# Tikkun

POLITICS+SPIRITUALITY+CULTURE

(tē·kün) To mend, repair, and transform the world. NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2006

FOUR SOLUTIONS
## Healthcare Reform

## SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

"*Tikkun* magazine hopes to provide a **voice** for those who still dare to **hope**, for those who are not embarrassed to **dream**, for those Jews and non-Jews alike who are still moved by the **radical spirit** of the Prophets and who insist on keeping their message **alive**."

—FROM THE TIKKUN FOUNDING STATEMENT

# 20

Annie Dillard
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Jessica Benjamin
Arnold Eisen
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Mohammed Abu Nimer
Harvey Cox
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and many more

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**Hannah Arendt Tribute | LGBT Judaism**
**The Bush Hangover | Empowering Israelis**
**Daniel Dennett on Religion | Califone**



*expand the area of focus to include marginalized, suppressed traditions (which we may, admittedly, half-invent, or which may, as in the case of the Nazirite, be vestiges of just the shamanic, boundary-crossing roles I was describing) as well as those few that found favor in the eyes of the Bible's codifiers.*

*This is not to say that anything a Jew does, now or then, is meaningfully "Jewish," or deserving of approbation. There is no substitute for reasoned moral conscience. But conscience is in play whether one reads within the Bible's boundaries or beyond them.*

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

I AM ASTONISHED TO learn and delighted to know that *Tikkun* is now celebrating its twentieth year. Of course the issues that occupy *Tikkun* are very old, intransigent, and intractable, but what a difference *Tikkun* makes in the midst of such issues: It reminds us regularly, boldly, and credibly that there is another way to imagine the world and another way to organize the world, wherein power can be mobilized not by acquisitiveness and anxiety, but in hope and human possibility.

*Tikkun* is a foremost vehicle whereby our deepest theological passions are kept connected in compelling ways to the world of power, territory, and ethnic imaginings of the most dangerous kinds. Of course the plight of the state of Israel and the destiny of Palestinians are foremost in your agenda, and I have no doubt that when we have peace in Jerusalem, we will have

## IT'S NOT ABOUT OIL

WAR IS ABOUT SOCIALLY induced paranoia that reciprocates back and forth via imaginary threats to humiliated beings who cannot make authentic contact with each other.

Each person on each "side" is withdrawn into him/herself fearing the anxious ping of rejection and humiliation, then hyper-identifies with an imaginary "we" under threat from an endlessly projected imaginary "them." There is no grounded I and no grounded Thou, just repetition of skidding off into collective flight out of fear of humiliation, on both "sides".

This can lead to a realpolitik "need" to get your hands on the other guy's oil. That can be a subordinate part of the rotating paranoia, where "they" have the oil and "we" need it to keep our self-owned machines going.

But if it were really just about oil, we would adopt a different course—namely, we would seek to calm things down and make peace with the big oil countries, and extend generosity and assistance and human recognition toward them, appreciating the human beings there in their true humanity, in which case they would share the oil


# Tikkun

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OPPOSITE: AP PHOTO/EMILIO MORENATTI

# Tikkun



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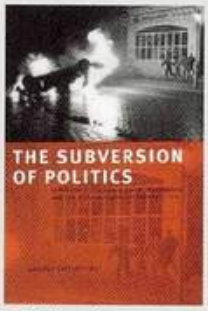
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# Tikkun RECOMMENDS

## THE SUBVERSION OF POLITICS: European Social Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life

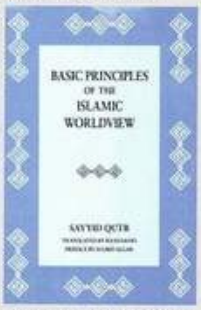
By Gyorgi Katsiaficas. AK Press, 2006




THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING CONtemporary anti-capitalism is looking at the autonomous social movements that flowered in Italy and Germany between the early 1970s and mid-1990s. Trafficking in a non-parliamentary constellation of anti-market ideologies, autonomism represented a logical and yet undeniably heterodox extension of Marxist political practice within the sphere of everyday life. An updated edition of the classic 1997 text, *The Subversion of Politics*, is a must-read for anyone interested in such questions as what made punk political, and why squatting can be just as important as belonging to a trade union.

## BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW

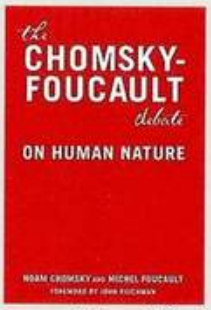
By Sayyid Qutb, translated by Rami David; Preface by Hamid Algar. Islamic Publications International, 2006




EVER SINCE PAUL BERMAN FIRST introduced in the pages of the *New York Times* the late Egyptian writer and activist as the intellectual architect of twenty-first century Islamism, there's been an increasing demand for a representative, English-language collection of writings by Sayyid Qutb. Rami David's translations of several of Qutb's key essays on Islam's fundamental concepts go a long way toward achieving that goal. Hamid Algar's first-class introduction to the book (worth the price of admission alone) provides an excellent historical overview to the politicization of Qutb's work in the West since 9/11.

## THE CHOMSKY-FOUCAULT DEBATE ON HUMAN NATURE

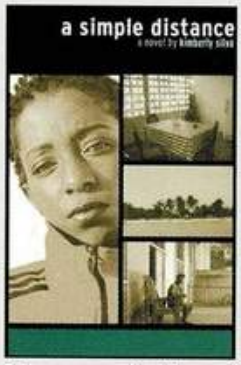
By Noam Chomsky and Michael Foucault. The New Press, 2006




HERALDING THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE* culture wars between liberals and post-modernists in 1971, these two cherished left-wing intellectuals took to Holland's airwaves to debate what constitutes human nature, discussing everything from science and epistemology to socialism and creativity. What emerged is every bit as valuable as a Platonic dialogue, and should be revisited as such. For those seeking a more philosophical introduction to Chomsky's journalistic writings, and an accessible political entryway to the stereotypically hyphenated language of Foucault, there's no better place to start.

## A SIMPLE DISTANCE

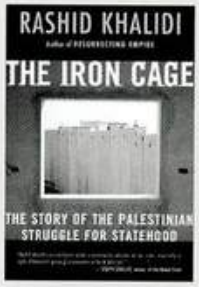
By K.E. Silva. Akashic Books, 2006




IN THIS SOON TO BE CLASSIC novel, West Indian-American writer K.E. Silva lays the groundwork for redefining family values. Moving back and forth between California and the fictional Caribbean island state of Baobique, Silva paints a picture perfect portrait of a biracial family that has both returned to its homeland *and* firmly established itself in the Diaspora. In the middle lies a growing recognition of the legitimacy of queer families as a natural consequence of the post-colonial reorganization of family life. Silva masterfully weaves such insights into a delightfully subversive narrative that's anything but simple.

## THE IRON CAGE: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood

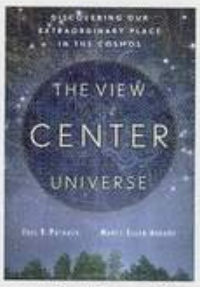
By Rashid Khalidi. Beacon Press, 2006




THE AUTHOR OF NUMEROUS CRITically acclaimed works including *Resurrecting Empire*, Rashid Khalidi is a historian's historian. *The Iron Cage* is his most accomplished effort to date. Charting the history of the Palestinian struggle to achieve statehood (and the forces which have historically conspired against it), the book is as much a study of what brought Israel into existence, as it is a depiction of the tragedy that continues to define Palestinian existence today. Magisterial in scope, meticulous in its attention to detail, and decidedly dispassionate in its analysis, *The Iron Cage* is destined to be a benchmark of its genre.

## THE VIEW FROM THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

By Joel R. Primack and Nancy Ellen Abrams. Riverhead Books, 2006




EVERY CULTURE AND RELIGION HAS an origin story, but this is the first one that no storyteller made up. Written as a collaboration between one of the world's leading cosmologists and his wife, a poet/philosopher/scholar, this book presents the new universe visually and lyrically, then goes beyond science to suggest how we humans may fit into the cosmos—personally, collectively, and meaningfully. Primack and Abrams make a novel argument that by using the universe as a model, we may begin to envision new solutions to global problems.

# Readers Respond

## TRANSGRESSION(S)

JAY MICHAELSON IS ONE of the more creative thinkers around these days. His writing consistently pushes and broadens my own reflection, and "*Shatnez* and Civilization" (*Tikkun*, September/October, 2006) is no exception. I want to point to a tension in that piece—perhaps it is less a contradiction than a dialectic.

On the one hand, he refers to the necessary binaries of Judaism, and marvels at "Moses' descent to the people, not his ascent to the ineffable," adding, "Imagine one of our latter-day prophets announcing a 'message from God' about tort law." But further on he suggests that "Judaism" be understood "as describing the practices of the Jewish people—*describing*, not *prescribing*." There is some Talmudic precedent: Hillel looks to the practice of the people to determine a particular *halachic* ruling, claiming that if they are not prophets, they are at least the children of prophets (BT Pesachim 66a). But there is a problem with expanding this more anthropological approach.

Judaism as a description of what Jews do loses its commanding force. It embraces equally the "religious" West Bank settler who attacks Palestinian farmers and the "secular" activist who works for human rights. It suggests that anything a Jew does (and who, by the way, gets to define "Jew"?) is in some authentic way Jewish. I find the same problem in Rav Kook's well-known claim that all Jews (especially those in Eretz Yisrael) participate in the redemptive process, whether they know it or not. Martin Buber offered an eloquent counter-argument to Kook in his chapter on the Korach revolt ("The Contradiction") in his classic study, *Moses*. (Buber does not mention Kook directly, but I am convinced that is who he had in mind.)

I have no resolution to suggest for what really is an old tension between "is" versus "ought." I am grateful to Michaelson for his eloquent framing of importantly transgressive questions, but I do not think that the discussion can end there. Emanuel Levinas, whom Michaelson cites, reminds us that Torah teaches core values—especially concern for the widow, the orphan, the poor, the stranger—and that Judaism is "an extreme consciousness" that requires action. It must be more than a description of what Jews do.

LAURENCE EDWARDS
*Congregation Or Chadash*
*Chicago, IL*

**Jay Michaelson Replies:**

*Rabbi Edwards is absolutely right in his thoughtful letter that a descriptive rather than normative Judaism loses its commanding force, and allows for the kind of mischief he describes. However, as he is also, I'm sure, aware, that even within the normative Judaism of the Bible's injunctions, there is plenty of room for nationalism, racism, sexism, and all the rest.*

*All of us pick and choose, even within the set of normative Biblical rules, where we place our emphasis—prophets and rabbis, heretics and heroes alike. What I am suggesting is simply that we*

Send letters to managingeditor@tikkun.org or to 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Letters may be shortened for space.

## From Tikkun.org

**TO JOIN IN THE DEBATE, VISIT WWW.TIKKUN.ORG/LETTERS.**

Stark disparities in power dynamics exist between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians at all levels: social (health, education, employment), political, economic, and military. Should not the party that has the means to sustain greater levels of adversity do so and display more generous acts of conciliation? —STEWART MILLS

*Rabbi Lerner Replies:*

*Israel has the greater power and hence has a greater moral responsibility to take the first steps toward genuine* teshuva *(repentance), atonement, and reconciliation. However, Jews remain a traumatized people, unable to see their own moral responsibility because we perceive ourselves to be constantly threatened with repeats of the traumas of the past two thousand years. So what can be done?*

*First, the world has to stop attacking Israel and instead acknowledge unequivocally its responsibility in creating a traumatized subject, the Jewish people. Second, the Palestinian people need to renounce violence, unequivocally and unilaterally. For those of us who are Jews, all we can do is repent, pray for a healing of the Jewish people, and work towards that healing in every way we can.*

peace on earth. I am grateful for the powerful ways in which you work to stay visibly and passionately grounded in Jewish tradition, but yet manage always to push beyond that troublesome twosome to the big issues that lie underneath it.

As a convinced and practicing Calvinist Protestant, I become aware, through your pages, of the particular urgency of my own theological tradition concerning peace, justice and holiness, claims of my faith that are peculiar and particular but that cohere with the particular faith traditions to which you testify. Your pages remind us regularly that we are in a moment of crisis when we may and must, at the same time, value our own tradition and notice its common way forward with other traditions that in another time and place seemed hostile and inimical.

No doubt each of us will continue to treasure our own particular dialect of faith, but clearly the world is now such a dangerous and demanding place that while we relish our own dialect, we are called to listen and learn and perhaps even speak in dialects other than our own. We can now see that the real adversary is not an alternative faith; the real adversary is the acquisitive pursuit of security through power, which can only end in destructiveness. Thank you for the large hearts and the open spirits and the daring minds that occupy your pages—a gift to all of us!

WALTER BRUEGGEMANN
*Columbia Theological Seminary*
*Decatur, Georgia*

with us. They would! (Yes via the market at present, but so what).

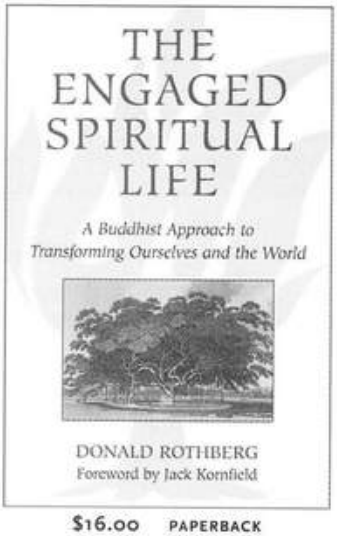
So it's not about oil. It's about the fear of humiliation and the attendant pathologies that come from that fear, not as a mere psychological matter, but as a legacy of a profound collective, mutually enforcing alienation.

When the Left keeps repeating that it's all about oil, it participates in the schizophrenia which treats the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld types as craven materialist robots, instead of as leaders of a disposition, a frightened way of relating to the world.

Instead of kicking the Bush administration out of office and replacing it with correct geo-political robots whom we would approve of, who would, say, recognize the sovereignty of the oil-producing countries, we must heal the distorted human consciousness that produces it by thawing out the paranoid dynamic I describe with love, authenticity and an appeal to the spontaneous desire within social space to recover from the bad dream of paranoid existence and actually Be Here Now with the other beautiful human beings on the planet.

—PETER GABEL


## A PRACTICAL AND INSPIRATIONAL GUIDE TO CONNECTING PERSONAL AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION




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"At a moment when our world desperately needs an integration of spiritual wisdom and social action, Donald Rothberg points the way to a new synthesis—of great interest to people in all faith communities and to many who have previously distanced themselves from spiritual life in order to pursue social change."

—Rabbi Michael Lerner,
author of *The Left Hand of God: Taking Back our Country from the Religious Right*

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# Current THINKING

## The Bush Hangover




AP PHOTO/RON EDMONDS

Over the course of the first five years of the War on Terror, Americans became increasingly bombarded by new definitions of war. Preparing the country's citizenry for a drawn-out global fight against stateless insurgents, representatives of the Bush administration continuously harangued a frightened American public about the changing nature of conflict in the twenty-first century, and how well prepared the United States was to confront it. American forces would no longer be fighting conventional engagements against nation-states with tanks and soldiers, but would be battling asymmetrical conflicts with the employment of high tech weaponry. Precision-guided munitions, global positioning systems, robots, and remotely piloted aircraft would now be used to hunt down an invisible enemy.

No such carefully packaged conflict, however, is ever complete without a cultural component. To that end, the Bush administration responded to the events of 9/11 with equally compelling marketing aplomb, deploying a combination of Cold War rhetoric about the need to promote democracy and free markets in the Middle East, while simultaneously eliding this oratory with politically-loaded caricatures of "right" and "wrong" manifestations of Islam that continue to alienate millions of Muslims worldwide. For a government derided by civil libertarians for its religious sectarianism, the cultural front of President George W. Bush's War on Terror effortlessly translated its parochial aura into a foreign policy that a majority of Americans could identify with.

Indeed, Bush's 2004 re-election confirmed that the administration's understanding of the fears and identity of its target market was correct. This is why, two years later, during a week when the President suffered amongst the worst ratings of his career—a 37 percent approval rating, according to a *New York Times* survey released at the end of September—it's worth asking how such a savvy propagandist could now be in such trouble with the same American public. Could it be that the administration has lost its sense of who its core constituency is? Has it forgotten how to pull the right fear-inducing levers

that its security plans once reassured? Or could it be that none of this makes any difference any more to a country for whom militarist, right-wing religious platitudes can no longer disguise the worthless anarchy sewn by U.S. policy in the Middle East?

Public opinion is clearly changing. Americans are no longer as easily susceptible to the forms of manipulation that they were subject to during the years immediately following the 9/11 attacks. In fact, one might even conjecture that Americans are slowly beginning to recover their sense of moral bearing. Nevertheless, this does not automatically imply that the terror of the Bush era is over, and that we are well on our way to a new order. But, what it should suggest is that that we are entering a period of opportunity to help channel this emerging sensibility into a new politics. On the occasion of *Tikkun*'s twentieth anniversary, we're proud to say that we plan on playing an important part in covering this process.

# The Kids Are Alright



When *Tikkun* was founded, the mainstream didn't understand how any magazine could combine politics and spirituality. Mainstream American Jewish institutions still seem confused. For example, blind to what is happening in the American Jewish community, United Synagogue Youth argues—on its home page!—that Jewish youth are willfully destroying American Judaism by refusing to accept what USY calls—without irony—"the Jewish mystique."

If the "Jewish mystique" means supporting the increasingly rightward-leaning, largely ossified Jewish establishment, USY is right. Young people are turning away from mainstream Jewish institutions. What Jewish youth are turning toward, however, is an authentic commitment to Jewish social justice and to a deepening Jewish spirituality—that is, a commitment to what we at *Tikkun* call spiritual politics.

A recent list of organizations funded by 21/64, the Bronfman Foundation's non-profit wing devoted to Jewish youth, reveals that Middle East peace, Jewish social justice, and Jewish spirituality are the issues that motivate Jews ages 15-35 today.

Aaron Tapper, a *Tikkun* author, runs Abraham's Vision, an organization devoted to bringing Jews, Christians, and Muslims together to work toward peace. He's joined by Seeking Common Good, a group that focuses on peace efforts by young women, and the filmmakers behind Just Vision, a film on peace-building efforts. To these groups recognized by 21/64, we can add *Tikkun*'s own Tikkun Community, Jewish Voice for Peace, Brit Tzedek, and a number of other groups, small and large, that seek a path to peace that recognizes that Palestinians and Israelis, Muslims, Christians, and Jews need to find a way to peace on the land of our joint ancestors—Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar.

Jewish social justice is becoming an increasingly insistent focus in the organizing efforts of young Jews. Progressive Jewish Alliance (recently featured in *Tikkun*); Avodah, a Jewish Service Corps that sends volunteers to low-income areas in Washington, D.C. and New York City; and Jewish FundS for Justice all received money from 21/64 this year. And they are just the tip of a larger effort in Jewish social justice organizing happening regionally all over the country—an effort we will discuss in later issues of *Tikkun*.

Perhaps most surprisingly for the old guard, Jewish spirituality plays an increasingly important role in Jewish life. But this is not your zeyde's prayer service. IKAR, Kehilat Hadar, and Mayyim Hayyim bring Jewish ritual and liturgy alive in new ways. Storahtelling (featured in the upcoming January issue of *Tikkun*) brings Torah alive through drama. Welcome to renewed and Renewal Judaism, youth-style.

Israel/Palestine, Politics, Judaism, and Spirituality—these are the issues motivating Jewish youth. Perhaps, on our twentieth anniversary, we won't be accused of too much chutzpah if we suggest that if USY wants to know where all the Jewish youth have gone, they begin reading *Tikkun*.

# *Tikkun*'s Twentieth Anniversary

BY MICHAEL LERNER

OK, I'M PROUD OF IT! TWENTY YEARS OF NEVER having missed a publication deadline, with each issue shining with brilliant and controversial analyses of American politics and society, Western culture and philosophy, social theory, religion and spirituality, Israel and Judaism.

The week my then-wife Nan Fink Gefen and I began to publish *Tikkun* magazine (in 1986) we read an ominous prediction: in a full-page story in *Newsweek* about the emergence of *Tikkun* as "the liberal alternative to *Commentary* magazine and the voices of neo-conservatism." Commentary editor Norman Podhoretz predicted we'd be gone within a year. In 1991, the centrist publication, *Moment*, announced happily to its readers that, "by the time you get this [issue], *Tikkun* will probably no longer be publishing." Despite inadequate funding and an overworked staff, we've not only survived, but have made a significant impact in American political and intellectual life.

In what follows, I'm going to list some of our accomplishments, and also some of what we haven't yet pulled off. It should go without saying that both *Tikkun's* achievements and the goals we have yet to reach could not have been and cannot be realized by our staff and surrounding community alone.

What we've done is create a space for a particular kind of perspective, and to provide sophisticated and well-articulated analyses that could not be easily dismissed by those who disagreed with us. Moreover, our consistent attempts to take progressive ideas out of the left-wing ghetto and find ways to get them into the mainstream media, into policy institutions and governmental circles in Washington, and into the consciousness of academics, religious leaders, and other shapers of public discourse—often at the risk of being labeled as "self-promoting" by some on the Left—has allowed us to break out of the self-imposed isolation that often feels comfortable to many progressives who can't imagine themselves powerful enough to command major public attention or impact social and political discourse. We at *Tikkun* have made it possible for many others to enter the public sphere with a degree of intellectual and political "cover" that make it easier for them to articulate publicly what they were already saying privately, but were finding it difficult to gain media attention until we pioneered the path.

While we are proud of the role we've played in bringing the voice of the spiritual Left into the pubic sphere, we humbly acknowledge that nothing could have been accomplished without the work of past generations of activists and thinkers who came before us: the women's movement, the Civil Rights movement, the anti-war movement of the Sixties and Seventies, the work of the Bundists and Yiddishists and magazines like *Jewish Currents*, the contributions of Martin Buber and Emanuel Levinas, Wilhelm Reich and John Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Shulamit Firestone, the social action arms of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now the Union for Reform Judaism), the courageous Quakers and the various branches of the American Friends Service Committee, Mennonites, the Unitarian Universalists, the United Churches of Christ, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church's Board of Church and Society, the Lutherans and the Episcopal Church USA, engaged Buddhists and the various Peace Fellowships, the inspiration of Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, my personal teachers and mentors Abraham Joshua Heschel, Yochanan Muffs, Marshall Meyer, Zalman Schachter Shalomi, Herbert Marcuse, Hal Sampson, Richard Lichtman, Elliot Liebow, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., Mario Savio, Erich Fromm, Yeshayahu Leibowitz, Abbie Hoffman, Bob Hoffman, and John Lennon, the work of the New Jewish Agenda, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, and of socialist Zionists and Jewish humanists and Christian movements like Pax Christi and the annual Catholic campaign against the School of the Americas and the work of Catholics in providing shelter for South and Central American refugees, the powerful work of the environmental movement and groups like the National Religious Partnership for the Environment and Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, Teva, Adama, and the continuing activism and thinking of tens of thousands of others today in organizations like the Tikkun Community, the Shalom Center, Jewish Voice for Peace, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom,



the New Israel Fund, Americans for Peace Now, Meretz USA, Jewish Funds for Justice, and the American Jewish World Service. Many of these organizations (whom we vigorously support) may not even be aware of how restricted American progressive social/political public discourse was before *Tikkun* first appeared in 1986 and helped popularize the ideas they put into political practice in the early years of the Twenty-first century.

Here's what we've accomplished in our twenty years:

1. We revived the voice of a liberal and progressive consciousness in the Jewish world at a time when it was almost without national representation, and when opposition to both neo-liberal and neoconservative ideology was required. We were particularly proud of helping to bring national attention to feminist voices, both Jewish and Christian, which had been ignored by the mainstream media. We created national conferences in New York, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles, which attracted thousands of participants, and spawned dozens of smaller conferences around the United States.

2. We played a major role in encouraging liberals and progressives to recognize that human beings not only have material needs, but also "meaning needs" (a need for a life that is connected to higher meaning and purpose) and/or spiritual needs (a need for a New Bottom Line to replace the Old Bottom Line of money and power).

3. We were the first major American Jewish periodical to challenge Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and to show that it was not only immoral, but also self-destructive for Israel and the Jewish people. Beginning in 1988, our advocacy of this position and our insistence that criticizing Israeli policy was perfectly legitimate (rejecting the labeling of those who raised criticisms of Israeli policy as "self-hating Jews" or "anti-Semitic non-Jews"), earned us death threats, loss of access to Jewish media, and the loss of financial support. But, by sticking to our principles, we've also helped to create a new path for hundreds of thousands of young Jews who had not seen how they could reconcile their own moral insights with a Judaism that appeared to give its loyalty to the Israeli government's policies a higher status than loyalty to the God of Israel and God's demands for justice and love of the stranger. At the same time, we've been the most outspoken voice criticizing those progressives who have used their criticism of Israeli state policies as a cover for an anti-Semitism that manifests itself (as all racisms do) in excessively focusing on the bad in a particular group (and generalizing that to all people in the group), giving little attention to that which is good and valuable in the community. We are proud to have published the first version of *Healing Israel/Palestine* and a handbook based on that work, which has been used on college campuses to show how it is possible to follow a progressive middle path that is both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine.

4. We were the first magazine in the Western world to publish a detailed account by an Israeli historian—Benny Morris—

of the role that the Israel Defense Forces played in forcing tens of thousands of Palestinians to flee their homes in 1948, and then refusing to allow them to return.

5. We were the first national magazine to provide a systematic critique of Heidegger-influenced deconstructionism, and to show how this version of postmodernism undermines an ethical foundation for progressive politics.

6. We were the first major progressive American magazine to provide a systematic critique of Political Correctness as it functioned in the Left.

7. We were in the forefront of the struggle to expose the pain and suffering faced by gays, lesbians, and transgender persons in the Jewish world, and to demand that they be given full and equal recognition by synagogues and rabbinical schools. And, we were the first to give voice to closeted Jews in the Orthodox community and opened the door for many to come out as equal members of our community.

8. We were the first major progressive national magazine to provide a systematic and ongoing critique of the misuse of the memory of the Holocaust, as a pseudo-religion for those who no longer believed in God, but wanted a way to remain Jewish as a justification for privileging Jewish suffering above all other suffering, and the use of this ideology to rationalize the necessity of the Occupation, and acts of injustice against the Palestinians.

9. We were the first progressive magazine to provide an in-depth critique of the transformation of science into an ideology (we call it "scientism") used to suppress social criticism and ethical-spiritual thinking in the public sphere.

10. We were the first major North American periodical to publish the profoundly wide range of progressive thinkers, poets, fiction writers, advocacy journalists and activists in Israel, and remain the number one North American publishing venue for such work today.

11. We held the first major conference of American and Israeli peace activists in Jerusalem in 1991 (over eight hundred people attended, mostly Israelis—itself a remarkable development).

**WE WERE THE FIRST** major progressive magazine to challenge media cynicism not only when it came from the Right, but also when it manifested in progressive media outlets within our own publishing community.

12. We were the first major progressive magazine to challenge media cynicism not only when it came from the Right, but also when it manifested in progressive media outlets within our own publishing community.

13. We helped to develop a meaning-oriented critique of law and the legal establishment, which became a foundation for subsequent spiritual discourses among lawyers at a time when the American Religious Right was the only social force attempting to introduce moral values into the legal sphere. We are still involved in developing a spiritual/meaning oriented approach in law and many other professions, and will be having a conference in the summer of 2007 to which all profes-

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# We'd like to say a special thanks to the

Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Rachel Adler, Shulamit Aloni, Gar Alperovitz, Yehuda Amichai, Gil Anidjar, Charlie Anders, Aharon Appelfeld, Janet Aviad, Bradley Shavit Artson, Ziad Asali, Uri Avnery, Michael Bader, Omer Bartov, Norman O. Brown, Melvin Jules Bukiet, Zygmunt Baumann, Yossi Beilin, Michael Berenbaum, Chip Berlet, Marshall Berman, Charlie Bertsch, Michael Berube, Jean Bethke, Chana Bloch, Shuley Boteach, Brenda Brossman, Herbert Bronstein, Cherie Brown, Rosellen Brown, Walter Brueggemann, Paul Buhle, Lawrence Bush, Fritjof Capra, James Carroll, Ginsberg Charles, Alice Chasan, Naomi Chazan, Kim Chernin, Joan Chittister, Noam Chomsky, Deepak Chopra, Aryeh Cohen, Peter Cole, Thomas R. Cole, John Dominic Crossan, Enid Dame, Charles Derber, Natalie Zemon Davis, John Dear, Jeffrey Dekro, Morris Dickstein, Elliot Dorff, Ariel Dorfman, Laura Duhan Kaplan, Marian Wright Edelman, Adams Edith, Thomas Edsall, David Ehrenfeld, Barbara Ehrenreich, Arnold Eisen, Riane Eisler, Akiva Eldar, Gornick Elisa, Hyman Elizabeth, David Ellenson, Leslie Epstein, Michael Eric Dyson, Schulman Esther, Amitai Etzioni, Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi, Jorge Ferrer, Nan Fink Gefen, Stanley Fish, Sylvia Barack Fishman, Carolyn Forche, Matthew Fox, Barney Frank, Estelle Frankel, Ellen Frankel, Yitzhak Frankenthal, Victor Frankl, Betty Friedan, Roger Friedland, Peter Gabel, Fox-Genovese Gail, Shai Ginsburg, Todd Gitlin, Bernie Glassman, Rebecca Goldstein, Mary Gordon, Daphne Gottlieb, Roger S. Gottlieb, Arthur Green, Miriam Greenspan, David Grossman, Marisa Handler, Judith Haptumank, Hazel Henderson, Susannah Heschel, Hanan Hever, Lawrence Hoffman, Irving Howe, Carmela Ingwer, Antonia Juhasz, Tony Judt, Jo Ellen Green Kaiser, Rodger Kamenetz, Alfred Kazin, Marjorie Kelly, Rashid Khalidi, Joel

sionals who are interested in rethinking the ethical and spiritual foundations of their work and how it might be changed are invited.

14. We have been the major progressive magazine keeping alive the libratory spirit that made the social change movements of the 1960s so powerful, while at the same time insisting on the importance of specific political and economic change, thus maintaining the dialectic between personal and social change by refusing to privilege one over the other.

15. We have been the major voice in the liberal and progressive world challenging the Religious Right without demeaning it or assuming that everyone who responds to its message is either evil or stupid. We've championed politics that insists on understanding which part of the message of reactionary movements satisfies core human needs that can be seen as legitimate. We've subsequently insisted on finding ways to address those needs through progressive rather than reactionary foundations. Moreover, we've adhered to a principle of never demeaning anyone with whom we disagree.

16. We've raised significant financial support from thousands of readers and social change activists from every religious, ethnic, gender and class position in North America and Israel. We are as deeply appreciative of the many people on social security or small pensions who send us $25 a year in addition to their subscription dues as those who have joined the Tikkun Community at $40, $80, or $120 a year, or those who send in the $300 a year we ask for people to be Tikkun Associates, or the people who stretch themselves to send us $1,000 a year or more. As we moved from just being a magazine to creating The Tikkun Community and the Network of Spiritual Progressives, we've seen an increased generosity and seriousness on the part of our readers who understand why a voice like that of *Tikkun* cannot survive in the marketplace without the funding for staff and printing costs that their donations make possible. Of course, we are also thankful for the help given to us by the foundations that have been willing to help us, particularly the Max and Anna Levenson Foundation. And we are deeply grateful for the indispensable help given by our publishers over the years—first Nan Fink Gefen, then Victor Goldberg and Danny Goldberg, and now for the past five years George and Trish Vradenburg. The generous support we've received is a continuing validation of our understanding that the spirit of the people can, when infused with the hopeful transformative/loving energy of the universe that some of us call God, actually triumph over the pain and cruelty that has been passed down from generation to generation and today appears in the form of cynical realism and a belief that evil or hurtfulness will always triumph enough to undermine our highest values and render absurd our aspirations for a world based on loving-kindness, generosity, peace, ecological sanity and social justice.

## Our Disappointments

1. We have not yet succeeded in convincing the liberal and progressive worlds that they need to understand and seriously address the spiritual crisis that we've been describing in *Tikkun* from our very first issue (a crisis that we analyzed first in our research at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, and then created *Tikkun* to be a vehicle for educating Americans about what we had learned). Right through the elections of 2006, the primary interest shown in these issues has been largely instrumental and manipulative, never seriously grappling with the analysis we've presented in our pages. Further, many liberals and leftists have continued to express outright hostility toward spiritual progressives.

2. We have not yet succeeded in attracting the financial support that would make it possible to pay our staff a sufficient income to live at middle-class standards, to hire the number of

# following *Tikkun* contributors

Kovel, Dennis Kucinich, Lawrence Kushner, George Lakoff, Lawrence Langer, Jackson Lears, Carol Lee Flinders, Elizabeth Lesser, Aryeh Lev Stollman, Mark LeVine, Philip Levine, Julian Levinson, Mordecai Liebling, Joe Lockard, Philip Lopate, Ian Lustick, William M. Sullivan, Shaul Magid, Simpson Martha, Korten Martin, Daniel Matt, Ruth Messinger, Jack Miles, Alice Miller, Czeslaw Milosz Jessica Montell, Thomas Moore, Alan Morinis, Benny Morris, Ron Nachmann, Michael Nagler, Ben Naparstek, Jay Natlie, Elliot Neaman, Adi Ophir, Wendy Orange, Jacqueline Osherow, Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, Alicia Ostriker, Amos Oz, Greg Palast, Marge Piercy, Robert Pinsky, Judith Plaskow, Mitchell Plitnick, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Carl Pope, Francine Prose, Ishamel Reed, Tanya Reinhart, Adrienne Rich, Jeremy Rifkin, Anne Roiphe, Or Rose, Thane Rosenbaum, Danny Rubinstein, Catherine Ruddick, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Michael Sandel, Rosenberg Sara, Joel Schalit, Mark Schechner, Jonathan Schell, Jerome Segal, Naomi Seidman, Gerald Serotta, Zalman Shachter-Shalomi, Rami Shapiro, Svi Shapiro, Alan Shapiro, Vandana Shiva, Jason Shulman, Joseph Skibell, Christine Stansell, Glen Stassen, Ilan Stavans, Newman Stephen, Gerald Stern, Zeev Sternhell, Lama Surya Das, Lam Surya Das, Meir Tamari, Thandeka, Robert Thurman, Michael Tomasky, Mario Van Peebles, George Vradenburg, Immanuel Wallerstein, Jim Wallis, Michael Walzer, Paul Wapner, Arthur Waskow, Maxine Waters, Andrew Weil, Joshua Weiner, Senator Paul Wellstone, Cornel West, Robin West, Ken Wilber, C.K.Williams, Patricia Williams, Ellen Willis, Jim Winkler, Lynn Woolsey, A.B. Yehoshua, Eric Yoffie, James E. Young, Eli Zaretsky, Richard Zimler, Howard Zinn, Laurie Zoloth, and Stephen Zunes.

staff persons we require, to publish *Tikkun* as a monthly, or to pay authors for their articles (which bears the unfortunate consequence of having to rely on the generosity of those few writers who privilege ideology over pay), or to commission investigative articles. We are not always able to respond quickly to all of the requests we get from our readers, or to pay for the outreach we require in order to send thousands of subscriptions of *Tikkun* to people in college or graduate schools, where we are increasingly finding a larger and more interested community of readers. (Our highest sell-through—60 percent—is in university and college bookstores.)

3. We have not succeeded in preventing the dumbing down of American media, increasingly evident in the world of print periodicals and web publications. We've largely succeeded in resisting those pressures ourselves, but only at the cost of losing many people to the magazines that provide everything in one or two paragraph form. We even hear from our own readers that they want to read shorter articles, though most of our pieces have always been less than five pages. We are doing our best in developing our websites (www.tikkun.org and www.spiritualprogressives.org) to keep a high level of discourse rather than try to compete in the attention-grabbing format that necessarily obscures those crucial nuances that make serious moral, spiritual and intellectual life possible. Over the course of the next few months, we will be completing the most extensive enlargement and refinement of our web presence to date in order to better serve the needs of our readers and organization members for more information, more articles and more interactivity. And if you send us your email address, we will put you on the list of people who get (for free) Tikkun Mail and the soon-to-come Love Embodied mail from the Network of Spiritual Progressives.

4. While we've contributed to a grudging recognition by many American Jews of the inevitability of Palestinian statehood, we have not yet succeeded in changing the attitude in mainstream Jewish institutions and major parts of the Israeli peace movement to recognize the humanity of the Palestinian people and their equal right to dignity and respect as we rightfully demand for ourselves. Nor have we overcome the fear of many principled non-Jews in America to speak out for a justice-oriented perspective in the Middle East. We have not yet blocked the tendency of the U.S. media to give one-sided accounts of developments in the Middle East and to restrict the views they present to the American public on Israel-related issues. In fact, most of us have to rely on media sources outside the United States for more honest reporting and incisive analysis.

Nor have we yet succeeded in stopping the overwhelming power of AIPAC and their American Jewish neoconservative allies to pressure elected officials into endorsing whatever policies they believe the Israeli government should be supporting (except when Israel was moving toward peace under Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's rule and AIPAC and other American Jews were working hard to undermine the Rabin government's policies). The example of 400 members of Congress voting to endorse the Israeli war with Lebanon in July, 2006—a war which only shortly thereafter was seen as a disaster by almost everyone in Israel—is a striking reminder of the importance of the various peace organizations in the U.S. to work together to create a single voice in the way that American Jewish neo-conservatives have done so effectively with AIPAC. We regret that we thought that we could do this by ourselves, and only in the past two years have recognized the necessity of bringing together all the organizations that support a two-state solution to be more effective in our public activities in trying to influence public discourse about the Middle East.

5. We have not yet broken through the bubble of delusion and denial that allows most Americans to continue in their daily lives without any serious reckoning with the fact that America is responsible for the senseless mass killing of civilians taking place on a daily basis in Iraq, that we are consuming and producing goods in a way that is dramatically accelerating the destruction of the environment, while our leaders in both major parties prevent global cooperation to stem the coming environmental disaster. We have similarly not convinced most Americans that the U.S. dominates a global economic system whose maldistribution of wealth leads to a reality in which one-third of the world's population lives on less than $2 a day, and some 20,000 to 30,000 children die each day of malnutrition or diseases that are preventable or curable were we to provide the healthcare necessary to cure or prevent such distress.

That we have yet to find the best way to speak to the always-present (and never extinguishable) goodness and desire of people to live in a morally coherent universe and provide as much love and caring as possible—this is our greatest disappointment. That there are hundreds of millions of people around the world who want this same thing we know to be true. But we have not yet found the way to help everyone unite in a manner that would make us all more effective and powerful.

We have a vision of how we can achieve this, and so we have been building *Tikkun* magazine, The Tikkun Community and The Network of Spiritual Progressives as platforms to put our beliefs into action, and to invite you to increase your level of involvement with us. Our spiritual practices, our commitment to critical thinking, and our shared dedication to our work has taught us that we must develop ways of sustaining ourselves for the long-term struggle that healing the world requires. The Talmud quotes a rabbi who told us not to think that it was our task to finish the work, but neither should we desist in our efforts to bring more love and kindness into the world.

In this issue of *Tikkun* we've picked a few representative excerpts from at least one article for each year that we've existed. We've also worked with Rowman and Littlefield to publish a

wonderful anthology of *Tikkun* articles that give you not only a far deeper understanding of where we've been, but also provides a foundation for understanding the discourses you encounter in *Tikkun*. Unlike many other magazines in which each new edition starts with a blank slate and no expectation of familiarity with the past, *Tikkun* has been developing an ongoing dialogue for twenty years, and it helps tremendously to understand our current positions and directions if you read that anthology, available in bookstores now. We also hope you'll check our websites regularly—www.tikkun.org for the magazine, www.spiritualprogressives.org for our interfaith Network of Spiritual Progressives organization, and www.BeytTikkun.org for those who wish to keep up with the synagogue of which I am the rabbi. The material on these websites has often been static in the past, but by the beginning of 2007 we can assure you that they will be as dynamic as you could possibly want, and will provide you with great opportunities to connect with each other, and to respond to our articles. In fact, it is increasingly true that *Tikkun* is functioning both as a print magazine and as a force on the web and with our emails.

Imperfect as I personally have been in doing this work, and as often as I have to apologize to those whom I have unintentionally offended or hurt (imagine how many people we disappoint when their articles are rejected—we've printed approximately 2,000 authors in the past twenty years, and had to turn down another 28,000, many of whom deserved to be published had we the money to publish biweekly instead of bimonthly), I nevertheless continue to have a wonderful time meeting the amazing people who work at, write for or subscribe to *Tikkun* and the fantastic thousands of human beings who have joined the Tikkun Community and the Network of Spiritual Progressives. This work continues to nurture my soul. I thank you, and I thank God, for the incredible opportunity I've been given to serve society and will continue to enjoy as editor of *Tikkun*. ■

THE CONTRARIAN

# The Persistent Progressive

## *Tikkun at Twenty!*

BY GEORGE VRADENBURG

IMAGINE THE WORLD IN 1986. THE SOVIET UNION IN full flower behind the Berlin Wall; the Internet but a gleam in Al Gore's eye; the first cases of a strange new auto-immune disease that some doctors are calling AIDS; no cell phones; no *Teen People* magazine; Ronald Reagan and conservative Republicanism in ascendancy; and *Tikkun* launched as a fresh, challenging, progressive voice.

Fast forward to 2006. The Berlin Wall gone; the Soviet Union collapsed; cell phones and the Internet ubiquitous; HIV/AIDS a global pandemic; *Teen People* come (and gone); Conservative Republicanism in impending decay; and *Tikkun*—still a fresh, challenging, progressive voice.

In the midst of all the changes in the last twenty years, *Tikkun* has not only survived, but thrived as a persistent, consistent progressive voice in the political and cultural debates over the role of the United States and of the Jewish people in the world.

Why?

Because of Michael Lerner's passionate, energetic, and innovative perspective with which *Tikkun* was founded, and which keeps it original and provocative.

I am proud to say that I am Michael's brother-in-law, having married his sister Trish (with whom I co-publish *Tikkun*). And I can testify from personal experience that Michael's take on the world has not changed in the nearly

forty years I have known him. I recently re-read a letter that Michael had written to me shortly after Trish and I were married, after he'd learned that I was planning to take a position as a pup lawyer in a major corporate law firm in New York City. In his letter, he carefully and thoughtfully advised me that I was making a major mistake that I would regret for the rest of my life. Michael described a world marred by poverty, disease, social injustice and a tragically misguided war policy in Vietnam. There could be no higher or more satisfying calling, he urged, than for me to use my legal education and skills to help heal that world. Working at a big law firm serving major corporate interests would make the world a harsher—not better—place.

I did not take Michael's advice, and I went on to serve as the corporate general counsel of CBS in the 1980s, then of Fox and AOL in the 1990s, finally moving to the civic sector full-time in 2001.

What I do recognize now, however, is the deep personal fulfillment that comes from doing whatever one can "to heal the world," something that Michael seems to have known all his life.

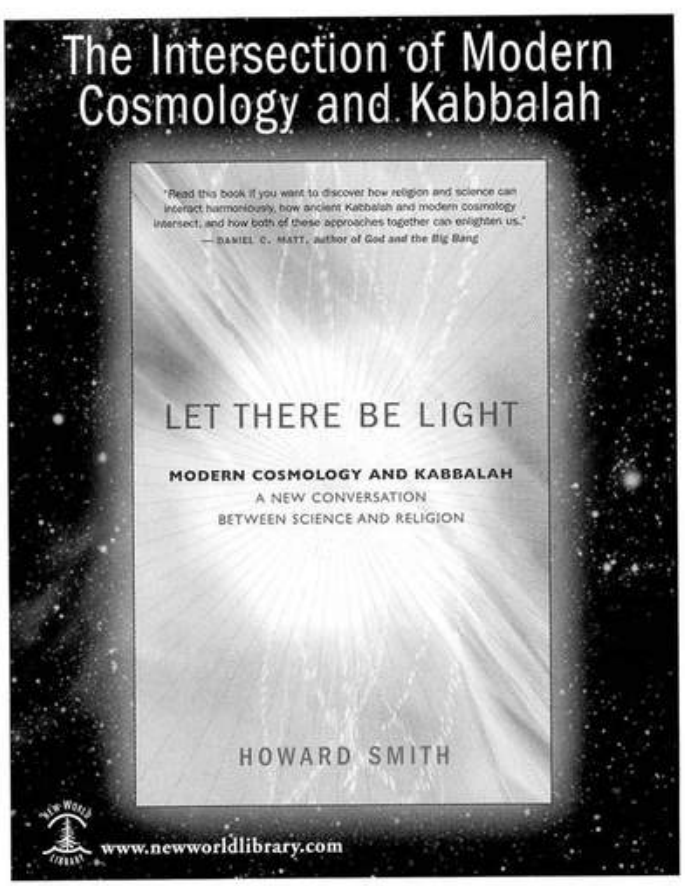
Michael and I have always had different perspectives on the world. His is a worldview rooted in a deep prophetic tradition, one that senses the imminent presence of the prospects for peace and justice, which could be achieved if Israel and the United States—and each one of us personally—modeled a generous and caring commitment to ending war, poverty, disease and injustice. I have what I would characterize as a more "realistic" outlook (Michael would object to that term), and believe that democratic capitalism represents a positive force in our society, and that the preservation of peace and justice requires fierce resistance to forces hostile to individual freedom.

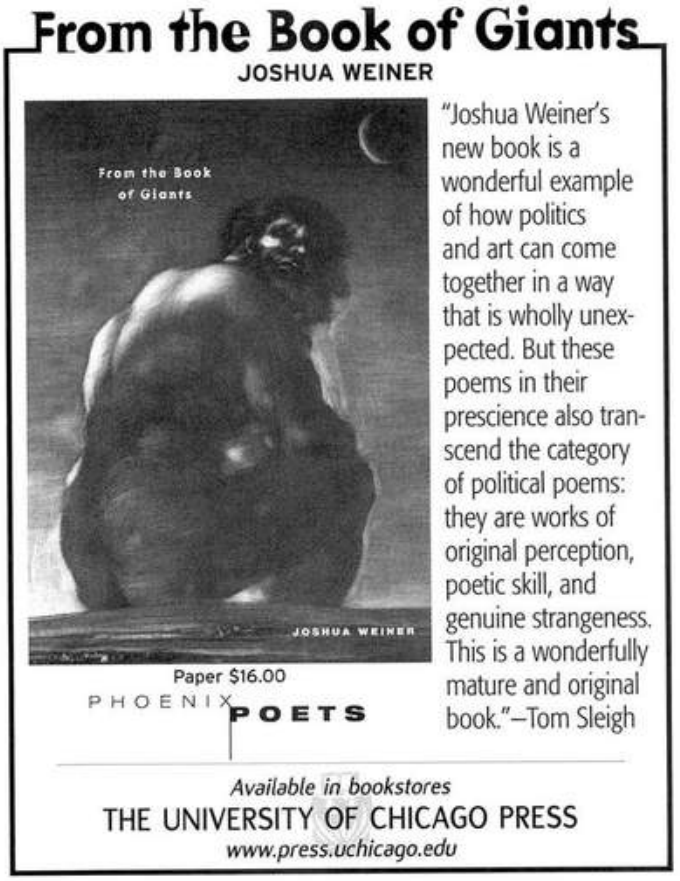
Yet, with the passage of time, I have come increasingly to respect Michael's point of view. His particular take on the critical issues of our time, while provocative and challenging, has had a deep impact on my own (Republican) thinking—sometimes reinforcing my views, and sometimes making me question my assumptions. And I believe that because his perspective comes from a place of deeply shared values, Michael's prophetic message responds to a human yearning that transcends narrow political agendas.

Another note from those personal family papers: in 1988, shortly after *Tikkun* was first launched, the young governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton, wrote to Michael that his reading of *Tikkun* had helped him clarify his own thinking toward the issues of the world. Twenty years later, it appears that another young politician, Barack Obama, may be drawing inspiration from the same source.

Keep at it, Michael. *Tikkun*'s voice has had, and continues to have, an impact on those near and far. ■

*George Vradenburg is co-publisher of* Tikkun.

# Making a Desert Bloom (Again)

BY JOEL SCHALIT

THE SECOND LEBANON WAR CLAIMED FAR MORE victims than the deterrent power of the Israel Defense Forces. While many analysts have argued that the biggest loser in this conflict was really America (who urged Israel to wage the war because it saw it as a rehearsal for a conflict with Hezbollah's main sponsor, Iran), the principal political casualty of the conflict was Israel's parliamentary Left. Led by the example of Defense Minister Peretz, and several Labor Party cabinet members who'd all done time in Israel's peace movement, Israeli progressives followed Peretz's ideological lead in helping throw the Left's weight behind the war effort.

From legendary peacenik and Meretz leader Yossi Beilin telling the *San Francisco Chronicle* that the "operation was very much justified," to internationally-acclaimed novelists David Grossman, Amos Oz, and A.B. Yehoshua initially issuing a joint proclamation supporting the government's prosecution of the engagement, it appeared as though an entire generation of Israeli progressives had crossed over to the other side, and, for the first time, were using their liberal credibility to sanction an utterly pointless and transparent war. (Grossman, Oz, and Yehoshua called for an end to the conflict in the final days of the war, two days before Grossman's twenty-one-year- old son was tragically killed when his tank was hit by a Hezbollah missile.)

The Labor Party's wartime positioning remains a topic of immense discussion, and no one has lost any time trying to capitalize on it. Conservative political parties like the Likud are working hard on regaining support from those sectors of the population that had shifted its allegiance to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Kadima party during the March 2006 elections. One month after the fighting ended, Israeli periodicals likewise remained full of articles covering the transformation of the Left's political leadership from moralistic peaceniks to garrulous populists eager to prove their reactionary mettle by displaying their ability to be tough on security matters. And, as though it were a guarantee of decades of future debate, Olmert continues to refuse appointing a judicially empowered independent counsel-equivalent to evaluate what exactly went wrong.

Clearly the Israeli public's inquisition over the second Lebanon war will have to take place at the ballot box. When that does eventually happen, it will be important to remember that the judgment rendered will not just be about the failure to win the war and protect innocent Israeli civilians from Hezbollah rocket fire. The verdict will be about the Israeli state's failure to do anything other than inexpertly maintain an indefinite status quo governed by never-ending military violence and a crisis-ridden public sector. Unfortunately, what such a protest vote may translate into politically will be a new government run by an alliance of secular, religious, and security conservatives who will simply do a better job of managing the anarchy.

Israelis feel abandoned by the state, with no effective and principled political parties to get behind; however, despite such depressing future scenarios as discussed above, some Israelis remain optimistic about the lessons learned in this war. Echoing the conclusions which emerged from analyses of the revolutions that swept eastern Europe during the 1980s, *Haaretz*' Lily Galili argued that the war strengthened the bonds of Israel's civil society, forcing both Israeli Jews and Arabs to look after each other in unprecedented acts of solidarity. Other commentators such as Meron Benvenisti concluded that at a certain point Israelis will simply demand a better situation for themselves because they've learned to live with a degree of comfort that they know they'll lose if things continue the way they are.

Though such positions may appear to be nothing other than wishful thinking, they point to something more than an inevitable prescription for nihilism. Faced with the perennial disappointments of institutional politics, activists have always found spaces in the margins from which to reenter the mainstream. Boasting a wealth of NGOs dedicated to social justice and peace causes, highly specialized action groups, and a large community of politicized intellectuals, Israel has a surplus of such resources. What needs to happen is for this constellation to start a process of rebuilding. Not another alternative or special interest party, but a new public consensus about politics and what its responsibilities must ultimately entail. ■

*Joel Schalit is managing editor of* Tikkun.

# An Arab Plan That Jews Must Pursue

BY MITCHELL PLITNICK

PEACE GROUPS OFTEN LACK A CLEAR, REALISTIC vision—something tangible to pin their hopes on. That can change now in Israel and Palestine. It is the right time, with Israel feeling less invincible after its failure in Lebanon. Many people realize that guns are not going to decide this conflict. And now there is actually something real and concrete to work with.

After the crisis in Lebanon, some Arab states have dusted off the Saudi peace plan of 2002. Upon its unveiling, the initiative was adopted unanimously by the Arab League, and has received endorsements from Iran and even Hezbollah after it was accepted by the Palestinians, including Hamas. Nevertheless, the plan was virtually ignored by Israel.

The Saudi proposal calls for a full Israeli withdrawal from all the territories it captured in 1967, including the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem. It also calls for a "just resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem ... in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194," which, in 1948, recommended the unconditional return of refugees, the demilitarization of Jerusalem, and the placement of the city under UN administration. In exchange, the Saudi plan offers not only full peace with Israel, but also the establishment of "normal relations" between Israel and the entire Arab world. The term "normal relations" is not trivial.

When peace proposals are floated, Israeli and Diaspora Jews are often skeptical of what guarantee can be given to ensure that once Israel's "guard is down" she will not be attacked by neighboring Arab states. Obviously, Israel's enormous military superiority and strong alliance with the world's sole superpower is not sufficient insurance, and clearly not enough to end the conflict. The guarantee of "normal relations" is intended to accomplish this.

"Normal relations" means social and economic interdependence, which is a huge incentive to maintain peace. Simultaneously, it means building relationships between people through business dealings, cultural and academic exchanges, and the like. Under such circumstances, both sides thus have far too much to lose by initiating violence.

It is often stated, incorrectly, that democracies do not go to war with each other (Israel and Lebanon just disproved that once again). In fact, countries do not go to war with one another when it is not in their interest to do so.

That is the guarantee. With normal relations with Israel, Arab countries can diversify their economies, and expand their industrial and academic resources. Israel will see the lifting of the Arab trade embargo as well as a similar broadening of cultural and academic horizons. Both sides quickly accumulate far too much to lose in war.

Obviously, Israel would not accept the 2002 Arab peace proposal whole cloth. Many issues would need to be resolved and the question of refugees, Jewish access to the Old City of Jerusalem, access to water, security arrangements, and many other, less crucial details would need to be worked out. However, this plan does contain many of the guarantees Israel is looking for, and is contingent on the viability and sustainability of a Palestinian state. The initiative would provide a strong foundation for serious negotiations. It would not lead to a complete end to all of the disputes, but it does represent a way out of occupation, a way out of the morass of violence and into a new era where disputes are dealt with politically and diplomatically.

This cannot happen on its own. For Israel to accept the Arab peace initiative as the sensible basis for negotiations that it is, they must be assured that this is what Jews—both in Israel and in the Diaspora—want. The critical mass of Jews around the globe that have the good sense to recognize that this deal contains the guarantees that Israel needs, the hope and the tools to build a real future for the Palestinians, and the incentive for genuine peace for all parties, must speak out. It is not the time to allow incompetent leaders like Ehud Olmert and Amir Peretz to determine the future of world Jewry. The overwhelming majority of Jews who wish to see a peaceful future must transcend differences and come together to call for negotiations based on this most realistic plan. There may not be many more chances. ■

*Mitchell Plitnick is the director of educational policy for Jewish Voice for Peace.*

## SPECIAL SECTION

# 1986 Tikkun 2006

Michael Lerner, Christopher Lasch, Adi Ophir, Enid Dame, Annie Dillard, Jessica Benjamin, Martin Jay, Michael Eric Dyson, Arnold Eisen, Peter Gabel, Daniel Boyarin, Harvey Cox, Joel R. Primack and Nancy Ellen Abrams, Carolyn Forché, Nan Fink Gefen, Tsvi Blanchard, Senator Paul Wellstone, Sharon Salzberg, Riane Eisler, Michael Bader, Mohammed Abu Nimer, Svi Shapiro, Ama Zenya, Shaul Magid

SOME OF THE MOST exciting articles that have appeared in *Tikkun* have been reprinted in the *Tikkun Reader: Twentieth Anniversary* collection, which is published by Roman and Littlefield this month. We have been very fortunate to have some of the world's premier intellectual and spiritual thinkers write for our magazine, and as there have been so many exceptional pieces in *Tikkun*, we thought we would present a taster of some of what is not in the collection. Through the collection, and our selections here, we hope to give you a deeper sense of what *Tikkun* has been about. Joel Schalit, our managing editor, will be coming out with yet another collection focused on our Middle East articles. It was extremely difficult to choose which articles to present here, and we still feel that way too many important pieces have been left out. After all, there is really no substitute for reading the magazine.

—MICHAEL LERNER

1986 | VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

# Founding Editorial Statement

*by Michael Lerner*

TIKKUN MAGAZINE hopes to provide a voice for those who still dare to hope, for those who are not embarrassed to dream, for those Jews and non-Jews alike who are still moved by the radical spirit of the Prophets and who insist on keeping their message alive.

Keeping the Prophetic tradition alive, as our spiritual mentor Abraham Joshua Heschel pointed out in his book *The Prophets,* means immersion in the details of daily life. The Greek philosophers spent much of their time talking about abstract concepts of goodness, virtue, and justice. Eastern spirituality led its practitioners to the mountains, forests, and caves for meditation, and directed their energies away from the daily life of ordinary people, often dismissed as "illusion." But to the Prophets, God's message directed attention to daily life, to the marketplace, to the family, and to the state. To the Prophets, each time the powerless were oppressed was a fresh outrage, each time religion was used as a cover for economic immorality was a new affront to God.

The commitment to change the world, to demand justice and love in a world that has given up on these ideals, is not some pious sentiment clouding one's eyes to a hard-nosed look at reality. On the contrary, the rejection of moral neutrality, the committed stance on behalf of the oppressed, makes possible a deeper understanding of the dynamics of culture and society. It is precisely in the process of acting to transform the world that the world reveals its deeper structures and meanings. Yet we shall insist that any social transformation requires a systematic and deep intellectual inquiry—we may get inspiration from the Torah, but we shall also engage in critical thinking that requires intellectual integrity, innovation, and sustained analysis. *Tikkun* hopes to provide a forum for that kind of intellectual work.

But we are not uncritically committed to liberalism. When liberal values are used as a cover for materialism and individualism, we say clearly that these are *not* our values. We stand for tolerance, but not for ethical relativism, which is sometimes seen as either the primary justification for or the logical consequence of a commitment to tolerance. We stand for freedom—but not for giving unlimited freedom to corporations so they can exploit the people and resources of the planet. Nor do we necessarily take at face value the claim of Western societies to be the living embodiments of the liberal ideals that they so proudly proclaim. If radically alternative policies to those held by the dominant parties are systematically excluded from serious public consideration, if anti-nuclear and anti-apartheid forces must use civil disobedience to have their views even noticed (and even then, not given a serious public airing), if U.S. military interventions can be financed despite the opposition of a majority of Americans, if freedom of the press actually amounts to freedom only for those with vast economic resources to buy media time or space, if economic power concentrated in the hands of the few pre-shapes the options so that the range of serious political choices becomes dramatically narrowed, then we can get a different kind of unfreedom—an unfreedom that celebrates itself as the paradigm of liberal ideals.

1986 | VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

# What's Wrong with the Right?

*By Christopher Lasch*

NOT ONLY TO DO conservatives have no understanding of modern capitalism, they have a distorted understanding of the "traditional values" they claim to defend. The virtues they want to revive are the pioneer virtues: rugged individualism, boosterism, rapacity, sentimental deference to women, and a willingness to resort to force. These values are "traditional" only in the sense that they are celebrated in the traditional myth of the Wild West and embodied in the Western hero, the prototypical American lurking in the background, often in the very foreground, of conservative ideology. In their implications and inner meaning, these individualist values are themselves profoundly anti-traditional. They are the values of the man on the make, in flight from his ancestors, from the family claim, from everything that ties him down and limits his freedom of movement. What is traditional about the rejection of tradition, continuity, and rootedness? A conservatism that sides with the forces of restless mobility is a false conservatism. So is the conservatism that puts on a smiling face, denounces "doomsayers," and refuses to worry about the future. Conservatism appeals to a pervasive and legitimate desire in contemporary society for order, continuity, responsibility, and

discipline; but it contains nothing with which to satisfy these desires. It pays lip service to "traditional values," but the policies with which it is associated promise more change, more innovation, more growth, more technology, more weapons, and more addictive drugs. Instead of confronting the forces in modern life that make for disorder, it proposes merely to make Americans feel good about themselves. Ostensibly rigorous and realistic, contemporary conservatism is an ideology of denial. Its slogan is the slogan of Alfred E. Neumann: "What? Me, worry?" Its symbol is a smile button: that empty round face devoid of features except for two tiny eyes, eyes too small to see anything clearly, and a big smile: the smile of someone who is determined to keep smiling through thick and thin.

Conservatives stress the importance of religion, but their religion is the familiar American blend of flag-waving and personal morality. It centers on the trivial issues of swearing, neatness, gambling, sportsmanship, sexual hygiene, and school prayers. Adherents of the new religious right correctly reject the separation of politics and religion, but they bring no spiritual insights to politics. They campaign for political reforms designed to discourage homosexuality and pornography, say, but they have nothing to tell us about the connection between pornography and the larger consumerist structure of addiction-maintenance. Their idea of the proper relation between politics and religion is to invoke religious sanctions for specific political positions, as when they declaim that budget deficits, progressive taxation, and the presence of women in the armed forces are "anti-biblical." As in their economic views, conservatives advance views of religion and of the political implications of religion that derive from the tradition of liberal individualism. Liberalism, as a Lutheran critic of the religious right points out, "means straining scripture to mandate specific positions on social justice issues ... bending the word of God to fit your political ideas." The religiosity of the American right is self-righteous and idolatrous. It perceives no virtue in its opponents and magnifies its own. In the words of a pamphlet published by the United Methodist Church, "The 'New Religious Right' has ... made the same mistake committed by the social gospeler earlier in the century. They exaggerate the sins of their opponent and negate any original sin of their won. They have become victims of what Reinhold Neibuhr called "easy conscience," or what the New Testament describes as the "self-righteousness of the Pharisees." The most offensive and dangerous form of this self-righteousness is the attempt to invoke divine sanction for the national self-aggrandizement of the United States in its global struggle against "Godless communism," as if American imperialism were any less godless than Soviet imperialism. In the words of Paul Simmons, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, "Identifying the Judeo-Christian posture with American nationalism is to lose the transcendent and absolute nature of the Christian faith. For Christians and Jews, loyalty to God must transcend any earthly loyalties."

1987 | Volume 2, Number 1

# On Sanctifying the Holocaust

## *An Anti-Theological Treatise with Adi Ophir*

A RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS built around the Holocaust may become the central aspect of a new religion, one which has at its core a story of revelation that goes something like this: "In the year five thousand seven hundred, since the creation of the world according to the Jewish calendar, in central Europe, Absolute Evil was revealed. The Absolute—that is, the Divine—is Evil. Every act has a part, to a greater or lesser extent, in this Absolute Evil, every act is an expression of it. But until the emergence of the Absolute Evil no one believed that there was a hidden lawfulness controlling every appearance of evil in our world. Until then, no one had placed his or her trust in the absolute, transcendent, one and only Evil, which is the ground of our lives and deaths, the logic of our finitude and suffering, the rock of our destruction, and the promise of our annihilation.

The four commandments of the new religion (Exod. 20:3): Thou shalt have no other holocaust before the Holocaust of the Jews of Europe; Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness; Thou shalt not take the name of the Holocaust in vain.

"Thou shalt not take the name in vain." How many outbursts of rage did Menachem Begin earn when he dared to profane the name. How many warnings have been uttered since then by researchers of the Holocaust, politicians, and educators, against that disreputable phenomenon, a transgression, no doubt, derogating the Holocaust by borrowing its name for calamities and disasters of a lesser order of atrocity, the earthly order.

"Remember the day of the Holocaust to keep it holy in memory of the destruction of the Jews of Europe." This is the most important commandment. This is the burden whose shirking is the archetype of sin. Not only

MAY/JUNE 1989 | VOLUME 4, NUMBER 3

# The Uses of Laughter

*by Enid Dame*

1.
The army is closing vegetable markets.
Chickens scatter. A boy bites a sandwich.
It looks like falafel and pita bread.
A soldier knocks it
out of his hand
as if it were dangerous.

They are kicking in doors, they are tearing
up olive trees.
That man was struck down in front of his family.
That girl was shot dead by her bodyguard.
Meanwhile, the children throw stones.

Terrible things are done in our name—
my name, and yours, which means "heart"
in their language.
Hearts can be dangerous things
for boys in New York carry
through schoolyards and streets. But you learned
how to joke your way out of violence,
how to make people laugh
with words aimed precisely as spitballs.

This is an ancient skill
our tribe perfected
in dark European ghettos.
We were
a nation of stand-up comics,
lawyers, negotiators,
people who said words mattered.

Now we're like everyone else
what do we do with history?
How do we learn to forget?
Smash all our windows and mirrors?
Seal off the door to the cellar
where memories scrabble like mice,
where words knit like bones?

2.
What does my enemy look like?
Is he that child
hurling rocks on the Evening News?
Is she that child throwing taunts
at the back of our demonstration?
We scream, "Peace Now!" They scream, "Not one
inch!"
I inch back to look in her face.
It is a mirror. Behind barricades,
the daughter I chose not to have
calls me traitor.

3.
On the way home
you and I stop to buy vegetables.
Our part of Brooklyn's called Little Odessa
after your grandfather's hometown.
He wore your name, played the fiddle,
was jumped by a gang of children.
They killed him for being himself—
a Jew in the wrong place.

Now we finger onions and yellow squash.
I say, "Let's boycott Israeli tomatoes."
You say, "The wrong strategy!
Better tomatoes than bullets
or, for that matter, stones."
And I picture children heaving tomatoes
at soldiers who aim water pistols
filled with tomato juice.
The floors of the world grow slick
and messy. The air turns sodden.
At some point, everyone laughs.
It's a scene from an old-time movie
the kind you played hookey to watch
when you were a funny kid
in a less dangerous time
learning the uses of laughter.

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the organized drive to forget, but also the innocent forgetting, the result of assimilation or simple lack of interest in the remnants of the Jewish possessions which a person carries with him or herself, as an act of terrible renunciation. Those who cause forgetting, to say nothing of those who deny, cooperate with the enemy. Those who assimilate complete the Nazis' work. Those who are faithful to themselves, and to their people, will repeat the tale until the end of time. Even if a thousand years pass and all the documents are lost, the revelation of Evil will be present in the midst of the nation through the countless threads of its common memory.

Absolute Evil must be remembered in exquisite detail.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1987 | VOLUME 3, NUMBER 6

# The Writing Life

*by Annie Dillard*

THERE IS NO shortage of good days. It is good lives that are hard to come by. A life of good days lived in the senses is not enough. The life of sensation is the life of greed; it requires more and more. The life of the spirit requires less and less; time is ample and its passage sweet. Who would call a day spent reading a good day? But a life spent reading—that is a good life. A day that closely resembles every other day for the past ten or twenty years does not suggest itself as a good one.

MARCH/APRIL 1988 | VOLUME 4, NUMBER 3

# Victimology

*by Jessica Benjamin*

A CERTAIN TRANSITION in politics, which occurred in the sixties, was required to pave the way for such thinking: the construction of the idea of the oppressed group as liberator. The notion of a class uniquely situated to oppose the ruling class because its exploitation is the hidden source of power gave way to a more simple proposition that the oppressed would rise up politically. In the sixties we evolved a new kind of "scientific" radicalism, the pursuit of what we might call "victimology," the highest stage of what Lenin never called "left-wing moralism—a gerontological disorder."

What we have learned is that there is a tremendous moral capital in suffering, even if you aren't suffering any more.

Women have a good case for focusing on their own suffering, for much abuse has been and continues to be inflicted on women directly by men. The question is: how to have a politics that recognizes injustice and recognizes abuse and suffering without degenerating into the victimological stance, without engendering the righteousness and sacrifice that has so long accompanied this position? For example, the more righteous a position feminists take about heterosexuality, the more self-scrutinizing they have to be about their own sexuality, regardless of what kind it is. In sexuality there is only a short step from censorship to proscription and inhibition. For most people it's not possible to continually mobilize resentment against women's sexual objectification and violation in pornography and then feel free to have a good time with their own sexuality. Of course, we might suspect that those who are inspired by this righteous position have taken the stance they do because they have suffered under the current organization of sexuality, not because they have enjoyed it. But, whatever the case, the liberation of sexuality in the interest of pleasure has lately been replaced as the goal of the movement; the goal now is to expose heterosexuality as fundamentally organized by the principle of domination.

There is no easy solution to this dilemma. Everything that we can mobilize in the way of human passion has a dangerous or a repressive side. But without some form of vision and passion, we can go nowhere. We therefore recognize that there needs to be a constant tension between passion and self-awareness, between being "into" things and standing critically outside of them. My personal solution to this dilemma is to add to these opposites a combination of irony, humor, and self-criticism. The kind of self-criticism I mean is not that which says, "Comrades, let us list all our errors and correct them immediately." It is based on life without historical teleology, in which we do not imagine that being right now can absolve us of responsibility for the past, or that right and wrong will be lifted above ambiguity by an objective historical process. It is my hope that the next phase of our movement may embody a very different kind of spirit, one which allows us to be committed while seeing the drawbacks of that commitment, to respect the reality of suffering without making it a brand of righteousness, to articulate a vision that does not demand human sacrifice, to play even with what is serious, and above all to accept—not resign ourselves to—living with contradiction.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1990 | VOLUME 5, NUMBER 6

# Hostage Philosophy: Levinas' Ethical Thought

*by Martin Jay*

ONLY WHEN I look for reciprocity, when I can see the same in the other, the neighbor in the stranger (even the stranger outside my kinship circle), will the likelihood of future Sabras and Shatilas diminish. Only when the realm of the polis is understood as the site to adjudicate difference, and not unethically to suppress them in the name of totalizing sameness, can the dignity of the other be genuinely upheld.

Although Levinas' profoundly moving reading of the Hebraic tradition has revivified that tradition for an international audience of Jews and non-Jews alike, it may nonetheless be worth pausing before we plunge too eagerly down the path of his "difficult freedom." For along with the Hellenic concern for Being, truth, and universality, there are also ethical-cum-political injunctions in the Hellenic tradition worth taking seriously. Levinas has brilliantly demonstrated the costs of forgetting the Jewish dimension of Western culture; the no less dangerous costs of suppressing the Hellenic is a lesson we have to go elsewhere to learn.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1991 | VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1

## Race Against Integration: Response

*by Michael Eric Dyson*

CONTEMPORARY BLACK nationalism, or neonationalism, is primarily a cultural affair: witness rap music, Spike Lee films, and the symbolic adoption of Egypt as a trope of racial origins. Though these cultural achievements are often significant and provocative, they do not by themselves promise a racial or cultural politics that can deliver the political vision, economic rehabilitation, moral renewal, and social reconstruction that the Black community so desperately needs. Nor does it effectively address those who are the most desperate: The Black poor, mostly women and children, who suffer a silent death by suffocation in the decay of our inner cities.

JULY/AUGUST 1991 | VOLUME 6, NUMBER 4

## University Truths

*by Arnold Eisen*

HOW EASY, HOW CRUEL, and how utterly stupid to lump thousands of years of texts—Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and secular—in a rubble on which one scrawls the obscene label "dead white males." The image smacks to me of the crematorium. It shows no respect whatever for human dignity—of the individual or of the group. It holds up the finger to me, a one-day-to-be-dead white male, and announces that my irrelevance has

## INTERVIEW WITH Peter Gabel

*By Jo Ellen Green Kaiser*

**TIKKUN:** You were critically important to the founding of *Tikkun* magazine. How did you get involved with *Tikkun*'s beginnings?

**PETER:** Michael [Lerner] and I met in 1975 at the Wright Institute. I was a law professor going back to get a Ph.D. in psychotherapy, alienated by the traditional nature of law at that time, particularly its emphasis on rule manipulation and detached analytical thinking. My interest was in the heart and soul. I hoped that dimension of existence would be illuminated by psychology.

Actually, in part because of *Tikkun*, we've been able to develop an approach to law and legal culture that emphasizes the healing capability of law in helping human beings to create a better world and to work through conflict in a way that fosters mutual understanding.

But, sticking with the story, Michael was going back to get a second Ph.D. in psychology. I guess he felt about philosophy—he was a philosophy professor at that time—as I felt about law. What animated both of us was that we were social activists shaped by the movements of the 1960s, and we wanted to connect the inner and outer dimensions of reality in a deep way.

It was the time of the Vietnam war, and there were two prevailing ways of understanding things if you were critical of American society and the inhumanity of war and the reality of injustice based on class, race, gender, and sexual orientation. One way was through the economic system, through Marxism, with its focus on externalities—the external inequality of the classes and the economic motivations underlying imperialism and nationalist expansion. The other way to understand the world focused on the internal aspect of human beings, on psychology and the way that

**I am not only an American who treasures the works of Herman Melville and Abraham Lincoln: I am a Jew obligated in my bones to three thousand years of my ancestors' reflection and behavior.**

already arrived. Please: I am not only an American who treasures the works of Herman Melville and Abraham Lincoln: I am a Jew obligated in my bones to three thousand years of my ancestors' reflection and behavior. And I am a professor who can bear witness to the fact (reported by participant after participant at a discussion this past December at the conference of the Association for Jewish Studies in Boston) that all across America multiculturalism and ethnic studies seem inclined to exclude the study of Jews—because we are after all "white," and all too often males. So much for the distinctiveness that has enlivened our souls for three millennia, and again recently, led to the destruction of our bodies. Multiculturalism, in the name of opposition to cultural imperialism, almost everywhere denies us the right to cultural self-definition.

JULY/AUGUST 1992 | VOLUME 7, NUMBER 4

# Platform for the Politics of Meaning: Senior Citizens

THE MAJOR OBSTACLE to shaping a society that honors and respects elders is the need of the competitive market economy to endlessly market new products. Since these products are often unnecessary, and changes in products are a function of the need to generate new markets by fostering new needs in the populace, the market is committed to an ethos of "newness" that denigrates that which is old. Experience and accumulated wisdom can be validated only to the extent that elders acquire them from the young, and learn that new products *are* really needed. No wonder, then, that political and social institutions built around the needs of the market will reflect that same invalidation of anything that smacks of being old. A commitment to seniors must ultimately be a commitment to changing those aspects

people's fundamental emotional needs were distorted during childhood within the family. Those were the two leading paradigms.

Many people were trying to figure out how to put those two paradigms together.

**TIKKUN:** How important was [the philosopher Herbert] Marcuse to you?

**PETER:** Marcuse was important to both of us, especially his *Eros and Civilization* and his *One-Dimensional Man*, because he attempted to integrate the insights of psychoanalysis with the Marxist critique. But he was still very much within the Marxist paradigm. He was not fundamentally a psychologically or spiritually-oriented person. He was a Marxist who was attempting to integrate Freud into the repressive nature of the capitalist system of production.

Actually, at that time, I would not have used the word "spiritual." I was secular. Michael had his Jewish side, but it was not that connected to our work together as intellectual activists or in our common projects like the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. I knew that he had led High Holiday services during the Sproul Hall sit-ins in the Sixties and I went to his son Akiba's Bar Mitzvah at an orthodox synagogue in Berkeley, but I didn't fully appreciate how deep the connection was between his commitment to Judaism and his political activism until I read his book *Jewish Renewal* in the early Nineties, shortly before he became a rabbi. It was then that I learned that he had been studying for a long time with Rabbis David Wolfe-Blank and Zalman Schachter, and I remember being actually shocked to see him bent over a Hebrew Bible one day with David, God rest his soul. I didn't fully take all that in until Michael became a rabbi in 1995.

**TIKKUN:** But *Tikkun* did start before Michael became a rabbi. How did your attempt to integrate psychology and Marxism end up manifesting in a Jewish cultural magazine?

**PETER:** Let's go back twenty years. We were in the second Reagan administration. The core of the *Tikkun* analysis emerged from the particular breakthrough in consciousness that was characteristic of the social movements of the 1960s.

In my own case, I came from a Park Avenue upbringing, went to law school, and then experienced

of the economy that require the rest of us to discard the old and endlessly consume the new. Such an attitude is not only ecologically destructive; it is also morally illegitimate, and leads to a society that devalues elders.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1993 | VOLUME 8, NUMBER 5

# Curing Homophobia and Other Conservative Pathologies

*by Michael Lerner*

THE ATTRACTION OF conservative politics is precisely that it promises rigid boundaries and assistance in repressing the parts of the male psyche that are traditionally seen as feminine, soft, caring, and giving. Conservative politics provides a variety of rationales for negating this part of the male personality, for assuming that these parts are not functional for the society, and for strengthening sex roles that re-enforce the macho energy needed to repress desire for nurturing, and in particular, to repress the parts of the male personality that might still be struggling with the desire to be like the nurturing mother. Whenever you see a man rigidly insisting on the traditional macho style, allow yourself to see underneath this a child desperate for love, attention, and caring, who has been forced to deny and repress those needs.

All this comes to the fore most intensely in the male homophobe. The little boys in the school playground who are continually testing each other for softness are, in fact, trying to reassure themselves of their own control over their desire to be soft and nurturing; qualities that they know will make them look "like a girl." This is the ultimate insult precisely because what they most desire and fear are those parts of themselves that initially identified with a nurturing mother and then found betrayed, abandoned, or repressed, first by mother, then by the social arrangements of a patriarchal society. The more unresolved the conflict, the more intense the need to assert one's maleness, and the more one feels threatened by those who are not doing so. The degree of macho is directly proportionate to the unresolved pain.

Men who have made a career for themselves in the male-dominated, male-bonding, military establishment are often those who are most intensely in need of these external supports to buttress their defenses

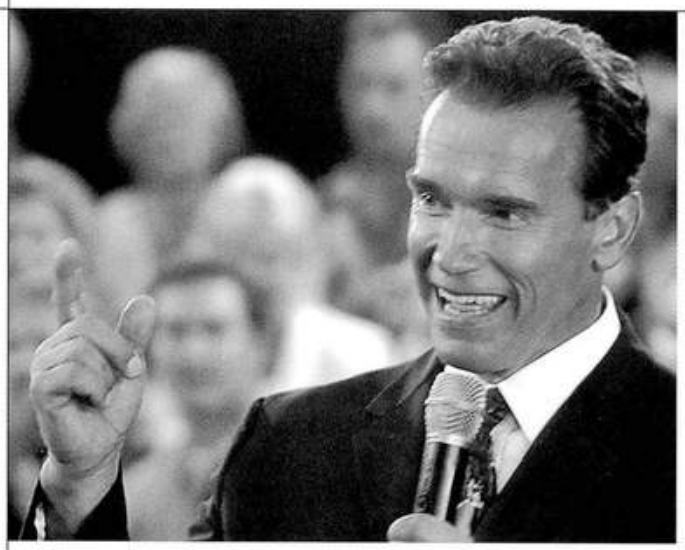
this force that welled up, not just in American society, but all over the world, in a very short time, from 1965 to 1971, a huge opening-up that occurred in which the social space between people went from being relatively empty to relatively full in a way that was startling to the heart and enabled us to powerfully manifest our presence to each other as historical actors. It was as if we previously had been surrounded by an invisible shield, and something was happening that was allowing us to break into authentic connection with each other. We became real.

The core insight that gave birth to *Tikkun* was the emergence of presence into public space, where you felt *there* with other people in a profoundly real and vitalizing way, in a relationship of what I later came to call mutual recognition. This had to do with more than the economy and the external aspects of reality. It had to do with social ontology, with our being-together as an independent aspect of reality. And I felt that the social, spiritual, and psychological dynamics attendant to this act of becoming present—and the falling away from that—had to be understood in order for us to develop an approach to politics and social change that would work.

The anti-war and Civil Rights movements were the initial phase of protest. But when the counterculture and the old Left merged in the late Sixties, there was a different level of breakthrough in which the world came to appear profoundly distorted and even insane. The war seemed to be a kind of normal expression of an insane, lost consciousness, cut off from itself, cut off from the soul of our common humanity. We felt we were unable to recognize each other as human beings and were living in some fantasy world. That was not an individual emotional insight; that was a collective awareness that just became evident to millions of people in a kind of ricochet of insight, more or less all at once. That's when the movement took off.

One day you'd be in a demonstration, and the next day you'd read about millions in a similar demonstration in Prague, in Guadalajara. There was something alive in the world that was palpable, that was ricocheting from person to person across the planet. There was a transformation of the social space between people.

That experience that the whole world was crazy was the beginning of my feeling that we needed a



AP PHOTO/DENIS PORDY

against the allure of the caring and nurturance they were forced to abandon when they were young. No wonder, then, that they are particularly threatened by homosexuals' presence in the military. When they talk about gay men, they talk about people who are weak, "pussies"—like women, soft, unable to maintain the toughness and courage that it takes for the rest of the military to be "real men."

Of course, these characterizations often have little foundation in the realities of the kinds of gay men who are attracted to volunteer for the military. What straight men are fearing is precisely what they most desire—the permission to be caring and weak, a permission that they will not allow themselves to hear because of the degree to which it runs against their own self-conception of being a male. Incidentally, this same characterization of Jewish men as weak, soft, and feminine often accompanies the most intense anti-Semitic caricatures, and it is to compensate for these characterizations that many Jewish men became enamored of the Israeli army as a way to show that there really could be "tough Jews." Precisely because the Torah tradition commands caring and nurturing of others, men within the tradition have often found it all the more necessary to build rigid boundaries to ensure that this nurturing doesn't get "out of hand," and they've done so by religious discrimination against gayness and against women.

Our attitude toward these men desperately shoring up their macho must be one of compassion and caring. However much we reject the way that they have dealt with their pain, however much we must and should repudiate the homophobia, patriarchal attitudes, machismo, insensitivity, militarism, sexism, and racism that these attitudes incubate, we need to see these people as victims rather than as the embodiments of evil. And it is as victims that we have a first chance to talk to them, not just at them.

Tackling this issue head-on is not a luxury; it is a

spiritual approach to politics. There was a necessity to heal a world that was out of its mind. Not that everyone else is crazy and we are sane, but that we are all caught up in a historical process in which the core aspect of our common humanity has been lost to us, and we are floating around in private head spaces full of distorted images of our common heritage.

It wasn't an individual experience. It didn't manifest with one person getting psychologically better. It was a movement. Millions of people got psychologically better, suddenly and dramatically—although, because we didn't know how to handle it, it had many disruptive consequences. It's anxiety-producing to suddenly be so connected, and we were in many ways poorly prepared to help each other through that anxiety.

It's hard to convey to the younger generation today what it was like to go to a meeting with 100 people every night who were brimming with excitement that we could transform the entire world. Now, you are lucky if you can get five people to your house.

**TIKKUN:** Even though you thought of yourself as secular, this was a spiritual experience, or what you would now call a spiritual experience.

**PETER:** At that time, we talked mainly in psychoanalytic categories. Marcuse talked about the overcoming of what he called the "surplus repression" of instinctive forces. No, I wouldn't have called it spiritual at that time. Maybe Michael would have. I was personally influenced by quasi-spiritual writings like those of the existentialists. Sartre described the feeling of being alive in an alienated world—his description of the waiter in the restaurant in *Being and Nothingness* who is merely playing a role of the waiter was central for me. It was the discourse of experiential philosophy and psychology, especially R.D. Laing in psychology, that tried to get at the felt reality of our mutual estrangement in those days.

I didn't get the connection to "spirituality" really until *Tikkun*. Judaism became for me a metaphor, a way of expressing the insights of a progressive religious worldview that could overcome alienation. Sartre and Laing's books are rational. There is no singing in those books. Nothing in them really shows you how to make yourself whole when you are fragmented and split. Through *Tikkun* and through my

political necessity. When I raised these matters with some of your White House advisers, I was told that they feared the perception of "the feminization of Clinton." But what men are fearing—the sense of weakness that would make them feel that they couldn't defend themselves—gets communicated much more in a president who backs away from principled fights than one who takes them on, even if he sometimes loses. You need to talk with moral courage about homophobia in the military and in the society and present to the American people an explanation for this stance based upon the understanding of why men are so traumatized that they constantly feel compelled to prove themselves as "strong."

I know that this is going to provoke a powerful reaction from the Right, precisely because they will feel themselves exposed. You need to predict their response and show them that you won't retreat, even when the media try to distort your message. If you draw your understanding of the social and political problems confronting you from this psychological analysis, and maintain that real men are strong enough to refrain from repeatedly having to prove their strength through control and can allow themselves to feel soft, vulnerable, and caring, and that those who cannot are victims of childhood trauma and deserving of our compassion, you will not only build a consensus for gay rights, you will pull the psychological rug out from under the feet of the American Right. In the process, you will also create a powerful majority willing to back much of the rest of your agenda.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1994 | VOLUME 11, NUMBER 1

# After the Rabin Assassination

*Daniel Boyarin's contribution to a* Tikkun *Roundtable*

THERE HAS BEEN a consistent pattern of violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, particularly around Hebron, and a condoning of the most violent actions of settlers. This is well documented. There is a way in which these settlers have been sent to do the work of the government, instilling terror in the local population in ways that have been useful to the government though the government couldn't allow itself to be seen as doing this itself, thus "persuading" the Palestinians that they must agree to Oslo I and II, because otherwise, look at the terrible settlers and what

friendship with Michael, I came to see that religious traditions—the best of them—do that. They seek to make love manifest in the world. And that's what has to happen.

**TIKKUN:** How has *Tikkun* played out these ideas?

**PETER:** In the beginning, we didn't have this integration in the magazine. Michael and I were trying to write this way. We were trying to illuminate a distortion in a way that pointed to a healing of that distortion, whether in media, or politics, or within the constraints of the democratic party. We wanted to create an opportunity to integrate the expression of the human heart and its longings into politics and society. We wanted to address the dominance of science, the artificiality of the world created by the media, the play-acting dynamics of American politics, the soullessness of much of psychology; we wanted to write in a way that would make visible what was invisible, like the pain in the world of work.

But, much of the writing we had in the early days didn't have this integrated approach. We had the political critique—we brought a lot of smart, insightful, critical left Jewish writers into *Tikkun* like Todd Gitlin and Paul Berman, but theirs were traditional rational critiques of the unjust aspects of American culture. They were not spiritual critiques.

Then we had the Jewish piece, which I was just learning about. Nan [Fink Gefen] was important to that, as she was to bringing the voices of women into prominence in the magazine.

**TIKKUN:** Tell me more about that "Jewish piece" and how the magazine came into being.

**PETER:** Nan was central to the creation of the magazine. It was Nan and Michael who came to tell me that they planned to start this Jewish magazine. I thought, Jewish magazine? *Bon Voyage.*

My [Left] meetings had the radical spirit to them; they were fun and liberating and hopeful, even inspirational, but they were also quite unsafe. They didn't create an accepting and loving environment, and when the Sixties began to unravel, I could see how the atmosphere of anger and political correctness and the threat of humiliation was contributing to that unraveling by scaring away perfectly good-hearted people and sending them back to private life. At the same time, I began to see how Judaism had a 3,000-year

they will do to you. There has been a systematic condoning and cynical utilization of these violent elements among the settlers and among sectors of the I.D.F., particularly the Golani Brigade for the past several years, that grows out of the Zionist position. There is a certain sense in which today the chickens are coming home to roost. I'm astonished and appalled at people who are more horrified now than they were at the massacre of Palestinians at prayer by Goldstein in Hebron, not to mention those who have closed their eyes to the level of violence against the Palestinian population throughout the past many years.

I feel very close to the conception of Judaism as tribal identity and want to preserve that sense of intimacy. Collective history is central to the beauty, pleasure, and joy of being Jewish. Retaining that possibility of tribal intimacy in the context of a species-wide solidarity is central to my project as a Jew and my critical project in intellectual life. I would feel lost in the world if in place of that, all we had was a universalistic "rights of man" citizenry notion. But the combination of that kind of tribal intimacy with state power and territorialism is explosive, racist in its implications if not in its intentions, and will ultimately be productive of enormous and horrifying violence. It's not a question of original sin, but of clarifying certain structural realities. It seems to me that we have a choice between Judaism and historical Zionism. There are varieties of ideas about the State of Israel that one might want to call Zionist, which I might find myself in agreement with: e.g., if one wanted to talk of a bi-national secular state of Jews and Palestinians in the land of Palestine, and wanted to call that Zionism, then I'd be a Zionist. But historical Zionism, the combination of Jewishness and state power and territorialization, seems to be an explosive combination. It is not only the religious Right, but the secular right wing represented by Raful, Naomi Shemer, by Moledet, which has made common cause with the religious Right, because they share the commitment to the Zionist project.

"Judaism" can't be blamed, because there is no such thing as "Judaism." There is a collection of texts, and a historical process of reading those texts, and a community that realizes its socio-cultural and religious practice in different ways under different material conditions. We have to associate ourselves with those historical realizations that seem most positive and useful, while not pretending that the other readings of those texts were not also present. And we need to seek to create those kinds of material conditions that lead people to create the most peaceful and just kinds of lives. For me, the richest include the realization of tribal identity, historical identity, being rooted in a community, having the enormous pleasure and richness of studying the life of

history of trying to create an accepting and loving environment and yet help people to radically let go of their separateness, and how powerful this could be, that's when Judaism began to be more meaningful to me.

And—I became aware that the pieces that I liked best in the magazine were not the political pieces, but the Jewish pieces. The Jewish pieces expressed more of the qualitative soulful dimension of life than the political pieces, which retained this analytical, detached, often biting critique of what was wrong with the world. A lot of the critique we offered did not have a very compassionate view—we didn't at that time have an understanding of why the Right was appealing to people. The political pieces didn't embrace and illuminate the cultural environment—they put it down.

I remember reading Letty Cottin Pogrebin's piece on making time sacred and thinking, "wow, this is such a good article, it captures so much of what we need to be bringing into our everyday lives." We need to move from the regimentation of clock time to a more sacred conception of time. That's what our politics needs to be, creating community experiences like that. That helped me understand why we were a Jewish magazine.

**TIKKUN:** Do you still see a political/spiritual split in the magazine?

**PETER:** No, we underwent a major shift. We split with the people who wanted *Tikkun* to be the inheritor of the mantle of "the liberal Jewish magazine" with all the sharp criticisms and sharp minds who would write the biting critiques of American culture and society. We remain allies with those writers, but we have a fundamentally different point of view.

Our focus is on this activity of illuminating the longings of the heart in an accepting and embracing way, and of making understandable the dynamic of spirit between us as human beings that prevents our common humanity from fully manifesting itself. We have a non-rational vision—in the classical sense of rationality—that is quite different from some of our original writers. And the political aspect of *Tikkun* has moved closer to the Jewish aspect. So now there are still somewhat different constituencies, in terms of our readership, but they are much closer to each other.

that tradition—that to me is one of the three pillars upon which I would predicate the good life.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1994 | VOLUME 9, NUMBER 6

# Pentecostalism and the Future of Christianity

*by Harvey Cox*

**It is hard to imagine a more radical vision of the future than the one this life-changing experience of the Spirit awakened in them.**

THERE IS A SEA CHANGE underway in American Christianity, a movement toward a more experiential, more emotionally expressive, organizationally less rigid form of spirituality. Pentecostalism is the generic name for this religious wave. But it is not restricted to immigrants or to North America. In fact, pentecostalism is the fastest growing religious movement in the world. From its obscure beginnings one hundred years ago in a tiny Black church on Azusa Street in Los Angeles it has expanded, especially in the past two decades, until it now claims 400 million people, one out of every four Christians. It is growing faster than radical Islam.

Pentecostals started out as rebellious antagonists of the status quo, refusing to serve in the armies of this fallen age, but many have now become impassioned super-patriots, easy marks for the high rollers of the new religious Right. They started out as a radically inclusive spiritual fellowship in which race and gender discrimination virtually disappeared. That is hardly the case today, at least in the white pentecostal churches. In short, as I came to know the pentecostal movement in its present incarnation I discovered that the pentecostals themselves are facing a dilemma they may not survive, at least not without betraying their original vision.

But there are also signs of hope. A special experience with the "Holy Spirit" or the "Spirit of God" was the crux of the early pentecostal movement. But this was not just any spirit. Pentecostals believed it was the Spirit of the same God who had created the world, had called the people of Israel forth, spoken through the prophets, and whose love had walked the Earth in

**TIKKUN:** We are now back in a world that is not too dissimilar from the one that led to the creation of *Tikkun*—an unwanted war, a retrogressive political regime.

**PETER:** Yes, But there's an important difference. At the time of the creation of *Tikkun*, the breakthrough in consciousness that I was speaking about was close, it was recent history; it had been part of many people's experiences in the 1960s and 1970s. Even though Reagan was the reaction against that, even though he wanted to contain those social forces, still the power and awareness of this social and historical breakthrough was palpable in the culture. So even though, at that time, the magazine was just learning to articulate this spiritual dimension, the feeling of it was still all around us.

Now, we have made real progress in how to talk and write about the spiritual dimension of reality, and we have made it more legitimate to insist that that dimension is real. So the magazine's content is more integrated, and the magazine is better, but the world is worse. The felt awareness of what *Tikkun* is about is not as self-evident, not as palpable in the world.

I feel positive that we've helped to create a spiritual/political discourse, and discouraged that the world is now so distant from its last breakthrough experience. Those who are religious can call upon some of their religious experiences for the feeling of what we're saying, but in terms of politics, that feeling is really in the past.

**TIKKUN:** So how do you bring the political sensibility back?

**PETER:** That is what the spiritual activist movement needs to be. We founded the Network of Spiritual Progressives to bring the movement back. The synagogue experience is part of it, but the challenge is to reshape the world as a whole, the experience of everyday life. You can't have a private spiritual experience that can take on the massive strength of the alienating effect of the culture. A purely spiritual experience just leads to private solutions that are filled with pathos.

No matter how long you meditate, the world is still out there.

**TIKKUN:** You are saying that *Tikkun* is fundamentally a movement magazine.

**PETER:** Yes, there is an indispensable relationship

Jesus Christ and—most important—the same God who had begun to fulfill all His promises by creating a new heaven and a new Earth where justice and compassion would reign. The early pentecostals saw themselves positioned "between the already and the not-yet," witnesses to the first fruits of the kingdom but not yet to its fullness, living in the light that precedes the dawn. In other words, the Spirit they testified to had a purpose for history and was calling people to be part of that purpose. That purpose, for the unemployed janitors and domestic servants who gathered at Azusa Street, was no less than the coming of the kingdom of God as it had been taught by the prophets and demonstrated by Jesus. And when it came, the poor would be lifted up, the hungry fed, and the brokenhearted comforted; while the mighty would be brought low and the rich sent away empty. It is hard to imagine a more radical vision of the future than the one this life-changing experience of the Spirit awakened in them.

As I got to know pentecostal people in America and elsewhere, I was pleased to find among the younger generation of their ministers a serious effort to retrieve this original pentecostal vision. These same young pentecostal leaders also realize that the fact that their movement started out among the disowned and dispossessed is not merely a historical artifact but a decisive key to what the Spirit wants them to be and to do today. A "pentecostal liberation theology" is beginning to emerge. The Puerto Rican theologian Eldin Villafane, a pentecostal himself, believes that the genius of the movement is the experience of the power of the "liberating Spirit," and he argues that this Spirit has a "project" that is being worked out within human history.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1995 | VOLUME 10 NUMBER 1

# "In a Beginning..." Quantum Cosmology and Kabbalah

*by Joel R. Primack and Nancy Ellen Abrams*

MOST EDUCATED people today have an essentially Newtonian picture of the universe as a place, devoid of all human meaning, in which we happen to find ourselves. If people come to understand the emerging scientific cosmology, however, they may see from what we know of the

*(continued on page 49)*

between the magazine and the movement. We have to foster and support other social forces that are trying to create spiritual community in reality. Otherwise, it's just words on a page.

Words are open to interpretation and aren't trustworthy on their own.. They have to have an embodied meaning in the world. That embodied meaning is what makes people dare to believe they could be true.

Spiritual words in particular—people's fears are read into spiritual language—they feel that they are going to be coercively brought into some phony fused group where their individuality is going to be trampled on by some gobbledygook about God, community, and love that is going to be artificial. So you need an authentic manifestation of spiritual community that supports the words of the magazine and makes them credible and a source of hope.

People don't believe that the things they actually long for in terms of social justice could be spoken about and shared, because the liberal part of themselves wants to preserve their autonomy from their fear of group coercion. It's very hard to go forward when you are afraid of the thing you are going forward for. The Left has got to get past the point of thinking that it can't express what it's for, which is a world of love and caring.

**TIKKUN:** We are living in a world now that is totally controlled by fear of many different kinds. It's hard for people to let go of those fears.

**PETER:** There is nothing worse than daring to hope and being disappointed. You have to make yourself vulnerable to hope. When you really do that, and you are disappointed, it is very painful. That leads to sedimented cynicism, where you live behind barriers.

**TIKKUN:** *Tikkun*'s job is to reaffirm hope.

**PETER:** Absolutely. And that's why you also need a counterpoint of activism to the magazine as a written text. People have to read the magazine, go to the meeting, then read the magazine again and say, hey, this could really be true. I want to learn and be part of this.

**TIKKUN:** Thank you.

MAY/JUNE 1997 | VOLUME 12, NUMBER 3

# Elegy

*by Carolyn Forché*

The page opens to snow on a field: boot-holed month, black hour
the bottle in your coat; half vodka half-winter light
To what and to whom does one say *yes?*
If God were the uncertain, would you cling to him?

Beneath a tattoo of stars the gate opens, so silent so like a tomb.
This is the city you most loved, an empty stairwell
where the next rain lifts invisibly from the Seine.

With solitude, your coat open, you walk
steadily as if the railings were there and your hands weren't passing through them.

"When things were ready, they poured on fuel and touched off the fire.
They waited for a high wind. It was very fine, that powdered bone.
It was put into sacks, and when there were enough we went to a bridge on the Narew River."
And even less explicit phrases survived:
"To make charcoal.
For laundry irons."
And so we revolt against silence with a bit of speaking.
The page is a charred field where the dead would have written
*We went on.* And it was like living through something again one could not live through again.

The soul behind you no longer inhabits your life: the unlit house
with its breathless windows and a chimney of ruined wings
where wind becomes and aria, your name, voices from a field,
And you, smoke, dissonance, a psalm, a stairwell.

# INTERVIEW WITH Nan Fink Gefen

NAN FINK GEFEN, the founding publisher of *Tikkun* magazine, is the president of Chochmat HaLev and the editor of the forthcoming *Persimmon Tree.* She is the author of *Discovering Jewish Meditation*, and *Stranger in the Midst: A Memoir of Spiritual Discovery.*

**TIKKUN:** You co-founded *Tikkun* with Michael Lerner. I've never heard the actual story of the magazine's founding. How did you get involved in starting it?

**NFG:** In 1984 I left behind my career as a Midwest psychotherapist and teacher and moved to Berkeley. This was a much-anticipated midlife opportunity to embark on a new path. The first thing I did was to look up Michael at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. I had read several articles by him and very much agreed with his ideas about politics and psychology (which later would be incorporated into the politics of meaning.)

We began to have long discussions, sharing our concerns about the state of the world and scheming about what needed to be done. Since I didn't have a job at that time and Michael was finishing a research project at the Institute, we decided to pool our resources and work together to do something that would make a difference. After writing down a long list of possibilities—some of them outrageously ambitious—we finally agreed on the idea of creating a magazine. This format would allow us to introduce progressive ideas on the important issues, and hopefully move public discourse to the left.

**TIKKUN:** Why a Jewish political magazine?

**NFG:** At first the magazine was going to be about politics and psychology. But the more we played with the idea, the vision grew. We began to think of offering analyses of contemporary culture and society, and I wanted to include short fiction and poetry. One day we asked ourselves, why not bring religion into the magazine?

early universe that we actually are part of an extraordinary adventure. With its mind-expanding imagery, this emerging cosmology gives us a new cosmic perspective, a powerful source of awe, and a potential source of meaning in our everyday lives.

MAY/JUNE 1997 | VOLUME 12, NUMBER 3

# Sharing Jerusalem

*by Tsvi Blanchard*

THOUGH I HAVE less of a claim to this discussion, because I do not live in Israel as most of the participants in this roundtable do, I do want to say that the process of arriving at what we want from our national capital should have certain elements or guiding principles, the equivalent for us today of what was the fire and cloud that guided the Israelites as they traveled through the desert after the Exodus from Egypt. Among those elements:

First, *b'tselem elohim:* Every human being is created in the image of God, sacred, of infinite value, and this commits us to wanting to enhance certain features of human life. The ability to be powerful, influential and to create is essential to what it is to be godlike; a powerless person is not godlike. Similar is having the dignity to have a voice in a conversation. Given this ideal, the process of determining Jerusalem's future must feel to all participants as though they have a real voice.

As I listened to the previous speakers it struck me that there is in the current situation, and in the determining of Jerusalem's future, an unequal distribution of power, dignity, voice and freedom. Palestinians are not being given the same power and voice in shaping a solution to Jerusalem.

Secondly, *brit*. Jerusalem is the capital of a covenantal peoplehood. The culture we build there must reflect the covenantal status we have with God. Jerusalem in Jewish tradition is associated with our messianic vision, a manifestation of what it would be like if we could express our ultimate values. In much of Jewish tradition, that has meant a covenant not only with Jews but with all people, a universal covenant, and even at times the tradition seems to indicate that this is a covenant with all beings, including the animals. The Jerusalem we should be dreaming of is one that gives full status to the Jewish people at its ideals, but on the other hand also gives full status to the universal covenant of which Palestinians and others will experience themselves as a part. To the extent

**Religious and secular points of view were hardly ever mixed. But at that time I was deeply immersed in converting to Judaism, and for me, religion and politics are always interwoven.**

This was scary because religious and secular points of view were hardly ever mixed. But at that time I was deeply immersed in converting to Judaism, and for me, religion and politics are always interwoven. Many people advised us against making the magazine Jewish, saying nobody would subscribe. When we chose the name *Tikkun*, they were even more aghast. But it seemed right to both of us, and we went with that.

**TIKKUN:** What were the early days of *Tikkun* like for you?

**NFG:** Crazy and exciting. I'd never done anything like this before. I immersed myself in the project, investigating paper samples and font styles, dreaming about magazine design. Michael and I divvied up the work load, with him taking on the editorial responsibility and me handling the publishing end. But in actuality our roles overlapped. I was very involved in selecting and copyediting articles—as a feminist, my priority was to include more women writers. I think of the early days of the magazine as a highlight of my professional life. It seemed to me that everything I had to offer was going into a creation that truly expressed my beliefs.

I was not prepared for the response to the first issue of the magazine. Within three months we were soundly criticized for being too confrontational, and there was a lot of positive press coverage, including an article about us in *Newsweek* magazine. But the greatest satisfaction turned out to be all the letters we got from readers, saying how pleased they were to find a Jewish magazine that spoke to them. Many of these people had been alienated from Judaism for years, despairing of ever being able to connect.

One other aspect of those early years sticks in my mind: I was new to the organized Jewish world and quite overwhelmed by its politics. There were so many organizations, associations, denominations,

that I understand what has been happening so far, it seems as if there has been an overemphasis on guaranteeing the Jewish side of that covenant, and not enough attention paid to helping other cultural and religious groups to develop their covenant around Jerusalem.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1998 | VOLUME 13, NUMBER 6

# On Globalization

*by U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone*

I HAVE BEEN IN profound disagreement with the president [President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore] on these issues. First of all, I disagree with the way they frame the question. I don't think this is a debate about whether we as a country are willing to participate in an international economy. Of course we are! No one is talking about building walls on our borders. But the question is whether, in this new international economy, there will be any rules. I think there is a very strong link between human rights in other countries and a fair international economy for Americans. There ought to be strong restrictions on child labor laws in other countries, fair labor practices, environmental regulations, and human rights guarantees so that corporations can't take advantage of the denial of these basic human needs in other countries to find a cheaper way to make their products, thereby disadvantaging American workers. We need these human rights built into our trade agreements with other countries. So we need to re-negotiate the terms of existing agreements.

Secondly, people have every right to be skeptical about what the new global economy is bringing for them and their families (including their realization that it's hard to compete against twelve-year-olds making twelve cents an hour in some foreign sweat shop). When I look at some of the economic prescriptions given by our international monetary organizations, which are closely aligned with some of our big corporate interests (no conspiracy suggested), the advice seems to be "devalue your currency and cut your benefits to your citizens, reduce wages, and general austerity." Supposedly this is going to help them. Well, they export products at a price at which we can't compete, but meanwhile they are unable to develop a middle class at the wages being paid so they can't consume what we in the United States produce. That means there's little market for our goods. This kind of international economy does not lead to a general upward

and leaders, and it wasn't clear who was who. Ordinarily I wouldn't have paid much attention to this, but as *Tikkun*'s publisher I needed to start building relationships. This was a stretch for a shy woman who had just converted. When I went to conferences and meetings to promote the magazine, I felt self-conscious about my lack of experience, but in the end I made my peace with it—and met a lot of interesting, helpful people along the way.

**TIKKUN:** Peter Gabel, *Tikkun*'s associate editor, told me he thought *Tikkun* had changed significantly over the years as the political and spiritual missions grew closer together. Would you agree with that? Have you seen a change in *Tikkun*'s direction since its founding?

**NGF:** I think the political and spiritual missions of the magazine have always been intertwined. The difference, however, is that now there are more articles that are directly related to spirituality and politics. This is not surprising. In the 1980s, hardly anyone in the Jewish world talked about spirituality. We had to be careful about using the word for fear of being branded as "New Age" and rejected as irrelevant.

Another reason why there's more about spirituality and politics is that Michael has led the magazine in that direction. As a committed political organizer, he's used *Tikkun* to further his vision of political change and to organize the Network of Spiritual Progressives. He did this less in the early years when I was there and we had a broader range of articles on culture and society.

**TIKKUN:** In the 1990s, you left *Tikkun* and went on to found Chochmat HaLev, an organization devoted to Jewish meditation and spirituality. Can you tell me about your move to an organization that more explicitly focuses on Jewish spirituality?

**NGF:** After *Tikkun* I took a few years off to write a memoir. Surrounding myself with Jewish spiritual texts, I investigated the mystical side of Judaism and learned about Jewish meditation. My own spiritual practice deepened a great deal during this time. In 1994 I was asked to teach classes on this subject. I found it enormously rewarding since many of the students were like the early readers of *Tikkun*, eager to find meaning within the Jewish tradition and appreciative of being shown a way.

When Chochmat HaLev was formed, I came on

development, but downward development in all countries, including the United States.

Finally, we need to focus more on home-grown economies and more self-reliant communities where more of the capital is kept inside small communities. We need to support small businesses, local co-ops, and this kind of thing.

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## Meditation and Social Change

*by Sharon Salzberg*

THE BUDDHA SAID, "Just as the dawn is the forerunner and the first indication of the rising sun, so is right view the forerunner and the first indication of wholesome states." "Right view" is a quality of perception that understands the world as interconnected, and understands that what we do is consequential, that actions ripple out through this web of interconnection. "Right view" is what is realized in meditation.

Our view of things molds our intentions, which in turn molds our actions. How we look at our lives becomes the basis for how we act and how we live. According to Buddhist teachings, when we understand the interconnection of all of life, then we can act with the ease of uncontrived altruism. We act with simple goodness. Whether they are personal and direct or take place in the larger arena of social change, our actions arise out of a wholesome state of mind rather than out of fear and anxiety.

With clear vision, we see that we are all a part of each other's life and journey toward liberation. This knowledge forms the spirit with which we do meditation practice, and the way in which we bring that practice into our daily lives. With greater awareness, often formed and refined in meditation, we begin to see that we are essentially no different from each other, no matter who we are. We all share the urge toward happiness, and not one of us leaves this earth never having suffered.

This view of interconnectedness may not give us the ability, the means, or even the inclination to do a political analysis of a situation or to engage in systematic social change, but it does give us an unfeigned goodheartedness. It gives us an urge to include rather than to exclude, to care rather than to reject someone else's problem as having nothing to do with us. This is the consciousness of social transformation.

board as an organizer and a teacher. The experience was much like that of starting *Tikkun*, exciting and creative. Eleven years later the center is flourishing and some of our students are moving into positions of leadership.

I'm most interested in the start-up stage of projects, it seems. I'm now creating another magazine, *Persimmon Tree: An Online Literary Magazine for Older Women*. This new project comes from my desire to broaden awareness of the talent, skill, and creativity that exists among women over sixty. I want to help readers move beyond the usual set of assumptions and stereotypes to a more nuanced understanding.

**TIKKUN:** You are still connected to *Tikkun* as a writer and informal consultant. Where do you see the magazine going and where would you like it to go?

**NFG:** In the early 1990s I left the magazine in Michael's hands. This was an exercise of letting go, not easy at the time but the wisest course over the years. I'm proud of what he and the competent *Tikkun* staff have done, and trust that they will continue to publish a magazine with integrity and relevance in the future. ■

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2000 | VOLUME 15, NUMBER 1

## The Partnership School of the Future

*by Riane Eisler*

WHEN I ENVISION the partnership school of the future, I see a place where children learn about the mystery and majesty of our amazing universe. In this school, young people will hear many stories of the wonders of life on our Earth. They will learn that cooperation and caring play a major part in the life of many species with whom we share our planet, and that what marks our human emergence is not our capacity to inflict pain but our enormous capacity to give and feel pleasure. They will know about chemicals that, by the grace of evolution, course through our bodies, rewarding us with sensations of sometimes exquisite pleasure when we create and care. And they will understand that this

pleasure is ours not only when we are loved but when we love another, not only when we are touched with caring but when we touch another with caring.

Boys and girls will learn to value women's contributions throughout human history, and to give particular value to the caring and caretaking work that was once devalued as "merely women's work." They will also understand that this work is the highest calling for both women and men, that nonviolence and caretaking do not make boys "sissies," and that when girls are assertive leaders they are not being "unfeminine" but expressing part of their human potential.

Spiritual education will not be an add-on, but integral to the whole curriculum. The partnership core of all world spiritual traditions will be taught in practical, day-to-day settings, inspiring young people to live lives guided by a partnership morality of caring rather than a dominator morality of coercion. Both girls and boys will learn that they have in them the divine spirit, and that this was recognized by our earliest ancestors, who revered powerful female deities from the North American Corn Mother and the Greek goddess Demeter, givers of the fruits of the Earth, to the Indian goddess Sarasvati and the Sumerian goddess Nidaba, honored as inventors of the art of writing.

Inspiring stories will be told of ancient myths honoring the Earth as sacred. Inspiring stories will also be told of heroic women and men who worked for a safer, more equitable society, and how we too can use our creativity to help build a partnership world.

Above all, in this partnership school of the future young people will form visions of what can be, and acquire the understandings and skills to make these visions come true. They will learn how to create partnership families and communities worldwide. And they will join to construct a world where chronic violence, inequality, and insensitivity will no longer be "just the way things are" but "the way things once were."

JULY/AUGUST 2001 | VOLUME 16, NUMBER 4

# The Political Meaning of Bush v. Gore

*by Peter Gabel*

AFTER STALINISM, Mao's cultural revolution, the Khmer Rouge, and the direct experience that millions of people had of the unsafe group dynamics that undermined the (otherwise wonderful, hopeful) 1960s, nobody could believe any longer that seizing economic and political power from private individuals on behalf of the collective through some apocalyptic revolution could possibly lead to something better than the lives we lead now, however isolated, alienated, and meaningless they often are. So by the early 1980s, the socialist idea had lost its capacity to serve as the unifying communitarian counter-vision that had made the Left a powerful and morally compelling force, and when the principal embodiments of "really existing socialism" vanished from the earth in 1989, the ideology of individualism appeared to have "won." The effect of this was both to give increased legitimacy to capitalism's economic, cultural, and political expansion on an increasingly global level and to greatly weaken the ability of the longing for community (a longing that exists in everyone) to even be seen or heard by the other, much less to be mobilized into a movement based on that longing that could enter public space and make moral claims on behalf of a universal, transformative alternative to an apparently vindicated conservative worldview.

The void left by the collapse of socialism as the dominant political metaphor for community intensified the ability of the American conservative legal intelligentsia to carry out its doctrinal disintegration of the constitutionally binding public morality that the progressive movements of the 1930s and 1960s had fought for. And, in fact, there is no better testament to the effectiveness of their effort to gradually convert the Reagan Revolution into a new legal order supported by a new and widely accepted conservative "common sense" than the inability of Bill Clinton to make his long presidency stand for anything. Elected and enormously popular precisely because of his ability to recognize and validate our universal longing for community, a capacity that arose in significant part from the effect on him of the civil rights and other movements of his youth, Clinton was forced to rely throughout his presidency on personal charisma and polling data that demonstrated his "private" popularity among otherwise disconnected individual voters to enable him to survive politically in a public sphere totally dominated by his conservative opponents.

Bill Clinton embodied hope, idealism, and communal aspirations—as the cliché goes, "he made you feel cared about"—but he could not speak for this ideal and aspiration in the name of a coherent moral and political vision. That is why the Right was able to crush his initially popular call for universal health care; he had no coherent social vision with which to fight for it in a public sphere now dominated by an individualist political worldview, a worldview that the Clintons ended up deferring to by basing their



AP PHOTO/REUTERS, SHARON FARMER, THE WHITE HOUSE, HO

legislative strategy on seeking support from the American Medical Association, the private insurance companies, and amoral, implausible claims of cost-efficiency.

Although things might have been different if Clinton had been able to imagine a new, emerging, spiritual-ecological-communal successor to the now-defeated Left and liberal materialist alternatives, he was, in the end, able to do no more than to cut his party's losses by rejecting the failed communal metaphors of the past ("the era of big government is over"), and, in an act of true political schizophrenia, use his personal capacity to evoke warmth and idealistic hope in the service of expanding the globalization of capital and international trade agreements, like NAFTA, that consolidated the power of international, private corporate power. In response to the uninterrupted progress of the conservative ascendancy in the social/political/legal sphere, he consistently took positions that actually accepted the conservative viewpoint and merely sought to restrain its influence, defending affirmative action, for example, with such morally toothless slogans as "mend it, don't end it," and signing the Republican welfare-reform bill in return for temporary concessions by the Right to ease their assault on remaining elementary legal protections for labor and the environment.

Increasingly during the course of his eight years in office, he was reduced to defining his legacy as "having presided over the greatest economic expansion in history," an expansion that demonstrated America's ability under his leadership to "compete and win in the world market." Taken as a whole, this record actually strengthened public acceptance of the continuing normalization of the Reagan Revolution, precisely because it showed that even a popular, liberal Democrat seemed to accept the inevitability of its basic tenets, and even measured his own success by conservative "free market" criteria.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2001 | VOLUME 17, NUMBER 1

# Post Traumatic Love Syndrome

*by Michael Bader*

EVEN THE LANGUAGE of our movement—"caring," "community," "love," "mutual recognition," and "spirituality"—will stir up resistance in people because such language puts into words longings that they have suppressed or cynically dismissed in themselves or in others because of the dangers of rejection and exploitation. By understanding how catastrophes bring people together, we can see how powerfully entrenched the fears of such connectedness must be. The world has to practically collapse around us before we can feel safe enough to come together. This understanding should help us feel compassion toward people who are dismissive or contemptuous of our ideas, as well as toward ourselves for not being able to sufficiently live them out.

This leads us to the centrality of addressing the issue of cynicism itself as part of our political work. In their heart of hearts, most people don't want to be cynical. They want to feel like they're part of something bigger than themselves while maintaining their freedom to realize their private ambitions. Their cynicism is a defense against the dangers of rejection and exploitation. Therefore, we should find ways to talk to

people—in our literature, our conferences, our political proposals, and in the various social movements in which we participate—about the dynamics of cynicism. In particular, we should talk to people about how our political leaders continuously promote a cynical attitude toward idealism of any kind, how the mass media insidiously reflects the notion that everyone has dark and ulterior motives, and how our religions and communities often recreate the same sense of spiritual emptiness. We should find ways to remind people of movements like the civil rights and women's movements, which were genuinely idealistic and rejected the cynical belief that the way things were was the way they were destined to be.

All the while, it's crucial to call people to their true longings for connectedness and to systematically confront the psychological dangers that keep people from hearing that call. We need to try, in words and deeds, to make it safe for people to experience more of the interdependence that they secretly desire and to rebel against the institutions that tell them that such mutuality is shameful. We shouldn't need a catastrophe to open our hearts to each other and to feelings that are aching to be expressed.

MARCH/APRIL 2003 | VOLUME 18, NUMBER 2

# The U.S. War Against Iraq

*by Michael Lerner*

How could it have come to this? The fundamentally decent people of the United States destroying the homes and lives of innocent Iraqis, just twenty-eight years after most Americans were so sickened by war-making that they chose to abandon the ill-conceived war in Vietnam!

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

How we live our lives is a manifestation of an underlying flow of energy in the world—either the energy of love and caring for others, and trust that there is enough, that you are enough, and that there will be enough for all of us; or the energy of fear that manifests in a certainty that the "Other" will be hurtful, that there is not enough love or recognition or food or material well-being to go around, and that if we don't take care of ourselves first and foremost—and without regard to what hurt we may have to inflict on others in order to achieve that—then others will hurt us or even kill us, and laugh at our naiveté and stupidity.

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

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

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

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

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

It may be most illuminating to think of history through the frame of seeing the ways that people become encouraged to move from moments of hope to what the society teaches is a "more mature" and "realistic" view of a world in which we are alone and at risk.

There have been many political markers along the way: the undermining of the hopes of universal solidarity expressed in the original formation of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, undermined in part by a new American na-

tionalism fueled by anti-Communist hysteria in the late 1940s and 1950s; the assassinations of President Kennedy and Senator Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr.; the infiltration and systematic disruption of the anti-war movement in the 1960s by the FBI and CIA; the false promises and raised hopes of the Clinton years which were then dashed against the reality of Clintonian opportunism and slavish desire to serve the interests of global capital (though of course some good things were also accomplished); the failure of Al Gore to provide a vision that could inspire or transcend his wimpiness, to demand real power for the views that actually won majority support in 2000 (rather than abandoning those forces and burying himself in wounded pride); and the failure of the Democratic leadership to provide a principled challenge to Bush's Iraq policy. You could probably add a lot more to this list of ways that hope has been undermined and people have given in to cynicism and despair.

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

JULY/AUGUST 2004 | VOLUME 19, NUMBER 4

## We the Peacemakers

*by Mohammed Abu Nimer*

I'M VERY SAD TO HEAR that there's so much pressure in the American Jewish community these days to silence the voices of peace, or voices that seem to be critical of Israeli policy. However, we peacemakers always suffer from this issue. Our respective groups tend to characterize us as traitors, disloyal, and we're ostracized. What we are facing is fear, ignorance, and lack of information from our own national and religious communities. From our past experiences in Israel and Palestine, peace activists have learned (some have paid the heavy price with their lives) that it is important in a way not to jump too far ahead of their communites and to try to understand their concerns, fears, and where they stand. However, such understanding has not, thankfully, prevented Israeli and Palestinian peace activists from meeting in times when such actions were politically taboo.

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

Palestinians who have worked for political compromise and dialogue have also faced pressure and have even been sanctioned by their own communities. One of the mistakes we make as Palestinian and Jewish or Israeli peace workers is to say that we're on two sides. We're not on two sides. We share lots of commonalities as people who advocate for peace and justice. Palestinians who call for joint peace work through the exact process that Jewish peace workers go through in their own communities—in terms of identity, in terms of proving their loyalty, in terms of defending the "other" side—but it's important to speak and work within our own communities. When I speak to Jewish groups they often think, "This is a nice, good Palestinian working for peace." But there's always this cognitive defense mechanism that makes people wonder if they can really trust me. What I really need is for Jews to speak in their own communities because it's harder for people to dismiss you if you're from "within." And if we continue to have people in the Arab community speaking of peace and justice in their own communities, this group of "us," who suffer from not belonging fully to either side, will grow. And it's the growth of this middle group that reflects and leads the path toward hope.

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

However, it is becoming harder and more challenging to raise such issues, especially since the recent Bush-Sharon exchange of letters in which Bush unequivocally supported Sharon's policies. If you're a

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

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

MARCH/APRIL 2005 | VOLUME 20, NUMBER 2

# A New Bottom Line in Education

*by Svi Shapiro*

OUR WORLD IS NOW stretched between the poles of two fundamentalisms. The "religion" of the untrammeled 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 by which to address the deepening moral crisis in ways that can bring about a more living, 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 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 worlds, 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 life on our planet and the interdependence that makes continuation of this life possible.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2005 | VOLUME 20 NUMBER 6

# Ama Zenya Speaking about Abortion

*at the Network of Spiritual Progressives' Spiritual Activism Conference*

WHAT WOULD a Spiritual Progressive perspective on abortion look like? I invite you to consider first that it will be pro-choice, not as a knee-jerk liberal stance, but because choice is a divinely given power. It's one of the sacred responsibilities for each of us spiritual beings having this human experience. To deny women the power to choose what impacts our bodies is to deny our humanness, just as slavery or forced labor denies humanness by denying personal sovereignty.

Women, I invite you to enter a place of being deeply and spiritually pro-choice, fully affirming our divinely given power to respond to what by grace, nature, or circumstance happens in our bodies. And, men, in revolutionary, spiritual commitment against sexism—against the teaching that others should determine what happens in women's bodies—I encourage you to support women's choice. Transgender folks, do both.

I believe that a spiritual politics calls me to move beyond the language of my rights and into the language of the sacred, the language of love—both for myself and for the new and sacred life within me. At the center of many faith traditions is the practice of surrender, of giving up our rights for love. Islam is all about surrender, affirming that one's life belongs to God. I think of the Jewish prophetic tradition and those like Esther, who left her right to be safe and secure in the palace and put her life at risk for the love for her people. I think of the Christian scriptures: Jesus could have just kept sitting at the right hand of God, but instead he emptied himself and became the left hand of God, the presence, as Rabbi Lerner says, of compassion and love. In Buddhism, bodhisattvas are enlightened beings who have the right to move on beyond the cycles of rebirth and pain because they have already woken up and become enlightened. They could just take off, but they make a commitment for love to keep being reborn into the world of suffering until all beings achieve liberation.

These spiritual traditions move us beyond the language of rights to the language of love. And what I see in current liberal politics is that there is no support for the woman that also honors the life within her and loves it. So abortion is talked about as though it is a purely practical, material decision. I've got to get my tooth pulled, use the john, and get an abortion. It's just a matter of getting something out of me.

On this issue, the Left has just completely bought the capitalist paradigm: What's good is whatever feels good to me. For most of us, our reasons for getting an abortion are self-centered.

What could a moral politics of love regarding abortion look like? The word that has come to me about this breaks through the right-left barrier. It affirms a deeply spiritual principle, and it could be written on a bumper sticker. So here it is: Choose life!

What if we had Choose Life Clinics that would talk lovingly and thoughtfully with pregnant women about their options in a way that affirmed the sacredness of both the mother and the unborn child? What if these clinics were centers of activism for the policies that affirm life, for free pre- and post-natal healthcare and childcare, for living wage, and affordable housing. What if we had Choose Life Retreats for young, pregnant women who wanted to go somewhere to be nurtured, blessed, and affirmed as they were pregnant and as they gave birth? What if Choose Life Chaplains were available to help women who chose abortion create time and ritual for mourning and grieving?

MAY/JUNE 2006 | VOLUME 21, NUMBER 3

# Jewish Renewal and American Spirituality

*by Shaul Magid*

REB ZALMAN [Schachter Shalomi, the spiritual leader of the Jewish Renewal movement] has said of Judaism that "It can make of God no less than pantheism.... This is what I have in mind when I say, 'No less than ...,' that God can be no less than pantheism. If pantheism is a given, what is already there as a minimum, then what else can we say about God?" The "what else" in this sentence is where monotheism either lives or dies. Reb Zalman is not that interested in monotheism for its own sake. We cannot, he argues, say anything about God before we acknowledge that God is everything—and once we use that as a beginning, the edifice of classical monotheism begins to shake.

## A Jewish Theomonism

REB ZALMAN'S observation resembles a position about Sufism explicated by the great scholar of Islam Henri Corbin. Corbin argues that mystical Islam, especially Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240), adheres to what he calls a "theomonism," an idea that the oneness of being is manifest in the many different dimensions of the created universe. The world is thus not simply the consequence of God's activity (a standard Jewish view that acknowledges God's presence in creation while maintaining his utter transcendence), but is itself divine.

Corbin argues that the experience of the phenomena of creation (the world) is itself "theophany" (a revelation). Revelation is happening at every moment. While rabbinic midrash makes a similar claim ("God renews creation every day...") Corbin and Reb Zalman's theology actually bracket the transcendent God—the backbone of monotheism—as a reference for worship and theological reflection. Revelation, in the widest and not merely symbolic sense, is happening at every moment and an act that responds to that moment is a religious act.

What would it mean to live inside that myth—to treat the world and its creatures as if they were direct consequences of theophany? Among other things, such a view threatens the hierarchical nature of Judaism's claim of uniqueness based on the revelation at Sinai as a historical event that can never be repeated. Religious authority founded on continuous revelation is always in a state of flux, and religious experience (even Hasidic *devekut*) is freed from its classic monotheistic/hierarchical framework. Perhaps this helps us to understand what Reb Zalman means when he says that pantheism is a given, an experiential starting-point of Jewish theology. What can we say about God if we bracket His transcendence? Thus begins Jewish Renewal. The conscious move from monotheism to pantheistic monism or theomonism reframes the notion of revelation, thrusting it out of its historical confines and context, making it a trope that can be used to justify the reformation of a monotheistic religious tradition.

To many, this conversion of monotheism to theomonism removes Jewish Renewal from the sphere of Jewish theology. How can a movement be Jewish and not embrace particularism and monotheism? Jewish Renewal argues that its worldview is not a new religion but rather is deeply embedded in the Jewish kabbalistic tradition if we read it with unapologetic eyes, that is, unafraid that it will undermine sacred doctrine.

As scholars of Kabbalah have noted, theomonism is in concert with certain kabbalistic and later Hasidic traditions. Certain forms of Kabbalah were accused of being non-monotheistic by numerous medieval legalists and even by the renowned kabbalist Abraham Abulafia. However, because both Kabbalah and Hasidism have largely been wed to Jewish Orthodoxy (both culturally and interpretively) these subversive tendencies in the tradition have almost always been aligned with accepted Orthodox doctrine and practice (i.e., codified *Halakhah*). It is precisely Reb Zalman's willingness to reread these sources outside their interpretive tradition that may be one of Jewish Renewal's most important and lasting contributions to Judaism.

## Post-Monotheism

UNDERSTOOD AS A paradigm shift within Judaism, Jewish Renewal may be best viewed not as a pantheistic or monistic theology but as a post-monotheistic theology. Zalman's Judaism is not a neopagan pantheism that seeks to retrieve a pre-monotheistic paradigm that was corrupted by the (patriarchal) domination of monotheism. One does find that view among Zalman's contemporaries, particularly in the works of feminists such as Adrianne Rich (especially her early work), Meryll Stone, Riane Eisler, Starhawk, and perhaps most prominently Jenny Kien in Reinstating the Divine Woman in Judaism. Nor is Zalman's Judaism an attempt to erase the Divine in a non-theistic practice like Eastern Buddhism or the pantheism of a nature religion.

Rather, the theology Zalman suggests is more constructive than restorative; it attempts to "purify" monotheism rather than abandon it. He abandons what some view as the negative dimensions or consequences of classical monotheism and replaces them with more universalist and tolerant spiritual alternatives while retaining monotheism's basic superstructure. This critique from within is postmodern in its sensibility: it is what I term "post-monotheistic."

Maintaining and reconstructing the past are no longer the goals. Survival alone is insufficient. The God that is (re)created in Jewish Renewal is no longer the God of classical monotheism, nor is it the "return of the gods" in Nietzschean fashion or the new spirituality of neopaganism but a post-monotheistic God who is both one and many, close at hand and within one's reach. Unveiled from the secret cloak of Jewish doctrine, Renewal's God becomes the kabbalistic God of humanity. Jewish Renewal is a yet unwritten chapter in the history of American spirituality. While it invokes the names of the Baal Shem Tov, the Seer of Lublin, and Nahman of Bratslav, it is just as influenced by the voices of Emerson, Whitman, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott, Felix Adler, Thomas Wentworth Higgenson, Jiddu Krishnamurti, Thomas Merton, the Beats, and others in the American spiritualist tradition. ■



# Choosing Health Reform

by Sheila James Kuehl

AS THE STATE SENATOR FOR THE 23RD Senate District in California, I represent almost a million people on the west end of Los Angeles County and the southern part of Ventura County. It's a diverse district, culturally, economically, and religiously—containing some of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the state, as well as working class neighborhoods where one of the most urgent issues is gang violence. There are high-rise urban neighborhoods, suburbs, agricultural areas, some of the most beautiful wild land in the state, and miles of gorgeous coastline.

My constituents are bus drivers, movie stars, shop owners, social workers, and teachers. My job brings me into frequent

PAUL LACHINE/NEWSART

meetings with Chambers of Commerce, union members and leaders, entertainment industry leaders and representatives of their crews, law enforcement officers, gangland peace brokers, doctors, lawyers, and Native American tribes. I find it interesting that, no matter how diverse the group or the subject matter of a meeting, talk inevitably comes around to health care and how our health care "system" is broken.

The facts are chilling. In California, nearly one of every five persons lives without any health-care coverage at all. Over 80 percent of these uninsured are employed. Even though various solutions to the crisis have been brought to the Legislature or proposed by initiative over the last few years, we (like the rest of the country) find it easier to agree about the extent of the problem than about a solution.

Some aspects of what the people want are clear enough. Over and over, we are told that individuals want the right to choose their own doctors. Doctors want to regain control over their patients' care—they don't want insurance company bean counters telling them what to do. Patients and doctors want evidence-based standards for appropriate medical care—not formularies dictated by pharmaceutical companies.

People don't want insurance companies passing judgment on their health care—and they don't want the government to own the doctors and hospitals, either. They want quality and choice, and they don't want to have to choose between medical care and their life savings—or between medical care and food.

## The Costs of Our Current System

THE HEALTH-CARE CRISIS doesn't just affect the poor and the working poor. A study in *Health Affairs* this past February reported that about half of personal bankruptcies result from medical expenses. People who declare bankruptcy are people with assets to protect. The lack of national health care means that one traffic accident or one serious illness can wipe out a lifetime of careful financial decisions.

The effects of today's health coverage crisis on our common lives are broad and deep. The economic effects are the easiest to measure. For most people with on-the-job insurance coverage, premium costs are rising (at about 9 percent a year, at the very least, and, increasingly, by double digits) faster than real wages. Co-pays and out-of-pocket expenses are also going up, as coverage decreases. The share of these costs borne by employees is rising, but so are employer costs. Major financial scandals, such as the looming wave of retirement pension defaults and the degradation of stocks in large American-based companies are aggravated by the rising costs of providing health-care coverage benefits. Labor unions are spending increasing amounts of time, money, energy, and goodwill on struggles, not for improved wage packages, but simply to hold on to the already inadequate coverage for their members that employers now provide. Many large employers provide no health care coverage at all, leaving their minimum-wage workers to rely on MediCal.

For those who are uninsured, and for the growing number who are under-insured (nearly 16 million in 2003, according to an article in *Health Affairs*), this lack infiltrates every aspect of life. Nagging conditions go untreated until they explode into medical catastrophes. Simple high blood pressure, which could have been controlled with medication, leads to a stroke. Undiagnosed diabetes results in a coma, and hospitalization.

Of course, these disasters cause immeasurable anguish to those most directly involved. What may be less obvious is how much the rest of us also pay for these avoidable catastrophes. People without adequate insurance wind up in emergency

Today, one out of five Americans doesn't have health insurance. That means when their children get sick, they don't take them to a doctor. They wait, and hope their child will get better. People without health care don't treat their diabetes. They don't get a Pap smear. They ignore the pain in their chest.

We all agree we should love our neighbors as ourselves. But we also tacitly agree to a society in which we do not care for the sick or help those in need.

We can do better. In this section you'll read about concrete, doable reforms in California, Massachusetts, and Ithaca, New York, which are being implemented at the local level. No matter where you live, you can learn from these activists and get reform rolling.

Along with this nuts-and-bolts activism, however, we must change our thinking. Reforms based on the market will always have the potential to neglect the people behind the numbers. As Daniel Sulmasy argues in the article that concludes this section, real tikkun can only come when we create a society based on values rather than numbers. —JO ELLEN GREEN KAISER, SENIOR EDITOR



rooms—where they will receive much more expensive care than they would have had with regular doctor visits. Hospitals bear the brunt of this over-reliance on ERs, not only because facilities are overused and patients have to wait to be seen, but also because many of the patients treated in ERs are not insured and cannot afford to pay for the care they get. Hospitals also face shrinking reimbursements and daunting red tape when dealing with insurance providers. As a result, hospitals close each year, but new ones don't open. All of California's people, insured or not, have to make do with fewer care providers.

The personal costs of this crisis are harder to measure, but pretty easy to see. It isn't always easy to be a patient, even when we can afford it. Health care is one of the most intimate services that a professional can perform for us. As health-care consumers, we have to make decisions that are sometimes very difficult, because they will have life-changing consequences for ourselves and for those we love. It's hard enough to make those decisions under the best possible circumstances. But now, when critical decisions about what's best for our children and parents, or for ourselves, become infected with

PAUL LACHINE/NEWSART

the question of what we can afford, the situation is a source of immense anxiety and shame, as well as fear. This is a private anguish that many people never share and can never be measured. But it affects us as communities and as a state.

Furthermore, in order to feel comfortable as patients, we need to form relationships with care providers whom we trust and who know our history based on their own direct experience. The current patchwork of private and public insurance plans with which we now live, along with the practice of insuring most people at the point of employment, means that changing or losing jobs brings the risk of losing the doctors on whom they depend. Many people remain tethered to jobs from which they could otherwise advance only because they don't want to lose their particular health benefits. A change in provider networks by an employer can tear us away from our primary care physician. And there's not much we think we can do about it.

## California State Senate Bill 840

BUT WE CAN CHANGE THE CURRENT SYSTEM. Based on careful studies of the health care problem and analyses of proposed solutions, I introduced a bill that, I believe, would solve California's health-care crisis and could be a template for the rest of the country. State Senate Bill 840 passed the California's State Senate and the Assembly and was sent to Governor Schwarzenegger for signature. On September 5, the Governor released a statement signaling his intent to veto the bill.

State Senate Bill 840 is a single-payer plan that would have insured every Californian with comprehensive benefits while controlling medical care costs and preserving the right of each of us to choose our own doctors and hospitals. SB 840 would have accomplished these goals without putting additional burdens on California's general fund.

How could we get more for the same amount we are paying now? SB 840 is based on a model carefully analyzed in a report by the Lewin Group, an independent health care cost/benefit analysis firm with eighteen years of experience. The Lewin Group discovered that almost one-third of every dollar spent on health care in California goes to administrative costs—that is, paperwork, not patient care. The Lewin model, on which SB 840 is based, shows that we can reduce administrative costs to about 5 percent of every dollar spent (about a 20 percent drop) and that the savings will pay for a health care plan that can work for everyone.

Specifically, SB 840 would reduce costs by replacing the current chaos of private and governmental insurance plans with a single, reliable claim and reimbursement system. This is estimated to save about $20 billion in administrative costs. Second, SB 840 would mandate California to use its purchasing power to buy in bulk prescription drugs and durable medical equipment, such as wheelchairs, from pharmaceutical companies. This would save about $5.2 billion dollars. Twenty-five billion dollars buys a lot of health care.

## A Human Impulse

GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER VETOED SB840 on September 22, just a couple of months after stating in remarks before the Commonwealth Club, "I don't believe in universal health care." It's hard to believe that the Governor truly meant what he said, but his veto speaks volumes.

Quality health care is not some status symbol or commodity that can be the province of the richest class. It is a necessity of life, like water or breathable air. Surely people who live in such a technologically advanced and wealthy society as ours ought to be able to expect a higher level of health care than we live with now.

Each of us will need health care at some point in our lives. Each of us is vulnerable—each of us will, someday, die. People may be uncomfortable with the subject of health care, because it is a reminder of an aspect of life that we'd rather not look at. But being mortal and vulnerable simply makes us more human.

Popular culture, in our country, places such an emphasis on strength that it has become almost shameful to admit to any need that one can't fulfill as an individual. Action movie heroes (and governors) make normal people look unnaturally weak. "Tough-guy" strutting is back on the big screen and in politics.

However, it makes no sense to tell a SARS virus to "bring it on." Nor can we fight illness or injury with "self-reliance." Like it or not, we are weak animals who rely not only on our brains, but also on our cooperation with one another.

If we embrace our inevitable interdependence, if we embrace that human impulse we call kindness, we can see that universal health care is not only the compassionate solution—it is the fiscally "tough" solution as well.

This is especially true when we expand our idea of cost/benefit analysis. We might point to all the benefits of increased wellness—not only is preventive care cheaper in terms of preventing expensive problems down the road; it also prevents human misery and promotes every level of well-being. We all have an interest in the health of our neighbors.

I seem to remember an excellent self-help book—the title will come to me any minute—that suggested it's possible and necessary to love one's neighbor as oneself. When it comes to health care, that's a sound prescription. ■

*Sheila James Kuehl is the California State Senator from District 23.*

# The Art of the Possible

## *Health-Care Reform in Massachusetts*

by Michael Miller

In April of this year Massachusetts enacted legislation that has sparked renewed interest in state-level health reform around the country. If implemented successfully, most of the roughly 500,000 uninsured in Massachusetts will gain coverage. The law has also provoked a debate about its nature that is reminiscent of the folktale about the blind men and the elephant. Commentators have approached the law with an ideological predisposition and found there what they wanted to see.

In reality, this complex legislation says much about the possibilities and the limitations of state health reform in a politically polarized environment. Although it represents a major expansion in coverage, significant compromises were made in order to gain access to critical federal financial support.

The foundation of the Massachusetts reform is an expansion of publicly subsidized health insurance. Insurance will be free for those below poverty, and offered with a sliding scale premium for those between 100–300% of the poverty line. Employers who do not provide health insurance have to make a contribution to financing these government subsidies; their contribution is meant to parallel the contribution that insuring employers already make. A highly controversial element is the "individual mandate" which places a penalty on those individuals who decline an offer of affordable insurance. The law also contains various insurance reforms meant to bring down premiums for those who lack employer-sponsored insurance and yet are ineligible for subsidized coverage.

Many key elements of the law are left to the regulatory process, including the scope of covered benefits, the definition of an insuring employer, the premium subsidy schedule, the definition of who has affordable coverage for the purposes of assessing penalties, and the size of the penalties themselves. Some of these issues have been addressed in ways that activists who supported the law find objectionable, but all are subject to revision following the November election.

In the Talmud it is written that when one saves a life it is as if he or she has saved a whole world. There is no doubt that tens of thousands of lives will be improved and many will be saved as result of this new legislation. At the same time, given the many uncertainties surrounding its implementation and financing, the Massachusetts law must be regarded more as a commitment to walk the path than any sort of arrival at a destination. To truly reach the goal of universal, affordable, quality health care will require many more years of sustained commitment from the groups like Health Care For All, Greater Boston Interfaith Organization and others who made passage of this law possible.

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# National Health Insurance Begins at Home

BY PAUL GLOVER

AMERICANS DESERVE universal health coverage and will get it when corporate insurers, pharmaceutical companies, major media, bankers, investors, and the Congress they own are forced to sacrifice profit. The health-care industry, which today commands about 17 percent of the GDP, is tougher than ever to tame. Roosevelt and Truman could not prevail against that plutocracy; neither could Nixon or Clinton. In short, while demanding single-payer health insurance, we can't wait for politicians or private corporations to enact it. The solution will arise partly from localities.

Even as we rally and march for national health care, we should create and embrace regional member-based health plans, which activate the uninsured and pay at least some of our bills. Such grassroots nonprofit health systems, established nationwide, will reassure American taxpayers that cost-effective nonprofit services work, and would be broadly available were national bills like Medicare for All (HR 676) to pass.

## Solution within the Solution

THE CANADIAN SINGLE-PAYER campaign was begun in 1948 by Swift Current, Saskatchewan, a farm town of 15,000. They organized a local plan that became so successful that Saskatchewanians demanded their province adopt that locality's model. The plan was enacted in 1962, despite solid media opposition and a strike by doctors. By 1971 all Canadians followed Saskatchewan, enacting universal health-care access. Even today, while besieged and underfunded by Canada's conservative politicians, the single-payer initiative is endorsed by over 90 percent of Canadians. Only 8 percent prefer the U.S. system *(Mendelsohn report, 2001; American Journal of Public Health, 2003).*

By 1997, residents of Ithaca, New York, were likewise not waiting for the government to become humane. They began a local nonprofit, member-owned self-insuring system. Ithaca Health Alliance members pay $100 per *year* (or $50/year/child), entitling them to receive substantial payments for several categories of preventive care (exams, treatments, sterilization) and common emergencies such as broken bones, stitches, burns, appendectomies, and dental repair. The Ithaca Health Alliance locates and pays any healer anywhere to care for a co-op member, usually within twenty-four hours. They operate a free clinic for the entire community; offer interest-free loans to members, local organic farmers, and healers; and have also secured discounts with 120 Ithaca area health providers. In fact, the Alliance is so successful that the $100 annual membership fee has not increased since 1997, while the payment menu has expanded from two categories to twenty. It's still rudimentary, but if you cannot afford insurance, even this level of security is impressive.

How can the Alliance afford these health services? As more people have joined and renewed annually, both the general fund and size of payments has steadily increased. Were membership to stabilize or decline, so would payments. During the past decade



the Alliance has created its own actuarial expertise by graphing the frequency and amplitude of payments, by category. At full scale, the plan is capable of proving that HMOs are not necessary.

## Health Democracy

THE ITHACA HEALTH ALLIANCE is part of the Health Democracy movement, a network of co-operatives whose members own health systems.

Direct democratic control is strengthened through bylaws that require that all medical payments that are made to members, or declined, are seen on the Alliance website [ithacahealth.org]. Members are invited, via newsletter and listserv, to suggest how coverage should expand, serve on the board and committees, and elect board members. The board meets publicly each month. The maximum salary for administrative staff (about one employee per 2,000 members) is twice the local livable wage, to ensure that top staff are more dedicated to the mission than to money.

The Alliance's co-operative nature is underscored by the fact that membership fees are the same for everyone, since they ally to help one another, rather than exploit weakness for profit. Ithaca's community currency is accepted for membership dues. Love, not marriage, defines eligibility for domestic partner discounts.

Health co-ops support people's preferences for gentler, preventive healing. Were Medicare made universal overnight, the medical technology pills-and-surgery sickness system would keep prices unnecessarily high. Health Democracy stresses changing the basis of the medical health-care system, encouraging healthier living and holistic care.

Most outstandingly, Health Democracy co-ops sponsor public health committees to confront health damage from larger issues: consumerism, which leads to overdoses of sugar and fats; polluted soil, water and air; and war, which is notoriously unhealthy.

## From Local to National

PROPELLED BY THE FAILURES of the public and private sectors, the co-op sector intends to weave a national health system that is democratic, nonprofit, efficient, preventive, holistic, and generous.

Here's where the top-down relies on the bottom-up. The United States Health Alliance will link co-op health plans to one another, creating a movement both practical and political, which heals the nation. This is the infrastructure universal coverage needs and deserves. ■

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JOHN OVERMYER/NEWSART

# It's Not Just the Economy, Stupid

## *Genuine Health-Care Reform*

BY DANIEL P. SULMASY

SOMETIMES, WHEN A PATIENT is sick, it is because something is maldistributed within the body—too much fluid in the abdomen; not enough blood flow to the brain. At other times, the problem is more pervasive, even insidious, affecting all parts of the body—not enough sugar anywhere; a toxic metal accumulating in every cell. Sometimes several types of anomalies occur concomitantly, as in kidney failure, in which fluid builds up in the legs and lungs while the whole body is poisoned in its own waste.

It is now almost a cliché to pronounce the American health care system sick. Everyone has known this for a long time. Yet those who have attempted to "doctor" our health-care system have failed in each of their successive efforts to effect a cure. Presuming always that the problem is solely one of unequal distribution of health-care resources, the doctors of health-care policy have recommended a wide variety of remedies: national health insurance, managed care, managed competition, health savings accounts, extending the number of individuals covered while rationing services through a massive exercise in public utilitarianism. Each failure has been more spectacular than its predecessor. And the system has continued to sicken.

A treatment usually does not work if the illness has been misdiagnosed. I think this is what has happened in the case of health-care reform. The problem with American health care is not merely one of maldistribution, as ugly and lethal a problem as it poses for our health-care system. American health care is more pervasively sick. And what no one seems capable of acknowledging publicly is that this sickness is spiritual in nature. American medicine has lost its soul. And without a soul, nothing lives.

Patients feel increasingly alienated by a system that treats them as objects—first of science, now of economics. Clinicians too—physicians, nurses, psychologists, physical therapists, and others—are beginning to feel alienated from their work. Looking through a scope at the inside of the human colon ten times a day can become as dehumanizing as working in a poultry processing plant. Katie Couric's colon is not very different from yours and mine.

### Spiritual Experience and Illness

YET ILLNESS IS ALWAYS A SPIRITUAL EVENT. It grabs a person by the soul as well as by the body. Illness raises spiritual questions for all who are sick—questions of meaning, value, and relationship. Our health-care system has long denied the importance of such questions. And that is precisely why it is so sick.

Those who are ill search for meaning. They want to know why this illness has befallen

them. They want to know what this illness portends. They want to know if they have anything for which to hope.

Those who are ill question their own worth. This is especially true in America. If an American cannot work, cannot be the object of someone's sexual desire, and cannot exercise control, there is a resultant crisis in his or her value. Illness precipitates such crises. What is the source of my worth? What about me—suddenly a weak, broken, and dependent human being—gives me dignity?

Those who are broken in body are also mysteriously reminded of what is broken in their relationships. They seek reconciliation. They seek forgiveness. They seek to be united with those they love.

Whether raised in a religious context or not, these questions are all spiritual in nature. Each line of questioning has a transcendent term. In and through the experience of illness, the sick person confronts the question of whether there really is a transcendent source of meaning, value, and relationship. Every drop of blood; every wave of nausea; every creak in the back; every skipped heartbeat portends the dark secret of our mortality. Sickness points to the horizon, thereby raising the question of what lies beyond the horizon. The sick person confronts the infinite. American medicine answers with a CAT scan.

## Historical Considerations

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRIT and health should not come as news. In ancient societies, the practices of medicine and of religion were combined in the practice of Shamanism. Similarly, in very ancient Israel, only the priests could heal, in the name of *Rophi Cholim* (the "Supreme Healer"). Before the Hellenistic occupation, pious Jews were forbidden to seek out physicians, whose practices were considered to be contaminated with the worship of false gods. With the rise of a secular form of Hippocratic medicine, however, Jewish physicians began to appear on the scene, always with the understanding that it was from *Adonai* that their power and knowledge were derived, and that it was Adonai who had endowed the world with the healing plants and herbs by which the physician eased pain and cured the sick. A few centuries later, Christianity put a very special spiritual emphasis on healing. Most of Jesus' miracles were works of healing the sick. Visiting the sick has always been a Jewish *mitzvah*, and Catholics count it as one of the special "corporal works of mercy." The first hospitals in Europe were monasteries, in which monk-herbalists treated the sick who traveled far from home or were too poor to consult a physician.

So what has happened?

Centuries of tension between scientists and religious authorities over the extent to which science can replace religion as the ultimate source of explanation for the universe, and long-standing religious objections to medical advancement intended for the betterment of humankind have gradually eroded the relationship between religion and medicine. In the last few decades, the pace of that erosion has accelerated. Even when I attended medical school in the early 1980s we were at least taught to ask a perfunctory question about the patient's religious preference. Now, even that question has disappeared from standard textbook instruction in taking a medical history. Religion and spirituality have been effectively purged from medicine.

Physicians are not the only ones who have contributed to the current state of affairs. The technological success of medicine in the twentieth century has been alluring. The general population has been enticed into seeking immortality in stem cells rather than in faith. Our vocabulary betrays our truest values. We reserve the terms "wonder" for drugs, "miraculous" for surgical operations, and "sinful" for chocolate cake. A colleague once stated that in the neighborhood in which she grew up, to say that one knew a good man meant that one knew an excellent cardiologist or some other medical specialist to whom to refer a friend.

We have all played a part in the purge.

Most patients simply want medicine to recognize them once again as whole persons, and to understand them as beings in relationship to the transcendent.

## Unfaithful Medicine and Injustice

IN RECOUNTING THE HISTORY of the Jewish people, the scriptures tell us over and over that in times of prosperity, we tend to lose our faith. And our misplaced faith invariably leads to injustice. When we value things more than we value people, we always seek to hoard our supply of those things. In the abundance of our medical success, in the rich harvest of our medical technology, we have built towers in which to store our riches and to keep the poor out. This too has been foretold by the prophets.

The economy of medical technology is a zero-sum game, and here is how it is played: There will only be so many stem cells to go around. For me to get mine means that someone else must go without his—unfortunate, but really not unfair. These are the rules. Someone has to be the first to live to 150 years. The price of progress may just be that others will not even have aspirin. This is how a zero sum game is played.

And so, more than 40 million Americans (not counting the undocumented) go without health insurance while we proudly boast of having the best health-care system in the world. We demand every conceivable gadget in a vain hope to avoid dealing with the transcendent questions sickness places before us. If one of us dies, the rest of us sue. It must have been someone's fault. If she could die, so could I. And that could not possibly be true.

Thus the spiritual sickness that poisons our health-care system and the unjust maldistribution of access to care are intrinsically linked. It is one affliction. And that may be why those who see the problem with American health care as solely an issue of distributive justice have been doomed to failure in achieving genuine reform.

## Is There Another Way?

IN THE 1950S, IN A SPEECH to the American Medical Association, Abraham Joshua Heschel spoke simply, but with remarkable clarity, to the doctors who were in attendance. He said, "To heal a person, you must first be a person."

Only a *person* can engage the spiritual questions of meaning, value, and relationship. Only a *person* can apprehend the transcendent term to which these questions invariably point, especially as they arise in the face of illness. Heschel's insight was that only one who has engaged such questions in light of the work of health care can truly offer to be a healer for a person who has become sick.

Patients today are painfully aware of how depersonalized health care has become. They are increasingly dissatisfied with their care. The better it has become technically, the more it has accomplished, the longer it has helped people to live, the less satisfying the experience has become. Psalm 33 echoes in the heart of every patient: "Despite its power, medicine cannot save."

Medicine today has erected enormous barriers to protect itself against the spiritual reality that its official teaching rejects. Like the builders of the Berlin Wall, medicine has established checkpoints to prevent anyone inside its domain from venturing too close to the spiritual.

When the eyes of both the patient and the practitioner are focused on an image projected on a screen rather than each other, questions of meaning cannot possibly be addressed. Transformed by managed care into a "resource-utilizing unit," it is almost impossible for a patient to sense that he or she is valued as a person. In a seven-minute office visit, establishing a genuine patient-physician relationship becomes a romantic dream. Such medicine crushes the spirit. And patients are beginning to recognize and understand their predicament.

## New Trends

IN REACTION TO these developments, there has been a resurgence of interest in spirituality and health care. Bookstores now regularly feature works on spirituality and coping with specific diseases. The self-help literature includes many treatises describing how particular spiritual practices can help to prevent certain illnesses. Some of this can be very banal. But it does represent the inevitability of the transcendent *(continued on page 76)*

*(continued from page 50)* questions that sickness always raises, and the irrepressibility of the human spirit in the face of such questions.

Clinicians, too, are expressing a new interest in spirituality. In the medical journals, much of this has taken the form of empirical research about the physiological effects of spiritual practices and the impact of religious belief and practices on health-care outcomes. Sadly, many of the authors of these studies, while well intended, have been so co-opted by the positivist attitudes of medicine that they fail to see how such studies tend to trivialize the transcendent and in fact border on idolatry. Sometimes spirituality can be very bad for one's health, and one need not go much beyond Jesus of Nazareth, Mahatma Gandhi, or the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to understand this. What rabbi, pastor, or imam would seek a congregation filled with people who are there for the health benefits?

Yet even more encouraging signs of a movement to rekindle the spirit of medicine are becoming apparent. Most patients simply want medicine to recognize them once again as whole persons and to understand them as beings in relationship to the transcendent. Surveys report that most patients in the United States (with the exact percentages varying with geographic region) want their physicians to address their spiritual needs. In one survey, 48 percent even expressed a desire to have their physicians pray with them. This is not just a phenomenon among Southern Protestants. In one survey, even 45 percent of patients with no religious beliefs thought it appropriate for physicians to inquire about patients' spiritual needs. Needless to say, exceedingly few ever have such an experience in our health care system.

Clinicians, too, are undergoing a spiritual re-awakening. To borrow a phrase from twelve-step spirituality, one might say that physicians, nurses, and other health-care professionals have "hit bottom." Dissatisfaction is rampant. Physicians are retiring early. Fewer students are applying to medical school, and fewer medical students are applying to residencies in primary care—general internal medicine, family medicine, and pediatrics—the specialties that have traditionally offered the best chances for relating to patients as persons. Clinicians are looking at their own professional work for answers to those same spiritual questions about meaning, value, and relationship. Searching for the spirit in a system that denies the spirit, and finding ourselves backed against medicine's Berlin Wall, there is no way out but up, with a desperate cry to God.

## Healing American Health Care

HESCHEL ONCE WROTE, "Religion is medicine in the form of a prayer; and medicine is prayer in the form of a deed." If that is true, what would twenty-first century medicine look like if it were considered a prayer?

First, there would be no need to deny the importance of science or to establish an "alternative" form of practice. Adonai still gives us the knowledge and has endowed the earth with the sources of healing. Medicine as a prayer will use science for the good of others, while refusing to be reduced to science. Yet neither is medicine as prayer a form of "complementary" medicine. Too many well-intended individuals are urging us to consider prayer an adjunctive form of medicine; another nostrum in the physician's black bag. Medicine as prayer is not a form of practice that adds a spiritual layer on top of scientific practice. Medicine as prayer proclaims that scientifically-based practice is itself the work of God, using science to glorify the Creator and to serve the needs of the sick.

Second, such a form of practice would demand time. Being present for a person demands time. Time provides a space for meaning. Time allows one to show respect for the value of the patient as a person. Time is required to establish a healing relationship. Medicine as prayer demands the de-industrialization of practice. Seven minutes a visit will not be enough.

Third, medicine as prayer would be attentive. Lexically and temporally prior to petition, prayer is fundamentally an act of listening. Traditionally, the physician who is in charge of a hospitalized patient is called the "attending" physician. Medicine as prayer demands reverent attention to the patient, through whom a clinician can hear the voice of God.

Fourth, medicine as prayer requires the acknowledgement of limits—the limits of the human body and the limits of the medical art. As the Christian theologian Paul Ramsey once put it, "the function of medicine is not to relieve the human condition of the human condition." Genuine prayer always makes us humble, and reminds us, first and foremost, that we are not divine.

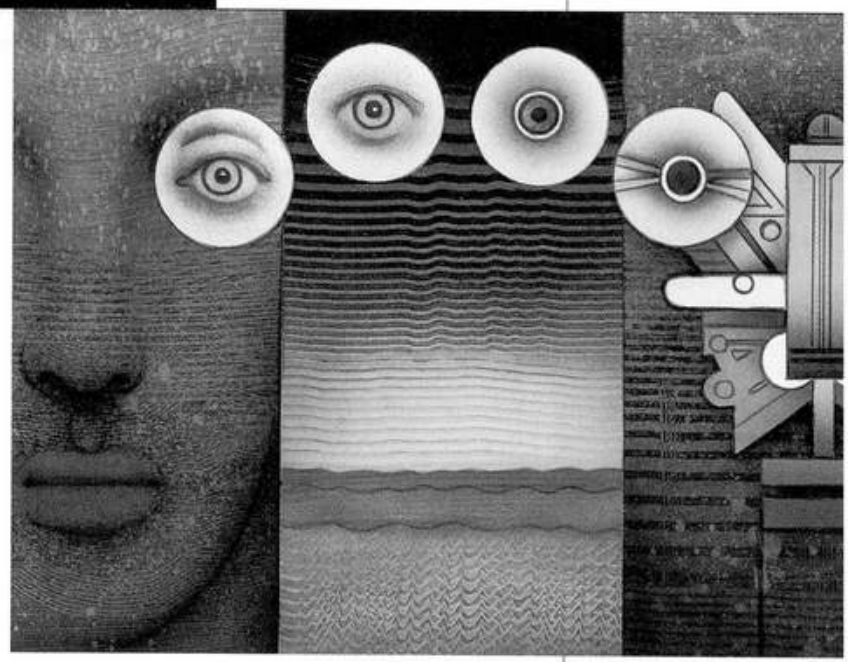
Finally, medicine as prayer requires social solidarity. A few years ago, at a meeting convened by the Hastings Center regarding hospice care and justice, I recommended that we establish social solidarity as a principle on which to base an argument for more funding for care at the end of life. A Washington, DC policy maker in attendance, while sympathetic to the cause, remarked, "Oh, no. We can't say that. This is America. 'Solidarity' sounds like 'Socialist.' That will surely kill anything we bring to Congress." Medicine as prayer knows the difference between totalitarian communism and love of neighbor, and opts for the latter. Medicine is prayer in the form of a deed, based on the link between the healer and the healed. That prayer is grounded in the solidarity that begins when the healer recognizes, "This could have been me."

Medicine as prayer participates in the Divine economy, which is not a zero-sum game. God changes all the rules. The infinite generosity of the Almighty has the power to inspire liberality of spirit in the faithful. The loaves can be multiplied. There can be enough for all.

Genuine health care reform is not merely a matter of economic policy. To be more just, medicine must first recover its soul. ■

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# Daniel Dennett's *Theory of* Religion

by Dan Levine

WHERE IN THE HUMAN MAKEUP DOES religious fanaticism come from? The possibility that fanatics, of any faith, with access to modern technology could threaten civilization compels us to learn as much as we can about the root causes of their behavior. And while some cultures and some historical periods encourage militant faith more than others, the phenomenon is clearly universal. Could there be something in our evolutionary programming that inclines so many of us toward the kind of beliefs that provoke harmful actions? Daniel Dennett, a leading philosopher of science and of mind, and author of several prominent books on consciousness and on evolution, thinks so. His latest book, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*, which Bill Moyers recently discussed with him on American public television, is one of the most serious recent explorations of the biological roots of religious belief.

AP PHOTO/PLINIO LEPRI

Dennett spends considerable time in his early chapters arguing for the social benefit of the scientific study of religion—that is, the study not of the claims of religion itself, but of why people are motivated to be religious. He notes that many likely readers of his book are true believers who would be offended by the very notion of subjecting the sacred to scientific scrutiny. But Dennett states that religion is no different from any other phenomenon occurring in nature, and the more we know about it, the better we can understand its effects. By analogy he recalls what a hornet's nest Alfred Kinsey, and later Masters and Johnson, stirred up by scientifically studying human sexuality and yet how valuable their contributions were in the end. To the fear of many religious people that the study and analysis of religion will diminish the value of faith, he answers, "I have been unable to come up with a case of some valuable phenomenon that has actually been destroyed, or even seriously damaged, by scientific scrutiny."

## What Does "Religion" Mean?

ANYONE WITH A SOCIALLY PROGRESSIVE OUTLOOK can endorse the idea of expanding our knowledge of religion as of any other human pursuit. Yet many readers of *Tikkun* will probably take issue with how Dennett *defines* the object of his study. His definition of religion is "social systems whose participants avow belief in a supernatural agent or agents whose approval is to be sought." By contrast, the first definition of the word "religion" in the Second College Edition of Webster's New World Dictionary reads "belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be worshiped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe." As an alternative definition, the same dictionary lists "any specific system of belief, worship, conduct, etc., often involving a code of ethics and a philosophy."

Hence, what the self-described atheist Dennett calls "religion" is much more restrictive than the first dictionary definition, which is in turn more restrictive than the second dictionary definition. The difference between the dictionary's "superhuman" and Dennett's "supernatural" is instructive (although some other dictionaries use "supernatural" in their definitions). A *supernatural* being stands apart from, and transcends, nature, whereas a *superhuman* being is more powerful than we are, but can still operate within understandable natural laws. This means that belief in the supernatural, but not belief in the superhuman, inherently limits scientific investigation of the world. Also, belief in the supernatural tends to promote authoritarian structures within organized religions, because a priesthood can argue that its domination is required to intervene between powerless people and an incomprehensibly powerful deity.

The New World dictionary's second definition of religion is even more expansive. In addition to more orthodox religions, "any specific system of worship or belief" includes both theists and non-theists practicing what Michael Lerner calls "Left Hand of God" religions that require understanding and conscience rather than obedience.

In general, Dennett gives short shrift to the Left Hand of God, despite sharing many of its beliefs. He doesn't address the work of significant liberal theologians; the book makes no mention at all of Lerner, Matthew Fox, or Sharon Welch, for example, and only a few passing comments about Paul Tillich. However, Dennett does sprinkle the book with references to liberal religious ideas, such as Unitarianism (highly familiar to him as a resident of Massachusetts) and Spinoza-style pantheism. Yet he seems to regard those liberal ideas as rationalizations—that is, feeble resolutions of cognitive dissonance by people who want whatever comforts religion is supposed to provide, without the suspension of reason that belief in the supernatural might require. Dennett is impatient with religious liberals because he feels they have not clearly defined what they believe in, and therefore sees Left Hand beliefs as not truly "religion."

## Evolutionary Fitness versus Meaning

DANIEL DENNETT WANTS TO UNDERSTAND what motivates so many people to want to belong to an organized religion and, depending on the tradition, worship a supernatural being. He begins his investigation by expressing puzzlement as to why so many

people would engage in rituals and practices that are costly and often involve the sacrifice of economic comfort, and occasionally even of life. Surely, then, there must be some benefit that people derive from a belief in a god that outweighs these costs.

In seeking an explanation, Dennett asks the question of *cui bono* (Latin for "who benefits"). He has two different, though not incompatible, answers to his own question. Neither answer is consistent or supported by hard scientific evidence; despite his avowed faith in science, his arguments tend to be circumstantial and often rely on hints and clever analogies. One answer, advanced early in *Breaking the Spell*, is that the main beneficiaries are a rather unscrupulous class of religious leaders (generically labeled "shamans") who somehow trick average people into following them. Irreverently, Dennett draws an analogy between the relationship of shamans to average people and the relationship of a biological parasite to its host. His other answer is that average people psychologically benefit (or at least believe they benefit) from finding comforting answers to the mysteries of the universe. In particular, many people find comfort in facing the prospect of their own or their loved ones' death by believing in the continuity of personality past the present life.

Yet again, to understand Dennett's arguments we must consider his framing and definition of terms. What does he mean by "benefit"? Like most writers steeped in mainstream Darwinian evolutionary theory, Dennett expresses a view that the bottom line for biological organisms is the ability to survive and reproduce. In alluding to the costliness of human religion, he says "Any such regular expenditure of time and energy has to be balanced by something of 'value' obtained, and the ultimate measure of evolutionary 'value' is fitness: the capacity to replicate more successfully than the competition does."

There are both scientific and spiritual reasons to challenge Dennett's exclusive concentration on fitness. The late evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould noted that natural selection and survival of the fittest do not always lead to improvement of the organism, because selection for one adaptive trait always carries with it some nonadaptive (or at least neutral) traits that go along for the ride. Dennett himself acknowledges at many points that classical evolutionary fitness is not equivalent to ethical goodness, or to human welfare. Yet he doesn't take the next step of defining his question *cui bono?* in a broader sense than simply survival or reproductive value. And it is exactly in the sense of quality of life, rather than survival advantage, that we find the real benefits of religion.

To his credit, unlike many neo-Darwinists, Dennett seems to be sincerely devoted to using his intellectual insights to improve the human condition and to avoid cynicism about human motives. After much rambling, toward the end of the book he makes a powerful statement that seems to sum up the *raison d'être* for his enterprise:

> ... in continuing pressure to make the world a better place for people to live ... we must recognize that people need to see their lives as having meaning. The thirst for a quest, a goal, a meaning, is unquenchable, and if we don't provide benign or at least nonmalignant avenues, we will always face toxic religions.

This is very close to statements of Left Hand of God theologians, such as Lerner's explanation of the American Religious Right's appeal. The problem Dennett depicts in the last quotation can motivate a whole lifetime of study in psychology or behavioral biology (in fact, it is one of the motivators of my own research). Yet his inability to abandon the traditional Darwinian outlook (which he devoted another book to defending) keeps him from asking some key scientific questions his words suggest. Such questions include:

How can one describe a biological state that correlates in some way with "having meaning"?

Is there a biological description that distinguishes mere survival from "really living"?

If we can identify physically measurable states that correlate with our need for meaning and with our fulfillment of this need, can these insights guide us in designing societies, institutions, and interactions that meet the need for meaning without the toxic side effects of fanatical, Right Hand of God religion?

Asking such questions need not lead us to *scientism*, the outlook *(continued on page 77)*

(continued from page 53) that says only what is scientifically measurable and observable is real, and one that both Lerner and the chaos theorist Ralph Abraham rightly decry as one source of our widespread sense of meaninglessness. Instead we can approach the idea of meaning analogously to how a Renaissance person might approach the idea of color. At that time, the notion of the wavelength of light had not yet been formulated (the seventeenth-century Dutch physicist Christiaan Huygens is usually credited with the idea). But this did not make people's perception of color any less real than it is now, when we do understand it in terms of wavelengths. Moreover, we now know there is not a tight equivalence between the color we see in an object and the wavelength(s) of light the object reflects. The color we see is also influenced by background illumination, colors of other objects in the environment, and memories for colors of other objects we saw recently. Even more importantly, our scientific understanding of, for example, the color red does not tell us the nature of our *subjective experience* of seeing red. By analogy, if we learn enough about the brain to understand the gist of what neural events correlate with feeling our lives are meaningful—and I believe we will in this century—those neural events will not be the *same* as our feeling of meaning.

Thus, the biological needs of organisms (humans as well as other animals) include much more than survival and reproduction. Our needs include meaning, competence, bonding with others, physical and intellectual stimulation, and pleasure. The orthodoxy in science decries talking about those other needs as "non-biological," but that was not Darwin's own view. David Loye, co-director of the Center for Partnership Studies, founded the Darwin Project (www.thedarwinproject.com), with a council of over sixty natural and social scientists from around the world, to educate society to the fact that Darwin's *The Descent of Man* and other later writings spoke much more about cooperation, love, bonding, altruism, and morality than they did about survival of the fittest.

So not *every* human behavior can be fully explained in terms of providing a survival advantage for those who engage in that behavior, in comparison to those individuals who engage in competitive behavior. Moreover, the founder of evolutionary theory never attempted the sweeping set of explanations that some of his later followers tried to carry out in his name.

This doesn't deny the fact that survival and reproduction are extremely important motivations. The survival and reproduction of individuals through genes can be generalized to survival and reproduction of cultural forms through units that the geneticist Richard Dawkins called *memes*. Dennett makes numerous references to religious memes, and discusses reasons for different types of religion to survive better than others. While he talks as if the Right Hand (supernatural, authority-oriented memes) typically possess the best survival value, Dennett acknowledges individual differences in susceptibility to the beliefs such memes embody, with references to the work of the nineteenth-century philosopher-psychologist William James. Dennett is not clear on what traits make some people temperamentally theistic and others temperamentally atheist or agnostic (which he labels "Bright"), but calls for scientific investigation to illuminate these individual differences much further. Based on what he says about shamans and parasites, one part of the puzzle could be differences in sensitivity to persuasion (which many experimental psychologists have studied in relation to hypnosis).

Dennett's analysis omits people who share his passionate devotion to the pursuit of understanding and resistance to authority, yet strongly desire to be part of both a religion and a religious community (with or without a deity). This is where I would place myself, and probably the majority of *Tikkun* readers, along with Bill Moyers. Where would those of us with Left Hand of God beliefs fit on the continuum between the religiously orthodox and the "Brights"? Just as there are niches for alternate genes in the natural world, there are niches for alternate memes in culture, and Left Hand styles of religion have always been present to varying degrees.

In fact, as Lerner's book documents, there are numerous people who have broad needs for meaning and religious expression but could be induced to follow *either* the Right Hand or Left Hand of God. This can be explained by the marvelous plasticity of the brain. In 2002 I edited and co-authored with Riane Eisler an article in a special issue on brain development and caring behavior for the journal *Brain and Mind*. Based on evidence both from humans and other mammals, each of the authors in that issue argued that we carry within us multiple conflicting patterns of behavior that *all* have evolutionary survival value, and that environmental contexts influence our decisions between conflicting behavior patterns. For example, there is both a survival value in a tendency to fight other people who may threaten our goals, and in a tendency to bond with others for mutual support. Because our brains have modifiable connections that are largely shaped by our experiences, each of our tendencies to be more competitive or more cooperative is heavily influenced by the social interactions we experience. This means interactions not only with our families of origin but with our cultures, our houses of worship, and our work places, among other institutions.

The notion that genes express themselves through their environments is addressed in books by recent popular writers such as Matt Ridley and Michael Shermer. As we learn more about the brain's plasticity (which was not observed in the laboratory before the mid-1960s), the interplay between genes and environment is becoming more broadly accepted by geneticists as well. Leaders of the Human Genome Project argue against the simple idea of genes for specific psychological traits, and in favor of genes that incorporate broad tendencies whose expression can be partly shaped by the environment.

Dennett partly reflects this trend: he calls for "multilevel mixed processes, getting us away from the simplistic ideas of 'genes for religion' at one extreme and 'a conspiracy of priests at the other extreme' and permitting us to consider much more interesting (and more probable) accounts of how and why religions evolve." Yet we already possess more clues than he discusses about the nature of these mixed processes. The Webster dictionary's second, and broader, definition of religion points

the way. There seem to be widespread genetic tendencies toward wanting to be part of some community with values and a belief system, as the definition says. And social forces, from the family on up to the global community, play a major role in shaping whether such genetic tendencies take on a specific Right Hand of God or Left Hand of God form. "Brights" like Dennett can share the need for values: his earlier book *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* ends with a declaration that "The world is sacred." But unscrupulous religious leaders are part of the problem, because they exploit people's legitimate and natural meaning needs in directions that lead to authoritarian socioeconomic hierarchies and sometimes to terrorist violence.

## Religion and Morality

*BREAKING THE SPELL'S* FINAL CHAPTERS deal with social implications and recommendations, some of which seem largely disconnected from the author's scientific and evolutionary insights. For example, the discussion of religion and morality in chapter ten is instructive reading for religious believers. One of the more troubling points the chapter raises is the lack of correlation between religious belief and ethical behavior. Clearly one of the avowed purposes of religion is to foster the ethical and moral treatment of people. Yet Dennett cites both studies and personal observations showing that believers are no more likely to treat each other well and avoid criminal activity than nonbelievers. In fact, according to one yardstick used to measure moral behavior—the stability of marriages—Dennett cites a study showing that in the United States, the lowest divorce rates are among atheists and agnostics and the highest are among born-again Christians.

Oxford University's Richard Swinburne, a Christian philosopher of religion, carried on a series of dialogues with Dennett that were published in the March 2006 edition of *Prospect*. In this exchange, Swinburne tried to address Dennett's claim that religious people are no more moral than others. Part of his answer was:

> ... it might be the case that those more inclined to "murder, rape..." are those who are so aware of their inclinations that they feel a need for a God to forgive them and help them, and so are more open to the claims of religion.... But that is compatible with religion making each person more moral than they would be otherwise.

Swinburne has a valid point: the appropriate comparison might not be between religious and nonreligious individuals, but between how the same individual acts with religion and how she or he would act without religion. Yet the same author also differs from Dennett in his belief about the source of morality. Swinburne (like most religious conservatives) regards morality as emanating from the commands of a divine being. By contrast, Dennett (like many religious liberals) sees morality as inherent in nature and open to human judgment. He states that "There is only one way to respect the *substance* of any purported God-given moral edict: consider it conscientiously in the full light of reason, using all the evidence at our command." Dennett goes on to say that making moral judgments on the basis of what we believe a god says, or what we hear a rabbi, priest, pastor, or imam say, without examining these statements on our own, is actually *immoral*.

## Extremists and Moderates in Religion and Science

IN THIS SAME CHAPTER Dennett expresses kind words for moderate, ecumenical-minded people of different religions, such as those who attended the 2004 Parliament of World Religions. But he then chides these same religious moderates for not doing enough to curb the pronouncements and activities of extremists within their own traditions. He expresses agreement with this argument (from a book by Sam Harris) that:

> ... there is a cruel Catch-22 in the worthy efforts of the moderates and ecumenists in all religions: by their good works they provide protective coloration for their fanatical coreligionists, who quietly condemn their open-mindedness and willingness to change while reaping the benefits of the good public relations they thereby obtain.

This seems to me an overly harsh statement. Dennett is right that "there is more work to be done, and it is the unpleasant and dangerous work of desanctifying the excesses in each tradition *from the inside*." Yet he underestimates the number, commitment, and courage of religious leaders in every denomination who are already doing what he calls for. In the United States, for example, members of the Network of Spiritual Progressives have remained true to their vision despite adamant opposition from authoritarians or fanatics within their own faiths, including at times official silencing (as in the case of Matthew Fox) and even death threats (as in the case of Michael Lerner).

This type of religious moderate would certainly endorse the statement from Dennett's last page that "Ignorance is nothing shameful; *imposing* ignorance is shameful." Yet each of the major faiths already has an element that advocates values without imposing ignorance. The Dalai Lama captured this element nicely in a talk for the 2005 annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience, a gathering of over 30,000 brain and nervous system researchers. When asked how he would react if a new scientific discovery contradicted something in the scriptures of his Buddhist faith, the Dalai Lama said that it would be scripture that would have to be rewritten.

Dennett has his heart very much in the right place in seeking to alleviate the bad social effects of fanaticism, and raises a large number of excellent points about how religions work and how they should work. Yet at times he gets carried away with his own polemical tone in favor of science and against some aspects of religion. Dennett gives a good description of the showmanship aspect of religious service: "Every minister in every faith is like a jazz musician, keeping traditions alive by playing the beloved standards the way they are supposed to be played.... " But having heard Dennett once give a superbly entertaining lecture about his evolution book, I feel he is partly describing himself. The tradition, or meme, he keeps alive is scientific method, which, despite his statements to the contrary, evokes in many of its adherents a visceral, emotional allegiance comparable to what a religion can evoke.

The Dennett-Swinburne debate, while perfectly good-natured, is an example of this type of polemicism. It has the flavor of what the communications expert Deborah Tannen calls "argument culture," in its academic form. The argument culture seems also to influence conferences, such as those sponsored by the Templeton Foundation, that bring together leading scientists, theologians, and clergy. So a task for both scientific and religious leaders now is to try to build on the issues Dennett and others have raised and find points of common interest between the two pursuits.

In fact, serious efforts are underway already to find biological correlates of religious experience. Andrew Newberg and the late Eugene D'Aquili, for example, have done brain imaging studies of people in meditative states (see the book by Newberg, D'Aquili, and Vince Rause, *Why God Won't Go Away*). Based on their studies, these researchers developed at least a plausible first hypothesis for which brain circuits become more active, and which other brain circuits become less active, in this type of focused consciousness. Dennett cites Newberg's work, (along with other related experiments) but dismisses their importance on the grounds that their results are compatible with atheism as well as theism. Unfortunately, that seems to be an irrelevant objection: the researchers were trying to find a neurobiological basis for religious or spiritual experience in the broad sense, not to justify belief in God *per se*.

By analogy with the Right Hand and Left Hand of religion, we can talk about a *Right Hand of science* and a *Left Hand of science*. The Right Hand of science is the orthodox scientism that denies all life experience not verified by the traditional five senses, refuses to consider meaning, imagination, or spirituality, and reduces all biological motives to survival and reproduction. The Left Hand of science is the "ecumenical" approach to nature that celebrates the depth and complexity of human (and animal) personality, embraces meaning and imagination as universal values, opens itself to multiple interpretations of what it observes, and seeks bridges between scientific analysis and subjective experience.

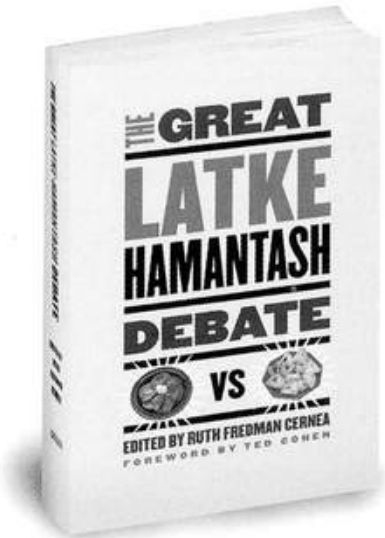
The Left Hand of science shares Dennett's opposition to "faith" interpreted as a manipulated belief in that which is not verifiable. Yet the Left Hand is friendly to a different interpretation of faith: something akin to Sharon Welch's "ethic of risk" that errs on the side of hope and is willing to go out on a limb for highly uncertain rewards. In fact such risks of faith are required for any creative activity, including creative science. Taken in that light, science and spirituality (whether religious or nonreligious) are no longer warring adversaries, but complementary partners in the quest for good life.

Though *Breaking the Spell* starts with Right Hand of science rhetoric, many unacknowledged Left Hand of science statements permeate its ideas. In this light, *Breaking the Spell* can be valued as a prelude to future works that will openly embrace the Left Hand of science, and thereby bring us closer to Daniel Dennett's goal of explaining religion as a natural phenomenon. ■

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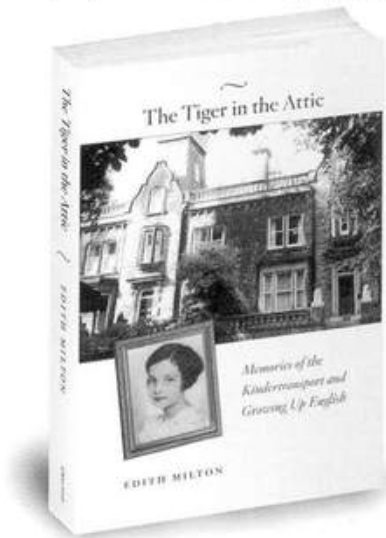



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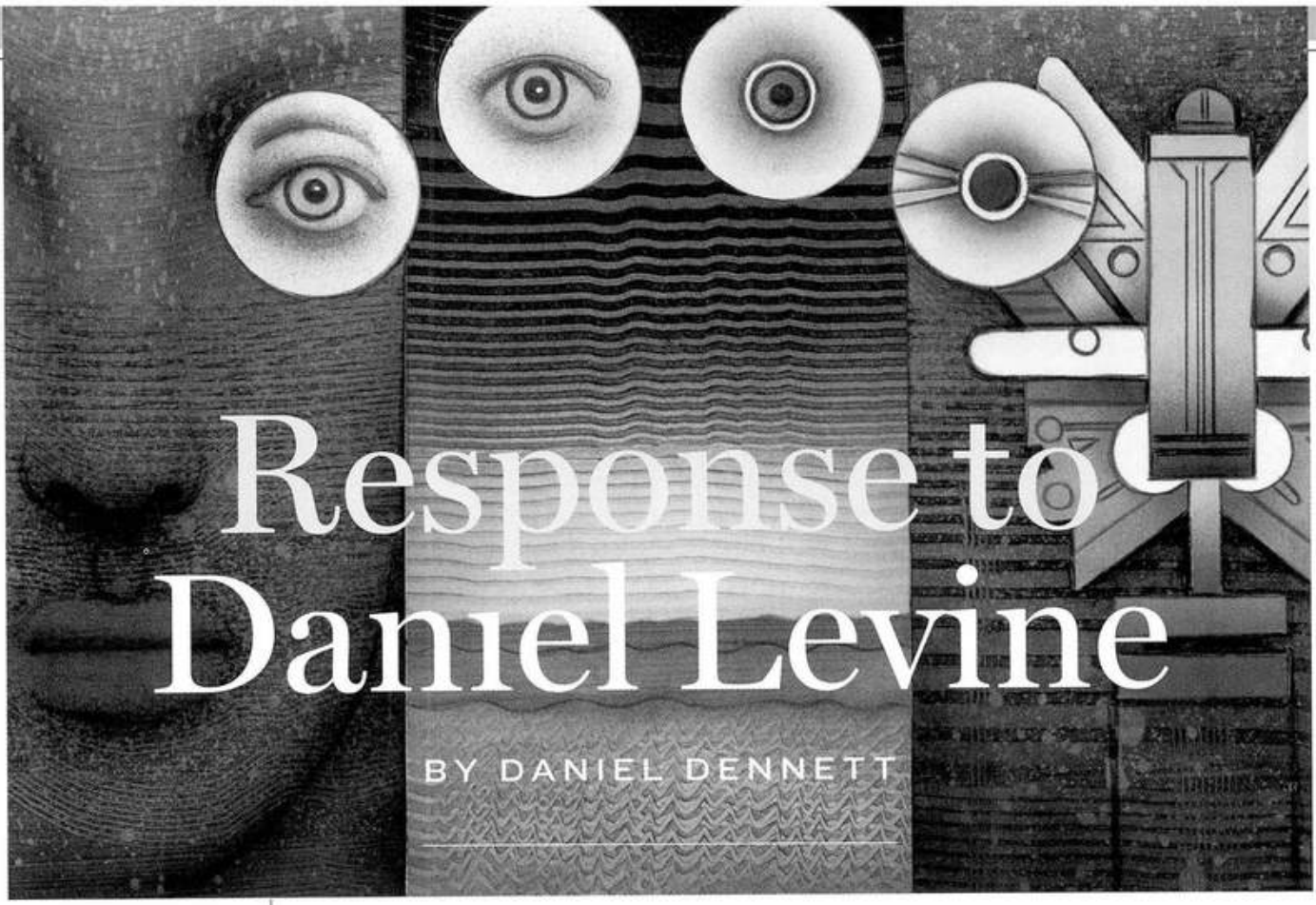
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# Response to Daniel Levine

BY DANIEL DENNETT

I AM OFTEN ASKED by non-philosophers with whom I work why it is that philosophers so often read their papers verbatim at conferences, instead of talking more informally while showing overheads, slides, or PowerPoint presentations, the way scientists do. My answer has been that when scientists give their presentations they are *talking about* their research, which they typically conduct with painstaking attention to detail and rigor; when philosophers give presentations, their presentations *are* their research, and every qualification, every word and comma, has to be just so. Why? Because a tiny inadvertent nudge in one direction or another can turn an interesting thesis into a hopeless falsehood, and can turn an important argument into a *non sequitur*.

What is tantalizing about Dan Levine's review of my book are a series of near bull's-eyes that *almost* get me in their crosshairs but end up misconstruing me; what he thinks of as telling points of criticism are actually points I myself make. We are much closer to agreement than he realizes.

For instance, he finds my definition of religion too restrictive since it includes the requirement of a "supernatural" (instead of a "superhuman" agent or no agent at all), but as I say when I offer my definition, it does not really matter where I "draw the line" since I will be going over the line in any case (p. 7). I think it is sometimes more useful to describe an institution or other social phenomenon as *descended from* a religion rather than a religion in the original sense. Since it is one of my main aims to resist the traditional hyper-respect with which we treat religions, I reject the assumption that a value judgment is implicit in my relative neglect of "significant liberal theologians." Levine says: "He is impatient with religious liberals because he feels they have not clearly defined what they believe in, and therefore sees Left Hand beliefs as not truly 'religion.'" No, many religious liberals have gone to admirable lengths to define clearly what they believe in, and I devote a whole chapter to exploring the powerful phenomenon of *belief in belief* that explains why they do this, since they make it manifest that they do *not* believe in a supernatural agent with whom one can have an "extended exchange relationship," as Rodney Stark puts it. I take the idea of a god who literally answers prayers to be

the historically distinctive mark of religions, but not the feature that makes a religion (or would-be religion) valuable.

Are birds dinosaurs? Yes and no. They are direct descendants of dinosaurs, so one might say they are what dinosaurs have become today, although they are strikingly unlike their ancestors. In any case, birds are wonderful, and none the worse for not being dinosaurs—if that is what we decide. Are Left Hand of God religions really religions? Or are they descended from religions? The title of Michael Lerner's book, *The Left Hand of God*, nicely evokes the supernatural *agent* in their ancestry (the left *hand* of *whom?*), but it is a metaphorical hand today, not a hand that plucks ribs and smites the enemies of Yahweh. Still, Lerner's God is quite like a human agent. He says "God needs us as partners in the healing and transformation of the world and as stewards of the well-being of the planet, and sometimes gets irritated or upset when we misuse God or Torah or Judaism as a vehicle to escape doing what we know we must do to heal the world." Are we to read this assertion as only a useful metaphor? There is a good reason, of course, to insist that the Left Hand of God is, really, a religion. As L. Ron Hubbard recognized some years ago, calling your movement a religion is in itself a valuable adaptation, given the environment in which movements compete today, but there are also costs, as Lerner is well aware: some of those whose allegiance he rightly aspires to win are resistant to anything that calls itself a religion. But this is a question of strategy, not essence. Religions don't form a *natural kind*, so there is nothing to discover about which organizations are *really* religions.

It is interesting to compare two more or less opposite "charges" that are often leveled: Levine sees me as *charging*, in effect, that the Left Hand of God is not really a religion, while I, in turn, am often *charged* with having a religion: scientism. "Science is *your* religion!" people say, implying, typically, that my faith in science is no more rationally defensible than their faith in God–whichever God they have faith in. Both moves should be disqualified from the discussion, since each is a compound of facts and values that don't fit together well. I *do* have "faith" in science in this sense: I find no institution more deserving of trust and support than science, so it has my allegiance and I am prepared to make sacrifices to preserve it from its enemies, who are legion. But that is a rationally defensible allegiance, so it is just the opposite of "faith" in another sense. Some people have a rationally defensible allegiance to their religion—or what they call their religion—and I read *The Left Hand of God* as a persuasive expression of such an allegiance. Nowhere does it excuse itself from negotiating a contradiction by hiding behind "faith"—something no scientist would tolerate—and I certainly wouldn't want to exclude it from the charmed circle of religion because it had this fine feature! I would much rather extend the political and economic benefits of religionhood to my allegiance to science, but that is politically impractical, because—for reasons I recount in my book—the prevailing presumption in the world continues to be that it is virtuous and deep to be irrational about these matters.

Lerner, who expresses his own respect for science, nevertheless elides two entirely independent themes in his own attack on what he calls scientism: (1) the idea that science is the only path to factual truth, and (2) "the idea that people are only motivated by material self-interest." My work for the last decade has concentrated on defending the first *in order to refute* the second. Ever since I wrote *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, I have argued, in books and articles, that, contrary to the anti-science bias enshrined in many corridors of the humanities, the way to understand our ability to rise above material self-interest is not as a "God-given" distinction from the rest of the natural world, but as itself a naturally evolved complex of phenomena. And this capacity for moral imagination and ethical reasoning, the existence of which science explains, gives us answers that science itself cannot give us. As Lerner says—with which I entirely agree—"I don't rely on science to tell me what is right and wrong or what love means or why my life is important." I don't rely on (old style) religion to tell me this either—and neither does Lerner. As Levine suggests at the end of his review, what he calls the Left Hand of Science is in agreement with

the Left Hand of God on almost all issues. Perhaps only a difference in expression and ceremony remains.

Levine's other serious misunderstanding concerns the role of genes (and genetic fitness) in biological or evolutionary explanations. He wants to diminish the importance of genes in any explanation of religion—and so do I. Levine gets off on the wrong foot, noting that I start out:

> with an expression of puzzlement that so many people would engage in rituals and other practices that are costly and often involve sacrifice of economic comfort, and occasionally even of life. Surely, then, there must be some benefit that people derive from a belief in god that outweighs these costs.

Not "surely" at all! Yes, the differential replication of *something* must "pay for" these energetically costly and obviously designed phenomena, but one of my chief targets is the well-nigh standard assumption in evolutionary considerations of religion that "there must be some benefit that people derive." That is only one possibility, and I insist that it *must not be assumed at the outset.* Who benefits? Perhaps the principle beneficiaries are the memes themselves, in their mindless competition for rehearsal time and space in the limited number of minds, not the people who are their vectors. Somehow this prospect, one of the main messages of my book, eluded Levine, who sees me as suggesting that "a rather unscrupulous class of religious leaders (generically labeled 'shamans')" might well be the chief beneficiaries. Actually, there is only one place in my book where I even mention this familiar idea: "the elite who control the system benefit, at the expense of the others," and I have next to nothing to say in favor of it. And I never use "shaman" as a generic term to label unscrupulous religious leaders. I use the term to refer to the healers of traditional or folk religions, and I suggest that they may indeed have provided a remarkable health benefit to their clients.

Levine quotes my claim that "the ultimate measure of evolutionary 'value' is fitness" while overlooking the fact that I am talking as much about the fitness of memes—cultural replicators—as about the fitness of their hosts. Indeed, for our species, what Levine calls "quality of life, rather than survival advantage" is what motivates us, now that we have been so heavily occupied by cultural replicators, and this striking fact about us—that we are the only species that can thus transcend our genetic imperative—cries out for a biological explanation, which I have attempted to sketch. Biology is not just genes! Of course I agree with him when he cites "meaning, competence, bonding with others, physical and intellectual stimulation, and pleasure" among human needs, and I agree with Darwin's emphasis on "cooperation, love, bonding, altruism, and morality" as human traits in need of an evolutionary explanation. I just insist that an evolutionary explanation need not be a *genetic* explanation. So when Levine concludes "So not *every* human behavior can be fully explained in terms of providing a survival advantage for those who engage in that behavior over those who engage in a competing behavior," he is singing my song.

At one point Levine says "Dennett partly reflects this trend [the recognition that biology is not just genes]: he calls for 'multilevel mixed processes, getting us away from the simplistic ideas of "genes for religion" at one extreme and "a conspiracy of priests" at the other extreme,'" but he seems to think this is a concession of mine, instead of part of my main message. It is frustrating to be branded a "gene centrist" after writing several books that have gene centrism as a central target, but I appreciate that for those outside the controversies that swirl in evolutionary theory, the fine points may get lost in the fog of battle.

How does Levine's account of my views on the relation between religion and morality fare? Once again, he gets me almost right, seeing that my challenge to the traditional presumption that religions make us moral requires a defense that will be far from routine. He quotes Swinburne as surmising that perhaps religion makes individuals more moral than they otherwise would be, without observing that a corollary of this noted by me is that religions might then enable some people to be as moral as non-religious peo-

ple manage to be without any religion. Is that possible? Until we do the even-handed research—which has hardly begun—we just don't know, and one of my primary objectives was to dramatize the fact that here too, we must stop making the standard, undefended assumptions. If religion is the chief source, or even a major source, of the moral energy and conviction in the world, this should be something we can demonstrate conclusively, not something to be assumed just because people have always assumed it in the past.

We can all agree that in addition to all the good that religion inspires and enables, it has also on occasion provided a specious justification and an effective infrastructure for the perpetration of great evil. Levine finds my claim that fanatics exploit the protective coloration provided by their coreligionists' good deeds "overly harsh," but that puzzles me, since he goes on to say that I underestimate "the number, commitment and courage" of those within religion already engaging in the critical task that I call for: cleaning up their own houses. He notes that they stand up to "official silencing" and even death threats. Levine seems thus to be agreeing with me that their task is both unpleasant and dangerous. I am glad to be told that there are more such heroes than I have realized.

I am also happy that Levine quoted my closing statement: "Ignorance is nothing shameful; *imposing* ignorance is shameful." He is right, of course, that "each of the major faiths already has an element that advocates values without imposing ignorance." I join him in applauding these elements, and urge, moreover, that we support them by making a fourth R in American compulsory education: the basic facts about the history, creeds, rituals, prohibitions and practices of all the major religions. My hypothesis, as yet untested but testable indirectly, is that toxic religions all depend on enforced ignorance in the young, and that any religion that can flourish in a world of mutual knowledge of the facts about world religions is a benign religion that deserves to persist. I am pretty sure that we agree about that point, too. ■

*Daniel C. Dennett, author of* Breaking the Spell, Freedom Evolves, *and* Darwin's Dangerous Idea *is University Professor and Austin B. Fletcher Professor of Philosophy, and Co-Director of the Center for Cognitive Studies at Tufts University.*

# The Passion Test

## *How Humor Fuels the New Economy*

BY SWAMI BEYONDANANDA, AKA STEVE BHAERMAN

CURRENTLY, MY PRIMARY PASSION—along with helping the world enlighten up through laughter—is working with cellular biologist Bruce Lipton on a book we are calling *The American Evolution: Re-Growing the Garden From the Grassroots Up.* In this book, we extrapolate the wisdom of the 50 trillion cell community called the human body and apply its natural laws to the body politic and the living "organism" called the Earth.

In the body's thriving cellular economy, there is full employment, universal health care and truly "no cell left behind." Interestingly, those cells whose work is most essential for the *thrival* of the organism get "paid" more—in the form of ATP, the body's energy currency—but all participating cells are supported. No cell ever has to worry about where its next ATP (Aid to Thriving Protoplasm) cheque is coming from.

Applied to our 6.5 billion "cell" human community, it might be said that each of us individual human cells has an opportunity to contribute to the health and well being of the whole, and be compensated—in money, love and joy—for this contribution. In looking at the economy as it's currently constituted, we may seem a long way away from this ideal. However, once enough of us realize that "money" is merely a vehicle for circulating energy—and love—we'll see that both energy and love exist even when money doesn't.

I am reminded of a brilliant characterization of the Great Depression I read somewhere. Even though the money system had collapsed, there were still jobs to be done, things to be produced—and plenty of people willing to do the work. It was as if a carpenter came to work one monday and the boss said, "Sorry, no work. We've run out of inches."

Once we remember that money is just a measurement of value, we can also remind ourselves which activities bring true value to the world. Or in the Swami's words, "What is it that helps us re-grow the Garden and have a heaven of a time doing it?"

Which brings us back to passion. What I was reminded of as I read Chris and Janet Atwood's *The Passion Test* is that passion is the fuel for loving endeavor. Often as children, our passions are thwarted by well-meaning adults who want to spare us the disappointment of trying to make a living (as opposed to just living!) at some endeavor without obvious commercial applications. As a result, we end up with unhappy adults who seek to pursue happiness not through passionate participation but passive consumerism.

In the world of the future—which is already upon us—pursuing happiness at the expense of Mother Earth is no longer viable. Instead of measuring wealth in "things," the new measure of wealth is likely to be experience and awareness. Think about yourself and the people in your life. Those who are living from their passions have richer, fuller lives regardless of what their bank statement says. At the same time, it's true that many of the most successful businesses grew from someone's singular passion.

"Passions arise from the heart," say co-authors Chris and Janet Attwood. "When you are truly passionate about something, you don't have to try hard to put attention on it." Sometimes these passions come so easy to us, that we don't even consider turning it into our life's work or business. Work is supposed to be hard, right? As much as I've always loved humor and used it in all my endeavors, I never imagined doing it as a career until I was in my late 30s!

As part of the promotion for the *Passion Test* book, I was challenged to come up with something of value that I would be willing to offer as part of the package of gifts for those buying the book. And I was immediately reminded of my passion for not just comedy, but using humor as a tool for transformation. Then I remembered that for most of the past twenty years, I have been doing talks and teaching classes in The Alchemy of Humor and Comedy As a Healing Art. As part of that curriculum, I have a 33 page mini-book available called "A Course In Laughter: 'Situational Comedy' for Non-Comedians." Interestingly, in the process of preparing this mini-book for downloading, my passion for teaching "alchemical" humor has been rekindled.

So ... if you've been curious about your passions and how to pursue them as a way of life (and a way of making a living), I think you'll find *The Passion Test* clarifying and extremely helpful. And ... you'll also be able to download a copy of A Course in Laughter.

May the FARCE be with you. ■

*To learn more about Swami Beyondananda, visit wakeuplaughing.com*



# When a Country Doesn't Take Responsibility

by Jeff Halper

HERE IS THE QUESTION: IF ISRAELIS TRULY crave peace and security—"the right to be normal," as Prime Minister Ehud Olmert put it recently—then why haven't they exhausted each and every opportunity for resolving the conflict? Why do Israelis continually elect governments that aggressively pursue settlement expansion and military confrontations with the Palestinians and Israel's neighbors even though public opinion polls clearly show that a majority of Israelis want to get the albatross of Occupation off their necks? Why, if most Israelis truly yearn to "separate" from the Palestinians, do they offer the Palestinians so little that separation is simply not an option, even if the Palestinians are willing to make major concessions?

OPPOSITE: AP PHOTO/EMILIO MORENATTI

Over the course of the past fifty-eight years, Arab states have made numerous and repeated peace overtures to Israeli governments. King Abdullah of Jordan, with whom Israel had an "understanding" in the 1948 war, engaged in two years of negotiations with Israel (including offering to meet with Prime Minister David Ben Gurion), but was never able to break through. In 1949, Syria's leader Husni Zaim openly declared his readiness to be the first Arab leader to conclude a peace treaty with Israel, but he was rebuffed, as were successive Syrian presidents up to the present one. Gamal Abdel Nasser, too, made repeated appeals to Ben Gurion and Prime Minister Moshe Sharett, but finally gave up when a young Ariel Sharon led an attack on an Egyptian military base in Gaza. In 1988, the Palestinians already formally recognized Israel within the Green Line, yet never succeeded in getting Israel to negotiate a genuine two-state solution, even during the Oslo process. Perhaps the greatest missed opportunity came during Operation Defensive Shield in 2002, when Sharon refused to even acknowledge a Saudi-led initiative by the Arab League, which offered recognition, peace, and regional integration in return for ending the Occupation. Only two Arab leaders, Egypt's Anwar Sadat and Jordan's King Hussein, managed to get a reluctant, at times resistant, Israeli leadership to sign peace treaties, and then only at their own initiative.

In fact, despite its highly conflictual relations with its Arab neighbors, Israel *has* succeeded in becoming an accepted part of the Middle East, as indicated in particular by the 2002 Arab League offer, which Israel continues to disregard. But this also pinpoints the problem. Israel ignored the initiative (it even insisted that the Americans remove it as a term of reference in the Road Map) because it was contingent upon a full withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. True to form, Israel responded to the offer "on the ground" rather than through diplomatic channels. Sharon carried out his plan of "disengagement" from Gaza explicitly to ensure Israel's permanent and unassailable rule over the West Bank and east Jerusalem, while his successor, Ehud Olmert, vigorously pushed a "realignment" plan under which Israel would annex its major settlement blocs and lock the Palestinians into a series of bantustan-like enclaves, transforming the Occupation into permanent Israeli control.

All of this conforms to an Israeli foreign policy first formulated by Ben Gurion, which asserts that if Israel limits its aim to achieving a *modus vivendi* rather than full-fledged peace with the Arab world, it can ensure its security while retaining control over the entire Land of Israel west of the Jordan. To be sure, occasional conflicts will erupt, such as those in Gaza or with the Hezbollah in Lebanon. But such "mishaps" (or so the thinking went before the Lebanese debacle) are easily contained.

## Non-Constraining Conflict Management

ISRAELI *REALPOLITIK* RESTS ON the extremely pragmatic, akin to what the British termed "muddling through." If Israel's goal was to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians and seek genuine peace and regional integration, it could easily have adopted policies that would have achieved that long ago. The goal, however, has been conflict management, maintaining the "*status quo*" in perpetuity, and not conflict resolution. Muddling through similarly suits Israel's attempt to balance the unbalance-able: expanding territorially at the expense of the Palestinians while maintaining an acceptable level of security and "quiet." This strategy enables Israel to meet each challenge as it arises rather than to lock itself into a set of policies that fail to take into account unexpected developments (*Yesterday we tried Oslo, today we'll hit Gaza and Lebanon, tomorrow we'll try "convergence"*). It may not look rational or neat, but conflict management means going with the flow; staying on top of things, knowing where you are going and having contingency plans always at the ready to take advantage of any opening, always dealing with events as they happen. There are no long-term strategies, just a vision implemented in imperceptible stages over time and under the radar so as to attract as little attention as possible in order to progressively secure territorial gains.

If my analysis is correct, Israel is willing to settle for peace and quiet rather than gen-



PHOTO: EMILIO MORENATTI

uine peace, for management of the conflict rather than closure, for territorial gains that may perpetuate tensions and occasional conflicts in the region, but which do not jeopardize Israel's essential security. Declaring "the right to be normal" thus becomes a PR move designed to blame the other side and cast Israel as the victim; it is not something that Israeli leaders sincerely expect. Indeed, their very policies are based on the assumption that functional normality—an acceptable level of "quiet," a strong economy, a fairly normal existence for an insulated Israeli public most of the time—is a preferred *quid pro quo* to the concessions required for a genuine (and attainable) peace.

## What About the Battered and Exhausted Israeli Public?

THE ISRAELI JEWISH PUBLIC only partially buys into all this. It would prefer peace and normalization to territorial gains in the occupied territories, though it definitely favors separation from the Arab world to regional integration. If this is the case, then why do Israelis repeatedly vote for governments that pursue the exact opposite? Mystification of the conflict by Israeli leaders plays a large role, as does the "clash of civilizations" discourse in other Western countries. Since Israel's strategy of enduring a certain level of conflict as an acceptable price for territorial expansion would not be tolerated if it was stated to Israelis in those precise terms, successive governments throughout the country's history have instead convinced the public that there is simply no political solution. The Arabs are our intransigent and permanent enemies; we Israeli Jews, the victims, have sought only peace and a normal existence, but in vain. And that's just the way it is. As Yitzhak Shamir put it so colorfully: "The Arabs are the same Arabs, the Jews are the same Jews and the sea [into which the former seek to throw the latter] is the same sea."

This manipulative representation of the conflict fashions discourse in a way that prevents the Israeli public from "getting it." Reinforced and made coherent, it is a compelling national narrative that permits us to do whatever we like without ever being held responsible. This framing, which underlies all Israeli public discourse, goes something like this:

> The Land of Israel belongs exclusively to the Jewish people; Arabs (the term "Palestinian" is seldom used) reside there by sufferance and not by right. Since the problem is implacable, Arab hatred and terrorism, and the Palestinians, are our permanent enemies, and the conflict has no political solution. Israel's policies are based on concerns for security. The Arabs have rejected all of our many peace offers; we are the victim fighting for our existence. Israel therefore is exempt from accountability for its actions under international law and covenants of human rights.

> Any solution, then, must leave Israel in control of the entire country. Any Palestinian state will have to be truncated, non-viable and semi-sovereign. The conflict is a win-lose proposition: either we "win" or "they" do. The answer to Israel's security concerns is a militarily strong Israel aligned with the U.S.

One of the many problematic elements of this framing is its glaring omission of the Occupation. Without that, debate is reduced solely to what "they" are doing to us, in other words, to terrorism and security. There are no "occupied territories," only Judea and Samaria, the heart of our historic homeland, strangely disembodied but certainly hostile "territories." Quite deliberately, then, Israelis are studiously ignorant of what is going on in the West Bank, whether in terms of settlement expansion and other "facts" on the ground, or in terms of government policies. One can listen to the endless political talk shows and commentaries in Israel's media without ever hearing a reference to the Occupation. Pieces of it, yes: settlement outposts, perhaps; the Separation Barrier (called a "fence" in Israel) occasionally; very rarely house demolitions or references to the massive system of Israeli-only highways that have incorporated the West Bank irreversibly into Israel proper. But never the "Big Picture." Although Olmert's Realignment plan, which is of fundamental importance to the future of Israelis, is based upon the annexation of Israel's major settlement blocs, the public has never been shown a map of those blocs and therefore has no clear idea of what is actually being proposed or its significance for any eventual peace.

Framing, then, becomes much more than a PR exercise. It becomes an essential element of defense in insulating the core of the conflict—the Occupation itself, the proactive policies of settlement that belie the claims of "security," and Israel's responsibility as the occupying power—from both public scrutiny and public discussion. Defending that framing is therefore tantamount to defending Israel's very claim to the country, the very "moral basis" of Zionism we Israelis constantly invoke. No wonder it is impossible to engage even liberal "pro-Israeli" individuals and organizations in a substantive and genuine discussion of the issues at hand.

The result of such discursive processes is the disempowerment of the Israeli public. If, in fact, no solution is possible, then all that's left is to hunker down and carve out as much normality as possible. For Israelis, the entire conflict with the Arabs has been reduced to a technical question: how do we ensure our personal security? Since conflict management assumes a certain level of violence, the public has entered into a compact with the government: *You reduce terrorism to "acceptable" levels, and we won't ask how you do it.* In a sense, the public extends the government a line of credit. *We don't care how you guarantee our personal security. Establish a Palestinian state in the occupied territories if you think that will work; load the Arabs on trucks and transfer them out of the country; build a wall so high that, as someone said, even birds can't fly over it. We, the Israeli Jewish public, don't care how you do it. Just do it if you want to be re-elected.*

This is what accounts for the apparent contradiction between Israeli public will and the policies of the governments it elects. This explains how in 1999, Ehud Barak was elected Prime Minister with a clear mandate to end the conflict, and when he failed and the Intifada broke out, that same public, in early 2001, elected his mirror opposite, Ariel Sharon, the architect of Israel's settlement policies, who eschewed any negotiations at all. Because of such events, "peace" carries a negative political connotation amongst most Israelis. It denotes concessions, weakness, increased vulnerability. The notion that Israel is in a permanent struggle against intractable enemies lowers public expectations that peace is possible; instead, the public is satisfied merely with "peace and quiet."

Because the "situation" (as we call it) has been reduced to a technical problem of personal security without political solution, Israelis have become passive, bordering on irresponsible. They have been removed from the political equation altogether. Any attempt to actually resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict (and its corollaries) will have to come from the outside; the Israeli public will simply not make a proactive move in that direction by themselves. While the government will obviously oppose such intervention, the Israeli public may actually welcome it—if it is announced by a friend (the *(continued on page 80)*

*(continued from page 62)* U.S.), pronounced authoritatively with little space for haggling (as Reagan did over the sale of AWACs surveillance aircraft to Saudi Arabia in the early 1980s), and couched as originating out of concern for Israel's security.

Israeli Jews may be likened to the whites of South Africa during the last phase of apartheid. When international and domestic pressures became unbearable and President de Klerk finally said, "It's over," there was no uprising, even among Afrikaners who had constructed the regime. I sincerely believe that if President Bush would get up one morning and say to Israel: "We love you, we will guarantee your security, but the Occupation has to end. Period," you would hear a sigh of relief from Israel all the way to Washington.

## The Signs Are Not Good

IN THE MEANTIME, the war in Lebanon and the unending conflict with the Palestinians has left Israel staring into the abyss. In the wake of the war, Olmert has announced that his convergence plan, the only political plan the government had, was being shelved for the time being. (But only for the time being: in early September the Housing Ministry announced the approval of an additional 690 housing units in the occupied territories, while the Justice Ministry will legalize more than 100 settlement "outposts".) Without the ability to end or even manage its regional conflicts unilaterally, faced with the limitations of military power, increasingly isolated from a global community to whom human rights does matter, neither Israeli governments nor the public are able to formulate policies that might break Israel out of its self-destructive *status quo*. Israel's proportional electoral system, in which voters cast their ballots for parties rather than candidates, saddles it with unwieldy coalition governments incapable of formulating and pursuing a coherent foreign policy and only adds to the Israeli public's disempowerment and frustration.

Only when the international community—led by Europe rather than the U.S., which appears to be hopeless in this regard—decides that the price is too high and adopts a more assertive policy toward the Occupation, will the ability of Israeli governments to manipulate it end. Since governments will not do the right thing without being prodded by the people, what the Israeli public needs for a peaceful resolution to the conflict is not the "support" of its supposed "friends" but the active intervention of international civil society. Even if the Israeli government accepted this, the organized Jewish community in the Diaspora and Christian fundamentalists may not appreciate it.

On September 25, Syrian President Bashar Assad said his country wants peace with Israel, and does not support wiping it off the map. Olmert replied that same day, stating, "conditions are not ripe for peace," and that, "the Golan Heights will remain forever in our hands." Case closed. ■

*Jeff Halper is the coordinator of the Israeli Committee Against Housing Demolitions. He lives in Jerusalem.*

*Beyond Genocide*



Armenia

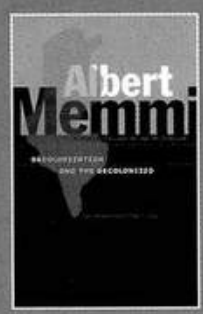
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# America's Military Proxy

BY STEPHEN ZUNES

ISRAEL'S DISASTROUS WAR on Lebanon was instigated largely at the behest of the United States in the hope of curbing Hezbollah's influence in Lebanon and serving as the first phase of a possible U.S. war against Iran.

Writing in the August 21 issue of the *New Yorker*, Seymour Hirsch quotes a consultant to the U.S. Department of Defense describing how the Bush administration "has been agitating for some time to find a reason for a preëmptive blow against Hezbollah." He added, "It was our intent to have Hezbollah diminished, and now we have someone else doing it."

Hezbollah was formed in reaction to Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon and its military occupation of the southern part of that country, which did not end until 2000. In addition to its militia, which received Iranian support and engaged in a series of notorious terrorist attacks during its early years, the movement subsequently evolved into a legal political party with an impressive network of social services directed primarily at the country's Shi'ite population, Lebanon's largest, poorest, and least politically represented of Lebanon's major religious communities. Taking advantage of the alienation that resulted from the displacement of hundreds of thousands of poor Shi'ites as a consequence of years of Israeli bombardment of civilian areas, and the neo-liberal economic policies of the Lebanese government, Hezbollah has grown to be the largest political party among the Shi'ite minority.

With the country's democratic opening after the departure of Syrian troops last year, Hezbollah gained a significant minority of seats in the Lebanese parliament. Hezbollah's unwillingness to disarm their militia, and the inability of the pro-Western Lebanese government to force it to do so, led the Bush administration to push Israel to take military action to crush a movement that had defied U.S. efforts to democratize the region on American terms.

Just as the Reagan administration and its supporters during the 1980s deliberately exaggerated Soviet and Cuban influence over Nicaragua's Sandinista government and Salvadoran rebels in order to advance their broader Cold War aims, the Bush administration and their bipartisan backers have grossly exaggerated the influence of Syria and Iran's influence over Hezbollah. Indeed, the rhetoric of the Bush administration and the language of the House and Senate resolutions supporting Israel's war appear to be paving the way for an American-Israeli attack on Iran and possibly Syria as well.

In his May 23 summit with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, President George W. Bush strongly encouraged the Israeli leader to launch the long-planned attack on Lebanon soon, offering America's full support for the massive military operation. Numerous Israeli press reports indicate that some Israeli officials, including top military officers, are furious at Bush for pushing their country into a war that has shattered the morale and confidence of the Israel Defense Forces.

The coalition government lead by Ehud Olmert was not an unwilling partner, however. Israel had been planning the war since 2004 or earlier, according to a July 21 article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and had briefed U.S. officials with details of the plans, including PowerPoint presentations, in what the newspaper described as "revealing detail." It also cited Gerald Steinberg, professor of political studies at Bar-Ilan University,

as saying, "Of all of Israel's wars since 1948, this was the one for which Israel was most prepared. In a sense, the preparation began in May 2000, immediately after the Israeli withdrawal..." Despite this, the Bush administration and Congressional leaders of both parties tried to present the devastating attacks, which took the lives of more than 1,000 Lebanese civilians, as a spontaneous reaction to Hezbollah's provocative July 12 attack on an Israeli border post and its seizure of two Israeli soldiers.

According to Hersh's *New Yorker* article, "several Israeli officials visited Washington, separately, 'to get a green light for the bombing operation and to find out how much the United States would bear,'" soon getting the final approval from Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, and shortly thereafter, President Bush.

Some reports indicated that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was less sanguine about the proposed Israeli military offensive, believing that Israel should focus less on bombing and more on ground operations, despite the dramatically higher Israeli casualties that would result. Still, Hersh quotes a former senior intelligence official as saying that Rumsfeld was "delighted that Israel is our stalking horse."

The *Jerusalem Post* reported on July 30 that President Bush prodded Israel to expand the war beyond Lebanon, with Israeli military officials "receiving indications from the U.S. that America would be interested in seeing Israel attack Syria," but that Israeli officials found the idea as "nuts."

In support of America's policy of backing the Israeli offensive, the office of the White House Press Secretary released a list of talking points that included reference to a *Los Angeles Times* op-ed piece by Max Boot, a senior fellow for national security studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, highlighting a quote claiming that "Our best response is exactly what Bush has done so far—reject premature calls for a cease-fire and let Israel finish the job." The article, entitled "It's Time to Let the Israelis Take Off the Gloves," noted that "Iran may be too far away for much Israeli retaliation beyond a single strike on its nuclear weapons complex. (Now wouldn't be a bad time.) But Syria is weak and next door." Boot, who has close ties to the Bush White House, went on to insist that "Israel needs to hit the Assad regime. Hard. If it does, it will be doing Washington's dirty work."

The primary target for the Bush administration in goading Israel into war, however, appears to have been Iran. According to Hersh, the Israeli attack on Lebanon was to "serve as a prelude to a potential American preemptive attack to destroy Iran's nuclear installations," citing a Pentagon consultant as describing how the Israelis would be able to "to hunt down and bomb missiles, tunnels, and bunkers from the air. It would be a demo for Iran." Similarly, a former senior intelligence official was noted as describing how the Israeli attacks on Lebanon were "the mirror image of what the United States has been planning for Iran."

While Hezbollah had largely demobilized its militia since the Israeli withdrawal six years earlier, fears of a U.S.-Israeli strike against Iran resulted in Iran sending hundreds of rockets to Hezbollah to place in southern Lebanon to serve as a deterrent. Indeed, it is no accident that Iran began the large-scale transfer of these dangerous weapons to Hezbollah only after the Bush administration started making threats to attack their country.

Hersh quotes a senior analyst with close ties to the Bush administration as saying, "The White House was more focused on stripping Hezbollah of its missiles, because, if there was to be a military option against Iran's nuclear facilities, it had to get rid of the weapons that Hezbollah could use in a potential retaliation at Israel." Without that threat, Israel might be less willing to assist in a U.S. war against Iran.

Starting this spring, according to Hersh, the White House ordered top planners from the U.S. Air Force to consult with their Israeli counterparts regarding war plans against Iran in which an Israeli preemptive strike against Hezbollah would be part of the process. Indeed, Air Force Lieutenant General Dan Halutz, the chief of staff of the Israeli military and principal architect of the war on Lebanon, had worked with U.S. officials on contingency planning for an air war with Iran.

Hersh also reported that Bush administration officials, particularly Vice-President

Cheney, pressured Israel to "move quickly in its air war against Hezbollah," and cited a former intelligence officer who said, "We told Israel, 'Look, if you guys have to go, we're behind you all the way. But we think it should be sooner rather than later—the longer you wait, the less time we have to evaluate and plan for Iran before Bush gets out of office.'" Hersh goes on to quote him as saying, "Cheney's point was: 'What if the Israelis execute their part of this first, and it's really successful? It'd be great. We can learn what to do in Iran by watching what the Israelis do in Lebanon.'"

While this summer's attacks on Lebanon may have originally been seen as advantageous for the Bush administration's regional goals, it was certainly unnecessary in terms of Israel's strategic needs. With the exception of one accidental fatality in 2003 caused by a Hezbollah anti-aircraft missile fired at an Israeli plane, which illegally violated Lebanese airspace and landed on the Israeli side of the border, no Israeli civilian had been killed by Hezbollah for more than a decade. Reports from the Congressional Research Service, the State Department, and independent think tanks failed to note any major act of terrorism by Hezbollah since the bombing of the Jewish cultural center in Buenos Aires in 1994. Despite claims by President Bush to the contrary, Hezbollah began killing civilians in Israeli cities only *after* Israel began to kill civilians in Lebanese cities on July 12.

Before the recent conflict, Hezbollah was down to about 1,000 men under arms (which promptly tripled in size when reservists were called in once Israel commenced its attacks) and a national dialogue was going on between Hezbollah and the government of pro-Western Prime Minister Fuad Sinora regarding disarmament. More concerned with the populist party's political influence than Israeli security, however, Washington pressured Israel to find an excuse to go to war.

Hezbollah gave it to them in their attack on the Israeli border post and the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers. However, Hezbollah was not such a serious threat to Israel's security that it required such a massive strike against it, much less the civilian infrastructure of Lebanon as a whole. Though Hezbollah had hardly renounced their extremist ideology, they had largely put their terrorist past behind them.

The majority of Lebanese opposed Hezbollah at that time, both for its reactionary fundamentalist social agenda as well as its insistence on maintaining an armed presence independent of the country's elected government. Thanks to the American-backed Israeli attacks on Lebanon's civilian population, however, support for Hezbollah is now at more than 80 percent according to polls, even within the country's Sunni Muslim and Christian communities.

While it was widely reported that Bush administration officials believed that destroying Hezbollah might strengthen pro-Western elements in the Lebanese government, it has instead done just the opposite. Even Richard Armitage, deputy secretary of state under President Bush's first term, and a leading hawk, noted how "The only thing that the bombing has achieved so far is to unite the population against the Israelis."

By the fourth week of the Israeli offensive, Israel's right-wing prime minister, Ehud Olmert, found himself under increasing criticism at home, with polls from *Haaretz* indicating that only 39 percent of Israelis would support the planned expanded ground offensive. Meretz Party MP Ran Cohen, writing in the *Jerusalem Post*, calls earlier moves to expand the ground offensive in which scores of Israeli soldiers died "a wretched decision." Yariv Oppenheimer, general director of Peace Now, which had earlier muted its criticism of the attacks on Lebanon, noted that, "The war has spiraled out of control and the government is ignoring the political options available," and that, "The government has fallen into the trap that [Hezbollah leader] Hassan Nasrallah has laid for it.... We are ploughing back into the Lebanese quagmire."

Still, Washington continued to block international efforts for a ceasefire and encouraged Israel to continue with the war, which resulted in unprecedented anger among Israelis at the use of their country as an American proxy. *Haaretz*' centrist Washington Bureau Chief Shmuel Rosner, even referred to Israel as "America's deadly messenger." Gush Shalom's Uri Avnery went even further, calling Israel "America's rottweiler," and

asked, "What interest do we have in being regarded—accurately—as the servants of the greatest enemy of the Muslim world in general and the Arab world in particular?

These critical observations by Rosner and Avnery were just the tip of a much larger iceberg. As the war in Lebanon proceeded to go awry, for the first time in Israel's history, the country's consensus about the value of its relationship with the United States became subject to increasingly critical domestic debate. A *Haaretz* article about an anti-war demonstration in Tel Aviv noted how "this was a distinctly anti-American protest," which included, "chants of 'We will not die and kill in the service of the United States,' and slogans condemning President George W. Bush."

This cynical use of Israel as a military proxy could have offered Congressional Democrats a chance to challenge the Bush administration's disastrous Middle East policy and demonstrate how they were true friends of Israel by allying with the Israeli peace movement in calling for an end to the war. Instead, as President Bush defied the international community in blocking a cease fire that could have stopped the fighting weeks earlier and saved the lives of hundreds of innocent civilians, all but seventeen of the 201 Democrats in the House of Representatives voted in favor of a Republican-sponsored resolution (H. Res. 921) that commended President Bush for his actions, claiming that the targeting of Lebanese population centers were acts of legitimate self-defense and even praised Israel for "minimizing civilian loss."

That this summer's war against Lebanon would be a disaster for Israel was entirely predictable. However, the Democrats, like the Republicans, demonstrated that they had absolutely no qualms about using Israel to advance the Bush administration's militaristic agenda in the Middle East, despite the enormous costs to the Lebanese and Israeli people.

And, ironically, political action committees affiliated with MoveOn.org, Peace Action, Act for Change, and a number of other supposedly progressive groups have refused to rescind their endorsements of Democrats who support the use of Israel as proxy to advance U.S. hegemony in this oil-rich region. As a result, the Democrats know they can continue this dangerous policy with impunity.

For centuries, non-Jewish elites have employed Jews as the visible agents of unpopular political and economic policies so that Jews could be used as scapegoats by oppressed populations, turning their anger and resentment away from those who really had the power. Indeed, this is the basis of historical anti-Semitism. This is ultimately why the Bush administration pushed Israel into war—to do America's "dirty work."

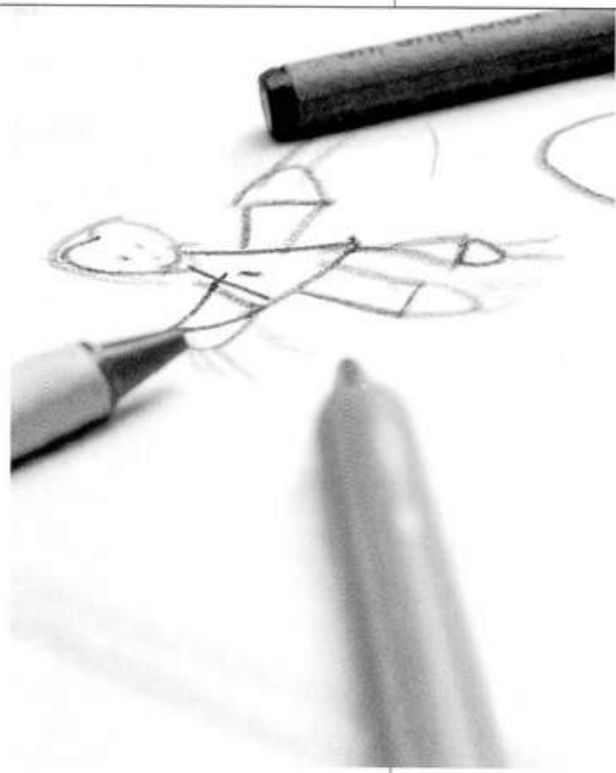
This contemptuous policy seems to be working, as the latest orgy of American-inspired Israeli violence has resulted in increased anti-Semitism in the Middle East and throughout the world. Ironically, in the United States, many critics of America's support for the war in Lebanon are blaming "the Zionist lobby" for somehow forcing the United States to back Israel's brutal assault, rather than the Bush administration and its bipartisan Congressional allies who encouraged Israel to do so in the first place.

It is certainly true that there were reactionary elements within the Israeli government who were quite willing to play the role of America's proxy and may have even mistakenly believed that this war was somehow in Israel's interest. However, given the enormous dependence Israel has on the United States militarily, economically, and diplomatically, this latest war on Lebanon could not have taken place without a green light from Washington. President Jimmy Carter, for example, was able to put a halt to Israel's 1978 invasion of Lebanon within days, and force them to withdraw from the south bank of the Litani River to a narrow strip just north of the Israeli border.

By contrast, the Bush administration and an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Congress clearly believed it was in America's interest, regardless of the negative implications to Israel's legitimate security interests, to try to fight the Muslims to the last Jew.

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*Stephen Zunes is a professor of politics at the University of San Francisco and a member of the advisory board of the Tikkun Community. He is the author of* Tinderbox: U.S. Middle East Policy and the Roots of Terrorism.



# My Child's God—and Mine

by Anne Trubek

MY FIVE-YEAR-OLD SON HAS A MIND world. Here's how he defines it: "You know, the things that are going on in your head, that aren't the same as what's going on in real life?" Sometimes he goes to a special room inside his mind world. He calls it his "mind praying room." It's where he goes when he wants to talk to God.

Simon is being raised in a secular Jewish household. We are "twice-a-year Jews," going to Temple just for the High Holy days, and celebrating Passover each spring with our extended family. He has a sporadic history with religious school. That means that in our family, going to talk to God is pretty much a bottom-up activity, invented by Simon.

Some of Simon's *sui generis* religion comes from the lunchroom cafeteria of the overwhelmingly Christian Midwestern public school that he attends, where he is the only Jewish kid in his kindergarten class. While I don't get many details from him about reading or math lessons, I do hear a lot about what the kids talk about during lunch where, apparently, religion is a common topic of kindergarten conversation.

"Mommy," he told me one day after school. "I figured out how to pray. I put my head down, my hands like this, I close my eyes and I talk for a very long time. At the end I say Jesus Christ."

I told him that Jews think Jesus Christ is a man, not a God. He got very upset, and started to cry. He wants to figure this stuff out, and he wants to become part of the lunchtime gang. Religious difference is hard for all five-year olds: months earlier, I had talked to his class about Chanukah. After forty-five minutes of storytelling, menorah lighting, and dreidel playing, there was time for one final question. I called on a boy sitting in front who asked me: "What does all this have to do with Jesus Christ?"

"Mommy. This is what I decided. Jesus Christ is a really nice man who lives next to God in the sky."

Simon's particular religious situation makes understanding this God stuff difficult, but he is dogged when he wants to figure something out, and he has a remarkable capacity to overcome cognitive dissonance inside his mind world. A few days later, strapped in his car seat, he told me his new theology: "Mommy. This is what I decided. Jesus Christ is a really nice man who lives next to God in the sky."

Things got harder when he wanted to place my religiosity into his mind worldview.

I was cleaning up the kitchen one afternoon when Simon came in, grabbed a snack and asked:

"Mommy, do you believe in God?"

As I wiped down the countertop, I tried to compose one of those instant-parental-wisdom-without-flinching responses.

"I don't know, sweetie. I'm not sure. I do believe you should treat people well, and help out those in need."

Simon was instantly upset, tears forming in his eyes. "You do believe in God, you do!" he bellowed. "Remember Passover? Remember when God told Moses to lead the Jews out of slavery in Egypt? That really happened! He's real!"

I floundered, trying to think of a response that would be honest and comforting at once. It's painful to be so inarticulate before the crying, searching face of a serious kindergartener. (My friend Erik had recently told me that his six-year-old son, Graham, had put this same question to him. When Erik replied that he didn't know if he believed in God, Graham retorted: "Dad! Focus!")

Simon didn't give me enough time to compose that perfect reply before he off-loaded another biggie:

"Mommy, how do you pray?"

"Well, you know how we say which things we're thankful for before we go to bed? That's a way of praying."

"But that's not talking to God," he insisted. "How do you *talk* to God?"

It was spring, so I thought of the nearest, most recent, spiritual-like activity: "Well, sometimes when I'm gardening I feel like I'm talking to God."

Since that spiritual crisis in the kitchen, Simon has continued his quest for faith, and to understand how it clicks with the faith of those around him. If I'm pulling weeds in the vegetable patch, he'll come over and ask what I'm saying to God. And when he's on his swing set talking out loud and I ask what game he's playing, he'll often say, "Oh, I'm just talking to God." One day after summer camp he told me he discovered how to pray underwater while swimming. He showed me the two different ways to do it, legs spread or legs crossed.

"And I put my hands like this," he said, pressing his palms together.

"Do you do that, Mommy?"

"No."

"Oh. I must be the only Jew in the world who prays like this!" he said, excited by his originality.

I have always let Simon run wild with his secular imagination. I strain to keep him in the age of credulity. He believes in the tooth fairy, and his imaginary companions, the invisible bad guys, whom he fights with out in the yard. With God, I stumble, and feel compelled to express skepticism. But Simon has true faith: he knows on one level that Santa and superheroes and God are not empirically verifiable, but he also believes that believing can make things true.

And while my opinions are important to him, and help shape his views, ultimately Simon is the lord of his mind world. It's his own private faith, made out of bits and pieces of the grown-up advice and lunchtime stories and annual rituals, and concocted inside his mind praying room. There, he's the only Jew in the entire universe who prays underwater, sitting cross-legged on the bottom of the pool, palms-pressed-together. Some may call such faith childish, but it takes my breath away. It fills me with wonder and Old Testament-sublime, jaw-slack awe. I believe in the God inside Simon's mind world.

My family thinks Simon has Talmudic scholar written all over him. I asked him if he'd like to go to Hebrew school next year and he enthusiastically said yes, so I'll sign him up. I've added a holiday celebration or two to our household: in addition to our annual Sukkot party, this year we'll put on a Purim play. I'll begin to explain to him why I strive to tithe my income and incorporate social justice into my professional life in religious as well as secular terms. But truth be told, I'm not being reluctantly pulled along by my proudly Jewish son. I've wanted him to be interested in religion all along, and I put enough on his path early on to encourage him. In a way, I have been using him to work out my own questions about faith. I think I've found an answer, and it goes something like this: If I believe in Simon's God, then I believe in God. And God to me means wonder.

I've spent most of my life analyzing and explaining and interpreting things (I'm an English professor), and I somehow misled myself into thinking that if I thought about my own faith I'd have to analyze and explain and interpret it, too. Coming from an intellectual, secular background, I'm somewhat ashamed to admit that I—maybe? kinda?—believe in God. And my bedrock rationalism makes me feel that if I do assert my belief in God, I should be able to explain what God is, what God does, what God means. Simon's old bearded man in the sky doesn't work. But that doesn't mean, of course, that God doesn't work for me.

His questions—about what's real and how one talks to God—are ones I have forgotten to ask myself directly, but ones that I indirectly put forward when I introduced Judaism into our household. This is not an original move: many secular parents exercise their religiosity through their children, holding Shabbat dinner only after the children are born, for example. And it's a cliché to project onto children purer, Edenic versions of our now-fallen selves. In a sense that's what I've done. The trick will be for me to turn the awe Simon inspires in me into my own mind world, and to the outer world, whether or not that means a turn to more traditional faith. I'm not yet ready to answer Simon's questions about my religion. But I have realized this: it's not just his wonder that inspires me. It is my wonder. If I believe in Simon's God, then what I believe in is wonder and awe, a hedge against cynicism and skepticism. I wonder what my mind world—and the outer world—would look like if I brought to it this awe.

As Simon grows up, and learns more about scripture and ritual, he'll begin to adapt his mind praying room to official doctrine. He'll find his own path, I have no doubt. Meanwhile, I will try to adapt with him, adding a new room in my mind world to house my capacity and desire for wonder. With a child like mine, in a world like this, how could I not believe?

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*Anne Trubek is associate professor of rhetoric and composition at Oberlin College. She has contributed essays to* The Washington Post, The Believer, The Chronicle of Higher Education *and other publications.*

# One Day's Oil for Eight Days' Needs

## *The Chanukah Miracle in a Petroleum Generation*

BY ARTHUR WASKOW AND RUSS AGDERN

BEHIND THE ISSUE OF global scorching stands America's Oiloholism, as we pour carbon dioxide at a destructive rate into our planet's atmosphere.

Behind the issue of the Iraq War, and threats against Iran, stands the need to secure the great oil deposits of the Middle East, the "drug supply" for oil addiction.

And behind the oil addiction stands the drug lords of Big Oil. They have often used their power to deny the very existence of global scorching and prevent action to avert it.

American religious communities and congregations have shown they can call forth the energy and the Spirit to end addiction in our personal lives; and in some generations, they have shown they could also call forth movements to challenge top-down, unaccountable power—like that held today by Big Oil. Today, we challenge synagogues, churches and mosques to take up a campaign to move this country Beyond Oil.

### Recreating the Chanukah Miracle

IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, Beyond Oil will focus on Chanukah—the festival celebrating the "miracle" of conserving oil, when one day's worth of sacred oil kept the Temple menorah lit for eight days.

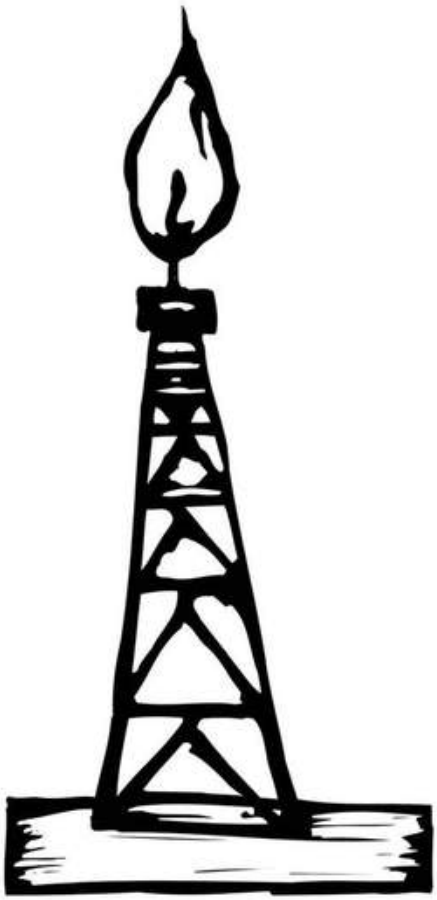
Our goal is to emulate that miracle. We too can make the oil we use on one day last for eight by conservation and by the use of non-fossil, non-carbon-dioxide-producing, non-nuclear sources of renewable, sustainable energy. We believe we can achieve this seven-eighths reduction in U.S. oil consumption by 2020.

Meeting this ambitious seven-eighths goal will require some major changes. In the U.S. transportation system, we will need to shift to the use of cellulosic ethanol (NOT corn-based ethanol) as our primary fuel source, plug-in hybrid vehicles, and subsidies to support public transit and to protect bicycle pathways. Our daily energy allocation will require the greatly expanded use of wind power, solar power, and other renewable, non-nuclear, non-carbon-dioxide-producing sources of electricity.

### How We Can Move Beyond Oil

THE SHALOM CENTER'S GOAL is that every synagogue, church and mosque—

**Reduces its own** and its congregants' use of oil and coal by conservation, and by using sustainable sources of energy.



**Organizes "Oiloholics** Anonymous," groups of congregants that would help each other to "kick the oil habit" in their own households.

**Urges all congregants** to adopt a commitment to "Kosher Kars"—using their present cars in such a way as to reduce gas use (e.g. by carpooling) and making their next car purchase a hybrid or other high-mileage car.

**Involves itself in** social action to change public policy on at least one of the following issues:

- Increased funding for and better access to more frequent, higher quality, and cleaner public transportation.
- More governmental use of and investment in renewable energy sources for electricity.
- Governmental and corporate action to invest more money in cleaner car technology (hybrids, plug-in hybrids, flex fuels) and greener vehicle fleets for local governments.
- Most important, support for a "Carbon Tax" on energy sources according to how much carbon dioxide they create. To keep this tax from being onerously regressive, its proceeds must be plowed back into meeting the needs of workers and the middle class.

The Carbon Tax is a crucial idea whose time will only come if the public fights for it. No other policy step will make enough change to free the United States from its oil addiction, yet politicians will be afraid to support the Carbon Tax until there is public demand for it.

The Beyond Oil campaign gives the religious congregations of America an opportunity to work for the imperative of healing the earth and reducing the pressure for war, just as they did in the 1960s for the imperative of racial justice. Politicians then and now were not ready to oppose entrenched interests until religious and moral responsibility forced their hand.

Chanukah reminds us that not only can oil be conserved, but that Antiochus' great empire—powerful enough to make God's Temple into an idol's plaything—could be overturned. Today the Holy Temple is the great round earth itself; today our idols are oil and the vehicles that guzzle it. Religious communities should be pioneers in turning those idols back into the tools we occasionally use. Today the religious communities should join in a covenant to heal and rededicate God's earth.

This Chanukah, The Shalom Center will invite synagogues everywhere to join in the Green Menorah Covenant and will present the first Green Menorah Award to a synagogue or other Jewish organization that has done extraordinary work to green itself and America. To join in the Covenant, go to www.shalomctr.org.

*Rabbi Arthur Waskow is director of The Shalom Center and oversees its Beyond Oil campaign at http://www.shalomctr.org/taxonomy_menu/1/124/1. Russ Agdern <ragdern@gmail.com> is national organizer of Beyond Oil.*



# A Season for Inclusion

## *A Family Reflection*

BY NEAL ROSE, CARNIE ROSE,
KLIEL ROSE, AND OR N. ROSE

WE ARE A FAMILY OF RABBIS. Rabbis Neal, Carnie, and Kliel Rose were ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary (Conservative Movement); Rabbi Or Rose was ordained privately. This summer we had the honor of participating in the wedding festivities of our son and brother, Avi, and his partner Binyamin.

The *simchah* (celebration) began on a humid afternoon, in a tall, austere government building in downtown Toronto. This civil ceremony was a powerful event—moving, precisely for its ordinariness. There were no protests or debates, no banners, signs, or slogans; neither the justice of the peace nor the office staff acted as if same-sex weddings were unusual.

Given the current political climate in the United States, and the strong opposition to gay marriage throughout North America (we write this essay just days after New York's

supreme court shamefully denied same-sex couples the right to marry), the ease of the civil ceremony was a blessing.

The following evening, Avi and Binyamin stood beneath a *chuppah* (wedding canopy) in a friend's backyard, surrounded by loved ones, and sanctified their relationship as Jewish marital partners.

One poignant moment in this service was the exchange of rings, in which the grooms recited a revised version of the traditional Jewish wedding vow to each other: "By this ring, I hereby consecrate myself to you according to the renewed and repaired ("*metukenet*," from the same Hebrew root as *tikkun*) tradition of Moses and the people Israel."

With this simple textual change, Avi and Binyamin expressed their desire to celebrate their wedding in a richly Jewish context—using time-honored symbols and language—while, at the same time, articulating their belief that Judaism is an evolving tradition, one that is flexible enough to invite same-sex couples to hallow their relationships using public Jewish rituals.

## Judaism Renewed

AS RABBIS, WE WISH TO AFFIRM THIS POSITION. Judaism is at its core an interpretive tradition, one that is open to inventive commentaries and insights. How else could exegetical giants like Yohanan ben Zakai, Maimonides, or Isaac Luria have introduced into Jewish life creative (often radical) teachings about God, Israel, and humankind? Without the possibility of religious innovation, Judaism would have become a fossil long ago.

As Western notions of gender and sexuality have evolved in the last few decades, a cadre of gifted Jewish theologians, liturgists, and legal experts has provided us with a variety of intellectual and experiential tools to help assimilate new understandings of human experience into Jewish life.

While there is more work to be done in these areas—particularly for transgendered Jews—there is a growing body of Jewish LGBT resources available to us [see Gregg Drinkwater's accompanying piece].

What is needed more urgently is a shift in Jewish communal consciousness: Jewish leaders must realize that when we marginalize queer folks, not only do we cause them pain, but we also harm the Jewish community as a whole, squandering the talents and abilities of these precious souls. We must create more safe spaces in which LGBT Jews can fully express themselves as Jews, and as human beings.

We are thankful to Avi and Binyamin for helping us to cleanse from our hearts some of the residual homophobia that we carried with us to Toronto, and for reminding us of our responsibility as rabbis to be more vigilant in our efforts to welcome same-sex couples and other marginalized people into our houses of worship and study.

We vow to speak out against homophobia from our respective pulpits, and to raise awareness within our communities about the ongoing struggle of LGBT people to gain full recognition in religious and political spheres.

Because not all rabbis will have the gift of celebrating the marriage of a gay son or brother, we know that we must also share our experience with our colleagues and urge them to widen their circles of community.

In the book of Ecclesiastes—traditionally chanted on *Sukkot* at the end of the fall holiday cycle—we read, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven (3:1)." We hope and pray that this will be season of healing, a time for the full inclusion of LGBT people within the Jewish community. ■

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*Neal Rose is the senior scholar at Congregation B'nai Amoona in St. Louis. Carnie Rose is the senior rabbi at Congregation B'nai Amoona in St. Louis. Kliel Rose is the rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in Miami Beach. Or N. Rose, a contributing editor to* Tikkun, *is an associate dean at the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College.*



# Small Steps to LGBT Inclusion

BY GREGG DRINKWATER

THE 1980S WAS THE AGE of "identity politics." Almost a generation later, especially for readers of a progressive magazine like *Tikkun*, focusing on diversity can seem so passé. Don't we all—that is, those of us in the liberal political and religious world—already get it? Do we really need more discussion about diversity?

When it comes to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) identities, we do. Jewish responses to LGBT people run the gamut from the celebration and affirmation of sexual and gender diversity found in LGBT-outreach synagogues to the utter condemnation of any form of gay visibility by the chief rabbis of Israel and Russia, among others. Over the last ten to twenty years, social justice activists committed to LGBT inclusion have seen incredible strides in the Jewish community, but much of the Jewish world still falls short in their progress toward this goal, and there is work to be done.

Most Jewish communal leaders, for example, favor the inclusion of LGBT Jews, but



those same leaders often don't know where to start. A recent community study conducted in Colorado by Jewish Mosaic, the organization I work for, found that even when Jews in leadership roles considered themselves open and welcoming, many LGBT community members looked at the same institutions with hesitation and uncertainty. Projecting inclusion visibly and proactively is not just about having a receptive attitude. It's about making inclusiveness a reality through concrete policies and procedures, words and actions. And ultimately, it means having LGBT Jews in visible roles in the Jewish community.

The complexity of making "grand gestures" around LGBT issues often intimidates Jewish community leaders into inaction. With so many competing communal priorities, why should they spend precious institutional resources on comprehensive LGBT inclusion projects? At Jewish Mosaic, the most important piece of advice we give to community leaders and activists is: grand gestures are great, but don't ignore the small stuff. That's the same lesson the sages conveyed in Pirke Avot (Ethics of our Fathers) when they taught us that "It is not our responsibility to finish the task [of repairing the world], but neither are we free to leave the status quo alone."

For example, while hiring an openly gay rabbi or executive director would boldly demonstrate your institution's commitment to diversity, a first step you can take now would be implementing an institutional nondiscrimination policy that makes it clear that your organization is open to staff and clergy regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Starting an LGBT *havurah* is a great way to create community for LGBT Jews within synagogues. But before starting up a program to recruit new people, make sure your shul has undergone a "form audit." This involves pulling recent copies of all of the synagogue's membership forms, school enrollment forms, and program sign-up sheets to make sure the forms are appropriate for diverse families. For example, do your school's forms have one space each for "mother" and "father" or multiple spaces for "parents/guardians"? The latter is a more open and welcoming way of recognizing family diversity. LGBT Jews are unlikely to feel truly welcome in a synagogue whose forms and policies don't appear to even recognize their existence, and by honoring diverse families you'll also validate many of the divorced and blended families in your congregation.

Another fairly simple step is to hold diversity workshops to foster dialogue in your community about LGBT inclusion. Jewish Mosaic, in cooperation with the Anti-Defamation League's A World Of Difference Institute, maintains a national roster of diversity trainers who conduct workshops focused on LGBT issues in Jewish community settings. Diversity workshops don't require long-term commitments and can be tailored to fit the needs and available time slots of any organization.

And if you've considered holding a workshop, but think that your community doesn't need it because they're already welcoming and the workshops would just be "preaching to the choir," then fear not. What's so wrong with preaching to the choir? Most choirs I know practice regularly, and the really good ones—the ones that make the biggest impact—practice a lot. The choir's members rely on their leaders and on each other to motivate and inspire them and to help them continue to improve their vocal skills. Why should social change activists be any different? ■

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*Gregg Drinkwater is the Executive Director of Jewish Mosaic: The National Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, www.JewishMosaic.org*

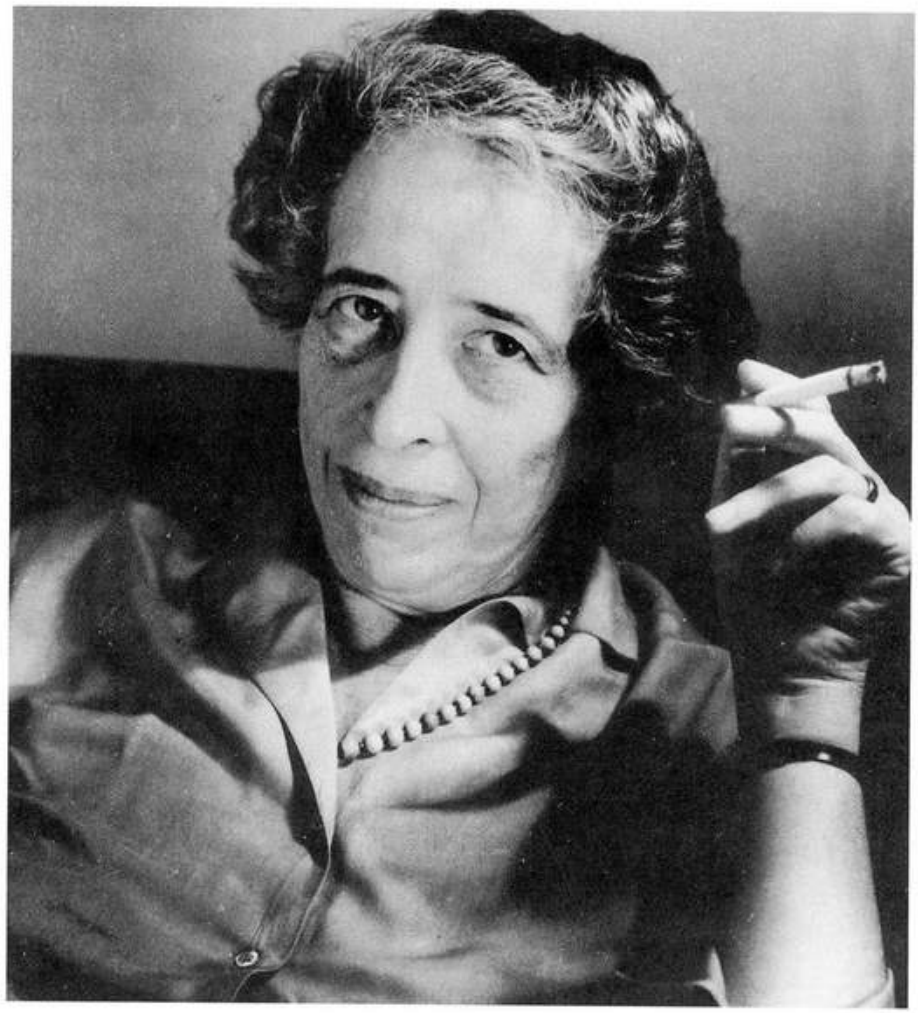
# Culture

BOOKS | FILM | MUSIC

## A Tribute to Hannah Arendt

### *Marking the Centenary of Her Birth*

**EDITED BY BEN NAPARSTEK**



AP PHOTO

On the 100th anniversary of her birth, Hannah Arendt's influence has never been greater. Yet within the Jewish world, Arendt's status remains contested. Her critique of Zionism as an exclusory ideology is celebrated for its prescience by the Jewish Left. But for most Jewish intellectuals, Arendt's legacy remains tainted by her relationship with the Nazi-affiliated philosopher Martin Heidegger, her criticism of Jewish complicity in the Final Solution, and her depiction of Adolf Eichmann as a banal desk-murderer, rather than a demonic stereotype.

Arendt's schism with mainstream Jewry is perhaps best represented by her falling out with her friend Gershom Scholem in 1963. Writing in the wake of her coverage of the Eichmann trial, Scholem admonished Arendt: "in the Jewish tradition there is a concept, hard to define and yet concrete enough, which we know as *Ahavet Israel*, 'love of the Jewish people.' In you, dear Hannah ... I find little trace of this."

Arendt was born in Linden, Germany on October 14, 1906. She studied philosophy under Heidegger, with whom she became romantically entangled, and wrote her doctorate—published in 1929 as *Love and St. Augustine*—under the existentialist philosopher Karl Jaspers. In 1933, after anti-Semitic laws barred her from teaching in Germany, Arendt immigrated to Paris, where she befriended Walter Benjamin. There she worked for Zionist organizations assisting the passage of Jewish refugees to Palestine, before fleeing to the United States in 1941.

Arendt maintained her friendship with Heidegger after WWII, despite his involvement with the Nazis. She first achieved fame with her book *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), controversially arguing that Hitlerism and Stalinism are manifestations of the same social phenomena. Covering the trial of Eichmann for the *New Yorker* in 1960,

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Arendt caused a furor for criticizing Jewish organizations in Nazi Europe for allowing themselves to be co-opted into the Nazi extermination plan. She died in 1975, at age 69.

To mark the centenary of her birth, *Tikkun* asked a select group of leading Jewish intellectuals for their reflections on Arendt's legacy.

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*Ben Naparstek is a literary journalist and broadcaster based in Melbourne. He is a contributing editor to* Tikkun.

## Omer Bartov

AT A RECENT CONFERENCE IN LJUBljana dedicated to Arendt's legacy, I was taken aback by the tendency to apply her writings to the present, with which she would have doubtlessly disagreed. Arendt's theory of totalitarianism was extremely acute, but ended up serving conservatives, eager to equate Nazism and communism. Would she have agreed that the Bush administration represents the "new totalitarianism," or rather that it is fighting the good war against "Islamo-fascism"? I assume Arendt would have rejected both of these empty slogans. I think she would have agreed that the only means to stop Milosevic's butchers were bombs, which could have similarly saved hundreds of thousands in Rwanda and in Darfur, Sudan. She would have also recognized that today the main threat to freedom comes from a messianic, relentless, violent, and expansionist Islamist movement. Arendt would have had no time for the likes of Bush and Cheney; but she would have insisted, I believe, that the greater evil emanates from those who advocate the return of the Khalifa under the rule of such aspiring firebrands as Osama bin Laden, Moktada al-Sadr, Hassan Nasrallah, and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

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*Omer Bartov is the John P. Birkelund Distinguished Professor of European History and Professor of History at Brown University.*

## Seyla Benhabib

FOR SOME, ARENDT WAS NOT JEWISH enough, for others, she was all-too

Jewish. Her critique of the nation-state, and, in particular, political Zionism, appeared to many—among them, Isaiah Berlin and Gershom Scholem—to be an exercise in vacuous moralism. But for the neo-Marxist members of the Frankfurt School, Arendt was too particularistic and culturalist in her analysis of totalitarianism and modern evil. This, however, is the heart of Arendt's cosmopolitanism, which fundamentally represents an attempt to hold together moral universalism and civic republicanism in one. Thus, Arendt perspicaciously argued that the persecution of Jews merely prefigured the emergence of stateless people and refugees on a global scale. Since no nation-state could be trusted to protect the rights of its members, and since every human being had a right to "belong to some community," she claimed that "the right to have rights" of every individual had to be guaranteed by humanity as a whole.

*Seyla Benhabib is the Eugene Meyer Professor of Political Science and Philosophy at Yale University and author of* The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt.

## Jonathan Boyarin

HANNAH ARENDT SHAPED ME PROfoundly, but indirectly, through the essay on her lost friend, Walter Benjamin, which served as an introduction to his book *Illuminations*. The essay is loving, critical, and elegiac, as when she writes of Benjamin as one "who regarded even the essay form as too vulgarly extensive and would have preferred the aphorism if he had not been paid by the line." Here Arendt echoes Benjamin's famous way of combining the sublime with the material, decades before Woody Allen made a career out of comic juxtapositions between the two. Similarly, she captures Benjamin's out-of-timeness: "as though he had drifted out of the nineteenth century into the twentieth the way one is driven onto the coast of a strange land." Arendt made me fall in love with Walter Benjamin before I read a word he had written.

*Jonathan Boyarin is the Robert M. Beren Distinguished Professor in Modern Jewish Studies at the University of Kansas.*

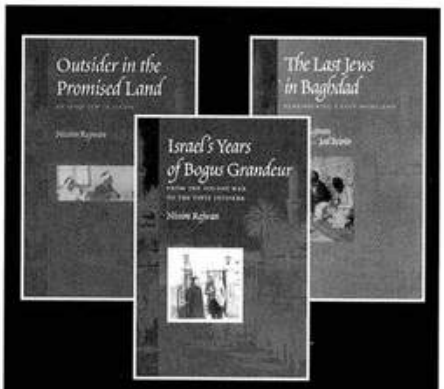
## Michael Hardt

FOR ME, THE MEASURE OF HANNAH Arendt's greatness is clearest in her book *On Revolution*. In it she celebrates her signature concept of political action—characterized by speaking in the presence of others, and the search for freedom—and links it to the American Revolution. Arendt's affirmation of the American historical tradition brings to light the subtlety typical of her thought: once she validates the American Revolution she uses it to critique the contemporary United States—its forgetting of revolution, the failures of its party system, and the undemocratic character of its representational institutions. This book also demonstrates, however, the limitations of Arendt's thought. In arguing against the French Revolution and its legacy she strives to separate what she considers the proper domain of politics and freedom from "the social question," including issues of poverty, social needs, and economic inequality: one should never seek to solve the social question, she warns, with political means. Arendt thus poses an unwarranted restriction on the potential of politics.

*Michael Hardt teaches at Duke University and is the co-author with Antonio Negri of* Empire.

## Eva Hoffman

WAS THERE EVER A THINKER LESS sentimental than Hannah Arendt? Her work has a certain ruthlessness, an uncompromising analytical rigor, which always trumps sympathetic or affective bias. But her severity is consistently deployed in the service of an exacting standard: what she wants from her subjects is a three-dimensional awareness of their "political" situation—that is, the framework of formal relations which defines their public identity and their position as members of a social body. Only from




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such an awareness, Arendt repeatedly suggests, can a person, or a collective, make truly conscious, truly realistic choices. Arendt underestimated the values of subjectivity, specific attachments, and art. But what she understood powerfully was that the isolated life is not worth living, that we are shaped by our actions and transactions with others, and that we express ourselves most fully as free and equal actors negotiating our place among others, rather than trading on our origins. Between community and solidarity, she chose, always, solidarity. This form of universalism—particularly at a time when we see the dangers of extreme communal sentiments—is very much worth keeping in mind.

*Eva Hoffman's latest book is* After Such Knowledge: Where Memory of the Holocaust Ends and History Begins.

## Martin Jay

WITH EACH NEW PUBLICATION OF hitherto uncollected essays or extensive correspondence with eminent contemporaries, the variety and depth of Arendt's thought becomes increasingly apparent. For my own current project on political mendacity, her two essays of the 1970s, "Lying in Politics: Reflections on the Pentagon Papers" and "Truth and Politics," have provided invaluable stimulation. Helping us get beyond the sterile alternatives of moralism and realism, Kant and Machiavelli, Arendt draws attention to the ways in which politics has a special affinity for fabulation and counterfactual assertion. She helps us see the inherent tensions between the imperative to tell the truth—singular and coercive—and pluralism, action, and the importance of rhetoric in the political realm.

*Martin Jay is the Sidney Hellman Ehrman Professor of History at the University of California, Berkeley.*

## Baruch Kimmerling

ISRAELI INTELLECTUALS NEVER FORgave Hannah Arendt. Even today, most Israelis consider her work indigestible and ignorant, and remember only her relationship with Heidegger. Ultimately, Judaism consists of two contradictory faces. One is a universalistic and humanistic civilization while the other is an ethnocentric tribal community. In Israel, and often in the Diaspora, Jewish culture is predominantly ethnocentric and particularistic. When Arendt, breaking the narrow Jewish perspective, defined Eichmann's crimes as crimes against humanity, even Gershom Scholem, the respected scholar of Jewish mysticism and prominent humanist, accused Arendt of lacking "love for the Jewish people." As a result of his comment, one of the most prominent Jewish philosophers and intellectual of the modern era was excommunicated from the collectivity. Again, Jewish tribalism triumphed, as it did when Jewish Sages excommunicated Spinoza.

*Baruch Kimmerling is Professor of Sociology at the Hebrew University and the author of* Politicide: Ariel Sharon's War Against the Palestinians.

## Jerome Kohn

HAVING RECENTLY COLLECTED AND studied more than four decades of Arendt's Jewish writings, I am convinced that the fundamental concepts of her political thought arose from her experience as a Jew living in the twentieth century. Her unique understanding of action, for example, whose condition is human plurality, cannot be fully grasped separately from the Nazi destruction of European Jewry. Arendt considered being a Jew a given of her existence—a gift she never wished to exchange, and for which she never expressed anything but gratitude. There is no little irony in the fact that Arendt, by bringing the light of reason to bear on the thought-defying evil of the Shoah, was herself cast out of the Jewish community. That terrible injustice is only now being rectified, and, to be sure, slowly.

*Jerome Kohn is the co-editor of* Hannah Arendt's The Jewish Writings, *forthcoming from Schocken.*

## Julia Neuberger

ARENDT WAS, BROADLY SPEAKING, not only a great philosopher, but also a very brave woman, and that is something, in the history of Jewish women, we should remember. But set against her more general courage and clarity in the face of wrong and evil, Arendt had a fatal flaw—her relationship with Heidegger. She accepted his self-serving account of the pre-war and war years—that he was only a Nazi very briefly. In fact, Heidegger was a Nazi until the end of the war, and made no attempt to criticize Nazi ideology or even to help his Jewish friends. The long exchange of letters over a fifty-year period is a testament to Arendt's willingness to overlook his Nazi past because she never really fell out of love with him.

*Dame Rabbi Julia Neuberger is a British social reformer and the author of* The Moral State We're In.

## Ilan Pappe

I FEEL VERY ATTACHED TO TWO INTELlectual legacies that Arendt left behind her. Like Arendt, my father came from an assimilated, highly educated German-Jewish family. Its younger generation, like Arendt and her friends, was seeking academic careers, but aspired nonetheless to be involved in society, rather than adopt a contemplative and condescending philosophical position toward it. But I feel mainly in debt to Arendt for teaching us about the need to universalize the memory of the Holocaust. It forces you to be harsh on the cynical manipulation of the Holocaust memory in Israel, for the purpose of oppressing and dehumanizing the Palestinians, and to work with all your heart, regardless of the price, for peace and reconciliation—and a future state that does not bow to any "ism."

*Ilan Pappe's latest book is* The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine.

## David Pryce-Jones

*THE ORIGINS OF TOTALITARIANISM* was early to draw out the elements common to Nazism and communism. This was valuable, and the book still has much to offer, particularly on the issue of Jew-hatred. All her writings are characterized by a period belief in some sort of "pure" revolution, and this leads her to a manner of quite unnecessary and off-putting intellectualization. *Eichmann in Jerusalem* suffered greatly from this: trying to prove her preconception of the man's banality, she revealed her own lack of human understanding. Evil is not banal and neither was Eichmann. Her correspondence with Mary MacCarthy revealed that she believed Nixon's America was turning Nazi, so that the intellectualization finally proved tragicomic.

*David Pryce-Jones is a senior editor at the* National Review. *His most recent book is* Betrayal: France, the Arabs and the Jews.

## Tanya Reinhart

ARENDT HAS BEEN A BIG INSPIRAtion to me, but trying to explain why would take too much space. The easiest thing would be to provide a favorite quote: "Since man contains within himself a partner from whom he can never win release, he will be better off not to live in company with a murderer or a liar. Or, since thought is the silent dialogue carried on between me and myself, I must be careful to keep the integrity of this partner intact; for otherwise, I shall surely lose the capacity for thought altogether" (*Between Past and Future*).

*Tanya Reinhart is a professor of linguistics at Tel Aviv University and a political columnist for* Yediot Aharonot.

## Jacqueline Rose

THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT ARENDT'S tone that seems to me crucial. Challenged in an interview about *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, she responded: "That the tone of voice is predominantly ironic is completely true. The tone of voice in this case is really the person." As with Arendt's tone of voice, so with her Jewishness. "I have always regarded my Jewishness as one of the indisputable factual data of my life," she insists in her dispute with Gershom Scholem. Rather than being at odds with each other, Arendt's irony and her Jewishness are, therefore, the unanswerable facts of Arendt as a person. Jewish identity was in danger of self-idealization. The greatness of the Jewish people had been their trust in and love for God: As Arendt stated, "And now this people believes only in itself. What good can come out of that?" To bring such love to the negotiating table, she expands in the interview, is, "to put it bluntly, fatal." Such love will estrange you from the rest of the world. Hence, I believe the playfulness, the slight oddity of her style—as if the modern curse of nations, their militant conviction, resided at least partly in a failure to observe the proper tone. We still have everything to learn from that insight.

*Jacqueline Rose is Professor of English at Queen Mary University of London. Her most recent book is* The Question of Zion.

## Thane Rosenbaum

IN A POST-9/11 WORLD OF GLOBAL terror that inaugurated the new century, the "banality of evil" has now become either its own cliché or a capitulation to the most base, and debased, of human truths. Has Arendt comforted the world by humanizing evil, or foreshadowed the occurrence of more evil—banally evoked, indiscriminately exercised—lurking in all of us? If evil is banal—interchangeable, democratically available—then there is nothing special about it. In the *Austin Powers* films, Dr. Evil took his doctorate in being evil. All it takes is an abundance of unresolved grievance, suppressed rage, or a simple bureaucrat's cynical desire to get ahead. Anyone and everyone can devise a plan for mass murder or strap on a bomb and board a bus. It's just a matter of time, and circumstance, and the unseen, mutating forces of human frailty. Yet, if everyone is potentially evil, then no one is really evil.

*Thane Rosenbaum is a novelist, essayist, and law professor. His most recent book is* The Myth of Moral Justice.

### Elisabeth Young-Bruehl

ARENDT'S INSIGHT IS SO LONGED for because it had two rare qualities: her view was unconstrained by inherited concepts and completely free of clichés; she had an unerring sense for the novelties in situations, for the unprecedented. When Arendt judged something unprecedented—totalitarianism was an unprecedented form of government, a government bent on destroying politics—she formulated a concept that was adequate to it rather than using concepts generated in a different historical context and thus constituting a misconception. Much of Arendt's most important work was conceptual brush clearing—she showed how our inherited lexicon for talking about politics is thick with philosophical prejudices and ideological distortions. "The banality of evil" was a new concept for a new type of criminal and "crime against humanity."

*Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, a former doctoral student of Arendt's, is the author, most recently, of* Why Arendt Matters.

### Richard Zimler

Hannah Arendt's writings on Eichmann reveal that in order to limit evil, our institutions must encourage individuals to consider the consequences of their actions and put themselves in the place of others. Yet the American government seems aggressively committed to encouraging the opposite, having defended the Kafkaesque nightmare of the Guantánamo prison for four years. How would Arendt characterize a government that denies basic human rights to its prisoners, a Supreme Court that rules that detainees can be held without charges or trial, and a public that remains largely complacent? What would she make of the guards, bureaucrats, and spin-doctors who carry out the orders that have made Guantánamo and other moral disasters of American foreign policy possible? ■

*Richard Zimler is a novelist based in Portugal and the author of* The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon.

[BOOKS]

# Texas Jews, Blue-Eyed Gods, and Multiple Personas

## *An Interview with T Cooper*

**BY MATTILDA, A.K.A. MATT BERNSTEIN SYCAMORE**

SOMETIMES ASSIMILATION is not as simple as it's made to appear. That is, if T Cooper has anything to say about it. In her new novel, *Lipshitz Six, or Two Angry Blondes* (Dutton, 2006), Cooper recasts the age-old story of Jewish integration in American culture in an unexpected and original light. The story begins with a Jewish family, the Lipshitzs, fleeing the Russian pogroms and landing at Ellis Island. The family not only loses one of its children in the tumult of arrival, but ends up in Texas, where the mother becomes convinced that the biggest star of the era, legendary anti-Semite and aviator Charles Lindbergh, is her lost Jewish son.

Fast-forward three generations to the last surviving Lipshitz, T Cooper (not to be confused with the author), a New York City bar mitzvah entertainer whose success with the kids derives from his skill at impersonating megastar rapper Eminem, who, like Lindbergh, is white and arrogant. In *Lipshitz Six*, Cooper deftly weaves humor with tragedy, fake newspaper articles with meticulous historical research, and conventional narrative with the tricks of postmodern storytelling, to deliver a complicated take on Jewish family history, intergenerational trauma, and the elusiveness of a fixed identity in a rapidly shifting cultural landscape.

By choosing to start the book with a visceral description of a pogrom, Cooper illuminates a period of Jewish history buried by today's obsession with remembering the Holocaust. Cooper states, "I was fascinated by something I noticed while working on this book. People would ask me what it was about, and I'd tell them it begins in Kishinev during the 1903 pogroms. And two seconds later, when the conversation would continue, we'd all of a sudden be talking about the Holocaust, and these people—intelligent, well-intentioned people—would equate the two experiences as though they were part of the same campaigns and eras."

The true story, of course, is a much messier one. Cooper adds, "I was surprised during my research of *shtetl* and small city life in Russia by how much the Czar depended upon Jews to be responsible subjects who would reliably collect taxes and negotiate local politics. Of course, this was so insidious precisely because the Russian peasants who had to pay the Czar/government through Jews were then all too happy to take part in pogroms when they were ignited."

So much of *Lipshitz Six* hinges upon the process of *passing*: passing as Russian, American, Texan; passing as Jewish, straight, normal; even passing as Eminem. Cooper's impetus for this focus undoubtedly comes from her own family history. "In my actual family that landed in Texas because of the Galveston Movement, they pretty much became Texans first and businessmen second. If there was anything left, it would be for being Jews, but they toned it down and had to fly under the radar to do business the way they did. The Galveston Movement

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl

ARENDT'S INSIGHT IS SO LONGED for because it had two rare qualities: her view was unconstrained by inherited concepts and completely free of clichés; she had an unerring sense for the novelties in situations, for the unprecedented. When Arendt judged something unprecedented—totalitarianism was an unprecedented form of government, a government bent on destroying poli-

[BOOKS]

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asked that men who came over from the old country be prepared to work on the Sabbath and be disconnected from their community. The very founding idea was to get settled and fit in first, and then send for your family later—to import a little of your community only after you were entirely separated from it."

This cultural erasure takes its toll. Esther, the matriarch in *Lipshitz Six*, living in Amarillo, Texas, develops an obsession with Charles Lindbergh, the biggest star of the era, saving newspaper articles about every last Lindbergh experience. Cooper adds, "The mother in my book becomes convinced that the Nordic wonder Lindbergh is her son precisely because she knows that if that blond-haired, blue-eyed god is her offspring, then she and her family have made it for good—they are all not only American, but the ultimate all-American."

With a nod to the paradoxes of intergenerational memory, T Cooper the author introduces T Cooper the character, Esther's great-grandchild, who is obsessed with another pop cultural icon, rapper Eminem, whose misogyny and homophobia are almost as legendary as his alleged finesse at freestyling rhymes. New York in the early 2000s, where T lives, is a place of much more cultural fluidity than the Amarillo of the early 1900s. T is able to take his obsession much further than his grandmother, who sufficed with newspaper clippings covering the kitchen table and slipping onto the floor. T not only imitates Eminem's bleached flattop and baggy clothes, his braggadocio and his methods of rapping, he virtually becomes the rapper, with the exaggerated rage and all. In the end, after T entertains a lavish bar mitzvah with his hyped impersonations of Eminem, he finds all of his valuable DJ equipment stolen. Standing on the street corner, screaming unintelligibly, he is approached by Eminem fans who assume he is the real deal. This scene of anguish and absurdity speaks to the layers of desperation covered up by standard tales of "making it."

Cooper explains, "I wanted the T Cooper character, in trying to figure out where he came from, to grapple with the same strategies Eminem uses to negotiate his life, the multiple personas blending fact and fiction, love and hate, violence and tenderness, etc. And the fear of everything being taken away—that anxiety is traditionally thought of as something particularly 'Jewish,' and yet I wanted to think about it in terms of not only four generations of a pogrom-fleeing Jewish family, but also these totally un-Jewish, blond-haired, blue-eyed American pop cultural icons." ■

*Mattilda, a.k.a. Matt Bernstein Sycamore, is the editor, most recently, of* Nobody Passes: Rejecting the Rules of Gender and Conformity *(out in December) and an expanded second edition of* That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation *(out mid-November). Visit www.mattbernsteinsycamore.com*

[BOOKS]

# Breaching the Iron Wall

**BY RAYMOND G. HELMICK, S.J.**




**DEFENDING THE HOLY LAND: A Critical Analysis of Israel's Security and Foreign Policy,** *by Zeev Maoz. University of Michigan Press, 2006*

REVIEWING, IN THE July/August issue of *Tikkun*, Shlomo Ben-Ami's *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, I was struck by his conclusion that no Israeli government has ever had control over its military. In *Defending the Holy Land*, Zeev Maoz delivers, in vast detail, a similar conclusion, with all of the authority that one would come to expect of the former head of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies and previous senior instructor at the Israel Defense Forces War College, who is now directing the international relations program at the University of California, Davis.

With such credentials, and a prodigious output of previous writing, Maoz examines the behavior of the Israel Defense Force in every war or military engagement since the 1950s, focusing on the IDF's security doctrines and their influence on foreign policy and every other part of government decision-making. Seldom does Maoz credit the army with a positive contribution to Israel's safety or prospects for peace. Instead, he charges the IDF with subjecting the possibility of peace to Ze'ev Jabotinsky's concept of the "Iron Wall" as a preferred way of relating to all of Israel's neighbors, with its fixed doctrine of escalation dominance as the way to confront every situation, whether it be low-intensity conflict with the Palestinians during the Al-Aksa Intifada, or a conventional military engagement such as the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

The IDF's military strategy has its origins in David Ben-Gurion's fundamental idea that Israel faces a permanent existential threat from its neighbors. It is on that principle that Ben-Gurion derived the foundations for Israel's national security policy, which are still widely accepted by the security community and by much of the Israeli public. Maoz lists these foundational principles early in his book, and subjects them to acute criticism in the course of examining each of Israel's military engagements. Ben-Gurion also decided that the army should be the secular, rather than religious, engine of socialization for Israel's constantly growing immigrant population. This military structure made it difficult for the first generation of Israel's political leadership to forsake the sense of external threat as a motivating force.

Almost all of Israel's wars, Maoz concludes, have been "wars of choice," acts of aggression for the purpose of territorial expansion. They have regularly

involved unintended consequences that have precipitated new dangers for Israel. With tremendous erudition, Maoz works doggedly through Israel's history to illustrate these assertions.

But the book reaches its most serious conclusions only near the end, when Maoz takes up the IDF's relation to foreign policy and governmental decision-making. The military intelligence bureau of the IDF (AMAN) has a practical monopoly over the intelligence input into all of the government's decisions, easily outranking Israel's CIA equivalent, the Mossad, and its domestic intelligence unit, the General Secret Service or SHABAK, having the only fully-staffed analytic branch that reports to the government. In 1998, when the government finally established a National Security Council under its executive control, AMAN sought to control the agency and deprive it from gaining access to intelligence from sources other than AMAN.

The Foreign Ministry or the Knesset Committee on Foreign and Security Affairs likewise lack serious intelligence staff to compete with AMAN, which remains immune to government investigations into its frequent fiascos. Legislative or public oversight of the military does not truly exist, and even the Supreme Court, which has recently taken a liberal posture in its interpretation of the basic rights of the (Israeli) individual, walks in such fear of being placed under external control that it takes no risks of opposing military judgment when it comes to the Occupation or the rights of Palestinians. In its sociology, moreover, the military and its intelligence service is cripplingly inbred, reliant only on statistical modeling, lacking in social or historical knowledge, insistent on acting recklessly in military matters, and prohibitively cautionary on any moves toward peace. Such initiatives have rarely come from the Israeli state, but from Arabs or outside parties, which have been consistently frustrated by the habits of the IDF.

The solutions Maoz envisions to these dangerous defects are to provide the Knesset and the executive branch with an independent staff to break the monopoly of the IDF on political decision-making. In taking such positions, Maoz addresses a culture of paranoia that extends beyond the military itself. His hope is that younger readers will absorb his observations and eventually demand the required structural changes in the Israeli state's relationship to its military apparatus. ■

*Raymond G. Helmick is an American Jesuit priest and professor of conflict resolution at Boston College. He is the author of* Negotiating Outside the Law: Why Camp David Failed *(Pluto Press, 2004).*

[BOOKS]

# A Primal Cry

BY DAN CHIASSON




**FIRST THINGS TO HAND,** *by Robert Pinsky. Sarabande, 2006*

BOOKS, PENS, A WATER glass, a photograph, the newspaper, a pair of pliers: Robert Pinsky's chapbook, *First Things to Hand*, traces the smallest possible circle around a self, mere objects dotting its circumference. Even the individual at the center is an object, a thing to be handled by the "hand" that touches, say, "the tattoo on my right shoulder" or the mind "waiting in the mind/ like the first thing to hand." That last formulation invokes Wallace Stevens ("The Palm at the End of the Mind"). Often, Stevens' existence in the actual world, more haunting than haunted, informs these new poems. Both the choice of muse (Stevens representing the quintessence of "private," even clandestine, poetry), and the deliberate, monitored narrowness of milieu (the family cat, sole "fellow mortal" to appear here, only makes it in by crying at Pinsky's office door) establish an art of indrawn breath and tentative mental foray.

For a poet of full-throated social, indeed public (and increasingly political) voice, these poems would seem a departure. But, as Stevens knew, "this absence of the imagination/had itself to be imagined." What the "imagination" here does—what it has always done for Pinsky—is to restore to emptied forms their original luster and density. As Pinsky points out, the word "thing" (itself an abstraction that identifies a class of non-or anti-abstractions) once meant "an assembly or council," the etymology suggesting what a remarkable congeries of human will (as well as human blood) makes up our everyday matter. An ordinary drinking glass cannot be considered without conjuring an "assembly" of the dead:

> Ancestral totem substance:
> My one grandfather
> Washing store windows
> With squeegee and bucket,
> The other serving amber
> Whisky and clear gin over the counter,
> His son my father
> An optician, beveling lenses
> On a stone wheel.

No optician's son would want to isolate sight from the mechanical processes (shaped by the body, itself an object shaped by culture) required for a person to see. And so these poems move rapidly back from sense impressions (the glass "waterlike," then "still visible," then "nearly invisible") into the tools, "mere" tools, of the senses, and from there into memory, history, lore.

Great poems resist their own designs, or seem to. The poems in "First Things to Hand" seem to find their own, wayward, surprising paths through culture and identity, sometimes in vigorous refutation of the terms that frame them. The title poem gathers great musical

and rhetorical authority in its opening lines:

> In the skull kept on the desk.
> In the spider-pod in the dust.
>
> Or nowhere. In milkmaids, in
> loaves.
> Or nowhere.

If, based on the verbal and cognitive presence of these lines, you were asked to place a wager on what came next, what would you say? Never what, in fact, follows:

> And if Socrates leaves
> His house in the morning,
>
> When he returns in the evening
> He will find Socrates waiting
>
> On the doorstep.

This mini parable of Socrates violates every principle established by the opening three-and-a-half lines; only the word "loaves" anticipates "leaves," and only in terms of its sound. (There are other "loafs" in American poetry, starting with Whitman, but few "loaves" to speak of.) All bets are off: these poems provide many such shocks, suggesting an imagination so complexly and broadly attentive to its own swerves as to surprise even itself.

This is a book about returning home and finding yourself, as did Socrates, on your own doorstep waiting for you, a book about the small tools and talismans of the writer's life, the nearly molecular reality that nevertheless engages "the infinite." At the book's heart, though, is a nearly primal cry that (though it express torrential yearning) mockingly resembles "the three/words American men say/After making love: *Where's the remote?*" Where, indeed, *is* the remote? These poems, among the very finest Pinsky has written, suggest that "the remote" is always right where you left it—that remoteness resides at home. ■

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*Dan Chiasson is author of two books of poetry,* The Afterlife of Objects *and* Natural History, *and a book of literary criticism,* One Kind of Everything: Poem and Person in Contemporary America *(Chicago, 2007). He teaches at Wellesley College.*

[BOOKS]

# The People's Historian

**BY CYNTHIA HOFFMAN**




**ORIGINAL ZINN: Conversations about History and Politics,** *by Howard Zinn with David Barsamian. Harper Perennial, July 2006*

IN WHAT HAS BECOME an annual event for educators, every August, Bowdoin College tells us what this year's entering class knows from their experience of the world. This year, for instance, students entering university have never known a world with an Iron Curtain or with a Berlin Wall.

While reading *Original Zinn*, it occurred to me that for a number of years now, Bowdoin could have included in their list that the entering class has never had to study U.S. History without the benefit of Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States.*

It's difficult to explain to people what it was like to be half-way through completing a minor in U.S. history, at a major university, before the publication of *A People's History*—a book that as near as I can tell, changed the way we think about historiography in this country. Before reading Zinn, I knew there were facets of our history that went beyond wars, presidential elections, and congressional debates; what I didn't know was how to access that type of information outside of doing serious library research. And I was skeptical of using my own experience (or the narrative experience of others—we still weren't using slave narratives in the study of the Antebellum South) as evidence.

It is no exaggeration to suggest that Howard Zinn changed not only the ways in which we think about history, but also the ways in which it is taught. For instance, personal experience is now widely considered an essential element in our understanding of a historical moment. The victor is no longer necessarily the only one writing history. Because of Zinn (and concomitantly scholars like Martin Jay and Stephen Greenblatt), the experience of the so-called "common man" is valid evidence for the writing of history.

David Barsamian directs Zinn's conversation by asking the kinds of questions we've grown accustomed to Zinn asking himself: Why quote poetry in a history textbook? Who was Rosa Parks the activist? What was Martin Luther King, Jr. doing in Memphis the week he was assassinated? Barsamian's questions allow Zinn to model the very kind of historiography he advocates: the use of the personal voice as an agent of historical change. So it should come as no surprise that it is less for gleaning new information that one should read *Original Zinn*, but for precisely the change that Zinn inspired—the validation of the authentic voice of experience. The book features Zinn's personal observations of the times in which he lives, and a reification of an activist approach to the teaching and writing of history.

Zinn's observations include a memory of a waitress in Albany, Georgia, who served him and Martin Luther King, Jr. while wearing a button that read "the white South will never surrender"; a reminder that the 1963 March on Washington was organized by telephone, without access to the Internet or even answering machines; a discussion on the value of artists as agents of social change; and, his trademark pointed and scathing comments about the current administration's marriage to corporate power and the resulting corporate media and what that does to the ability of "the people" to know what their government is really doing.

Zinn oversaw the beginnings of a shift in American historiography from an emphasis on the government to an increasingly more populist bent, with an examination of culture, art, and literature. And it is with great enthusiasm that he retells the story of an episode of *The Sopranos* in which Tony Soprano

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disses *A People's History* (being read by his son for his high school history class) by asserting that "Columbus will always be a hero" to him.

Howard Zinn changed my worldview and that of the teachers around me. It's nice to see that he's still actively engaged in the world, in teaching, and in rousing rabble. See dad? We don't all get more conservative as we age. ■

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*Cynthia Hoffman is a Jewish educator in San Francisco. She is the former co-director of the world's oldest online political magazine,* Bad Subjects.

## [BOOKS]
# Capsule Reviews




**JOKES AND THE UNCONSCIOUS**, *by Daphne Gottlieb & Diane DiMassa. Cleis Press, 2006*

GRIEF IS JUST THE punch line in Daphne Gottlieb and Diane DiMassa's brilliant and unsettling graphic novel. Before your loved one dies, there's often a long, horrendous period of decay and diminishment. It's this period that *Jokes and the Unconscious* dwells on.

At one point, Gottlieb's narration talks about "sunsetting," the idea that a dying person dwindles a bit every time the sun goes down. The book is full of people waiting for loved ones to die so they can get on with the grieving process. Most of the action takes place in a hospital whose patients have passed the point of no return.

Sasha's father, a doctor, gets her a summer job working at the hospital where he ends up on his deathbed with cancer. His slow demise is interspersed with scenes from his overbearing prime, so the reader gets a sense of how much of him there *used* to be. Meanwhile, Sasha falls in love, first with a boy, and then with a girl.

The fallibility of human bodies is in the foreground of *Jokes*, and it's here that DiMassa's gnarled artwork is at its most powerful. I'm afraid my only exposure to Diane DiMassa has come from reading her transphobic comments in the past, but her art creates powerful juxtapositions and compositions with Gottlieb's sharp prose.

The biggest joke is that we're saddled with these frail bodies that can fall apart in so many awful, unpleasant ways. From the sick man who keeps unintentionally flashing his grotesque penis, to the man whose arm is torn off by a car window, the horror of physicality grows on the reader. Gottlieb juxtaposes these gruesome images with off-color jokes, as if to say laughter is the only sane response.

Even the young and (supposedly) healthy people in the book struggle with their bodies. Sasha falls in love with Jet, a young dyke who suffers from stomach pain and diarrhea when she gets sexually aroused—a result of having been molested by her uncle.

Jokes aren't just a coping mechanism—they're a lifeline. *Jokes and the Unconscious* celebrates the notion that we come through loss and horror not just intact, but laughing. —*Charlie Anders*




**THE VISIONARY STATE: A Journey Through California's Spiritual Landscape**, *by Erik Davis, photographs by Michael Rauner. Chronicle Books, 2006.*

THE EVOLUTION OF "CALIFORNIA CONsciousness," that uniquely fantastical, infuriating, permissive, empowering, cheesy, and transcendental state of being that wafted from the rich and peculiar loam at the far fringe of the New World, is depicted in witty, knowing detail by native son Erik Davis, the futurist and culture critic. A tour of the granola state's sacred spaces, refulgent personalities, and heretical movements, *Visionary State* is no platitudinal pudding, but an astute document of (paraphrasing T.S. Eliot) the life of this age's "significant soil." Like sprites captured in respite, photographs by fellow Californian Michael Rauner further anchor the book's ethereal themes in literal space.

An entertaining piece of pop sociology, the book traces how the rootless arca-

dia sprouted a tradition of co-mingling traditions that yielded a broad continuum of noetic endeavor, pleasure seeking, and the search for meaning as an extreme sport. Davis's multifarious "theme park of the gods" teems with colorful figures and iconoclastic movements: trickster sex messiahs; psychic yogis; mega-evangelists; neopaganism; the New Age; the art bursts of Burning Man; a whisky-breathed, Beat-inflected Tao morphing into an acid-laced Zen; and a host of other transformational paths.

As exemplified by the celebrity-driven Kabbalah Centre at one end, and the progressive Jewish Renewal Movement on the other, the spectrum of California consciousness ranges from the flaky and shallow to the deeply profound and regenerative. Erring on the side of pantheistic plenty (hence the feminization and queering of the sacred) rather than the monotheistic minimum, California's become a virtual landing pad for the ineffable Other—be it angel, wraith, or UFO occupant.

Elemental to California's character are the state's Pacific Rim geography and Edenic landscape. Davis lays out how the get-rich-quick speculation instilled by the Gold Rush belied the Protestant work ethic, spurring a polyglot influx of risk-takers who nurtured a culture of ecumenical tolerance. At the core of the California ethos, he writes, is an insistence on direct experience, a primary gnosis of the "power behind the show." California may be the last Western frontier, but the sheer momentum of its seeker nature makes it a wave that keeps breaking far beyond its shores. —*Charles Hayes*




**KINGDOM COMING: The Rise of Christian Nationalism**, *by Michelle Goldberg. Norton, 2006*

WHILE COVERING THE 2004 presidential campaign for *Salon*, Michelle Goldberg observed that "liberals and conservatives no longer merely had divergent values—they also occupied different realities, with contradictory facts, histories and epistemologies." *Kingdom Coming* is about precisely this divergence in perceived reality. Goldberg didn't simply read about the Christian Right, she spent time with them, talking to individuals, attending services and meetings, visiting with representatives of the various offshoots of the movement such as abstinence-only education programs, pregnancy planning clinics, and home-schooling parents. In her travels across the country, she interrogates, and subsequently reveals, not only the false assumptions and assertions of the Christian Right—who claim for instance that this is a Christian Nation—but also the political strategies of "Intelligent Designers," both generally and in Dover, Pennsylvania in particular, as well as the political uses of homophobia in the 2004 general election. In addition, she provides an in-depth analysis of some of the explicit consequences of Bush's faith-based initiative along with the so-called war against the judiciary.

Her text is littered with references to Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, and she equates—with carefully stated reservations—twenty-first-century American Christian nationalism with the rise of totalitarianism in Europe in the mid-twentieth century.

While Goldberg concludes bleakly, albeit tongue-in-cheek, with the old joke about keeping our bags backed and our passports current, she also carefully elucidates the ways in which Christian nationalism, in and of itself, is anxiety inducing, and goes beyond the mere curtailing of our civil rights. By far the most unsettling moment in the book is the realization that as a movement, the Christian Right is in fact organized enough to threaten the Constitution's protections for minorities. That alone is frightening, but it is even more so because the movement has created a class of people who simply reject certain objective truths, leaving a cavernous empty space where there should be common ground for conversation amongst all of us.

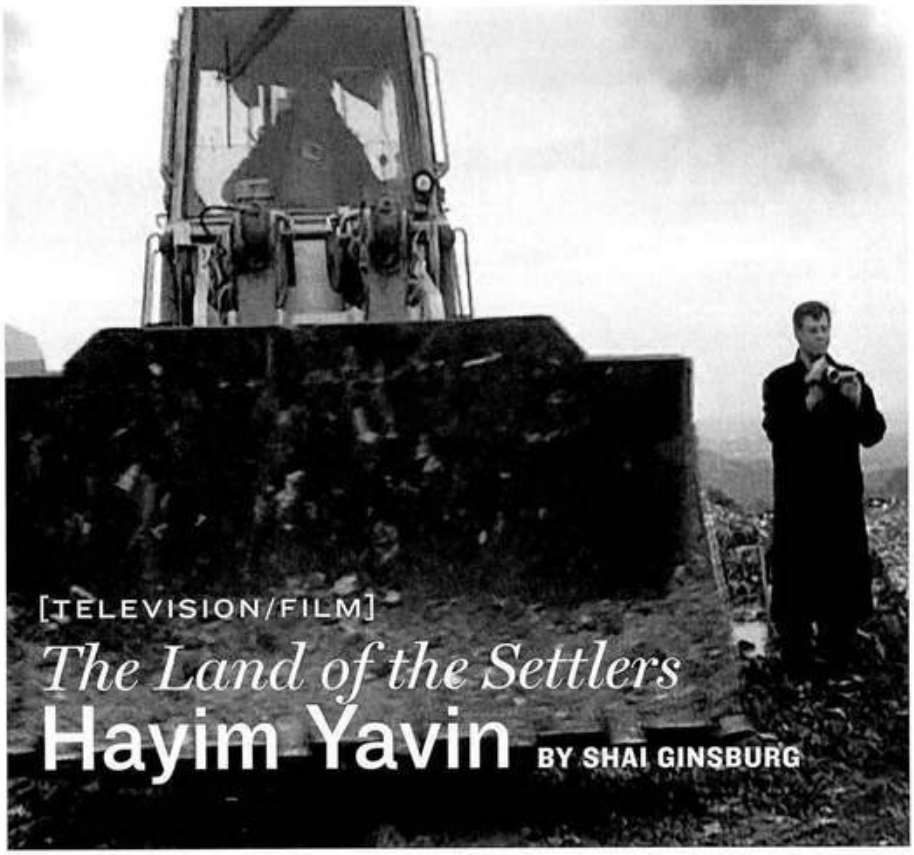
For those of us who live in the reality-based world, and value Enlightenment principles, the next decades may be fraught indeed. —*Cynthia Hoffman*



**Jean-Paul Sartre and the Jewish Question**
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[TELEVISION/FILM]

# *The Land of the Settlers*
# Hayim Yavin

BY SHAI GINSBURG

EVEN BEFORE IT WAS AIRED on Israel's second television channel—just a few weeks before the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, in June 2005—Hayim Yavin's documentary series *The Land of the Settlers* inspired heated reactions. On the eve of its broadcast, leaders of the settlement movement appealed to the chairmen of the Israel Broadcast Authority, demanding that it dismiss Yavin, Israel's "Mr. Television," from his job as anchor of Israel's first and longest running news program. The series, they claimed, was not merely imbalanced but left-wing propaganda that smears the settlers, an indictment of the objectivity of both Yavin as a journalist, and that of Israeli public television during a time of painful public debate over the Disengagement.

Rushing to Yavin's defense, his supporters argued that the series revealed the settlers' continuous defiance, directed not only at the liberal-humanistic ethos of Zionism, but at the State and at international law; some even compared the series to Walter Cronkite's groundbreaking reports on the Vietnam war. What upset the settlers, Yavin's defenders maintained, was not the lack of truth in Yavin's report, but simply his lack of empathy for the settlers. Responding to his critics, Yavin explained that while as a news announcer he was careful to maintain balance, he should be allowed to express his political views in documentaries and that, in this particular documentary, the settlers speak for themselves and represent their own views.

Yavin opens the series with scenes from the first encounter between the government and the settlers in Sebastia, in the Samaria, during Chanukah, 1975. Shimon Peres, who was the defense minister at the time, was sent to negotiate with the settlers over their evacuation. "From the *Mabbat* news studio, it looked simple," Yavin comments; "Peres will pull the settlers and us out of the mud. I've been broadcasting this story for thirty years." In *The Land of the Settlers*, Yavin crosses the street from the protected studio of the news show to the ground of the events. For two and a half years he interviewed settlers and left-wing activists, soldiers, and Palestinians. In the series, he juxtaposes Daniella Weiss, "the high priestess of the settlements" as he calls her, with Gideon Levy, who in his weekly column in *Haaretz* condemns the Israeli occupation and its horrors; a soldier at a roadblock and a female activist with a checkpoint monitoring organization *Machsom Watch*; Elyakim Haetzni of the ur-settlement Kiryat Arba and Shlomo Leker, attorney-at-law who represents the Palestinians of Hebron; Shalhevet Federman, who calls the Arabs "sub-humans," and the novelist Meir Shalev, who joins Palestinian farmers in the harvest of their fields; Colonel (Res.) Danny Tirzeh, architect of the separation wall, and Uri Avnery, who protests against the wall; the woman settler who is willing to give up her life for the Jewish settlement project in the Gaza Strip, Mazal Emek who, despite her anger, would peacefully evacuate her house in Kadim in the North of Smaraia, and Lydia Gvilli, who is eager to leave the Gaza Strip, but has nowhere to go; and, Lieutenant Colonel (Res.) Yitzhak Shadmi who declares that he would disobey the order to evacuate Jewish settlements and reservist Captain David Zonshein, who refuses to serve in the army in defiance of the Israeli occupation. In assembling together these divergent personalities and perspectives and in cutting repeatedly between them, Yavin's documentary reflects the hectic public debate about the Occupation in Israel.

Indeed, Yavin does not hide his political views when interviewing. His commentaries place him securely within the Israeli Zionist left; he views the settlement project with suspicion. Thus, while Daniella Weiss contends that the settlers attack no one and hurt no one; while settlers in Itamar refuse to talk about the Palestinians; and, while Elyakim Haetzni attests that the years he has been living in Hebron were the happiest of his

**In *The Land of the Settlers*, there is no discussion, no shared language—not even an interest in finding such a language—not only between the settlers and the Palestinians, but between Jewish Israelis themselves.**

life, Yavin shows the price paid by the Palestinians for the Occupation and the settlement project. He shows the Palestinians who wait for hours in line at the road blocks, the merchants who are forced out of their stores to make room for the Jewish settlers, the farmers whose olive trees are uprooted, the victims of murderous Jewish attacks. Still, Yavin "balances" the sights of the abuse of Palestinians with the all-too familiar sights of Jewish victims and survivors of Palestinian terrorist attacks.

Throughout the five episodes of the documentary, Yavin is seen holding a hand-held video camera, and the frame alternately shows him together with his interviewees and his interviewees alone, as captured by the lens of his small recorder. The documentary thus oscillates between the desire to provide a panoramic view of the Israeli occupation and the settlers, and Yavin's personal perspective. Narrated by Yavin himself—an Israeli icon, whose voice is equated with "The News"—the series endows Yavin's personal perspective with an authority that surpasses the subjective viewpoint that he evoked in his defense.

Settlers who are critics of the film have argued that Yavin tricked them into collaborating with him. Given the media savoir-faire of the settlement movement, this claim is indeed surprising, and smacks of insincerity. One would be hard pressed to believe that such figures as Daniella Weiss, Elyakim Haetzni, Noam and Elisheva Federman, and others, all familiar with Yavin's own political views, would have innocently allowed themselves to be deceived by him. In fact, more than once, the documentary evinces the willingness of the settlers to collaborate with Yavin, even when they accuse him, openly and in front of the camera, of being "one of the Oslo criminals because of whom we buried more than 1000 Jews." And particularly when, on film, they censure Yavin for selling out his people, his land, his honor, and the security of all the citizens of Israel, and wish that he would be put to trial for his despicable treachery.

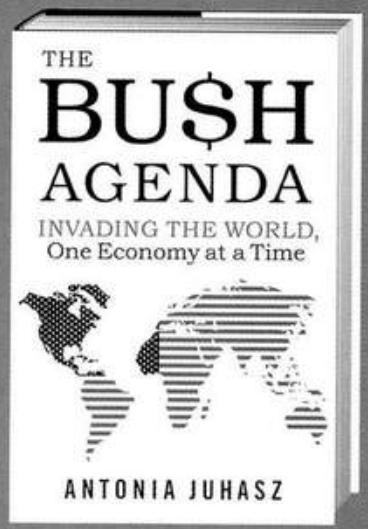
What *Land of the Settlers* shows is neither new nor unknown. It has been written about and seen in countless journalistic pieces, news items, broadcasts, and documentaries for the past thirty-nine years, even on the screen of the all-too reluctant Israeli television network. Yavin interviews the usual suspects, shows the usual sights, and refers to the usual incidents. Indeed, he argues that we—that is, Jewish Israelis—do not see the Palestinians and their suffering. But would the unconvinced suddenly see what they have refused to see all along?

What is striking in Yavin's documentary is not what it shows, but what it ultimately enacts—namely, a complete lack of dialogue. In front of the camera, his interviewees—whether from the Right or from the Left, soldiers or Palestinians—deliver their ready-made and well-articulated speeches, and reiterate well-known theses and arguments, slogans, and platitudes. There is no discussion, no shared language—not even an interest in finding such a language—not only between the settlers and the Palestinians, but between Jewish Israelis themselves, irrespective of their political positions. In fact, Yavin himself, despite his efforts, fails to engage his interviewees: like them, he repeats what he believes in, yet his words find no echo in his interlocutors. The documentary thus becomes a series of solipsistic monologues and, as such, becomes part of the well-known tragedy that it portrays. ■

*Shai Ginsburg is* Tikkun*'s Television/Film editor. He teaches at Duke University.*

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[MUSIC]

# Redistributing the Sonic Universe

## *Listening to Califone*

BY CHARLIE BERTSCH

A TRAIN WHISTLE THAT ISN'T, the fleshy whump of bongos, the plinking of a single, tinny note, the thrum of a too-slack string insistently plucked—these are the sounds that open "Pink and Sour," the first song on Califone's new album *Roots and Crowns*. They share a sense of isolation, as if they had each been made far away from each other, a distance measured in both years and miles. And yet we hear them together, through an expansion of the sonic landscape so daring that it threatens to implode under the burden of unity. What the song needs is a line coursing through its center, something to relieve the stress on its outer walls. When Tim Rutili's voice enters the mix, channeling the earnestness of country bluesmen and cantors alike, we expect it to bring relief. But the scratchy tune he unreels is too spare to deliver us fully from that initial tension. The song rumbles forward, threatening to collapse before our ears, losing parts along the way until it has been reduced to awkwardly plucked acoustic notes with the patina of a Depression-era field recording. Often gorgeous in the details, "Pink and Sour" never quite resolves into the kind of beauty you can display on your mental mantelpiece. It gives pleasure without giving itself too freely, the perfect metaphor for *Roots and Crowns*, and for Califone generally.

Califone's *Roots and Crowns* is available from Thrill Jockey records: www.thrilljockey.com

Rutili, interviewed for this piece, affirms, "I know I don't like being shouted at" in trying to explain Califone's approach to songwriting. He worries about "beating a melody or idea to death." At the same time, the band also wants to avoid the opposite extreme. "We try not to obscure things too much. A little subtlety is nice these days." The emphasis in his clarification falls squarely on the word "little." It's a delicate balancing act, staying poised on the divide between ease and difficulty. That Califone manages to sustain our interest in spite—or perhaps because—of its reluctance to outfit its songs with the structural supports of classic rock, testifies to the feel for sound that sets them apart from other artists interested in stretching the musical frame. The sounds that open "Pink and Sour" may seem isolated from each other, but they compel our interest all by themselves. We may be listening for that line that will make the song whole, but we are happy to listen to it in pieces while we wait.

In this regard, Califone is in step with a broader trend that has been reshaping our sense of what constitutes songwriting in the age of mechanical reproduction. Increasingly, serious artists rely on techniques that resist transcription into musical notation. When it's not the note that matters so much as where and when it was played, composition takes on an archival dimension. Rutili explains that the band's approach to craft is "mostly trial and error." But his definition of this term includes a lot more than jamming together in a practice session. "Maybe someone found an old Casio keyboard at a thrift store or someone found some metal in the ally. It's different every time." In other words, the process of discovery includes the search for sounds that cannot be reduced to their specs, in which the history of the object used to make them is an integral part of their character. Although chance plays an important role in the process, the search is not conducted blindly.

"Sometimes I'll make a list of sounds that I'd like to hear," notes Rutili. A traditional composer might say the same. In Rutili's case, however, the list functions like the sort used in scavenger hunts. A source must be found for each sound before it can be made. Thus, when Califone's equipment was robbed during the tour for their last album *Heron King Blues*, the loss was especially poignant. Musicians are usually sentimental about their favorite instruments, but it's easier to replace a Fender Stratocaster than a violin from 1917, which was one of the many items stolen. "Most of it was irreplaceable," he laments. Although it's possible to assemble a repertoire of digital samples for a particular instrument, the sort of experiments that Califone specializes in aren't easily simulated on a computer. Describing the song "Spider's House," the press release for *Roots and Crowns* remarks that it, "is built on the sound of a piano with duct tape and paper clips all over its wires."

This is not to imply that Califone promotes an anti-digital aesthetic. On the contrary, the band uses the latest technology freely. But there's an important difference, both quantitatively and qualitatively, between making a recording of a sound, whether in the field or the studio, and making a recording of a recording. Playing an actual instrument inspires a

specificity of musical thinking that is largely absent from the experience of making music exclusively on a computer, where the underlying equivalence of all digital data reduces particular use values—the historically accumulated quirks of that 1917 violin, the way the favorite guitar that Rutili lost in the theft felt in his hands—to exchange value. That list of sounds Rutili wants to hear is by definition a list of sounds he's not going to be able to hear sitting in front of his computer screen, because what he wants to hear is the mournful cry of a world that has been losing its character in the era of profligate copying.

It may seem that Califone works under the sign of paradox. How can you capture and manipulate the sounds of a one-of-a-kind artifact into a record destined for widespread distribution without undermining the uniqueness you wish to celebrate? In one sense, you can't. But the force of this critique is itself the product of the abstract mindset that hunts down differences and turns them into more of the same. To restrict one's choices to all or nothing is to succumb to the implacable logic of binary code, in which the universe is flattened into a series of zeroes and ones. Califone's music is directed at a different constituency, one that's more flexible and forgiving. The mere fact that it's possible to articulate the difference between recording a sound and recording a recording of a sound—or a recording of a recording of a recording and so on—indicates that there are shades of gray invisible to the high-contrast lens of the purity-obsessed.

Califone clearly prefers the honest grit of imperfection to the mendacious sheen of spotlessness. Rutili grows passionate in expounding on this point. "I love noise. A lot of what we do takes noise and puts it in places where it shouldn't belong." A few years back, the popular alternative rock band Wilco brought this sensibility to mainstream attention by fleshing out the songs on their critically-acclaimed *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* album with the type of hiss and crackle familiar to anyone who has tried to tune into a distant radio station. The band freely admitted to being inspired by artists like Sonic Youth, who were in turn influenced by a bevy of *avant-garde* composers and sound artists. Califone is clearly a product of the same lineage. But what sets the band apart somewhat from other rock musicians who have dabbled in making noise for noise's sake is their refusal to regard it as a supplement to a pre-existing song. The noise in Califone songs isn't just a veil that makes the body of work beneath it more appealing by blurring its contours. Rather, the noise is an important element of their music. Indeed, their music destabilizes the meaning of the word "noise" itself.

For Rutili, putting noise "where it shouldn't belong" gives listeners an incentive to seek out the obscure nooks and crannies in a song. "I think that leaves a lot of space and friction for anyone who wants to take the time to explore. This music should creep up on you and you should hear something new every time you listen." This goal also explains why the loss of Califone's instruments may actually end up being our gain. "We ended up just collecting more instruments or fixing old ones that had been lying around unused. We would have been doing that anyway. Getting out of that comfort zone and finding our way with new gear was good for *Roots & Crowns*." Considering the album's excellence, the band might just want to pay someone to steal their instruments during the next tour as well. ■

*Charlie Bertsch is* Tikkun*'s Music Editor.*

[MUSIC]

# Capsule Reviews



**VARCHARZ,** *by Mouse on Mars. Ipecac Recordings, 2006*

THE ANNALS OF electronic music history are full of talented artists who turn the gold of their studio recordings into lead when they hit the stage. Computer-triggered samples don't amplify as readily as bass and guitars. With each layer of pre-recorded sound, the likelihood increases that the limpid flow on a record will turn into a river of mud in a live setting. And, even if the technical aspects of the performance are ably handled, the attempt to reproduce an intricate collage in performance leads most acts to bend with furrowed-brow over their PowerBooks, too busy to let either themselves, or their audience, relax.

But there are exceptions out there, such as Germany's Mouse on Mars. Like Kraftwerk before them, this duo understands the virtues of restraint. The more you limit the sources of your sound, the better the chances that it will sound good live. Mouse on Mars trumps their illustrious ancestors, though, by using equipment that can be manipulated in response to the feedback generated by the specifics of a particular music-making context. Although the difference between pushing buttons and twiddling knobs may not seem that significant at first, it makes a world of difference in concert.

Or in the studio. This curious album, derived from the sessions that led to 2004's funk-happy *Radical Connector*, demonstrates that Mouse on Mars is perfectly capable of rocking out in the privacy of their Düsseldorf work space. Lacking the polish of their last few releases on Thrill Jockey Records, as well as the vocals that had become an increasingly prominent element in their sound, it sometimes recalls the minimalism of the duo's early records. At the same time, though, *Varcharz* also testifies to what Mouse on Mars have learned in the interim. This may be the most "live" studio recording ever produced by an electronic artist. Full of the contrast between tight and slack moments that characterize their concerts, it demonstrates that imperfection can be a shortcut to the sublime.

*—C.B.*

POEM

# Untitled

The sun is setting,
the mountains lie in shadows,

the birds are quiet
and the fields are still.

Everyone is happy,
for the evening brings rest.

I look all around me
and I am full of sorrow,

and my sorrow sends me to the dark
orchards of Ukraine.

My spirit flies
and continues flying

and in such motion
my heart finds stillness.

The fields are dark
and the forest and the mountains are also dark.

Star, beloved star,
why am I crying?

—Have you risen also
over my Ukraine?

Have beloved brown eyes looked up
in search of you?

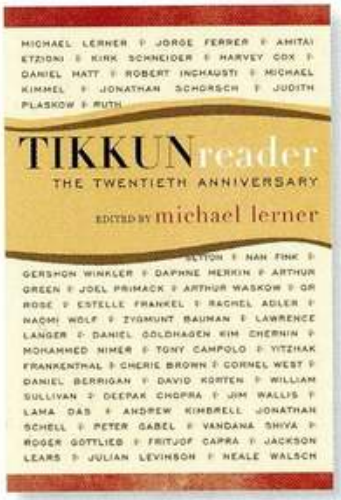
Or have you risen
only to be forgotten?

If forgotten, let such eyes stay
closed in sleep.

My only wish is that they never know
my fate here all alone.

Orsk Fortress, 1847
*—Taras Shevchenko*
*Translated by Joshua Weiner*

# Get the Best *of* Tikkun!




## THE TIKKUN READER

collects the best of *Tikkun* magazine since its inception. Thematically arranged, these essays raise deep spiritual questions—and give sophisticated answers. How can we approach God when we no longer believe? What constitutes a spiritual politics? How can we balance the need for inner spiritual work with the need for outer political work? The selections here also illuminate the contemporary Jewish situation, as authors ask: How has the Holocaust impacted Judaism for better—and for worse? Who is a Jew, and what does Jewish identity mean today? What relationship can or should the progressive Jew have with Israel? An introduction by founder and editor-in-chief Michael Lerner sets the stage and places the readings in context.

### LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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