" harms both the religion and the observant community by suggesting that religion allows for a divergence between piety and morality. Indeed, if this same yarmulka-wearing man were a completely honest businessman whose aberrant conduct was, instead, a weakness for shrimp, would the observant community refer to this man as an observant Jew or an otherwise observant Jew? Surely not! Is kashrut a more fundamental observance in Judaism than basic honesty?

Presiding over a case involving a Hasidic Jew who had pleaded guilty to burning down unoccupied buildings for insurance, Federal Judge I. Leo Glasser turned to the large number of Hasidim who had come to court in support of their fellow Hasid and said:

Some persons might characterize [your presence here] as being a *chilul hashem* [a disgrace to the name of God].... Sometimes one wonders whether ... more emphasis is placed on form and not enough on substance.... [T]he words that you recite three times a day and the code and the laws that you study should be thought of in terms of what those words mean and what they are intended to move us to do in terms of the kind of life we lead.

For a secular judge to have used the term *chilul hashem* in an American court suggests that he is speaking to the defendant as both judge and fellow Jew. His are words that we should all heed.

No matter how we try to justify it—whether as victimless crime, the result of past persecution, something that only affects "outsiders" while helping the Jewish community, a just response to unjust policy, or irrelevant missteps by the otherwise pious—criminal behavior simply cannot be condoned in observant Jewish communities. It undermines the foundations of what we believe, as well as damaging us in the eyes of the outside world. The disgrace of Jewish fraud is not only a disgrace against God, but also a disgrace to ourselves and each other. The Torah and Jewish teaching will give us guidance on how to live ethically, even in our complicated modern society, if we only listen to its truths. At day's end, the burden lies with all of us. In the words of Edmund Burke, "the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men [and women] to do nothing." □

Bearing Witness to Prison Brutality

Susannah Sheffer

No one is watching. No one sees when the officers invade the cell or surprise the prisoner who is being led down the corridor in cuffs and shackles. No one sees as they take matters into their own hands, take out their frustrations, take the opportunity to beat up a prisoner simply because they know they can. No one is watching except the prisoner himself, catching a glimpse before he ducks the blows, before his eyes swell up, swell shut, turn black, or bleed. What he sees besides their fists coming toward him, what he notices and will not forget, are the words in the insignia sewn on the sleeves of their uniforms: "State" and "Department of Correction." He is no stranger to violence, giving it or getting it, but these words burn an image across his mind that begets a fury and despair like no other, because this is *state* violence, paid for by tax dollars, sanctioned by custom, perpetuated by silence.

As social problems go, beatings of prison inmates by correctional officers have not typically attracted a great deal of attention. When the sister of a prisoner who had been repeatedly beaten told a friend about the stress her family was under because of these assaults, the friend replied with a comment that probably typifies public sentiment: "Well, prison isn't supposed to be easy, and anyway, look at what *he's* done to people."

But revelations about the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq got Americans thinking about whether physical violence toward prisoners was truly sound policy, in U.S. prisons or in Iraq. If, as Sir Winston Churchill said, the way criminals are treated "is one of the most unflinching tests of the civilization of any country," surely gratuitous violence and abuse do not pass the test.

Maximum security prisons are violent places. The mix of tedium, volatility, and fear can erupt at any time as prisoners fight to hang on to their dignity. But violence *among* prisoners—dangerous as it is, and important as it is to understand—is qualitatively and effectively different from violence that guards perpetrate *against* prisoners. Violent offenders are locked up, at least ostensibly, to *stop* further harm from being done. What happens when a prisoner, incarcerated because he has violated the state's laws, then becomes the victim of physical abuse from a state employee?

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"After a prisoner is beaten by a correctional officer, he's devastated," observes Robert Dellelo, who served forty years in prison. "At first, the prisoner fantasizes retaliation. He imagines all the scenarios in his head: stabbing, cutting guards' heads off. This is a defense he uses within himself, because of how helpless he feels. Then maybe he starts trying to draw some attention to what happened. Eventually, when he starts to perceive that no one on the outside cares about what happened, he withdraws. He goes inside himself, and if this continues, you end up with a really paranoid, anti-social personality. I've seen this happen to guys, this kind of psychological deterioration after a beating, and it's a scary thing to watch."

At one time, prisons were seen as social service sites—"correctional" institutions—as well as a solution to public safety problems. But the drive to use prisons for rehabilitation largely ended in the 1980s, and has gone in reverse ever since. By 1992, then governor of Massachusetts William Weld could declare, "I'm of the belief that prison should be like a tour through the circles of hell." Such attitudes, along with new "control units" created at many prisons, have sent a message to guards that they can treat prisoners as harshly as they like.

The increased political emphasis on punishment has only fed into the already dangerous psychology the prison environment itself creates. A well-known Stanford study from the 1970s showed that prison environments bring out certain kinds of behavior in *both* prisoners and guards. Add to this the fact that some correctional officers are inclined to view prisoners as animals or monsters in the first place, and it's easy to see how dehumanizing treatment can follow.

In the late 1990s, when Weld's "circles of hell" philosophy had been operating for several years, prisoners at Massachusetts' maximum security prison MCI-Cedar Junction began to notice that assaults were following a particular pattern. "They were ambushing people," is how Bobby Dellelo describes it. A prisoner would be lured from his cell on the pretext that he had an appointment with the health services unit, even though he had not requested such an appointment. Then, as the prisoner was being led down the main corridor of the prison to the fictitious appointment, a group of guards would jump him.

"It's important to understand how many people have to collude for this to happen," Dellelo notes. "Normally, the guard on the block would never call a prisoner to go to the hospital without seeing his name on an appointment list. But what was happening during this period was that the



guard on the block would get a call saying that a certain guy's got to go down to the hospital. The guard would see that this prisoner's name wasn't on the list, but he would call him anyway—knowing what was about to go down. Then, afterwards, when the prisoner got charged with assaulting the guards instead of the other way around, all the guards who wrote that report had to agree to write it that way.”

How common were prisoner beatings during this time? Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services (MCLS), which provides civil legal services to prisoners, knew only how many assaults prisoners were reporting to them. In 2000, that averaged 120 a year, with the majority taking place at MCI-Cedar Junction. MCLS attorneys assumed this was a minimal estimate; many prisoners didn't know MCLS existed, and those who did know about it often didn't bother to report a brutality incident. With a handful of attorneys trying to address the needs of 20,000 prisoners, and with no program designed to address guard brutality, MCLS could not promise to respond.

This was when Bobby Dellelo wrote to MCLS with a suggestion—or actually, a plea. It was startlingly simple. “His idea,” recalls board member Rebecca Young, “was that if every time a prisoner were beaten up by correctional staff, a lawyer were to show up right away and bring a camera, then that would send a message that you can't just beat prisoners with impunity. It would say that someone is watching and documenting what's going on.”

What human rights groups do in other countries, Dellelo was proposing to have attorneys do in United States prisons. He knew that attorneys could visit prisoners more easily than could friends, family members, or journalists. He knew that they were legally allowed to bring cameras in to photograph prisoners. Regular documentation of assaults would build a record, and—Dellelo believed—it would also head off the psychological deterioration he had seen in prisoners who feared that no one on the outside gave a damn.

In the fall of 2001, with the help of a Soros Justice Fellowship, MCLS board member Rebecca Young initiated the Rapid Response to Brutality Project. Between November 2001 and February 2004 the organization conducted 111 initial rapid response visits. At each visit, the

MCLS attorney begins by interviewing the prisoner, starting with a neutral question such as “I heard there was an incident with correctional staff and you might have been involved in it.” She then gets the prisoner's account and photographs any visible injuries and bruises. After making the initial visit, the attorney engages in what follow-up advocacy she can: attempting to ensure that prisoners who need medical care as a result of the assault receive that care and writing a letter to the prison superintendent that details the incident and requests an investigation.

From the start, prisoners were surprised and obviously grateful for the visits. “There they were in segregation, not expecting that anyone—much less a lawyer—would come to see a prisoner because he'd gotten hurt,” Young recalls. The clients' gratitude told Young that one of her original hopes for the project was already coming true: prisoners were seeing that someone on the outside cared what happened to them.

The visits appear to have achieved their primary goal as well: two and a half years into the project, 85 percent of the Rapid Response clients surveyed reported a decrease in assaults and said they thought the decrease was related to the project. “Having [someone] come see you when you are beaten and sometimes broken,” said one prisoner, “keeps the guards thinking twice about getting away with assaults.” In particular, prisoners report that the type of assault that had led Bobby Dellelo to write to MCLS—the ambushing of prisoners who were lured from their cells to fictitious appointments—has all but disappeared.

Young was surprised to discover a third outcome of her project. When she first began to make the prison visits, she says, “I found myself becoming incredibly angry at what I saw correctional officers had done to my clients, and I took that on, in myself, more than I should. I would walk in there feeling very adversarial.” Over time, however, she began think about how to apply the core belief of the project—treating people with respect for their essential humanity, regardless of their actions—to her interactions with the guards: “I decided to experiment with not viewing every staff person as my enemy. I was just as angry at the brutal treatment, but I went in there as friendly and respectful as I would be anywhere else. This is definitely better for *me*, and also, of course, I get a better response.”

How we treat people affects how they respond. It also, in some important sense, affects *us*. This is the deeper wisdom that the Rapid Response to Brutality Project invites us to consider. It's impossible to know for sure if the approach works because it makes the correctional officers afraid of possible consequences or because the presence of a witness encourages them to rethink their behavior. What is clear, though, is that witnessing—in the active sense of showing up, paying attention, saying “*this matters*”—is better than failing to witness. As one prisoner wrote, “The only way for assaults on prisoners to decline is if people let these people know someone is paying attention.” □

When Kosher Isn't Kosher

Aaron Gross

Rarely have the traditional Jewish dietary laws ever attracted the international attention that they recently received in the wake of an undercover investigation by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). On November 30, PETA released undercover video footage of grisly animal abuse at AgriProcessors, Inc. (Postville, IA), the largest glatt kosher slaughterhouse in the world. The video documented fully conscious cattle having their tracheas and esophagi ripped from their throats, their sensitive faces shocked with electric prods, and languishing for up to three minutes after their throats had been slit.

Articles in the *New York Times*, the *Jerusalem Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, and numerous other papers combined with a flurry of activity on web blogs such as FailedMessiah.com (run by an Orthodox Jew who has worked in kosher slaughterhouses) and webzines like Jewsweek.com, quickly brought the issue to wide popular attention. After initial statements denying that anything was wrong, the Orthodox Union (OU), which certifies AgriProcessors as kosher, put pressure on the slaughterhouse to address some of the issues raised by the PETA investigation. Promising as this step was, most of the concerns raised by PETA's video have yet to be addressed by the Orthodox Union or AgriProcessors. Indeed, the OU has indicated that, in their view, Judaism's dietary laws are not violated when animals are systematically mutilated, shocked, and left to languish at the hands of sloppy slaughterers. Even after the executive vice president of the OU, Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, acknowledged to the *New York Times* that the removal of the tracheas and esophagi was "especially inhumane," he asserted in a formal statement, "We continue to vouch for the kashrut of all of the meat prepared by AgriProcessors, Inc., which was never compromised." As far as we know, animals at AgriProcessors continue to suffer needlessly.

At stake is the basis of Jewish dietary law (*kashrut*) itself. While the OU has argued that there was never any violation of kosher law at AgriProcessors, PETA, a secular animal

rights organization, has served as a champion of kashrut's moral and ethical dimension. With the support of numerous rabbis, PETA has argued that the egregious cruelty at AgriProcessors is completely out of line with both the letter and spirit of kosher law, and has described Judaism's record of compassion for animals as the best of all the Abrahamic faiths.

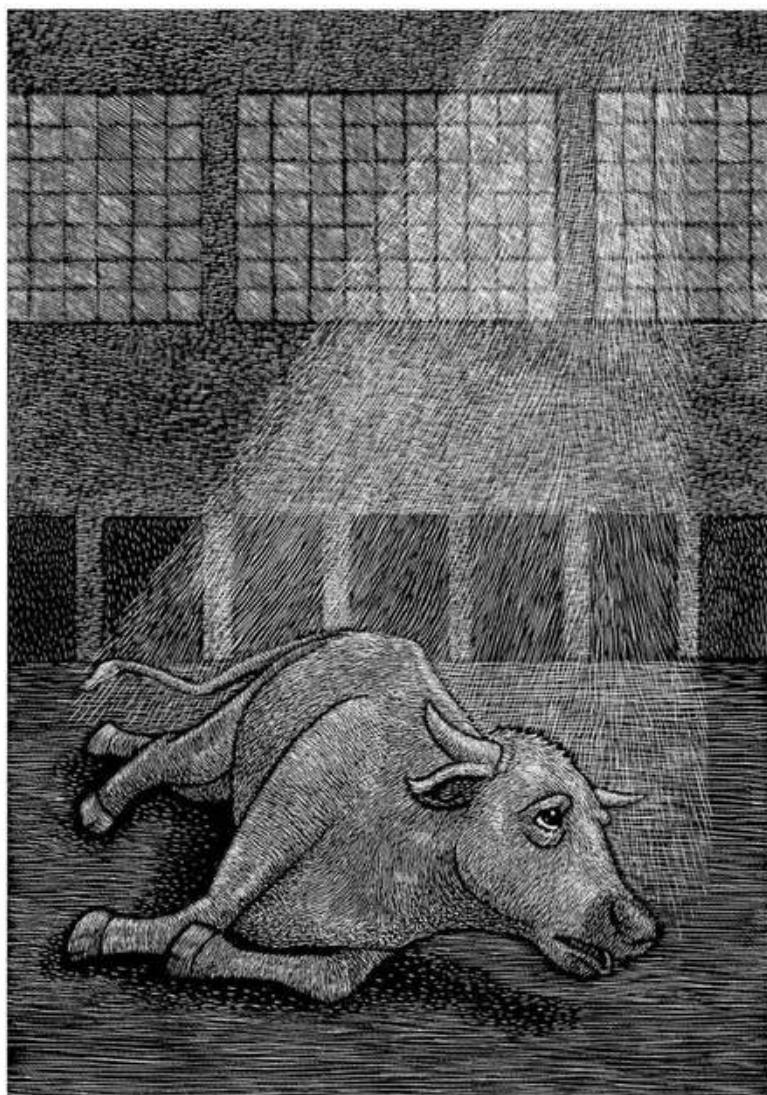
What is Kosher Slaughter?

At every kosher slaughterhouse, animals are killed by a ritual cut to the neck called *shechita* that severs the esophagus and trachea (or at least one of these in the case of chickens and turkeys). Ideally, the cut also severs blood flow to the brain and, after a variable period of time, leads to unconsciousness. Jewish law specifies that a razor sharp blade must be used and that the slaughter must be performed by a properly trained individual called a *shochet*. These rules are particularly important for animal welfare because the sharpness of the blade and its proper use seems to reduce the pain caused by the cut and speed unconsciousness. Most, though not all, authorities in *halakha* (Jewish law) have further argued that the animal must be conscious while *shechita* is performed. In non-kosher slaughterhouses, U.S. law requires that animals be stunned before being slaughtered on humane grounds.

The time to loss of consciousness after *shechita* is a central humane concern in any kosher slaughterhouse. Studies have shown that this time varies greatly based on the species being slaughtered, the type of restraint mechanisms used to hold the animal during slaughter, and the skill of the *shochet*. A 1994 review of the relevant scientific literature by Dr. Temple Grandin and Dr. Joe Regenstein, the two senior-most U.S. scientific experts on kosher slaughter, showed that even in the best cases, 5 percent of the animals retained consciousness for more than a few seconds after *shechita*. In other cases, technically correct *shechita* left 30 percent of the animals conscious for extended periods of time up to 30 seconds.

Overall, it is clear that *shechita* can render an animal unconscious in an optimal manner and is almost always better regulated than non-kosher slaughter. This is why animal rights groups like PETA have insisted that kosher slaughter is generally better than non-kosher slaughter. However, for kosher slaughter to optimally reduce suffering requires properly designed "upright" restraint devices and specific forms of employee training, neither of which are required by

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the USDA or kosher certification agencies. As a result, though the Jewish community may be rightfully proud that kosher law dictates a method of slaughter that *can* reduce animal suffering during slaughter to an absolute minimum, there is presently no guarantee that this is the case. The fact that the OU has stated that there were never any problems with kosher law at AgriProcessors underscores this point.

What Happened at AgriProcessors?

The abuses documented at AgriProcessors were not aberrations, but standard operating procedures. Most troubling is the procedure, performed immediately after *shechita*, of ripping out the tracheas and esophagi of conscious cattle. Significantly, this procedure is not typically performed in other kosher slaughterhouses and, according to Dr. Temple Grandin, the real purpose behind the procedure at AgriProcessors remains unclear. Whatever the reason, this procedure is not required by kosher law.

Nonetheless, the removal of the trachea and esophagus was performed on *every single* animal that PETA was able to video tape, the only exceptions being cases where pressure to keep the line moving meant the procedure was skipped. PETA was able to obtain a total of five hours of footage of cattle slaughter in six sessions over about seven weeks in which 278 animals were slaughtered; 230 of these animals were clearly visible and at least 20 percent of these animals were conscious *after* being dumped onto a concrete floor with their tracheas and esophagi hanging from their necks.

Stephen Bloom, a journalist who wrote the highly acclaimed book *Postville* about the clash of cultures in the small Iowa town where the slaughterhouse is located, has confirmed that shoddy slaughter existed as far back as 1996 when he was given a tour of the slaughter facility. Bloom witnessed multiple animals struggling to stand minutes after *shechita*. Although Bloom did not actually see animals' throats slit and so does not know whether or not the animals' tracheas and esophagi were removed at that time, another anonymous source has come forward to state that she saw the trachea and esophagus procedure when she visited the slaughter line in 1998.

Our best information, then, is that for at least six years AgriProcessors saw fit to cut the tracheas and esophagi out of animals that had at least a one in five chance (based on the undercover footage) of being conscious *after* the procedure. Moreover, for at least eight years, they have been so lax in their slaughter technique that animals have routinely been

fully conscious for minutes after they were dumped from the restraint onto concrete floors. And all this is to say nothing of other equally systematic abuses of animals at AgriProcessors, such as the misuse of electric prods on animals' faces and the use of a restraining pen which has been condemned as a violation of *tza'ar ba'alei hayyim* (the torah mandate not to cause pain to animals) by the Conservative movement's highest halakhic body.

In an ongoing, cynical attempt to distort the full extent of this abuse, representatives of AgriProcessors and the OU have suggested that the animals on PETA's tapes were not conscious. Everyone agrees that brain-dead animals sometimes make movements that non-experts might think indicate life. However, every single scientific and slaughter expert that has been consulted, *without exception*, has agreed that the animals on PETA's video were conscious (an impressive list of these expert statements is available on PETA's website, www.goveg.com). Nonetheless, the president of

AgriProcessors, Sholom Rubashkin, continues to maintain, "What you see on the video is not out of the ordinary... Nothing wrong was, or is, being done. There is nothing to admit."

The USDA, by contrast, found the abuse at AgriProcessors so offensive that they created a new "scenario" of animal abuse which precisely describes what occurred at AgriProcessors, as documented by PETA's video footage. The USDA advises that were an inspector to witness such a scenario, they should immediately suspend slaughter operations and notify the relevant authorities of "this egregious violation of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act..." (view the full USDA scenario at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/fo/tsc/hike_03-04.htm).

The Broader Context

What does it mean that such misery could go on for years in a facility that was doubly inspected by the USDA and religious authorities? Sadly, the abuse at AgriProcessors is a symbol of entrenched, systematic abuse of animals in today's meat industry, rather than an anomaly. It may be aberrant to mutilate animals in the particularly offensive manner practiced by AgriProcessors, but on today's factory farms it is perfectly routine and legal to cut horns, testicles, and beaks off animals without painkillers, and to confine animals for their entire lives in spaces so cramped that they must be fed antibiotics simply to keep them alive. Sadly, virtually all kosher meat comes from animals that are raised in the same abusive factory farms that produce most meat in America. This chronic abuse of animals on factory farms does not capture headlines in the way that the unusual level of abuse at Agriprocessors has, but this "normalized" abuse is equally, and perhaps more, worthy of our attention.

The contemporary French-Jewish philosopher Jacques Derrida was deeply disturbed by the cruelty of factory farming, and, perhaps even more, by the denials that allow it to continue. His remarks on the contemporary indifference to the misery of these "farms" are as chilling as they are relevant: "No one can deny seriously, or for very long, that men do all they can in order to dissimulate this cruelty or to hide it from themselves, in order to organize on a global scale the forgetting or misunderstanding of this violence that some would compare to the worst cases of genocide." Roughly 10 billion land animals are killed for meat every year in the United States alone and yet the average person has never witnessed an animal being slaughtered. Undercover investi-

gations, one after another, have demonstrated conclusively that neither the USDA nor religious authorities have adequate regulation to address even the most extreme instances of abuse.

Looked at in the broader societal context, the fact that the products of factory farming and even abusive facilities like AgriProcessors are given moral legitimacy by being deemed "kosher," transforms kashrut from an ethical system into one that helps mask organized animal abuse. This awkward situation is so far from the moral vision of kashrut that it is painful to even acknowledge.

The Ethical Basis of Kashrut

Few contemporary rabbis have articulated the moral foundations of kashrut for so many of today's current Jewish leaders as Rabbi Samuel Dresner. In his book *Keeping Kosher*, he reminds us that in the biblical vision, "permission to eat meat is... understood as a *compromise, a*

divine concession." The Rabbinic tradition has taught that human beings were originally vegetarian in the garden of Eden on the basis of Genesis 1:29, "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food." God's original plan contained no slaughterhouses; animal slaughter was only reluctantly allowed after the flood, and this slaughter had to be regulated.

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life they take." The laws of *shechita* are the concrete manifestation of this required reverence. However, it also is now evident that kosher slaughter can be turned on its head, becoming among the cruelest methods of ending life. As Rabbi Barry Schwartz, who sits on the task force on kashrut for the Central Conference of American Rabbis, noted upon viewing PETA's video, "If this is kosher, then we have a big problem."

Fortunately, Rabbi Schwartz has been joined by many others, and, in a remarkable demonstration of spontaneous Jewish pluralism, these voices have come from across the Jewish spectrum. Rabbi Raphael Rank, the President of the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly, fired off a letter to all Conservative Rabbis shortly after the AgriProcessors's story appeared, calling PETA's investigation "a welcome, though unfortunate service to the Jewish community." He argued that "[w]hen a company purporting to be kosher violates the prohibition against *tza'ar ba'alei hayyim*, causing pain to one of God's living creatures, that

company must answer to the Jewish community, and ultimately, to God."

Chaim Milikowsky, the chair of the Talmud department at Bar Ilan University and a traditionally observant Jew, went so far as to say of AgriProcessors that, "It very well may be that any plant performing such types of *shechita* is guilty of *hillul hashem*—the desecration of God's name—for to insist that God cares only about his ritual law and not about his moral law is to desecrate His Name."

The President and Executive Director of the Reform movement's Central Conference of American Rabbis, Janet Marder and Paul Menitoff, were among signatories to a joint statement by Jewish leaders which asserts that, "Judaism's powerful tradition of teaching compassion for animals has been violated by these systematic abuses [at AgriProcessors] and needs to be reasserted" (the full statement and signatories can be viewed and signed at www.HumaneKosher.com). The statement, which goes on to call for specific changes at AgriProcessors and for basic humane standards to be established for all kosher certification agencies, was also signed by Arthur Green, Dean of the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College; Arthur Waskow, the Director of the Shalom Center; Elliot Dorff, Rector at the University of Judaism and Vice-Chair of the Conservative Movement's Committee on Jewish Law; and other senior leaders in all major branches of Judaism.

Individual Responsibility

More than animals suffer in slaughterhouses like AgriProcessors. The entire tradition of reverence and compassion that is Judaism's life blood is drained when kosher slaughter becomes an act of cruelty. When *shechita* becomes part of systematic abuse of animals rather than a compassionate compromise with the inherent violence of meat-eating, the wounds that are inflicted upon these animals becomes wounds inflicted on all of us.

Resources

A free vegetarian starter kit is available from PETA at 1-888-VEG-FOOD or www.GoVeg.com (mention Tikkun to receive complimentary information on Judaism and vegetarianism). The growth of community supported agriculture (CSA) allows consumers to buy a share in the food produced in an area farm. To identify a CSA or similar options in your area:

- www.sustainabletable.com
- www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa
- www.biodynamics.com
- www.landstewardshipproject.org/csa.html

For many, the pervasive nature of animal abuse at AgriProcessors and elsewhere means that eschewing meat is now a moral imperative. Indeed, many who have investigated the pitiful conditions in which dairy cattle and egg-laying hens are raised, have committed themselves to veganism (eschewing all animal products). Vegan diets also have well-established health and ecological advantages, and are increasingly popular, especially with young people. A recent survey of 100,000 college students by food service giant Aramark indicated that fully one in four students consider finding vegan meals on campus important to them. In a like manner, many Jews feel that vegetarianism is the most effective way to stand against the cruelty of factory farms and within the Judaic vision of reverence for all life.

Those who choose not to become vegetarian still have an ethical responsibility to ensure the meat and animal products they eat come from animals that are both humanely raised and slaughtered. The only adequately regulated labels that a consumer could look for on a wide variety of products to ensure *better* treatment of animals are "organic" and "Certified Humane." Unfortunately, though these certifications eliminate some abuses, they allow farms to systematically mutilate animals without pain relief (for example, cutting off part of chickens' sensitive beaks), do not mandate access to the outdoors, and have no standards for the transportation of birds. Claims that animals are "free range" are so poorly regulated as to be meaningless and a multitude of industry-promoted "humane" labels like "Animal Care Certified" and the "Swine Welfare Assurance Program" are simply Orwellian tactics by industry to redefine even the worst factory farm methods as "humane."

This sorry state of affairs is further indicated by the fact that the only national chain of grocery stores which has meaningful humane standards for the animal products they sell is Whole Foods (roughly as good as those used by the "Certified Humane" label). Significantly, Whole Foods is in the process of developing new animal welfare standards which, when released, are likely to be vastly superior to any currently available. At present, however, the only way to ensure that animals are treated humanely is to avoid eating them or identify a free range farm (that you inspect yourself) and to personally arrange for the animals' slaughter.

Whether we choose vegetarianism or not, it is time we confront our own forgetfulness about the suffering of animals, and, equally, our forgetfulness about the moral intent of kosher law. Continued silence about the fate of the animals we eat is not just silence, but denial. The voices calling for compassion in how we treat farm animals are stronger now than at anytime in recent memory; they testify to a process of remembering a venerable tradition of reverence for life which continues to animate Jews today. Let us work to make these remembrances into a concrete, living tradition of day-to-day concern for all life. Let the image of the divine that we represent, be a vision of compassion. □

Towards a Jewish Theology of Nonviolence

Aaron J. Tapper

Towards the end of the Passover Seder, families traditionally open the front door of their home to the Prophet Elijah, who in Jewish belief will herald in the messianic age. Many Jews are familiar with the *Eliyahu Hanavi* prayer which asks for peace, yet in traditional homes another prayer is also said at this time in the Seder, *Shfokh Chamatka*:

Pour out Your fury against the nations who do not know You and upon the regions where they do not invoke Your name because they devoured Jacob and desolated his home. Pour out Your wrath on them and may Your blazing anger overtake them. Pursue them with anger and destroy them from under the heavens of Adonai.

Who are these nations deserving of God's wrath? Does "the nations that do not know you" mean all non-Jews? Does it mean non-Jews who are immoral and unethical? Or does it mean just those non-Jews who have persecuted Jews? What about the non-Jews who persecute other non-Jews? And why are we asking for destruction just before we offer a prayer for peace?

For the non-Orthodox and non-traditional, it is easy to simply ignore this prayer—most Reform, Reconstructionist, and other liberal Haggadot don't even include it, substituting instead a prayer praising God for saving the Jews in every situation. Yet the idea in Judaism of triumphing over our enemy is not one that we can—or should—simply ignore. An important part of our tradition is bound up in violent retribution. Instead of ignoring this vengeful rage we must address it.

Celebrating Violence

Passover follows directly after Purim, a holiday in which Jews celebrate the massacre of our enemies. *Celebrating violence* is a fundamental component of this holiday.

According to Jewish law, during the holiday's twenty-four-hour period a Jew is obligated to hear *Megillat Esther*, the sacred text read on Purim, twice, and during this recitation Jews commonly *celebrate* the killing of human beings.

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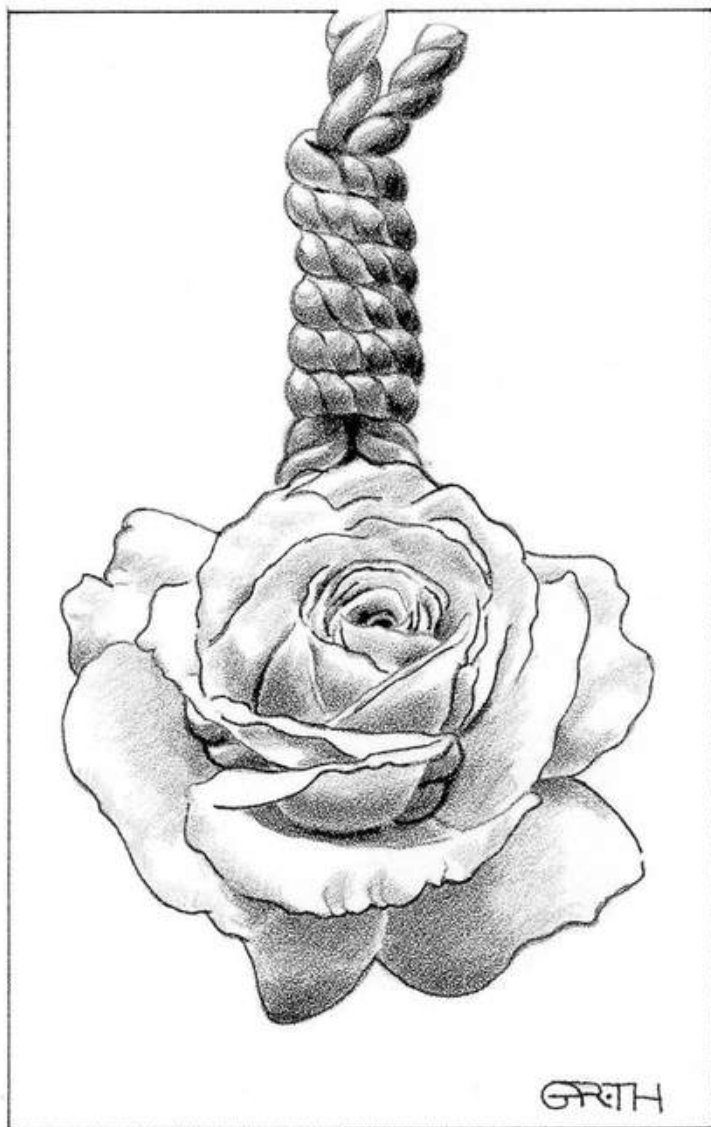
Although I am aware that some scholars say that the megillah is a brilliantly written farce, the Jewish communities that I have been exposed to in my life have not focused upon this literary interpretation. Instead, at Jewish day schools, in Jewish summer overnight camps, at synagogue services, and in various yeshivot, I have been invited to cheer and applaud King Achashverosh's sentencing and hanging of the character Haman, as well as his ten sons, alongside the killing of more than 75,000 others at the hands of Jews. Following a traditional custom, though the entire text is chanted with a specific trope, we have recited the verse of Haman's hanging using a special upbeat melody, one of six verses in the megillah that is treated in this way, for each of these passages contains descriptions of events that are perceived as having been beneficial to the Jews of the Purim story.

Many rabbis defend this upbeat celebration. For example, according to Rabbi Andrew Sacks, the Director of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel's Masorti movement and formerly a previous congregational rabbi for eight years, many, if not most, contemporary Jews who celebrate Purim use this holiday simply as a time to rejoice; the cheering involved with the megillah's reading is "merely an extension of this atmosphere and is not necessarily related to the text's seemingly hateful ideas."

I respectfully disagree. It is my experience that many Jews actually delight in the hanging of Haman and his sons, largely because they see these deaths as justified. And what of vindictive extremists who have used our Purim text to justify acts of violence? Only eleven years ago, Baruch Goldstein carried out perhaps the most heinous act by a Jew in the twentieth century when he murdered twenty-nine Muslims and injured more than 100 others while they were praying in Hebron's Cave of the Patriarchs. Though it is surely true that Goldstein has been an exception to the rule, an historical outlier in Jewish history, he intentionally chose Purim on which to carry out this act. I firmly believe that passages such as the following can only create hatred in Jews: "Thus the Jews smote all their enemies...and did what they would to those that hated them."

A Prayer for "Righteous Gentiles"

Though Purim is unabashedly a celebration of Jewish triumph, Passover presents itself as a more nuanced holiday. Even many non-Jews are aware of the custom during



the Seder of spilling wine out of our cups during the recitation of the Ten Plagues, symbolizing our communal discomfort with celebrating the suffering and deaths of the Egyptians, an idea echoed in various midrashim.

Realizing the contradiction in calling for God's wrath to be waged upon non-Jews immediately before making a prayer for universal peace, some rabbis have offered the following prayer as an alternative or accompaniment to *Shfokh Chamatkeba*:

Pour out Your love upon the nations who have known You and upon the regions where they call upon Your name, due to the loving-kindness that they have enacted upon Jacob's descendants and for defending Your nation Israel from those who would devour them. May they live to see the sukkah [of peace spread] over your chosen ones and to participate in the happiness of your nations.

Until three years ago, I chose to recite this passage at my

family's Seder, after my father said *Shfokh Chamatkeba*. I was comforted that I was performing a custom I believed was more than 500 years old, said to have been established around the same time as *Shfokh Chamatkeba*. Thinking of the Talmud, I also felt that in reciting both texts alongside one another my family was being more accurately reflective of our pluralistic, multi-opinioned tradition.

But eventually I became dissatisfied with this second tradition as well. I was asking God to bless those people who were already, in common vernacular, "good to the Jews." I realized that this prayer was limited in scope, focusing on a single group of non-Jews who—at least in my mind—already seem to be on God's path. Though this prayer did not call for violence, it continued the pattern of dividing the world into Jew and non-Jew, those who help Jews and those who hurt Jews, creating an "othering" that has generated much violence. Soon thereafter I learned that this second tradition was probably created around 1963, as the Halachic authority, Rabbi David Golinkin, contends in the Spring 2003 edition of *Conservative Judaism*.

Understanding Forgiveness

In the Summer of 2003 I had the opportunity to spend one month in Freetown, Sierra Leone, volunteering as a research intern with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). As many people know, prior to the ceasefire of 2002, a bloody and ruthless civil war raged in Sierra Leone for more than ten years. One of the many forms of violence perpetrated during this time was the chopping off of an "enemy's" hands.

On one of my last days at the TRC, I spoke with a Sierra Leonean who had lost his left hand in one such attack. Hesitantly questioning him as to what he would do if he encountered the man who had viciously chopped his hand off, I asked him about forgiveness. In one of the more profound moments of my life I listened to the beautiful way that this individual had decided to treat his so-called enemy.

"I would embrace him," he said. "I would hug him and tell him that I forgive him. I know that he didn't chop off my hand because he hated me. He didn't even know me. He chopped off my hand in a crazed state of fear and madness."

Is it possible for my Jewish community to deal with perceived enemies in this same way? Or should we pray for their demise or even their deaths? What about those who don't actually commit a crime? Should they be punished for intentions of thought? Purim's Haman, as the megillah informs us, didn't kill anyone. Using terms from the United States criminal justice system, Haman only "conspired" to

kill others. And according to the text his sons didn't even do that. As for the more than 75,000 others who were killed by the Jewish community that day, the text implies that some of these non-Jews were killed in self-defense and some were murdered in pre-emptive attacks.

But Jewish texts offer an abundance of voices in favor of reconciliation. According to one text, the esteemed Talmudic figure Beruriah finds her husband, Rabbi Meir, praying for God to destroy some men. Shocked at her husband's behavior Beruriah sharply admonishes her husband, asking him to explain how he could make such a prayer. Rabbi Meir explains that on his way home he was robbed by two thieves and his prayer was asking God to "justly" punish these sinners. Citing her own interpretation of a verse from the Book of Psalms, Beruriah tells Rabbi Meir that rather than asking God to destroy the men—to destroy the sinners—he should instead pray for God to destroy their sins.

In looking at the advocacy of nonviolence in the Jewish tradition, one is not hard-pressed to find that Beruriah was following an age-old Jewish tradition that confronts a Jew's urge to commit revenge, focusing instead on the biblical commandments to bear no grudge and to forgive others. Being created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God, commands us to take our lives—and the lives of all others—extremely seriously. Indeed, as a famous Mishnah teaches us, the loss of a single life is equivalent to the death of the entirety of humanity. The Jerusalem Talmud teaches us that it does not matter if the individual is a Jew or a non-Jew. Both are holy in the eyes of God.

This theology of nonviolence and communal forgiveness has been developed by contemporary rabbis Everett Gendler and Jeremy Milgrom, among others. It is a theology we can apply to reconciling with children of WWII-era Germans who must live with the actions of their parents and grandparents. It is a theology we can apply to the situation in the Middle East, where only by engaging in compassionate forgiveness will we be able to achieve an enduring peace.

Jacques Derrida, a Jew from Algiers who knew much about both war and genocide, wrote that there is an element of giving within the concept of forgiveness, a giving of a piece of oneself to another in response to an unforgivable act. But, he continues, the process must be performed despite this paradox. Reconciliation is *the* path towards healing, the way towards peace, whether in Sierra Leone, South Africa, or Israel and Palestine. We, as a Jewish community, must attempt to reconcile with our perceived enemies, for both the safety and sustenance of the Jewish community as well as the future stability of our global world.

A New Prayer

Using Beruriah's wisdom and other Jewish texts and customs as a backdrop, I recently composed the following

prayer, to be said during the Pesach Seder, either in place of or alongside *Shfokh Chamatkeha*:

Pour out Your love upon the communities who do not know You—both Jews and non-Jews—and the regions where they call upon Your name in vain, for we all need help from you to see the hate inside of us. Transform our evil thoughts so that we can use our power to make the world whole and to perfect its brokenness. May we live to see the sukkah of peace and to participate in the happiness of all of Your nations. Give all of us Your support, so that we can achieve a state of internal peace and a peace within the human collective, in Your name if not in ours, in our name if not in Yours. You who brings peace to Your world brings peace to us and to the people Israel and to all humankind, and we say Amen.

Judaism is hardly a monolithic religious tradition. For every passage of Isaiah 2:4, "beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks," there is a Joel 4:9, "beat your plowshares into swords, your pruning hooks into spears." Yet all Jews have a choice in deciding to identify with a particular textual tradition.

Some associate with the prevalence of violence over non-violence. Members of my own family, in fact, opt to ask God to inflict violence on others through the *Shfokh Chamatkeha* prayer, perhaps as a spiritual and psychological outlet for centuries of cruel and unjust Jewish persecution. I understand this anger and pain, for it is deeply embedded in both the Jewish community's narrative and my own. I comprehend the reasons for legitimizing these ideas because of our historical maltreatment. It is clear that individuals exist in the world that have deeply negative feelings towards Jews, often times committing hateful acts. I do not dispute this reality.

It is my humble thought, however, that *Shfokh Chamatkeha* and other texts of this kind do not reflect our ideal way to treat malicious or immoral people. For me, Jewish prayer should—and must—echo not the way we think the world is but rather the way that the world should be. Religious texts shape our community's consciousness; the habits of our ideas manifest in our physical actions. *Minbag yisrael k'balachab*; our community's casual customs often become etched into law. We must not run from this truth. Instead we should be vocal in reinterpreting, if not marginalizing, our hateful texts. Each text in the Jewish canon emerged in a particular time and place. Though many of our hateful texts were written in times of great persecution, our contemporary worldview must transcend our past; our prayers must focus on our ideals for the future.

In a time in which our world clearly needs physical and spiritual healing, I respectfully hope that this new *Shfokh Abavatkeha* prayer can serve as an addition, and perhaps a replacement, to the Jewish tradition of *Shfokh Chamatkeha*, placing the tradition of *darchei shalom* (paths of peace) back in the center of our ideological canon, furthering the Jewish community's efforts to transform and heal the world. □

Ethnic Impersonators, American Identities

Laura Browder

Elisabeth Stern's 1926 autobiography, *I Am a Woman—And a Jew* was a best-seller when it was first published and is still taught in college courses on women and Judaism. Published under the pseudonym Leah Morton, *I Am a Woman—And a Jew* explores issues common to many Jewish immigrant autobiographies and autobiographical novels of the period: conflicts between old and new worlds, between Orthodox Judaism and assimilation, and between spiritual and worldly success. And yet the title of the book is misleading: there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that Stern was not, in fact, Jewish. In fact, Stern was only doing what many other Americans before and since her have done: escaping the trap of an unwanted identity through reinventing herself in a new ethnicity.

I Am a Woman—And a Jew is only one of dozens of ethnic impersonator autobiographies that have been published in the United States over the past one hundred and sixty years. Paradoxically, by playing into cultural stereotypes of their newly chosen ethnicities, they have mired their readers in essentialist thinking—because in order to be heard, the ethnic autobiographer must often conform to his or her audience's stereotypes about that ethnicity.

Sometimes these transformations are personal triumphs. In the 1920s, the North Carolina janitor Sylvester Long transformed himself into Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance—a role that afforded him all the possibilities denied him by his birth identity, defined by the laws of his time and place as "colored." He not only authored a best-selling autobiography but became a movie star and even had his own line of running shoes. He embraced his "Indian" identity in every aspect of his life.

The white writer Daniel James broke his thirty-year writer's block, which first presented itself after his appearance as an unfriendly witness before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, by "becoming" the young Chicano activist Danny Santiago, author of *Famous All Over Town* (1983). As he explained to his friend John Gregory Dunne, Santiago "is so much freer than I am myself. He seems to know how he feels about everything and [has]



none of the ifs and buts that I'm plagued with."

However, in other contexts ethnic transformation can seem more troubling. *The Education of Little Tree*, Forrest Carter's memoir of his Cherokee boyhood, which reached number one on the *New York Times* best-seller list in 1991, turned out to have been written by Asa Carter, who had a nearly three-decade career in Alabama politics as a Ku Klux Klan terrorist and far-right radio announcer, as well as being the secret author of the famous 1963 speech by Governor George Wallace of Alabama: "Segregation now... Segregation tomorrow... Segregation forever." Finding himself further and further out of the mainstream of Southern politics by the early 1970s, he took refuge in a new, more sympathetic identity—but apparently did not modify his racial and political views at all.

Paradoxically, many ethnic impersonators seek out their new identities as part of a personal quest for authenticity. Mezz Mezzrow, the child of Russian-Jewish immigrants, began redefining himself in the 1930s as an African-American jazz musician—and eventually got the government to racially reclassify him as black. In his birth identity he could not, he felt, be an authentic jazz musician and so

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find self-expression. Mezz Mezzrow was so troubled by the racism of his time—and so enamored of jazz—that he felt that blackness was the only identity that would allow him to escape the ugliness of racial privilege while allowing him access to a more “authentic” sound. He remains a controversial figure to this day among jazz musicians and fans who debate the role of race in jazz.

Examining these stories of transformation together, we are forced to confront difficult questions: Is there such a thing as an authentic ethnic or racial identity? And what is it about American discourse that makes us accept these impersonators so readily—and then feel so betrayed when their deceptions are exposed? Ethnic impersonators force us to rethink our easy assumptions about identity; they disrupt the notion of the melting pot and make us question the ways in which all identities are constructed. And they revise the basis for a national sense of self.

However, ethnic impersonators and their autobiographies are not strictly an American phenomenon. Benjamin Wilkomirski's 1998 acclaimed “memoir,” *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood*, which was translated into twelve languages and won two prestigious literary awards, was revealed to be a hoax by Swiss author Daniel Ganzfried, who claimed that not only was Wilkomirski not an Auschwitz survivor, he was not even born Jewish. In fact, there is a growing body of false Holocaust memoirs. These impersonators write themselves into historical identities that are synonymous with suffering. Yet even these impersonations are about much more than assuming the mantle of victimhood. In the notorious 1994 case of “Helen Demidenko,” winner of the prestigious Miles Franklin literary prize for her “autobiographical” novel about the role Ukrainians played in committing atrocities against Jews during the Holocaust, the author turned out to be Helen Darville, of English descent, prompting many commentators to point the apparent anti-Semitic agenda of the work.

In the United States in particular, the ethnic autobiography has served an important political and social function. *I Am a Woman—And a Jew*, like other immigrant autobiographies written during the 1910s and 20s, a period when nativist sentiments were on the rise, offered a testimonial to why immigrants should be considered Americans. Since the mid-nineteenth century, autobiography has been an important vehicle for those trying to free themselves from the strictures of a subordinate racial or ethnic identity. Ethnic autobiographies offer the authentic voice of a minority group to a reading audience composed primarily of white, middle-class, native-born Americans. In a culture in which minority citizens have often had to struggle for their rights, ethnic autobiography states a case for citizenship and for the value of the ethnic self. The political arguments embedded in these autobiographies have often proved effective. Through reading ethnic autobiographies, from *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845) to *Black Boy*

(1932) to *The Woman Warrior* (1976), Americans have been outraged, stirred, and sometimes moved to action. Both the reader and the writer of an ethnic autobiography understand the implied contract: The memoirist is not telling his or her own story as much as the story of a people.

Elisabeth Stern's vision certainly bears this out: as she writes in her memoir, “we Jews are alike. We have the same intensities, the sensitiveness, poetry, bitterness, sorrow, the same humor, the same memories. The memories are not those we can bring forth from our minds: they are centuries old and are written in our features, in the cells of our brains.” The individuality that she grants members of every ethnic group, she denies for herself. “One is one's self. But not when one is a Jew.”

And yet, according to Elisabeth Stern's son, Stern was not, in fact, a Jew at all. In “Imaginary Jews,” the first chapter of his 1988 memoir, *Secret Family*, Thomas Stern begins to lay out the patterns of deception he claims characterized his mother's life. Rather than being, as she claimed, the Orthodox, East Prussia-born daughter of rabbi Aaron Levin and his wife Sarah, she was the Pittsburgh-born, illegitimate child of a Welsh Baptist mother and a German Lutheran father. Placed with the Levins as a foster child when she was seven, she remained with them until she was seventeen, when she returned to the home of her birth mother.

In Elisabeth's case, her decision to “pass” as Jewish had more complicated motives than simply wishing to hide her illegitimate origins. According to her son, during the years she lived with the Levins, Aaron sexually abused her. She became pregnant by him when she was fourteen, and after forcing her to have an abortion, he left her alone.

“I remember looking down at the face of my father, beautiful and still in death, and for a brief, terrible moment feeling my heart rise up—surely it was in a strange, suffocating relief?—as the realization came to me: ‘Now I am free!’” To gaze down upon the face of the man who sexually abused her, now dead and powerless, could have left Stern feeling free indeed.

Autobiographical accounts in direct contradiction to one another can only serve to highlight the fragile nature of memory and the incredible strength of the human desire to create a livable past. Ellen Umansky has done extensive genealogical research and come to the conclusion that Thomas Stern's account is at least partly substantiated.

In this formulation, Elisabeth Stern's ethnicity is the result of a trauma, as though her foster father impregnated her with his Jewish identity when he sexually abused her. Jewishness becomes a metaphor for the memories she cannot escape. If, as she writes of her father, “every word I wrote carried his feeling,” then her “voluntary” ethnicity comes to seem like less of a choice and more of a compulsion. The powerlessness she expresses, the inability to change this identity, even her loss of self—“One is one's self.

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Redefining Jewish Identity

Charlie Bertsch

- *Precarious Life*, by Judith Butler. Verso, 2004
- *The Judith Butler Reader*, edited by Sarah Salih. Continuum, 2004

Interrogating the presumption that there is “an equivalence between Jews and Israel” in *Precarious Life*, Judith Butler asks what the equation leaves out. “What are we to make of Jews who *disidentify* with Israel or, at least, with the Israeli state (which is not the same as every part of its culture)? Or Jews who identify with Israel (Israeli or not), but do not condone or identify with several of its practices?” Troubled by Harvard University President Lawrence Summers’s September 17, 2002 charge that, “serious and thoughtful people are advocating and taking actions that are anti-Semitic in their effect if not their intent” when they express opposition to Israel, Butler demonstrates that Summers ends up duplicating the all-or-nothing thinking that underpins extremism at home and abroad.

The health of the Jews, she argues, depends not on forcing them into a fictive unity but on recognizing the differences that make them stronger. “The argument that *all* Jews have a heartfelt investment in the state of Israel is simply untrue. Some have a heartfelt investment in corned beef sandwiches or in certain Talmudic tales, memories of their grandmother, the taste of borscht, or the echoes of the Yiddish theater. Some care most about Hebrew songs or religious litur-

gy and rituals. Some have an investment in historical and cultural archives from Eastern Europe or from the Shoah, or in forms of labor activism that are thoroughly secular, although ‘Jewish’ in a substantively social sense.” After reciting this range of possibilities, Butler revises her question. “What do we make of Jews, including myself, who are emotionally invested in the state of Israel, critical of its current form, and call for a radical restructuring of its economic and juridical basis precisely because they are so invested?”

Because this is also a question that TIKKUN readers find themselves asking these days, *Precarious Life* provides an ideal point of entry—especially when read alongside Sara Salih’s excellent *The Judith Butler Reader*—into the work of this difficult, influential Jewish thinker. A professor of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley, Butler is best known for the controversy surrounding her 1990 book *Gender Trouble*, in which she forcefully argues that there is nothing “natural” about gender stereotypes, whether promulgated by sexist men or radical women. “Because there is neither an essence that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all.” Turning feminism inside out, *Gender Trouble* radically challenged its foundation. If sexual difference is “tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exteri-

or space through a *stylized repetition of acts*,” rather than being an incontrovertible fact of nature, then the idea of “woman” that feminists have historically relied upon will necessarily place restrictions on many of the people they seek to free. “We regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right,” Butler notes, underscoring the irony in a supposedly liberatory political project relying on the bondage of its participants.

A decade and a half later, Butler has applied the same incisive logic to her analysis of the relationship between Jews and Israel. In taking Lawrence Summers to task, she makes it clear that we also regularly punish those who fail to do their Jewishness right. Although she never makes an explicit analogy between the category of “Jew” and the category of “woman,” the logic of her argument in *Precarious Life* implies that they function similarly. Just as, in her view, there is no common denominator that determines once and for all that one is or is not a “real” woman, there also isn’t one to determine once and for all that one is or is not a “true” Jew. It is crucial to note that this absence of a single unifying feature does not indicate, as Butler’s detractors tend to believe, that she regards the categories she critiques as empty or meaningless. Just because a collective identity cannot be reduced to a common denominator does not mean that the people who claim it have nothing in common. After all, Butler writes, “what do we make of Jews, including myself,” despite her reservations about the way in which the category of “Jew” functions in contemporary political discourse. She is willing to speak as a Jew, despite or perhaps *because* there is no indisputable essence to Jewishness.

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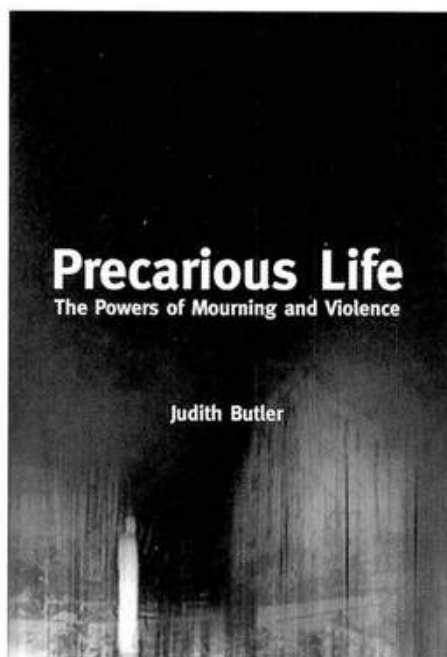
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At one point in the chapter devoted to Summers's charge, Butler describes speaking to a reporter from *The New York Times*. "I explained to her that I was, like many others who wrote in, a progressive Jew (handling the discourse of identity politics for the moment), and that I rejected the notion that to support Palestinian self-determination was in itself an anti-Semitic act." The parenthesis is key. She knows the potential risks and rewards entailed in describing herself as a "progressive Jew." So when Butler does, she does it not for all time but provisionally. Butler recognizes that there are times when it makes good personal and political sense to be counted as something specific. In the interview that closes *The Judith Butler Reader*, Butler tells a story. "I remember once walking on a street in Berkeley and some kid leaned out of a window and asked, 'Are you a lesbian?' Just like that. I replied, 'Yes, I *am* a lesbian.' I returned it in the affirmative. It was a completely impulsive moment." Realizing that the questioner was really asking, "Are you the thing that I fear and loathe?" Butler concludes that, "to the extent that I was able very quickly to turn around and say, 'Yes, I am a lesbian,' the power of my interrogator was lost. My questioner was then left in a kind of shock, having heard somebody gamely, proudly take on the term—somebody who spends most of her life deconstructing the term in other contexts. It was a very powerful thing to do."

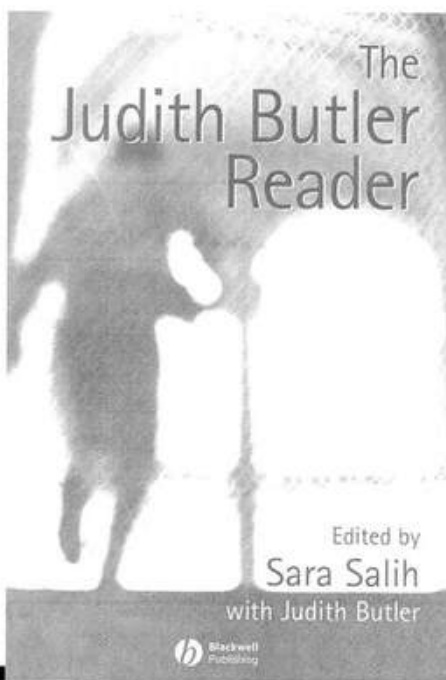
This sense of timing—when it makes sense to speak as something specific, when it would be better to question the construction of that something—is what makes Butler's thought particularly valuable to those of us on the Left. Regardless of what her critics may claim, she is no hide-bound idealist, who declares, "Women do not exist!" over and over from her mountaintop hermitage. Butler

knows why, how, and when to descend from the heights of philosophical complexity to communicate the importance of her approach to a broader audience than the graduate seminar. She writes for *Art Forum*. She does interviews. She composes opinion pieces for *The New York Times*. The essay on the charge of anti-Semitism originally appeared in the *London Review of Books*. She acts, in short, as a public intellectual, despite the stress that role surely brings her.

What makes *Precarious Life* so compelling is that it manages to do double duty, fusing scholarly sophistication with the accessibility Butler has until now cultivated



outside the academy. Begun in the wake of September 11, 2001, the book bears witness to the sense of urgency she felt as the American response to the attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. threatened to initiate a state of permanent war. This was no time to write *only* for scholars or *only* for mainstream progressive. This was a time to write for both groups at the same time, to bring them together on



the page in the hope of inspiring greater collaboration off it.

Mind you, *Precarious Life* is not light reading. Butler's sentences remain slow-going. But they require a lot less background reading to understand than their counterparts in earlier books like *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter*. Instead of confining itself to intricate analyses of texts that are themselves intricate analyses, such as essays by Sigmund Freud or Michel Foucault, *Precarious Life* applies the same rigor to speeches, newspaper articles, and government documents. Particularly impressive in this regard, along with the critique of Lawrence Summers's charge of anti-Semitism, is the chapter Butler devotes to the detention of the individuals being held at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. "These prisoners," she notes, "are not even called 'prisoners' by the Department of Defense or by representatives of the current U.S. administration. To call them by that name would suggest that internationally recognized rights pertaining to the treatment of prisoners of war ought to come into play. They are, rather, 'detainees,' those who are held in waiting, those for whom waiting may well be without end."

Here we see Butler's long-standing preoccupation with names—the name of “woman,” the name of “Jew,” the name of “lesbian”—in full effect, but turned to a more specific political end. For the people held at Guantanamo, being classified as “detainees” instead of “prisoners” has had the effect of suspending every other identity—citizen, brother, father, Muslim—that they could otherwise claim. In a brutally concrete sense, these individuals are being punished for doing their *humanity* wrong. The Bush Administration's rejection of due process for people captured in its “War on Terror” has transformed them into the ultimate “other”: the inhuman.

As Butler makes painfully clear, the sort of theoretical abstractions that postmodern thinkers have long been mocked for using—Jean-François Lyotard, for example, published a book titled *The Inhuman*—have, through an ironic reversal that rivals the best that Franz Kafka could dream up, become the bread and butter of American foreign policy. The Bush Administration engages, without apology, in the business of deciding who does and does not deserve to be treated as human. Whether the neoconservatives in D.C. think tanks have been reading the same abstruse theory as people like Judith Butler—one suspects that more than a few of them have—or have, rather, stumbled into inventing their own alternative, it is eerie how rapidly the gap between the so-called “real world” of Washington politics and the loftiest reaches of contemporary scholarship has closed.

Some progressives will argue that this fondness for abstraction on the contemporary Right serves as confirmation that *all* abstraction is dangerous, regardless of its perpetrator's allegiance. Like other academic leftists, Butler has come under fire for being too removed from the realities of day-to-day life. Even when critics concede theoretical points to her—agreeing, say, that the category of “woman” is founded on a fiction—

they usually make the counterargument that the practical value of those points is not worth the effort expended in absorbing them. “People still treat me as a woman, as a Jew, as a lesbian,” they argue, “whether I consent to their classification or not. I'm better off reshaping those categories from within than radically questioning them from without.”

What these critics have failed to see, however, is that there is a difference between the positions that Butler articulates in scholarly essays and the ones she stakes out by virtue of her actions. By saying, “Yes, I am a lesbian, woman, Jew, leftist,” when the situation calls for it, as she has repeatedly done—on the street, in bookstores, on petitions, and in the pages of establishment newspapers and magazines—Butler demonstrates a belief in the power of individuals to act responsibly for the public good that complicates the stereotype of her as an iconoclast bent on destroying the foundations of our civilization. Sure, she wants us to pry our minds free of the identity categories we are raised with in order to question them from the outside. But she also recognizes the need to keep working to reform those categories from within.

This aspect of Butler's work may be the hardest to pin down, because it is expressed less in the content of her argument than in the form it takes. One of the biggest strengths of *The Judith Butler Reader* is that it highlights the role that the first-person singular plays in her thinking. “The prospect of *being* anything, even for pay, has always produced in me a certain anxiety, for ‘to be’ gay, or ‘to be’ lesbian seems to be more than a simple injunction to become who or what I already am,” begins the 1990 essay “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” included in the anthology. But this unease has not stopped her from making judicious use of autobiography. In the new preface she composed for *Gender Trouble*'s tenth anniversary edition, also excerpted in *The Judith Butler Reader*, Butler

makes brave use of her past. “I grew up understanding something of the violence of gender norms: an uncle incarcerated for his anatomically anomalous body, deprived of family and friends, living out his days in an ‘institute’ in the Kansas prairies; gay cousins forced to leave their homes because of their sexuality, real and imagined; my own tempestuous coming out at the age of 16; and a subsequent adult landscape of lost jobs, lovers, and homes.”

Knowing Butler's reluctance “to be” gives passages like this one more weight. If we identify with the person who recounts these experiences—not hard for anyone who has suffered the pain of being marginalized—the temptation to conflate her life and work will be strong. While there is a good side to the investment that identification brings about, the understanding it conjures tends to be shallow. The sense of knowing, to use a highly appropriate idiom, where a person “is coming from” should not provide a shortcut to meaning. Just because someone grows up in New York or spends time in the military does not mean that she thinks like a New Yorker or a soldier.

From this perspective, Butler's greatest achievement may not be the dismantling of categories such as “woman” or “Jew” or “lesbian,” but rather her ability to write and speak in a first-person singular that invites people to identify her as a member of all three categories without letting them forget that identification always comes at a price. Identity provides a home, but one that too often turns into a prison. Without vigilance, the “I” we are required to speak will become the “I” we are forced to inhabit, an indefinite detention that will, in its own way, deprive us of our humanity. *Precarious Life* represents the culmination of an argument that Butler began making long before those jets crashed into the World Trade Center: the real war against terror begins not with the identification of suspects, but with the suspicion that identity is a problem with no final solution. □

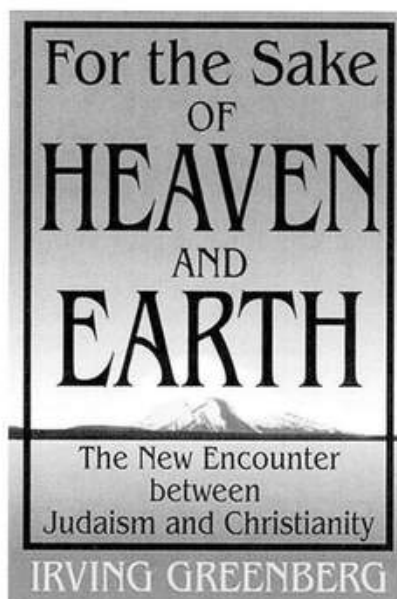
An Orthodox Iconoclast: Irving Greenberg

Or N. Rose

- *For the Sake of Heaven and Earth: The New Encounter Between Judaism and Christianity*, Irving Greenberg. (Jewish Publication Society, 2004)

If only Irving (Yitz) Greenberg were not such an uncompromising and daring religious figure, he could have enjoyed a much more serene career as an Orthodox rabbi, academic, or institutional leader. However, his intellectual honesty and ethical integrity have not allowed him to do so. Consequently, he has spent the last several decades—in one or another of these professional capacities—embroiled in controversy. Greenberg is perhaps best known within the American Jewish community as the co-founder and longtime president of CLAL—The National Center for Learning and Leadership, an organization dedicated to inter-denominational Jewish cooperation. He has also been an influential voice in discussions of post-Holocaust theology, and a leader in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Greenberg's journey into interfaith dialogue began with more "anger than hope." After spending a sabbatical in Israel immersed in Holocaust studies (1961), he came to the conclusion that Christian anti-Semitism provided a religious foundation for the Nazi assault on European Jewry. Fearing the possibility of a future recurrence, he and his wife Blu (a founder of Orthodox feminism and herself an important voice in contemporary American Jewish life)



decided to enter the fray of Jewish-Christian dialogue like "avenging" angels, demanding that Christians stop demeaning the Jewish tradition.

However, as the ecumenical spirit of the Sixties began to sweep through the United States, Greenberg began to rethink the motivations for his involvement in interfaith discourse. Particularly important to him was the 1965 Second Vatican Council, in which the Catholic Church publicly reassessed its relationship to the Jewish people and committed itself to revising several of its anti-Jewish doctrines. Deeply moved by this act of *teshuvah* (repentance), Greenberg felt that the Jewish community needed to reciprocate by engaging in its own process of *heshbon nefesh* (soul-searching), asking how it

contributed to the cultivation of an ethos of mutual hatred over the centuries. His aim since that time has been to better understand the religious commitments of his Christian brothers and sisters and to explore with them areas of commonality and collaboration.

For the Sake of Heaven and Earth is a record of Greenberg's attempts to articulate the motivations for his interfaith work and his vision of the relationship between Jews and Christians. The book opens with a moving retrospective in which the author describes the complicated and often painful path he and his wife have taken as Orthodox interfaith activists, including being branded heretics by many of their Orthodox colleagues. The remainder of the book consists of eight theoretical essays (new and old), a series of appreciative responses from leading Jewish and Christian figures, and a study guide.

Irving Greenberg's interfaith activism is based on his theological reading of Jewish history (*heilsgeschichte*) and the seminal role the Holocaust plays in this great drama. It is his assertion that Jewish history can be understood as involving three distinct stages of divine-human interaction. In the biblical period, God played a highly visible role in the life of Israel—splitting the Sea of Reeds, smiting the Egyptians, and initiating the people into the covenant at Sinai. However, in the rabbinic period—beginning with the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem (70 CE)—God began a gradual process of self-limitation (*tzimtzum*), playing a more subtle role in human affairs; no longer performing supernatural miracles for his people, but serving more as

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an inspirational force to the rabbis and other shapers of exilic Jewish life. Finally, Greenberg views the Holocaust as the third great moment in Jewish history, in which God's presence becomes even more hidden—discernable now only through human reflection. He understands this process as one that was intended by God from the outset of creation and is the fulfillment of the biblical description of God forming humankind in His "image." It is Greenberg's belief that despite the immense pain God suffered by watching the horrors of the *Shoah* unfold and not intervening, God refused to do so because otherwise He would have stunted human growth and undermined our maturation process.

Based on this reading of Jewish history, Greenberg feels that in a post-Holocaust world the covenant between Jews and their God is no longer one in which God commands loyalty; the covenant is now "voluntary" and those who continue to define themselves as Jews should do so out of their love for God and their belief that the teachings and practices of Judaism bring meaning to their lives and can play an important role in healing the world. Greenberg urges Jews to overcome past infighting and adopt a more pluralistic view of Judaism in which all manifestations of Jewish commitment—across denominational and political lines—are seen as "intrinsically heroic" after the *Shoah*. Further, rather than suggesting that Jews band together and fight off the evils of the non-Jewish world, Greenberg believes that this pluralistic vision must also be applied to other religious communities. He argues that one of the key lessons of the Holocaust is that we must all—Jews included—acknowledge the legitimacy of other people's faith commitments. To do otherwise would be to deny a person her full dignity as a human being. In fact, Greenberg goes so far as to say that Jews must revise their understanding of Divine election, viewing themselves as but one of *many* chosen peoples.

Greenberg is particularly interested in dialoguing with Christians because of close, if complicated, connections between these two Abrahamic communities. It is his belief that despite obvious doctrinal differences and a bitter history of animosity, Jews and Christians share an essential belief in the future redemption of the world and the dawn of a (full) messianic reality in which life will triumph over death. In this light, Greenberg views Jesus not as a "false messiah," but as a "failed messiah" (or "unfinished messiah")—one who embodied "the right values," worked tirelessly towards the praiseworthy goal of salvation, but ultimately fell short in his mission. Adapting the thought of the late Franz Rosenzweig, Greenberg asserts that Christianity was a "necessary outgrowth of Judaism," a tradition that could spread the message of the triumph of life farther and wider than Judaism could ever do alone. Islam, too, plays an important role in this schema, and both of these monotheistic traditions should be viewed, according to Greenberg, as part of the greater community of "Israel." However, he adds the important caveat that while (Western) Christians have largely purged themselves of their hatred towards Jews and of their supersessionist claims, Muslims have not yet taken this important step, thus denying themselves full entry into this expanded covenantal community.

The greatest strength of *For the Sake of Heaven and Earth* is the author's creative and inspiring reading of Jewish history. Greenberg constructs a religious myth that incorporates the terror and triumph of twentieth-century Jewish life and that encourages us to work with others to repair the world (*tikkun olam*). What Greenberg has not yet done is work through with sufficient depth or clarity many of the provocative claims in the book. For example, while he speaks in broad strokes about God's process of *tzimtzum*, Greenberg does not discuss much about who or what this God is and how one might cultivate

a relationship with this mysterious deity in contemporary times. Is this a conscious decision, based perhaps on a Maimonidean impulse towards negative theology? What becomes of prayer after Auschwitz? If God no longer deals in reward and punishment, as Greenberg insists, should Jews (and Christians) maintain their traditional liturgical practices, which are shot through with requests for health, wealth, and happiness? What of the rest of religious ritual and law? If this is a voluntary covenant, why maintain the *halakha* (Jewish law)? Greenberg remains an Orthodox Jew, why? Attending to these questions is essential for one who wishes to engage in intra- and inter-faith dialogue from a theological perspective.

Moving from questions of personal belief and practice to interfaith relations more specifically, I think that Greenberg's interpretation of chosenness also requires more thought. While I am sympathetic to his discomfort with the exclusivist Jewish claim to divine

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election, I do not think that this difficulty is resolved by simply including Christians and Muslims under the umbrella of Israel or by speaking of God's ability to choose endlessly. On the former point, I see no reason why we should attempt to incorporate Christians and Muslims into our community. Let each faith maintain its distinctiveness, while insisting that we treat each other with dignity and work together to heal the world despite our differences. On the latter point, if Greenberg believes that there are many viable religious paths, why cling to the term "chosenness"? Would it not be more intellectually honest to admit that this age-old concept no longer works for us? However, if he insists on maintaining use of this designation, he must explain why creating linguistic continuity is important to him, even as he radically reinterprets a concept like chosenness.

While *For the Sake of Heaven and Earth* is not primarily a book about Jewish-Muslim relations, I think it is crucial that Greenberg develop a more nuanced language for his approach to Jewish-Muslim dialogue. His rhetoric about the need for Muslim repentance is not helpful in an already volatile situation. Just as Jews cannot be held responsible for all Jewish hatemongers, we cannot hold all Muslims responsible for the attitudes and behavior of the extremists in their communities. Finally, I hope that in the future, Greenberg will explore more deeply the relationship between monotheistic and non-monotheistic traditions. This is a particularly important issue today, when so many Jews are drawn to Eastern religious paths.

While Irving Greenberg's writings on Jewish-Christian dialogue are open to legitimate critique, he must also be applauded for his courageous work as a spiritual activist. One may not agree with all of his arguments, Greenberg does provide us with an important model for how religiously-minded people might contribute to the ongoing process of tikkun olam. □

Zionism Killed Yiddish

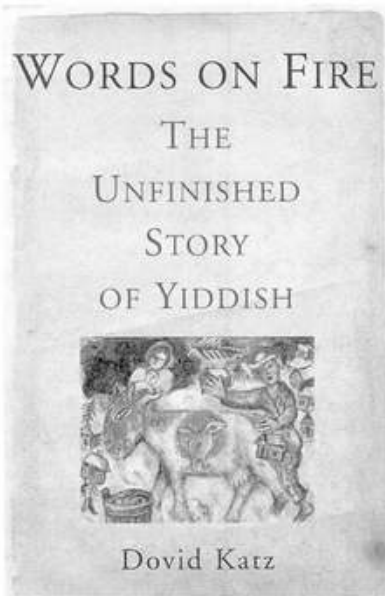
Mark Shechner

■ *Words on Fire: The Unfinished Story of Yiddish*, by Dovid Katz. New York: Basic Books, 2004

Visit the websites of some of the Judaic Studies programs in America, and you'll see a distinct family resemblance. They're invariably strong in Bible studies, Hebrew language, Israeli history and culture, Holocaust studies, and anti-Semitism. There will be local variations: courses in Kabbalah at one program, medieval philosophy and literature at another, and a remarkable amount about women everywhere: "Esthers of the Diaspora," as one course description calls them. Yet in virtually all these programs, you'll find the same gaping holes: centuries of Jewish life left untouched or patched in thinly, as though the Jewish people popped in and out of history at whim, like the magical creatures that float blissfully above the miseries of the shtetl in Chagall paintings. Predictably, Judaic Studies programs are weak in diaspora studies, most especially in the history, culture, and language of the Yiddish-speaking, Ashkenazic civilization that flourished in the heart of Europe for roughly a thousand years, until it was destroyed by the Nazis in the early 1940s. Considering that only sixty-five years ago Yiddish was the language of most of the world's Jews, remarkably little trace of what Irving Howe called "the world of our fathers" can be found in organized—that is,

university-based—Jewish learning.

It is in an effort to help us overcome this amnesia that Yiddish historian Dovid Katz has written *Words on Fire: The Unfinished Story of Yiddish*. While Katz himself is under no illusion that such entrenched institutions as Judaic Studies can be significantly reformed, he has dedicated his work nonetheless to the correction of the historical record and the restoration of Yiddish and *Yiddishkeit*—what he calls the "vanquished view"—to its rightful place as a defining force in the creation of Jewish civilization and consciousness. "PC Judaism," as Katz refers to it, "today has erected its own mightily financed hallways of power and glory: rich and influential organizations, great universities, and prestigious publications. The 'vanquished' view is



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largely relegated to Internet chat rooms, old folks clubs, community centers, and dedicated individualists who are regarded as eccentric at best." If history is the rhetoric of the winners, then Judaic Studies is a winner's curriculum, lavishly furnished with faculty, students, administrators, and endowments.

It may even be symptomatic of this situation, an exiling of the exile, that Katz is currently professor of Yiddish and director of the Yiddish program at the University of Vilnius in Lithuania. Brooklyn-born and the son of Yiddish poet Menke Katz, Dovid Katz previously taught at Oxford and Yale universities and is presently making his academic home in Vilnius. Could this be because his scholarship and cultural politics find little support in England, America, and Israel or because Katz favors Vilnius for historical reasons: as the former center of Jewish learning in the Ashkenazic Diaspora and the original home of YIVO, the Jewish Scientific Institute, founded there in 1925? I can't say. But it is certain that the story told in Katz's book and his present place of study and teaching are of a piece, and it is a remarkable story after all.

Words on Fire, a labor of deep erudition, possesses all the tension and drama of a novel. Following the language of the Eastern European "Ostjuden" from its origins in the Rhineland about a thousand years ago—and early dates are most uncertain—to its catastrophic disappearance during the Holocaust, Katz gives us a turbulent story, with cloudy beginnings, a bloody and contentious middle, and a catastrophic finale. Its theme is taken from the 1908 Yiddish conference in Chernowitz (now Chernovtsy, Ukraine), where Matisyóhu Mises (Mates Mizesh) admonished that should Yiddish die, "along with its language, our people will also lose its unique content, its soul, it will lose its living spiritual world of satire and emotion, the flashes of wit, the hues of texture of spirit... that are one of a kind, homey, that the Diaspora has given it

for all time and with cosmic vigor."

Though *Words on Fire* is a protest in the spirit of Mises' admonition, the broader story is a meticulously plotted linguography of Yiddish, as revealed by its surviving documents, and the folk epic of an embattled language and its champions. Yiddish had its origins in the Rhineland cities where Jews had settled around a thousand years ago. It was a "fusion" language that brought together elements of the surrounding German with the Semitic languages that the Jews had brought with them from the Middle East (Aramaic and Hebrew): "The Yiddish language is only a thousand or so years old. But many of its elements—words, turns of phrase, idioms, embedded historical references—are much older. They fed into Yiddish in a continuous language chain that antedated ancient Hebrew, progressed through Hebrew and then Jewish Aramaic, and ended up in today's Yiddish—without interruption, seam, or discontinuity, despite an ever-shifting geography and changing historical circumstances." This linguistic confrontation of Semitic with the wholly different German produced Yiddish, a "big bang," as Katz calls it. To the frequent charge that Yiddish was a "jargon" and a grab bag of linguistic odds and ends, Katz demurs that all languages in their origins were "fusion" languages, including Hebrew, Aramaic, and English. The myth of a pure language is a sentimental reconstruction at best, a cruel delusion at worst. It was the improvisational genius of medieval Jews to blend together disparate elements: Semitic, Germanic, and Slavic in the main, which gave their language its unique character—its loose-jointed zest, its ability to master experience in so many different registers.

Amending Yiddish scholar Max Weinreich's formula about the internal bilingualism of the Ashkenazim, Katz argues that the Jews were internally trilingual (quite apart from what they knew of their surrounding host languages) and that they spoke Yiddish on the street but were conversant (if they

were men) with Hebrew and Aramaic through study and prayer. Aramaic was the language of the Babylonian Talmud, and modern Jews may utter it even now unawares in reciting the mourner's kaddish. Because Aramaic and Hebrew formed a "sacred canopy" (Weinreich's phrase) over the world of Yiddish speech, Yiddish had to fight for its legitimacy as a written language against the charge of being a language for illiterates and women. Was there behind this resistance a fear that women might start writing? I find it hard not to think so.

Much of the drama of *Words on Fire* lies in its account of the embattled efforts of Yiddish to gain acceptance in print, starting with a page in the Passover Haggadah of Gershom ben Solomon Cohen in 1526, followed in 1541 by the Yiddish poetic masterpiece, the romance *Bovo of Antona*. This latter was published by Christian publisher Paul Fagius, establishing a pattern of Christian publishers being freer than Jews to publish in Yiddish. Throughout the late sixteenth century, Yiddish books would appear in increasing frequency, from the *Tseneréne* (the Yiddish Women's Bible) in the 1590s to the "lifestyle encyclopedia" *The Burning Mirror* of about the same time. In an outburst of Yiddish publication, there appeared in 1602 "the stories about mystical wonders said to have been worked by... Samuel ben Kalonymus of Speyer and his son Judah of Regensburg." Forming the backbone of Yiddish folklore and storytelling for hundreds of years, they were "codified in a text best known in the age of printing from the 1602 *Book of Stories* (*Máyse buk*). None of this took place without bitter resistance from traditionalists, who saw in Yiddish publishing a contaminant to scholarship and a coarsening of intellectual life.

Most of us are likely to think of the origins of Yiddish literature as the secular outburst of the late nineteenth century. Katz, however, locates the great breakthrough of Yiddish in "the

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Yiddish-Kabbalah partnership" of the eighteenth century and the Hasidic revival, much of whose doctrinal writing was in Yiddish. With the emergence of Hasidism in Ukraine, "Yiddish was ready to join Hebrew and Aramaic as the third great language of Jewish spiritual life." Particularly influential was the publication in Yiddish of *Praises of the Baal Shem Tov*, "the most sacred book of Hasidism." But it was the second Hasidic Yiddish book that appeared around 1815 that remains the first actual literary masterpiece of East European Yiddish, perhaps of East European Jewry altogether. It is the book of original stories by Hasidic master Nachman Bratslaver, who, though a master of Hebrew and Aramaic, elected to make his stories available in Yiddish.

But with the Yiddish-Hasidic revival came renewed efforts to crush Yiddish, including campaigns on the part of the *maskilim*, or enlighteners, of Germany, who regarded Yiddish as "a subhuman, degrading jargon." In the words of David Friedlander, a disciple of Moses Mendelssohn, "The Judeo-German that is common among us has no rules, it is vulgar, and it is an incomprehensible language outside of our own circles. It must be eradicated completely . . ." Shocking words, are they not? To the *maskilim*, it was a double curse for Yiddish to be not only a jargon but associated with a spiritual movement that was casting the Jews back in time and separating them, in dress, habits, religion, and language itself even farther from the populations of their host countries. They could not imagine Jewish modernization so long as the Jews were shackled to an uncouth and ungainly *mameloschn*, or mother tongues, so ignorant of science, so innocent of art, so impenetrable to enlightenment. But Yiddish had its own self-generated route to modernization that was little touched by the Haskalah, and the fateful encounter of Yiddish culture with modernity would take place not in the salons of Berlin

but the cafés of Warsaw and Vilna and later New York.

It came in the secular outburst of the late nineteenth century, in the writing of Mendele, Sholem Aleichem, and Peretz, who fashioned the *mameloschn* into a remarkably resilient instrument of imaginative fiction, in which the voices of the Ostjuden found outlets in magazines and books with increasingly cosmopolitan audiences. It was in this writing that the Jews realized themselves as people worthy of being literary subjects entirely as they were, neither idealized, as in devotional literature, nor degraded, as in maskilic polemics. Says Katz, "What happened is sometimes considered one of the great wonders in the history of languages. In the absence of legal or education authority, spread over a number of countries belonging to two separate empires, and with a good percentage of the native Jewish intelligentsia advocating Hebrew or Russian or German as the language of literary culture, written Yiddish nevertheless developed a standard form capable of rapid growth to the level of the great languages of Europe."

Cut to Palestine, where the Zionist settlement, the Yishuv, was even more bitter toward Yiddish than the German-Jewish *maskilim* and the Mendelssohn circle had ever been. The stakes in the early days of the Yishuv was not simply the choice of a language but that of a national identity; Zionists believed the only course was to revive Hebrew and eradicate Yiddish entirely. The new Israeli had to be the opposite of the old Jew; the Jewish image, to the Jew himself and to the world, had to be transformed irrevocably. Hebrew scholar Joseph Klausner wrote, "The new sanctity of language has to be as grave in our eyes as the old sanctity of religion . . . And whoever knows Hebrew but speaks a foreign language shall be in our eyes as an 'apostate for spite,' as a worshiper of idols, as a public desecrator of the Sabbath." The urgency behind this message spilled over into violence, as printers who dared set type of a

Yiddish-language magazine or newspaper in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv were threatened with firebombing. In some of the more disturbing pages of his book, Katz outlines the tactics of threat and intimidation used by the early Zionist Hebraists to keep Yiddish at bay, as if at any point it posed a genuine threat to the victory of Hebrew as the language of the new Jewish settlement and eventual state.

The fate of Yiddish in Europe, in Israel, in America is all too well-known to need repeating: only in certain Hasidic communities does it remain a spoken daily language. Otherwise it is increasingly an academic subject for specialists and antiquarians—wherever, that is, you can find them. Katz observes that "the American Jewish establishment, working closely with the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization, rushed ahead with a program to 'Israelicize' American Jewish culture too. Synagogue after synagogue and school after school, whose members and pupils were often almost all of East European heritage, switched to Israeli ("Sephardic") Hebrew, labeling the Ashkenazi rendering of Hebrew and Aramaic 'wrong,' 'ghetto-drone,' or 'bastardized.'" The exclusion of Yiddish was virtually axiomatic.

As a history and a reminder of the amnesia that undergirds contemporary Jewish education, *Words on Fire* strikes me as a necessary and magisterial study. It is, however, just a first step. Because Katz is a textual scholar and a classically trained philologist, he has little to say about the street and home life of Yiddish: its passion, its domestic intimacy and commercial wisdom, its vernacular robustness, its fertile comedy, its genius for insult, for melody, for mimicry and parody, and what Mises called "its living spiritual world of satire and emotion, the flashes of wit, the hues of texture of spirit." That too needs to be taken up and dusted off and restored to living memory and to memory's handmaiden, the curriculum of Jewish learning. □

Capsule Reviews

- *The Dark Side of Democracy*, by Michael Mann. Cambridge University Press, 2005

If only George W. Bush would read this book. That thought kept recurring to me as I read Michael Mann's *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. Although Mann focuses on the worst instances of mass killing in the twentieth century, his observations on the nature of modern democracy inevitably bring to mind the current situation in Iraq. Far from a primitive or alien phenomenon, the committing of atrocity, Mann argues, is "generated by civilization itself." He does not, however, resort to the oversimplification that "we are all potential Nazis." Instead, Mann explores the complex relations between political ideologies, social institutions, and subcultures that lead to an escalation of ethnic and nationalist violence. The comparisons between "them" and "us," then and now, are not hard to draw.

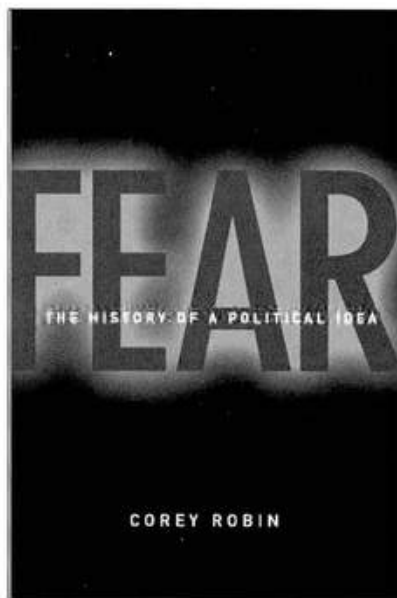
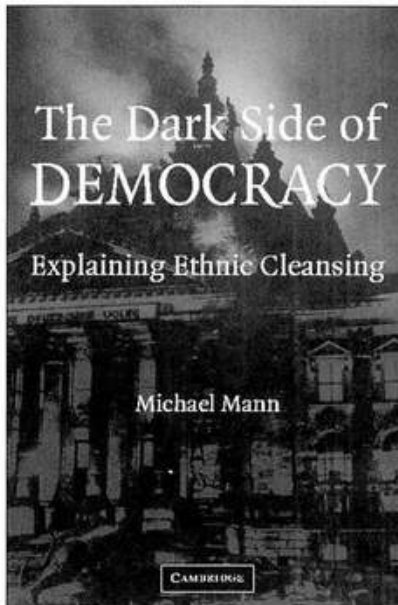
Take, for example, this description: "He conceived of rightist values as providing an objective justice above legal norms." John Ashcroft? No, Heinrich Muller, who rose to become head of the Gestapo. Or this observation: "Habitual perpetrators [blur] the line between torture to extract information and torture [as] purposeless." Abu Ghraib? No, the Nazi concentration camp system. Or this description of near-sighted political leaders whose worldview trumps their perception of reality: "This made them underestimate their enemy, whom they demonized...[they] neglected to consider how their enemy would respond to their actions." Rumsfeld and the neo-cons? No, Milosevic and the ethnic leaders of the former Yugoslavia.

The title *The Dark Side of Democ-*

racy is still something of a misnomer. A counterintuitive rethinking of the origins of modern genocide by UCLA sociologist Michael Mann, *The Dark Side* examines twentieth century instances of the phenomenon in order to argue that the perversion of liberal ideas of democracy frequently leads to atrocity. That is—contrary to conventional wisdoms accumulated since the Nazi dictatorship's final solution—genocide is not necessarily synonymous with state-sponsored, bureaucratically premeditated acts of terror, but is oftentimes symptomatic of crises that plague democratic societies like our own.

Mann also presents cases in which ethnic tensions have not escalated into murderous violence, such as India and Indonesia. Though he could have discussed more the impact of US, NATO, and UN policies in contributing to—or preventing—the escalation of violence, *The Dark Side* does much to deepen our understanding of the limitations of liberal democracy and the "dark side" that accompanies the process of democratization.

—Sarah Liu



- *Fear: The History of a Political Idea*, by Corey Robin. Oxford University Press, 2004

Since 9/11, Americans have become prey to fears that feel new and different; suddenly, we feel vulnerable in the country that has always been our safe haven. In *Fear: The History of a Political Idea*, Corey Robin masterfully unpacks the political power of this fear and others that dominate the American landscape—from the patriotic fears for the American way of life to our individual fears in the workplace, which seem private but actually play a hidden, yet crucial, role in American politics and even in the economy.

Robin examines the history of fear to show us that in fact our new fears are not new at all. Robin contextualizes social anxiety, beginning with Thomas Hobbes's writings on fear and rebellion in the seventeenth century, to Hannah Arendt's post-World War II analyses of total terror and totalitarianism. At times exhausting in its detail, this historical overview gives us the context and the language we need to fully appreciate the core of Robin's book: *Fear, American Style*.

BOOK REVIEWS

Today's no-fly lists, racial profiling of persons of Middle-Eastern descent, and many media sources' quickness to condemn questioning the government as unpatriotic recall the employment blacklists and paranoia about state loyalty of the McCarthy era. Robin finds in these phenomena a pattern of using fear as a tool of political repression in the United States, which he argues became institutionalized in American political culture during the twentieth century.

As a historical corrective, *Fear* is clearly instructive. However, what's most valuable about the book is Robin's discussion of how Americans are terrorized in their everyday lives by their jobs: "...it is in the workplace that men and women in the contemporary United States most consistently encounter personal coercion and repressive fear." Through statistics and personal testimonies, Robin shows us how employers use intimidation and fear to discipline workers for the sake of the bottom line.

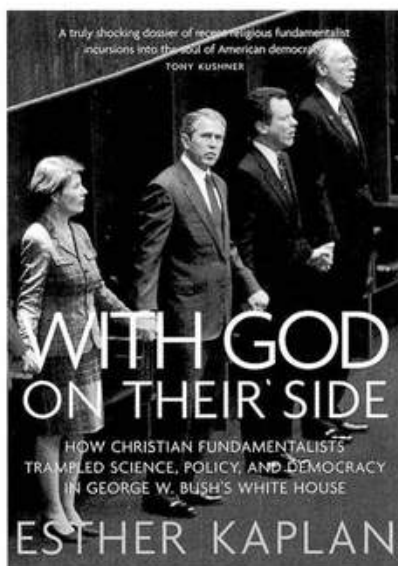
What's most troubling about Robin's analysis of the emotional landscape of the American workplace is the implication that it conditions Americans to see sadism as a natural characteristic of politics. With increasing support for the death penalty, widespread tolerance of the abuse inflicted on prisoners of war at Abu Ghraib, and the Patriot Act's curtailing of civil rights, the publication of *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* could not be more relevant or timely.

—Jane Credland

- *With God on Their Side: How Christian Fundamentalists Trampled Science, Policy, and Democracy in George W. Bush's White House*, by Esther Kaplan. The New Press, 2004

Bush's first presidential win—on the heels of a questionable Supreme Court decision, with less than 50 percent of

For a president to choose policymakers to promote his agenda is not remarkable. What Kaplan's analysis throws into stunning relief is the fact that in the Bush Administration, expertise in the subject at hand is no longer a job requirement.



the popular vote—seemed to mandate caution in office, and policies that reflected the compassionate conservative platform his campaign had promised. Needless to say, many of us were shocked when his first act as President was to reinstate the global gag rule on family planning clinics that accepted monies from the United States.

Former *Nation* editor Esther Kaplan's *With God on Their Side* articulates in painstaking detail exactly how and why we were hoodwinked, by drawing out the intimate connections between Christian Right leadership and Bush Administration policy, pointing out the key role that right-wing Evangelical media has played as an under-the-mainstream-radar publicity machine for Bush's sectarian agenda.

Kaplan's analysis begins with the 2000 campaign's bifurcated message of

compassion on the one hand and hard-line fundamentalist Christianity on the other. She details who the Bush faithful were and connects the dots to show what rewards they reaped once he gained office, by combing through memos from Focus on the Family, bulletins from Concerned Women for America, and congratulatory emails and calls to action from the Eagle Forum and the Family Research Council, as well as policy briefs from the Heritage Foundation. Leaders of these organizations are now heading government advisory committees on AIDS, Sex Education, and Family Planning, and working for the Government Accountability Office.

For a president to choose policymakers to promote his agenda is not remarkable. What Kaplan's analysis throws into stunning relief is the fact that in the Bush Administration, expertise in the subject at hand is no longer a job requirement. At every turn, precedent and informed decision-making have been replaced by faith, and science has been trumped by belief. Kaplan quotes former Office of Faith-Based Initiatives chief John Dilulio as saying, "the lack of even basic policy knowledge, and the only casual interest in knowing more, was somewhat breathtaking."

Kaplan doesn't offer us the magic bullet that would have changed the outcome of the 2004 election. But what she does give us is the research that's been so lacking in our attempts to understand the network of special-interest relationships that have sus-

tained the Bush Administration's hold on the White House—despite our best attempts to stop it.—*Cynthia Hoffman*

■ *Another World is Possible If...*, by Susan George. Verso, 2004

Anyone who's been involved in building coalitions between activist organizations knows that diversity is both a strength and a weakness. Though we are all fighting for change, we too often get stymied because we have different priorities. Political economist and ATTAC co-founder Susan George's, *Another World Is Possible If...* tries to call progressives to task by suggesting that they get lost when they direct their energies against each other, instead of staying focused on what really needs transformation: the way political power is structured internationally.

For the intelligent newcomer to a discussion of capitalist globalization, this dense, well-organized book is a valuable primer. George identifies the major players in the economic realm—the World Bank, the IMF, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and transnational corporations—and clarifies how their

agendas affect the world's ecology in terms of war, hunger, disease, and poverty. Arguing that attempts to prioritize the environment over the economy don't require an overhaul of human nature, George contends that progressives simply need to understand how a handful of powerful corporations have determined the planet's tax laws and trade regulations. When we comprehend the actions of the *real* powerbrokers, we can begin to make sustained, collective attempts to wrest these powerful tools away from them and into the hands of more responsible entities.

For the seasoned activist, too, *Another World* provides much food for thought. It fine-tunes a viable path for a robust, collective social movement that can absorb ideological differences by agreeing on the most rudimentary common denominator: human needs. George similarly criticizes the sloppiness of thinking in the anti-globalization movement, finding irony in its simple-minded privileging of the local, when, in fact, global thinking is the quintessence of real progressivism. Deftly tackling such poor habits of thought within the Left, George suggests, above all, that we target the right adversaries—not factions among us, not *ourselves* as “bourgeois” consumers and hypocrites, not the sociology and psychology of poverty—but rather those oligarchs who determine economic policy.

It's all too easy to indulge in old-school truisms about how the world is really controlled by moneyed elites, but even if the posturing might be crude and contrarian, this doesn't mean that the ideas behind it are wrong. The beauty of *Another World* is how it rehabilitates this kind of worldview without descending into such antiquated polemicizing. For those of us seeking a seriously thoughtful attempt to think outside the box of conventional progressive politics and to engage in inspired self-criticism, *Another World* is an excellent place to start.

—*Chaim Bertman*



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A Shared Exile

Shai Ginsburg

- *Kedma*, by Amos Gitai, Kino International, 2002
- *Jenin Jenin*, by Mohamed Bakri, Arab Film Distribution, 2002.

Here we shall stay, a wall upon your breast ... cleaning dishes in your bars, filling cups for your masters, sweeping your sooty kitchens to snatch a bite from your blue fangs to feed the hungry children.

So shouts an elderly Palestinian refugee at oblivious Jewish forces disappearing over a hill-top during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Embedded in the penultimate scenes of Amos Gitai's 2002 film *Kedma*, these lines—penned long after the fact by Israeli-Palestinian politician and poet Tawfiq Zayyad—form an ideological backdrop shared by Gitai's drama and fellow Israeli Mohammed Bakri's brutal 2002 documentary about Operation Defensive Shield, *Jenin Jenin*.

Available for the first time on DVD, both films exemplify the ways in which both Jewish and Palestinian Israeli filmmakers continue to reflect on the complex fate of the victims of a half-century's worth of warfare. United by a parallel preoccupation with the violence and displacement that shaped, and continues to shape, contemporary Israel, both films challenge the uncomplicated hegemonic representation of the conflict, which seeks to silence the stories of refugees in its construction of an Israeli national epic.

Kedma's subjects are Jewish refugees

displaced by war and genocide who make their way clandestinely to Palestine aboard an overcrowded freighter on the eve of Israel's independence. Immediately upon their arrival, they are intercepted by British forces trying to stem successive waves of illegal Jewish immigration and Jewish militiamen eager to recruit them into the ranks of the nascent Israeli army. Forced to march east, Gitai's exhausted refugees are immediately pressed into service without training and thrown directly into battle.

As the title *Kedma* (eastward) suggests, the main subject of the film is not the individual stories of these refugees, but their incessant movement east. Their progress extends their exilic wandering. Zion, the promised end point of their journey, continues to elude them, always remaining beyond the eastern horizon. Moreover, the Jewish drive east uproots and displaces the local Palestinian population, and Jewish and Palestinian refugees cross paths in a shared exile. *Kedma* thus points not only to the tragic outcome of Jewish immigration for the Palestinians but also to how similar the fate of both peoples really is.

An unusual feature of Gitai's film is the complete absence of intimacy between its characters, an absence that undermines whatever heroic melodrama and sentimentality the common Hollywood treatment of such a subject might suggest. As the refugees are urged forward by the command to create the Jewish state, they have neither the time nor the space for closeness. The continuous movement eastwards, towards an unachievable, post-exilic state of Jewish

collectivity, becomes a depersonalized dystopia that leaves characters alienated and estranged from each other.

An absence of shelter and refuge similarly shapes *Kedma*. Appropriately, the film is shot mostly outside. Only once, during a long battle scene, do we find a domestic setting, when Jewish troops and their Palestinian prisoner enter an empty stone house abandoned by its Arab inhabitants. Yet they also soon abandon it and continue on their way, exposed to the natural elements, whose sounds—ocean waves, wind, rain, and thunder—stand in for a soundtrack.

Gitai's camerawork has a similarly jarring effect upon the shape of the film. It remains almost exclusively attached to the point of view of his characters, so what they see is what we see. Rarely is there an establishing shot, taken from a distance, to help locate and contextualize the action. The dialogue supplies only the most necessary details to help us follow *Kedma*'s narrative. The result is a feeling of bewilderment akin to the disorientation felt by the refugees themselves. Whether on board the ship that carries them to Palestine or in the midst of battle, Gitai's characters seem to move in an abstract, timeless sphere, detached from the rest of the country.

We never know for sure where the characters are going, but we are carried forward and eastward with them by the movement of the film. The effect of such a cinematographic approach is especially conspicuous during the film's main battle scene. As the camera follows Jewish forces assaulting a Palestinian village, the full picture of the battle—its goals and aims, even its exact topography—is never clear. All we can do is follow the

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troops while they tally the unburied corpses they must leave behind.

In *Kedma's* concluding moment, Andrei Kashkar, playing Janusz, a Jewish refugee from Poland, shattered and distraught by the violent events of the day, speaks out Yudke's words from Hayim Hazaz's classic Hebrew short story "The Sermon": "We have no history at all... Because we didn't make our own history, the *goyim* made it for us." As Janusz rejects Jewish history, the other Jewish troops start for the horizon in trucks piled high with their dead.

This final scene sets up *Kedma* as a commentary on Otto Preminger's Hollywood spectacle *Exodus*. Like *Kedma*, *Exodus* tells the story of Jewish refugees and the struggle to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Yet Preminger casts the story in the form of an American Western. In *Exodus'* final scene, Jewish troops bury Taha, their Palestinian ally, in the same grave as Karen, a teenage Jewish refugee who is murdered by Palestinians. Their deaths are seen as a stepping-stone on the way to a new, peaceful and just co-existence of Jews and Arabs in the new Jewish state. The dramatic musical score of the movie swells, and the characters leave the grave on trucks that take them to a new multicultural horizon.

In *Kedma*, Gitai not only refuses to use *Exodus*-style melodrama to talk about the Arab-Israeli conflict but explicitly comments on its deceitfulness. Not only does he point out that the persisting conflict and dispossession of the Palestinians silences the possibility of speaking about reconciliation and justice but Janusz's speech also suggests that the horizon does not hold the promise of a better tomorrow but rather further displacement and misery. In fact, what is commonly celebrated as the inception of a new kind of Jewish national history is not new at all. Rather, it perpetuates the same forces that determined Jewish exile in Europe and that continue to doom the Jewish state.

Mohammed Bakri's documentary, *Jenin Jenin*, brings the contemporary misery of Palestinian displacement to

the screen. Bakri visits the Jenin refugee camp immediately following the battle of Jenin, which took place in April 2002. During the Israeli offensive, Palestinians claimed that Israeli forces massacred Palestinian civilians; the Israelis denied these claims, arguing that Israeli soldiers took extra measures not to hurt civilians. The film does not presume to give an objective account of the siege, the battle, and the resulting destruction by juxtaposing Palestinian and Israeli versions of the events. Instead, it focuses exclusively on the Palestinian residents of the camp and their suffering, giving voice to their testimonies, uncensored and

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unedited, against the background of the rubble and remnants of the camp.

Jenin Jenin became a media event when, in December 2002, the Israeli Board of Censors banned it, stating that it was a "distorted presentation of events in the guise of democratic truth, which could mislead the public." Bakri appealed the decision to the Israeli Supreme Court of Justice. During the legal and public debate that accompanied the appeal, veterans of the Israeli brigade that fought in the battle argued that the film disseminated lies about the battle and about the behavior of the Israeli troops during the fighting. They described the film as a "blood libel" that when shown abroad would stir up anti-Jewish sentiment. The legal battle ended when, in August 2004, the court ruled to allow the screening of Bakri's film in Israel.

Jenin Jenin contains disturbing statements; some are clearly derived from bigoted anti-Jewish—rather than anti-Israeli—rhetoric. Thus, one of Bakri's interviewees says: "These people have no pity or mercy. It's not because they are our enemies, but it is their history that has proved once again that they are so. These people have an odd nature. They cannot be the product of God.... They have nothing to do with the divine Genesis." Interestingly, this scene—along with a couple of others that made claims about Israeli atrocities that were later refuted—was taken out of the version of the film distributed in Israel. We should take note of these statements nevertheless; their inflated rhetoric (which Bakri publicly denounced, but decided, nonetheless, to include in the film) suggests that the film seeks not only to account for what actually took place in Jenin but also, and perhaps more importantly, presents an account of the way the residents of the refugee camps struggle to form a memory of the battle. Indeed, the public and legal debate stirred by the film is itself a battle over our memory of the camp and the Israeli offensive; in this context, it is important to weigh the testimony of Bakri's film.

One of the most memorable images of *Jenin Jenin* is that of a young man who is unable to speak, but nevertheless guides the film crew through the destruction, pantomiming the action, the violence, and the death, using his body as a signpost that gives meaning to the ruins surrounding him. In fact, the difficulty of explaining the destruction haunts Bakri's interviewees. It is not that it is hard to find the right words to describe what has happened. The decades of conflict have supplied everyone with a fitting vocabulary. The difficulty is that men, women, and children sense that their stories are denied and silenced. Therefore, they seek to convince us that they are worthy witnesses and that their reports are to be trusted. Their appeal is, first and foremost, to be heard; yet all are skeptical

about their chances: after all, the world has turned a deaf ear to their plight thus far.

The skepticism of Jenin's residents can be traced back to their double exile. These same people were first made refugees by the 1948 war, when they escaped or were expelled from their towns and villages in what became the State of Israel (and settled in refugee camps). While the material testimony of their first exile disappeared under the weight of Israeli construction—which literally buried Palestinian houses and fields—the destruction of the camp that led to a second exile is evident to the eye. (Since the film was made, many of these signs have disappeared, at least according to reports in the media; the rubble has been cleared and supplanted by new houses built by the UNHCR and international donors). These camp homes were constructed as a temporary solution to address the immediate needs of the refugees until they were permanently resettled; instead, they turned into an enduring reminder of Palestinian misfortune and strife. In *Jenin Jenin*, these buildings become a symbol of the refugees' true and durable home, and Bakri's interviewees reiterate their faith and their firm decision neither to abandon them, nor to be forced out. The battle over the camp is thus presented as a battle over the lost Palestinian homeland.

It is easy to empathize with the anguish of the adult refugees in the desolated camp. Bakri's interviews with children in the camp are more disturbing, even frightening, for they have transformed their anguish into desperate hate. "I saw dead bodies, houses in ruin, and indescribable atrocities," says a girl of eleven or twelve, lamenting the rubble around her and vowing never to make peace with the Israelis. "After all I've been through, what will become of my life? After they shattered my dreams, what is left for me to say? There is no life."

"If you want to survive," says Rossa to Janusz in Amos Gitai's *Kedma*, "you also have to forget." □

Impersonators

continued from page 60

But not when one is a Jew"—all of these seem metaphorical for the experience of surviving abuse. To be a Jew in this construct is to be forever linked with one's abuser. Assimilation into a new identity would be impossible. By her son's account, Stern insisted "I have to publish my book! It makes me what I want to be. It shows our family as I want people to see us." Yet the way she wanted to be seen, apparently, was as having a strong ethnic—and yes, familial—connection to the man who traumatized her.

It may be fitting to end with a story that in some ways parallels Stern's yet suggests a new set of possibilities for thinking about ethnic impersonation and the ethnic impersonator autobiography. In his 1996 memoir, *The Color of Water*, James McBride wrote about his mother, a Jewish woman who decided, in her late teens, to live as a black woman and who made that choice a permanent one. Like Elizabeth Stern, Ruth McBride was molested by her rabbi father over a period of years while she was a child. But unlike Stern, who took on the identity of her victimizer, Rachel Shilsky, in becoming Ruth McBride, moved as far away from her birth identity as possible. As McBride writes: "Mommy refused to acknowledge her whiteness." McBride's mother, born in Poland, had already been through one transformation, from Ruchel Dwajra Zylska to Rachel Deborah Shilsky. At age nineteen, she tells her son, she shed that identity: "Rachel Shilsky is dead as far as I'm concerned. She had to die in order for me, the rest of me, to live."

Rachel Shilsky, in becoming Ruth McBride, moved into a new identity where acceptance by her abuser, a racist, would be impossible. While killing herself in his eyes, she created a life for herself that would sustain her, her two husbands, and her twelve children. She fled to Harlem, married a black man, settled in the Red Hook housing project of Brooklyn, founded a Baptist church, and put all of her children through college.

As the daughter of a failed rabbi who became a grocer in a black area of Suffolk, Virginia, Ruth McBride was caught in a historical trap. Born in 1921, she remembers the Klan riding through town. She was isolated as a Jew living in the South, where housing covenants prevented her family from living in the white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant sections of town. Ironically, her story echoes that of other Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who needed to eradicate their pasts in order to live as Americans. In Ruth McBride's story, the Jewish immigrant narrative comes full circle; it is in many ways the natural terminus of a peculiarly American story.

In striking contrast to Thomas Stern's memoir, *The Color of Water* is a celebration of McBride's choice to enter a new ethnic and racial identity. While Stern's memoir excoriated his mother for lying, McBride's book is a warm celebration of his mother's choice and of her creative path to survival.

The Color of Water is only one of a number of recent autobiographies, such as Gregory Howard Williams' *Life on the Color Line: The True Story of a White Boy Who Discovered He Was Black* (1995), that refuse to posit racial identity as essential. Instead, they question the very idea of racial identity. In doing so, they invite readers to ask more questions about identity, instead of offering them answers. They open up the national conversation about race. They cannot properly be called autobiographies of racial impersonation. Rather, they are autobiographies that, by questioning the existence of race as an essential category, resist the idea that impersonation is possible.

Autobiography provides the illusions of an unmediated relationship between author and audience and an authentic voice speaking to one reader at a time. In a culture that resists ideology, popular autobiography has the moral authority of authentic, individual experience. Thus, the power of individual testimony can help reshape public thinking and public discourse about race. □

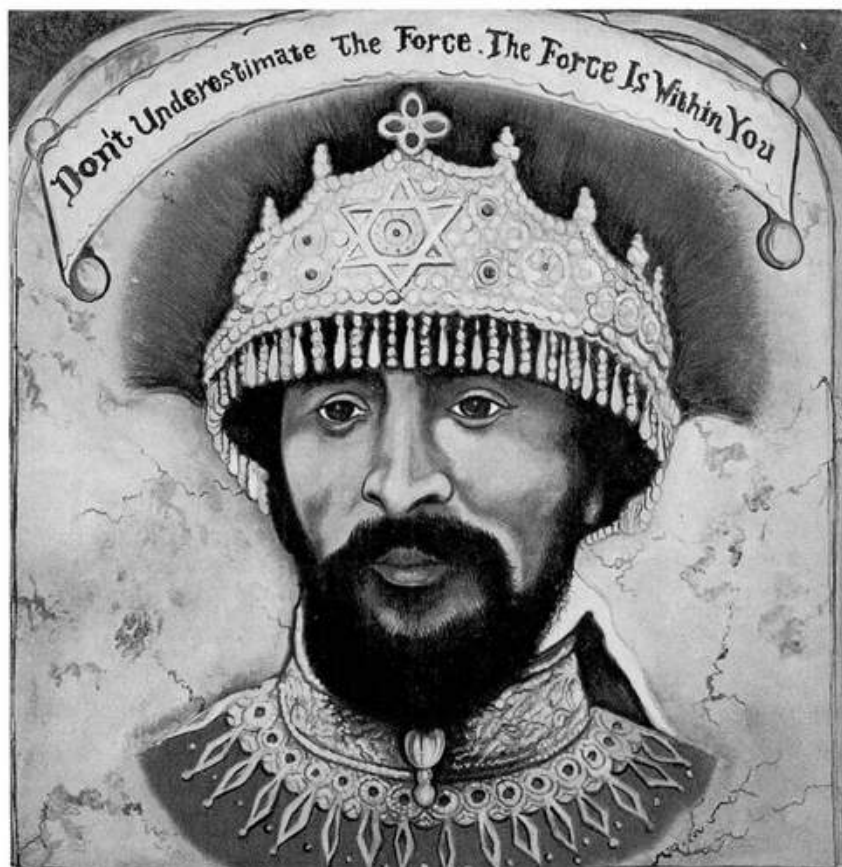
Zion Riddims

Daniel Sivek

As Zionism and making aliyah have become increasingly problematic for diaspora Jews over the years, Rastafarian reggae singers and dancehall toasters worldwide continue to proudly rejoice in the ideals of Zion and the Promised Land. In fact, based on the politically-charged titles they have historically given their records, one would think that Rastas are even more pro-Israel than right-wing Evangelicals, let alone conservative Jews untroubled by Israel's conduct in the Occupied Territories.

International reggae superstar Alpha Blondy, for example, has issued albums such as *Jerusalem*, *Masada*, and *Elohim*, and has even written a tribute to the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin ("Rabin Lo Met" or, "Rabin Isn't Dead"). Yet somehow, when Blondy sings about such subjects, one would never associate them with the kinds of terms that have become increasingly synonymous with Israel, like checkpoints, housing demolitions, targeted killings, and the like.

As an Israeli-American music critic, Rastafarian philo-Zionism has always fascinated me, as it does documentary filmmaker Monica Haim, whose work-in-progress, *Awake Zion*, uses it as a springboard to explore the relationship between reggae music and Jewish culture. *Awake Zion* has taken the Colombian-born/Miami-raised yeshiva girl from Brooklyn to Kingston to Hatzitza Be'er Sheva. Starting out as a



master's thesis in cultural journalism at NYU's Gallatin School, the film took on a life of its own, screening at the San Francisco and Montreal Jewish Film Festivals, the Miami Museum of Science, and even for the Beta (Falasha, or Ethiopian Jewish) Israel crowd at the Sheba Film Festival in Harlem.

Perhaps even more fascinating than the Jew-York-City hipsters who com-

bine klezmer and ska that Haim features in her film—like Adonai & I and King Django—are the Jewish Rastas she meets in Israel. This politically active group, living off the land and eating *Ital* (natural), raises interesting questions about the relationship between identity and place: they may live in the physical land of Zion, but with an apartheid wall so close by, do they really feel like they're in the Promised Land? Is Zion a police state or a state of mind? What sustains them? The Torah or just a bass-heavy sound system and a really good spliff? Or is it simply that Reggae soothes the war-torn soul?

As "Rasta" Guil Bonstein (known

Daniel Sivek was born in Jamaica, Queens but wants to retire with his Queen in Jamaica (the island). Since that's a long way off, he spends his time writing for snobby-to-shabby rags (like XLR8R, Swindle, the LA Weekly, etc.) and deejaying apartments as Daniel the Jah Lion. With fond memories of being in a Hashomer Hatzair socialist youth camp, he gives a "what up" to Camp Shomria in Liberty NY. Daniel can be reached through www.thejahlion.com

MUSIC

as the Reggae Ambassador), Israel's prime reggae promoter for over twenty-five years, explained to Haim, "They're living in heavy bloodshed, and reggae provides the medicine." This may be the case, but the connections between Reggae, Rastafarianism, Israel, and Jewishness run deeper than Reggae's palliative effect on Israelis with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Ooh Ooh: The Israelites

When legendary Jamaican ska artists Desmond Dekker & The Aces recorded the hit "Israelites" in 1968, ska had yet to transform itself into scathingly ruff, ready, and rebellious reggae. But even then Dekker was comparing earning a living in Jamaica to slaving for the Pharaoh. And through the infectious chorus, "Ooh, ooh, the Israelites," he illustrated how blacks related their suffering to that of the ancient Hebrews.

Most people would assume that all Africans in the colonies were whipped into believing in Christ generations ago

Most Israeli Rastas are far less interested in Jah and living a holy life than they are about the cooperative lifestyle and social outlook expressed in reggae music.

after being stripped of their culture and taken to the New World. However, Jamaican slaves came primarily from Ethiopia, and if you've heard of Operation Moses (1984) and Operation Solomon (1991), you know that the Israeli government and many religious authorities consider the Beta Jews of Ethiopia authentic, and perhaps even related to the lost tribe of Dan. If that's the case, then for many Jamaicans, the Black Diaspora was

only a continuation of the Jewish Diaspora, and while they may read King James's Bible, it's King Solomon they have allegiance to.

What Jamaican dancehall star Sister Natty has to say about the relationship between Rastas and Jews could have come straight from a brainstorming session for an Indiana Jones sequel. "When Monica and I first discussed *Awake Zion*," she says, "I told her I had a lot of ideas about the connection of our peoples, but the first thing that came to my mind was the Ark of the Covenant." Natty is speaking of history as told by the *Kebra Negast*, practically the Ethiopian addendum to the Holy Bible. The book describes the possible

Below: *Awake Zion* director Monica Haim with Natty and Eyal, an Israeli Rasta couple. **Opposite:** Grandmaster Sofer (top); Haim and Bongo Daniel, a Rasta elder, in Jamaica (bottom).



union between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. From the land of Kush, Sheba offered Solomon gold, frankincense, and myrrh; in turn he took her forcefully, and gave her a son, Menelik I, prince and heir to the spoils of Judah. As the story goes, God disapproved of the date-rape incident and gave Menelik permission to steal the Ark from Solomon's Temple and escort it back to Ethiopia, where it would rightfully rest in the city of Axum.

Fast-forwarding to 1930, the coronation of Haile Selassie I fulfilled a prophesy that a black king would return to the throne of Ethiopia. This was not only a vindication for Jamaicans under colonial rule, who now had their own royalty, a black messiah. It also reinforced their relationship to Judaism: Selassie, or Ras (Prince) Tafari Makonnen was considered the 225th Emperor, directly descended from the Solomonic line of kings. Among many majestic titles, he's revered as the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Selassie quickly attract-

ed unsolicited followers in his name, as the Rastafarians were certain he was the living God, or *Jah*, as named in Psalm 68:4.

By the time ska became reggae in the late 1960s, many of the genre's top ranking artists considered themselves Rasta. Reggae was their soul, their gospel, and they were giving it up for Jah, Psalm 87:7-style: "The singers and players shall be there: all my springs are in thee," or as Bob Marley sang, "We're jamming in the name of the Lord." Rasta's three sects—Twelve Tribes, Nyabinghi, and Bobo Shanti—all believe that Ganja is a sacred herb that has been part of Shabbat services since the Golden days of Solomon's Temple. It was the holy smoke from the Burning Bush on Mt. Sinai, where God talked to Moses. They'll tell you *kaneh bosc* (*kannabos*, or cannabis) was the sweet weed that was growing from Solomon's grave, and practitioners treat their chalice (*chillum/narghile/hookah*) like a Torah, as *Awake Zion* director Monica Haim quickly found out when the Nyabinghi elders, "made me put on a long skirt and cover my head," before letting her enter the inner circle. To a certain degree these Rastas feel they are more Jewish than the few Ashkenazi-looking Jews who attend the official Synagogue in Kingston. "They see them as the rest of the white people."

The Breslov from Jamdown, AKA Kingston

If the Nyabinghi feel out of place at a white synagogue, imagine how Grandmaster Yehoshua Sofer felt growing up a white Hassidic Jew in the middle of black Jamaica. One of the most bizarre amalgamations of characters—he looks like a chasid-cum-ninja-warrior—his toasting (rapping) name is Nigel the Admor, and he's also one of the early pioneers of Israeli dancehall reggae. His record, *Hummus Makes You Stupid* kicked off an entire scene of dancehall deejays when he moved to Israel. In an email interview he tells us how a Breslov Hasid could end up in Jamaica's legendary Trenchtown: "Jews

came to the West Indies running from the Inquisition. First they tried Surinam, but when that didn't work out too well, they bopped over to Jamdown." Sofer feels there is a link between the ancient Hebrews and the modern Rastas. "The Rasta emulates the Hebrew tribes in the way they wear a crown of hair like the Nazir." It may surprise you to learn that Rastas claim their dreadlocks from the same place Hasidim get their sidelocks: the Nazarite Vows. In his pact with the lord, the Nazarite grows out his hair and makes sure "no razor comes upon his head," as it says in Numbers 6:1.

Kibbutznik Dread

Though from Be'er Sheva, Israel like Ras Amram, Ras Congo Eyal, and his girlfriend Natty live the Rasta lifestyle, and, as Haim found out, "they really take the embodiments of both cultures to heart; the Israeli Zion and the Rasta Zion." Putting emphasis on the Jah of the Bible rather than the concept of Selassie as a godhead, Haim clarifies how this crew doesn't see being Ras in Israel as a violation of their Biblical beliefs.

Somewhere between the Bobo Dreads (orthodox Rastas who live in their own self sufficient village), socialist kibbutzniks, and the Bedouins who long called the Negev home, they eat Ital, smoke Ganja, and live off the land and its "aromatic" cultivation, though Ras Amram insists, "It's not just a hippy movement about peace and love; this is serious business." Now in his late twenties, Amram was discharged from the army and realized that his dad was right to call him a Nazarite after seeing Amram's new dreads. "I was a Nazarite, after growing locks," he says.

The more Haim looked into the history behind Rastafarianism, the more she noticed some kind of contemporary manifestation. "It's like a circular thing," she states. "It starts with the Old Testament; then Rasta appropriates elements of it; then reggae comes from Rasta; and at the end of that cir-



cle I would find Jews who are returning it back to the Old Testament somehow." Most Israeli Rastas are far less interested in Jah and living a holy life than they are about the cooperative lifestyle and social outlook expressed in reggae music. These dreads are kibbutzniks at heart, and Haim's stay on Ein Hashlosha and Kibbutz Tze'elim proved everyday that they knew damned well that (as Burning Spear once put it) "social living is the best." "They had a heavy Rasta flavor," Haim says, "and reggae acts would pass through and play all the time."

Occupation = Babylon

While so many real-life Israelis have been quick to embrace Reggae and Rasta values, Rastas do not necessarily feel the same uncomplicated bond with Israelis. Just about every reggae song references Babylon, shorthand for the Israelites' account of brutal subjugation at the hands of the Persians during the Babylonian exile, and which Rastas use as a catch phrase for anything they consider unjust, especially white bureaucracy or trickery. For Rasta stars like Bob Marley and Peter Tosh, living in Trenchtown under British "downpression" was occupation; and occupation is Babylon. As early as his 1977 release, *Equal Rights*, Tosh sang, "Palestinians are fighting for equal rights." As a Jew you may think, "wow, we got this whole Israel/Zion thing in common," but you're quickly reminded that many Rastas feel that not only are Israelis occupiers, they are imposters too.

Rasta arguments are simple: the people who control the political country known as Israel are white Europeans pretending to be Jews, and their claim to Zion is false, since the *Kebra Negast* asserts that "King Solomon dreamed that the sun of Zion moved to shine over Ethiopia." Even if it's not as sinister as that, Yossi Fine (the Israeli reggae scene's ubiquitous bass player/producer) simply points out, "the majority of Rastas are very left-wing and object to Israel's politics." Haim also became aware of the potential

dilemma the Israeli Rasta must face. How can you be Ras if you are considered Babylon? Or does being Ras give you a different perspective on your own country's actions? "It's interesting," Haim agrees. "Not only do they relate to Rasta on a historical level (their ancient Israelite legacy), but the current state of violence, hostility, and sort of weird domination is not unlike the Trenchtown that reggae sings about."

Haim speaks compellingly of an Israeli soldier who says that without the analgesic of "riddim and word-power,"

When Bob Marley sang, "Exodus, movement of Jah People" he was simultaneously memorializing the Israelites' journey out of Egyptian bondage and making an emotional plea for repatriating the sufferers of slavery.

he couldn't deal with it. Instead of the Michael Moore images of American troops blasting Metallica to pump them up, this soldier (who's named his rifle Buju, after the pacifist reggae icon) needs roots reggae to take the edge off. Haim reflects: "So the music is not only a voice of the kids who are outraged and need consolation, it's also the thing that heals them and gives them a little hope at the end of the day."

Zion is Zion

When Bob Marley sang, "Exodus, movement of Jah People" he was simultaneously memorializing the Is-

raelites' journey out of Egyptian bondage and making an emotional plea for repatriating the sufferers of slavery. In that one song, a Chai pendant-wearing Marley was making the case for Zionism for both peoples. Back-to-Africa advocate Marcus Garvey told blacks to seek Zion in Ethiopia after he interpreted Psalm 68 ("Princes shall come out of Egypt, and Cush shall stretch forth his hand to God") to mean it was there, not Israel, where the Israelites settled post-Exodus.

Theodor Herzl's idea of a quasi-socialist, secular Jewish state was to provide a homeland for victims of anti-Semitism and the vicious pogroms in Russia. Soon after the first World Zionist Congress, Britain offered up Uganda (where in 1919 the native Abayudaya converted to Judaism in resistance to European colonialists and missionaries), but would years later agree on Palestine with the Balfour Declaration. In 1914 Garvey wasn't so lucky. His UNIA (United Negro Improvement Association) started the Back To Africa Movement and soon made a deal with Liberia to repatriate black people of the Caribbean and Central and South America, but the host country backed out, and Garvey later lost credibility when he was arrested for mail fraud.

The relationship between these Diasporas is at the heart of both Haim's *Awake Zion* and reggae culture, no matter how trivially the connection might play out in pop culture (Gwen Stefani's dancehall version of *Fiddler On The Roof*?). "It's about one's roots and identity, and a sense of home and belonging," Haim sums it up. "Whether you're Jewish, or Rasta, or both, it's about being rooted versus being uprooted." Rasta Guil promotes events that feature Ethiopian, Israeli, and Palestinian youth skanking to the same beat, and, similarly, *Awake Zion* brought races together when it screened at Makor's "Unity Sessions," which suggest that perhaps Ras Congo Eyal has the right idea when optimistically concluding, "for me Zion is when all people come together." □

Indie Israel: A Scene in Bloom

Ron Nachmann

Since the 1980s, Israel has sprouted an exciting new-music milieu from an era previously rooted in government-sanctioned *Shirei Eretz Yisrael* (Songs of the Land of Israel), alongside standard folk, pop, and light rock (best chronicled in Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi's outstanding *Popular Music & National Culture in Israel*). Now the country hosts its own unique versions of the alternative music scenes fostered in Europe and the United States. Punk, hip-hop, electronica, reggae, psychedelia, jazz, and other genres have found voice in the country's basements and clubs as un- (and often anti-) official forms of expression in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and elsewhere in the country.

Israel's growing number of independent record labels testify to this blossoming of underground music culture. Along with performance venues and press, indies represent the building blocks of the community, and digital technology has empowered dozens of Israeli musicians to produce, manufacture, and distribute some of the world's most innovative contemporary music. Outfits like Tel Aviv's Earsay (www.earsayrecords.com) and Fast Music (www.fastmusic.co.il) labels, Ra'anana-based industrial electronic imprint Topheth Prophet (www.njstudio.co.il/tp), and Jerusalem's multi-genre label and distributor Men of Israel (www.menofisraelrecords.com) represent just the tip of the Israeli indie iceberg.

According to Fast Music's Netalie Gvirtz, there's more indie creativity to come. "This 'scene' is still in its diapers," she says, "and at times it even

seems like it doesn't exist. Israel is a real melting pot, and holds many talents, many cultures, and many bubbling emotions that are uniquely Israeli, and that reflects greatly in the music."

Like their American and European counterparts, Israeli independent labels face a seemingly endless struggle with finances. Men of Israel's Adam Lee Rosenfeld notes that Israel's economic troubles make "the music industry, especially the indie music industry, seem more like a movement or a calling than just a business."

Although it began with the guitar-based formats of punk, post-punk, progressive rock, and 60s psychedelia, Rosenfeld notes that Israel's indie scene now sports more artists and labels devoted to avant-garde electronic music than to rock 'n' roll. He chalks this up to a general lack of funds for band gear, as well as what he calls "a battle for time due to mandatory military service," and taxing work schedules. "As a result," he notes, "quite a few young people retreat to their rooms on their own, and pour their creativity into their computer programs, creating art that in many cases is laced with cynicism and bitterness, yet with a great deal of beauty and honesty on the inside—not unlike the classic metaphor of the sabra."

Is there something inherently political about creating and running an indie label? Rosenfeld believes that "the message of indie music in Israel is usually more a cultural one than a political one." Says Gvirtz, "I don't think indie culture is there to be challenging—it's there so that people will have a cultural alternative. We started the label simply because we felt cultur-

ally suffocated and decided to take matters into hand."

A radical Israeli anarcho-punk band like Nikmat Olalim might take issue with the culture-more-than-politics view of indie, as might politically minded sound artists like Eran Zachs and Meira Asher. So would Topheth Prophet owner Uri Shaham, whose label releases harsh experimental electronic music that often complexly and confrontationally explores the dark side of Israeli far-right political rhetoric. Shaham has released albums that, via their visual imagery and sound, aesthetically problematize the Revisionist teachings of Z'ev Jabotinsky and Uri Zvi Greenberg in a neo-fascist style. And a Tel Aviv festival partly produced by Topheth Prophet featuring bands exploring the same political themes was cancelled last fall.

Politics aside, as to the future of the underground label scene, Gvirtz is the most circumspect. "Israelis don't tend to look far into the future. We never make long term plans, for obvious reasons. On optimistic days, we wish for an artistic and active scene, small but steady. To stay afloat." But noting the growing profile of artists like punk bands Useless ID and Man Alive, psychedelic pop band RockFour, and sound artists Zachs, Rosenfeld is optimistic. "I think the Israeli scene as a whole will be recognized internationally, and indie Israeli artists and labels will be seen as just as legitimate as any other indie labels and artists."

Shaham agrees. "The future looks promising. We have new labels starting almost every month, releasing great music. I wouldn't be surprised if in a few years independent labels will be as legit as the big companies, and the music scene will flourish." □

Music editor Ron Nachmann is a journalist, editor, and culture worker living in San Francisco.

Capsule Reviews

- *Mauvaises Nouvelles des Étoiles*, Serge Gainsbourg, Mercury, 2004

By the time Serge Gainsbourg recorded *Mauvaises Nouvelles des Étoiles*, in 1981, the growling French songwriter had spent twenty years becoming a provocative star, a European hybrid of Tom Waits and Prince. Here was the man who made his name extolling the glories of deviant sex acts and set “La Marseillaise” to a reggae beat. Producer Bruno Blum reveals the re-release of *Mauvaises* as both a well-crafted existential mood piece, and a great work of cultural and political transgression.

Blum captures the album’s original flavor by including previously unreleased psychedelic instrumental (or “dub”) versions of the dozen songs. He also updates it by recruiting current Jamaican singers to vocalize over those instrumentals, often expanding on Gainsbourg’s original themes. The instrumental backing comes courtesy of some of reggae’s greatest musicians. Songs like the slyly phallic “Mickey Mousse” and the tender “Shush Charlotte” feast on Sly Dunbar’s metronomic beat-keeping, Robbie Shakespeare’s soothing bass lines, and angelic backing vocals from the I-Three’s, the trio who previously backed then-recently departed legend Bob Marley.

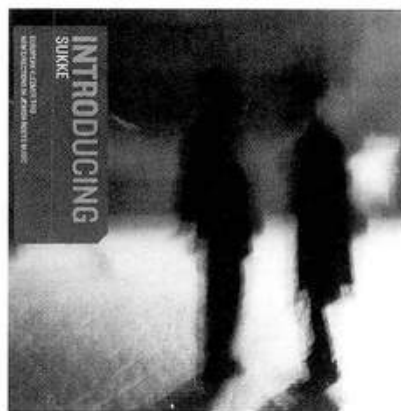


Perhaps *Mauvaise*’s most compelling moment is “Juif et Dieu” (“Jew and God”), a song that uses Gainsbourg’s experience as a starting point for an exercise in cultural-reference sprawl. Born Lucien Ginzburg in 1928 to Russian immigrants who later Francofied his name, Gainsbourg spent his childhood wearing a yellow star of David and watching his neighbors collaborate with the Nazis, until his family managed to escape the capital. Those experiences seem to inform “Juif et Dieu,” in which Gainsbourg chants a defiant roll-call of prominent Jews like Marx, Trotsky, and Einstein, after proclaiming: “You know that the Nazerene/Never was an Aryan/And if he is the son of God like you say/Then God is Jewish.”

But in “Jews,” the 2002 remix that Blum arranged for the song, Jamaican singer Mark Holloway and toaster Intaleck expand the scope. Their list includes not only Gainsbourg himself, but Abraham, Moses, Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, and Ethiopian emperor Hailie Selassie I, the deity of the Jamaican-based Afro-Zionist religion of Rastafarianism that informs reggae music. What other pop song combines a back-story, range of participants, lyrics, and sound that traces Judaism’s cultural strain through Christianity, Communism, European history, science and African diasporic religion and music? *Mauvaises Nouvelles des Étoiles* reminds us that few have brought incongruous elements together in pop more elegantly than Serge Gainsbourg.

- *Introducing Sukke*, Sukke. World Music Network, 2004

Listen to the story of Sukke, Europe’s first all-star klezmer group, and you’ll be tempted to double your dose of irony



medication. A trio formed by Berlin-based non-Jewish bassist Heiko Lehman, Sukke spearheads a global klezmer scene that since the 80s has found its most ravenous audience in—wouldn’t you know it?—Germany. How much does our dismay or delight in such a situation truly matter when it comes to the music?

The answer—as evinced on Sukke’s debut, *Introducing Sukke*—is precious little. For one thing, Lehman has lectured publicly on the problematic nature of the ardent, sometimes competitive philo-Semitism that’s periodically surfaced in Germany’s non-Jewish klezmer scene, saying that now, as back in the 30s, Jews and Jewish culture in Germany have no intrinsic need for “special treatment.” So no one can call the guy unselfconscious.

When you get down to it, traditional klezmer could hardly boast better practitioners than Sukke’s members: Lehman, British clarinetist Merlin Shepherd, and Dutch accordionist Sanne Moricke. The trio delivers a masterful fifteen-track mix of truly authentic dance instrumentals, somber traditional solos by each musician, and original vocal tunes with lyrics by Canadian Yiddish poet Michael Wex sung fastidiously by Lehman. Say what you will about where these klezmer veterans come from—intensive feats of arrangement like the tart, multi-part instrumental “Boibriker Suite” show you exactly where they’re at. □

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