

Tikkun

POLITICS+SPIRITUALITY+CULTURE

(tē·kūn) To mend, repair, and transform the world.

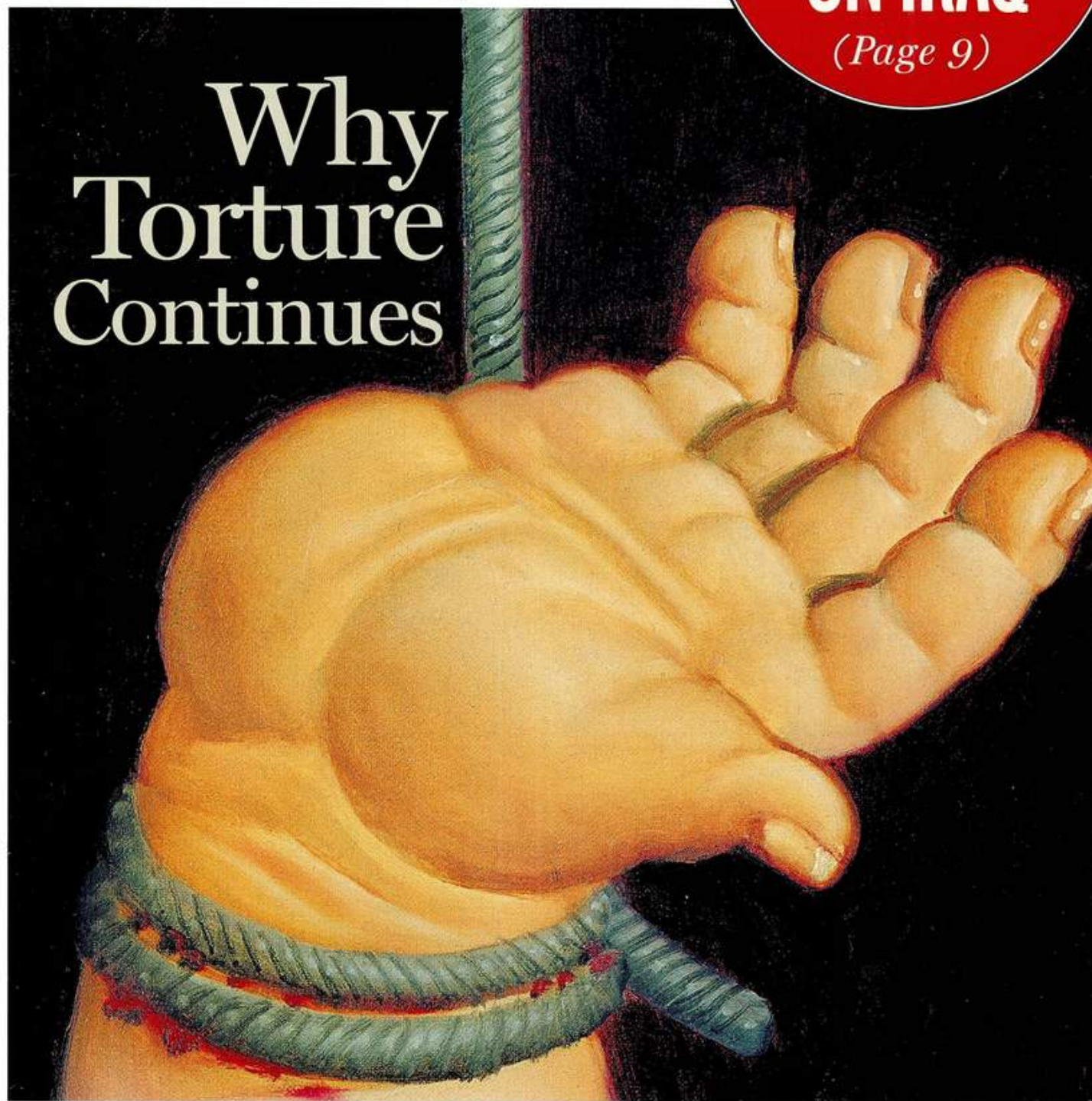
MAY/JUNE 2007

INTERVIEW

**CHOMSKY
ON IRAQ**

(Page 9)

Why Torture Continues



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**40 Years of Occupation | Rethinking Religion: Tony
Campolo, Richard Rohr, Glen Stassen, David Loy |
Flaming Lips | Fox News | A Meaningful Universe?**



These works are a result of the indignation that the violations in Iraq produced in me and the rest of the world.

- *Fernando Botero*



Sadly, it is no argument against the theory of Administration complicity in 9/11 that "they just wouldn't do that to their own." The aristocracy at the highest levels of power do not consider the hoi polloi as "their own." I would refer to some of the literature quoted by Norman Cohn in *Warrant for Genocide*. Partly because of the American myth of democracy, I think there is very poor understanding of how profound is the exceptionalism of the ruling class. Dick Cheney's "other things to do," Rumsfeld's breezy callousness, the President's not being able to conceive of personal error; not giving Osama bin Laden much thought—all of this makes sense for people who identify only themselves and their circle as truly human, and

only their own interests as relevant. John Dean's *Conservatives Without Conscience* is essential reading, but we peons need to grasp the narcissism of absolute privilege if we are to begin to take back our own humanity.

DAAPHNE WILSON
Sebastopol, CA

ONE OF THE CLAIMS David Ray Griffin employs to defend his arguments that the 9/11 disaster was to a certain extent planned is that the fires that ensued were unable to reach temperatures capable of melting steel. As someone working in the foundry industry, let me assure you that this is totally erroneous. Many foundries still use coal or coke-based systems for steel smelting, and steelmaking processes such as the old Bessemer converter and

hearth reduction furnaces all used hydrocarbons in various forms. This is common, even elementary knowledge among metallurgists, so when Griffin fails to check the validity of claims that can so easily be refuted, it must cast serious doubts on the value of the rest of his work.

KEN P. HARRIS
Asker, Norway

REALLY GREAT WORK for publicizing the work of David Ray Griffin. I wish more magazines were as bold, and that people would awaken to the fact that there is a major criminal element in the White House. Unfortunately, the average person doesn't like to question authority, and so it is up to magazines, and people like ourselves, to force the average American, and people

around the world, to have a real think about what is going on. Again, thanks.

SCOTT WOOLFENDEN,
Oldham, U.K.

Dear Editor,
Thank you for inviting me to write for *Tikkun*. While I respect your sincerity and sense of mission, I'm afraid I cannot allow my name to be associated with a journal that saw fit to publish David Ray Griffin's article in its March/April issue. Whatever your private views may be, publishing this piece was the moral equivalent of giving space in your pages to a Holocaust denier. It was an inexcusable editorial lapse. I say this as an early and fervent opponent of the war in Iraq.

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Tikkun



Rethinking Religion

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

- 17 God as the Suffering Servant** BY TONY CAMPOLO
God chose to be limited in power to make human freedom possible

BUDDHISM

- 19 The Three Poisons, Institutionalized** BY DAVID LOY
Collective Karma requires Buddhist social action

HINDUISM

- 23 Jerusalem in Benares** BY NATHAN KATZ
Much to learn from Hinduism

JUDAISM

- 25 Divine Garb:** BY OR N. ROSE
A Hasidic Teaching on Revelation at Sinai

CATHOLICISM

- 28 Mending the Breach** BY RICHARD ROHR
Spiritual wisdom for healing the world

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

- 31 God to Cain: If You do Right You'll Talk!** BY GLEN STASSEN
A biblical message on how to resolve differences peaceably

Politics and Society

- 33 Special Feature: Why Torture Continues**
The normalization of torture may be one of the worst consequence of the War in Iraq
- 34 Editors' Introduction to the Discussion and to the Artist Botero**
The renowned artist gives us a visual record, based on the facts
- 36 Spokes in the Wheel** BY DIANNA ORTIZ
A personal account of torture
- 39 Where Were the Doctors?** BY LARRY DOSSEY
Torture and the Betrayal of Medicine
- 53 Torture and Tikkun Olam** BY ERIK GLEIBERMANN
Repairing the victims

Healing and Transformation

- 56 Getting Real About Food** BY DONNA SCHAPER
The author has slow food idealism and a fast food stomach
- 60 A Call for a Sabbath Year to Repair a Broken World** BY JACOB FEINSPAN
The Biblical call for debt relief would work today

The War in Iraq

EDITORIAL BY
MICHAEL
LERNER

The split among progressives as we assess the Democrats' strategy (see page 6)

INTERVIEW:
NOAM CHOMSKY

Explores the role of elites in shaping the war (see page 9)

40 Years of Occupation

EDITORIAL BY
MICHAEL
LERNER

It's still immoral and self-destructive (see page 11)

EDITORIAL
BY URI AVNERY

The dean of Israeli peace activists reflects on how it started and how it will be overcome (see page 13)

Cover Image:
Fernando Botero

Tikkun

Departments

3 Letters

16 The Contrarian

Global Marshall Plan? Not so Fast!

Culture

TV

71 Fox News: Joker or Joke? *The 1/2 News Hour*, BY PAUL LEWIS

MUSIC

72 *At War with the Mystics by The Flaming Lips*,
REVIEWED BY KYVA HOLMAN

BOOKS

73 *Towards a Meaningful Universe*, BY JORDI PIGEM
A review of Richard Tarnas' *Cosmos and Psyche*

75 *Louis Zukofsky: Selected Poems*, REVIEW BY BOB PERELMAN

POEM

77 "Every True Religion is Bound to Fail" BY CHARLES BERNSTEIN

BOOKS

79 *The Colors of Jews: Racial Politics and Radical Diaspora*. An excerpt from
an important new book BY MELANIE KAYE/KANTROWITZ

HUMOR

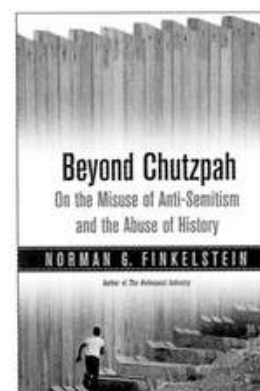
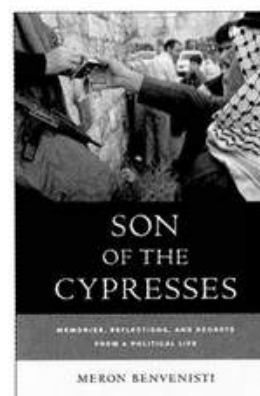
80 Dear Swami BY SWAMI BEYONDANANDA

Five Things YOU Can Do to End the War:

1. Let your Congressperson and Senators know that you will not vote for them if they vote for any appropriation for the war that does not require a firm 2008 date for bringing all the troops home.
2. Get your city council and state legislature to endorse the NSP version of the Global Marshall Plan, or put it on the ballot by organizing an initiative campaign.
3. Run for a delegate-seat to the state party convention of whatever political party you are part of on the platform of the Global Marshall Plan and with the intention of organizing people around that idea at the national convention.
4. Join the NSP and work with others who seek to infuse the anti-war movement with the kind of positive vision that the Global Marshall Plan represents.
5. Sign the ad for ending the war: www.tikkun.org/iraqpeace.

For help on projects 2-4 go to www.spiritualprogressives.org,
or contact Nichola@tikkun.org.

CONFRONTATIONS



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BEYOND WAR

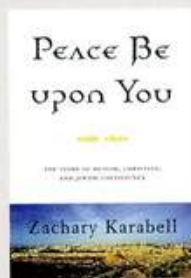
Douglas P. Fry
Oxford, 2007

PEACE BE UPON YOU:

The Story of Muslim, Christian and Jewish Coexistence

Zachary Karabell
Knopf, 2007

BOTH BOOKS GIVE US HOPE BY reminding us that there is a real human drive for peaceful coexistence. Fry reminds us that wartime enemies have sometimes become peaceful allies and friends even after horrible carnage, that ethnocentrism need not end in violence, that conflict management has grown, and that "hard-headed-realists" who think violence is inevitable are championing a myth that cannot be sustained by evidence. Karabell shows that Muslims, Christians and Jews have often coexisted in harmonious communal relationships in the past, and that it was modern nationalism, not intrinsic to any of the religious traditions, that has exacerbated tensions and generated warfare.



CALM AND COMPASSIONATE CHILDREN: A HANDBOOK

Susan Usha Dermond
Celestial Arts, 2007

SELF-HELP BOOKS LIKE this one are often useful, particularly to those who think they already know all the answers. Susan Dermond advocates for an approach of kindness and gentleness towards children, but she is also solution-conscious. She has written a book chock-full of good ideas for parents and educators who may not know how to translate their good intentions into compassionate action. Dermond reminds us that we need to be kind and compassionate towards ourselves if we wish to instill these values in our children.



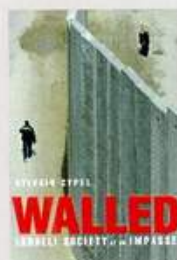
WALLED

Sylvain Cypel
Other Press, 2007

EXILE

Richard North Patterson
Henry Holt, 2007

SYLVAIN CYPEL'S CAREFUL STUDY of political discourse, and Richard North Patterson's engaging novel have this in common: they both address the contemporary Israel/Palestine struggle with the kind of psychological nuance often absent from public politics and scholarly inquiries. Cypel is a senior editor at Le Monde, and is well-versed in the details of Israeli denial and its roots in the legacy of Holocaust consciousness. Patterson gives us a better sense of the driving pain of Palestinians that helps account for suicide bombers. If read as widely as they should be, both books would make a serious contribution to changing mass consciousness about the nature of the struggle and how we should respond.

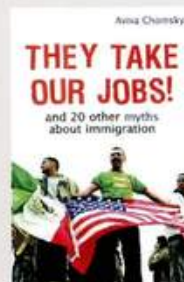


THEY TAKE OUR JOBS:

And 20 other Myths About Immigrations

Aviva Chomsky
Beacon Press, 2007

AVIVA CHOMSKY'S NEW BOOK is the perfect handbook for liberals and progressives facing a tough campaign issue in 2008. She recognizes both the fear-mongering that has made immigration a powerful issue for Right-wingers, and the global failings of Clintonesque neo-liberalism, with its attendant Third World poverty and hence flight to the First World.



THE ETHIOPIAN JEWS OF ISRAEL

Len Lyons
Jewish Lights Publishing, 2007

A LARGE COFFEE TABLE BOOK with beautiful photography, *The Ethiopian Jews of Israel* captures the amazing story of Ethiopians, whose claims to Jewish ancestry led to their immigration to Israel. Overcoming every possible stereotype, Lyons' book gives the reader a deep sense of the complexity of Ethiopian life in Israel, which has been fraught with challenges. Yet, for all the problems these Ethiopian Jews face in daily life, this book is a powerful antidote to those who wish to dismiss Israel as nothing but a state of white Europeans.



Readers Respond

DIGNITY IN DEATH

YOUR MARCH/APRIL 2007 issue was gutsy in many respects, challenging the pro-choice forces to reframe their agenda to make it possible for them to cooperate with pro-life forces; insisting on policies that support women as they raise their children ("Making Abortion Rare" by Nina Kohl), defending prayer to young people who might see religion as counterposed to rationality ("Praying with My Feet" by Margie Klein), and arguing that psychedelic therapy has demonstrated positive outcomes and thereby insisting that social policy should be subordinated to the medical and scientific experts on the possible use of these drugs ("Can Science Validate the Psychedelic Experience?" by Charles Hayes). But for me, the most powerful piece was Barbara Coombs Lee's "Dying in the Spirit" in which she describes how Oregon's "right to die" law has been operating, and why it is a moral choice that is consistent with the spiritual wisdom of many of our great religious or spiritual traditions. As a partner to some-

one who is suffering immense pain as he dies, and who cannot now be moved to the State of Oregon, I was truly grateful that *Tikkun* was willing to affirm that the God who loves souls may wish us, at times, to end suffering by allowing individuals to choose death when facing a terminal illness.

SANDRA FAIRCHILD
Chicago, IL

POLYAMORY

IN HIS ESSAY ON spirituality and human relationships, "Monogamy, Polyamory and Beyond" [*Tikkun*, Jan/Feb 2007], Jorge N. Ferrer frames the dialogue within a narrow definition of spirituality (i.e., "... the uncovering of ... self-centeredness"). The author then elevates this frame upon a pedestal of scientism and modern bias before hoisting the entire construction onto a barge built of Social Darwinist notions and setting sail upon a sea of wishful thinking. To dismiss jealousy as some relic of evolutionary adaptation is to deny our humanness and the very soil of our spiritual growth. Any discussion of spirituality and human relationship must be "heart-centered"—jealous hearts not excluded. When we delve deeply into the spiritual aspects of human sexuality (see *The Soul of Sex* by Thomas Moore), we discover the intimate webs of relationship. Jealousy, self-es-

teem, love, identity, etc., are pathways of self-discovery which comprise "the heart" and which lead to our spiritual core. For those on a spiritual path, the seeds of growth are contained in the challenges of committed relationship. This is my understanding of the phrase "the sanctity of marriage."

Early Christianity grew rapidly during the first and second centuries, in part, due to the general revulsion of the populace to the sexual licentiousness of the Roman citizenry. The soul weariness of decadence. Thus, faithfulness in marriage as a Christian institution was born. The reasons for today's failure of marriage as an institution are rooted in the materialism and decadence of the American Empire. Polyamory is a product of this very same narcissistic culture. To seek cultural salvation there is a fool's game. The way forward, I believe, is to reaffirm spirituality and the sacred in our daily lives, relationships, and institutions.

Polyamory is, at best, an ex-

perimental lifestyle. A small avant-garde of stalwart hearts have ventured there in the past with mixed results, leaving (as noted by the author) a slew of broken marriages. If one is single and "enlightened," have at it. But to characterize the experiments in polyamory as an emancipatory cultural development sounds eerily close to the hyperbolic ranting of the MDA drug culture.

ELLIOT TARRY
Montague, MA

THE AMERICAN EMPIRE AND 9/11

THANK YOU VERY MUCH for publishing the clear synopsis of David Ray Griffin's work on the anomalies in the official story of 9/11.

It was startling to me to recognize how much of this analysis passed the old logic standard that the simplest explanation that fits all the facts should get the benefit of the doubt. As a lawyer, I also appreciate the attention to behaviors contrary to normal procedures, and explanations contrary to normal motives.

Send letters to managingeditor@tikkun.org or to 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200 Berkeley, CA 94704

This section includes letters we receive from snail mail and from responses posted on our website to specific articles. We may shorten, edit, or change some words for greater clarity. We only print a small set of the large supply of letters and emails we receive. All letters sent to us are read, but only a few can fit here in our limited space.

We mourn the loss of two powerful women whose voices inspired many of our readers: Tillie Olsen and Tanya Reinhart.

Tillie Olsen was a powerful writer whose book Tell Me A Riddle contained the short story "I Stand Here Ironing," which became a classic for those seeking to understand how feminism and class issues intersect.

Tanya Reinhart taught linguistics at Tel Aviv University and became an outspoken critic of Israeli policy. She was a writer for Tikkun, and her book The Road Map to Nowhere was reviewed in our Jan/Feb 2007 issue.

Editor Responds:

Dear Potential Author,

I was quite shocked to receive your letter, stating that you would not allow your name to be associated with a magazine that printed an article by David Ray Griffin, even though we made it clear that we at *Tikkun* disagreed with the article and that our response appears on our website www.tikkun.org. You disregard the obvious free speech arguments for printing positions that we disagree with and find misguided by comparing this article to Holocaust denial. The analogy, however, is completely overblown and does not work.

The 9/11 conspiracy theorists, with whom we disagree, do not deny the fact of 9/11, nor do they say that the number killed has been wildly exaggerated. If they were to deny the obvious facts, in the way that Holocaust deniers do, we would not give them space any more than we'd give space to someone who claimed that there had never been an assassination of JFK or Martin Luther King, Jr., or that there had never been slavery in the U.S. However, the contention of the people who demand a new investigation of 9/11 is that the causal explanations given by the official stories and commissions leave a number of important issues unanswered and that they have a different causal explanation.

This is precisely the kind of debate that we do allow in *Tikkun* in relationship to the Holocaust: namely, what caused it and who actually planned or intended it—a debate that has raged for

decades among Jewish scholars of the Holocaust. For example, there are some who argue that it was a plan of the ruling elites of Germany and that it was done without much knowledge of, or support by, the population of Germany. Others argue that it had widespread support in Germany. Still others argue that it was implemented by the SS or other factions in the Nazi elite without knowledge on the part of the major German industrialists, including those who actually contributed to its execution. And there were many other theories about why it happened and who was involved in the relevant decisions. This kind of discussion is precisely what is being asked for by at least some of the 9/11 conspiracy theorists, who are engaged in an argument about who was involved in the causal chain and why, not arguing whether there were planes flown into the World Trade Center or whether there was in fact an explosion and damage done to the Pentagon.

As we said there in the magazine, and again on our website, we at *Tikkun* not only don't agree with their analysis, but also don't think that, even if it were true, it would be a wise thing to spend time engaged in that inquiry. But we often publish articles with which the editors completely disagree, and feel that commitment very strongly and most intensely when we get such pieces. Is it really appropriate to refuse to have any connection or to allow your name to be associated with such a magazine and

Intern/Volunteer at Tikkun

Come work from our national office in Berkeley, CA

Help to produce *Tikkun* magazine and work with the Network of Spiritual Progressives on our strategies to end the war in Iraq, including: the Global Marshall Plan and the Strategy of Generosity, the New Bottom Line in Professions, our national conference in D.C. in 2008, taking our ideas into the Democratic and Republican primaries and national conventions. Positions available June-August 2007 or Sept 2007-June 2008. To apply: please send a self-revealing letter or video/DVD to RabbiLerner@tikkun.org, or hardcopy to Tikkun Intern, 2342 Shattuck #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704.

such a tradition of free speech? Of course, there are always editorial decisions to be made with limited space, so we don't reprint positions with which we disagree if they have already been given a great deal of attention in other media outlets, but if they have not, or have been treated unfairly, we are very willing to give such positions, when well articulated, space in our magazine.

GLOBAL MARSHALL PLAN

WHEN I FIRST HEARD THAT you were touting a Global Marshall Plan my heart sank, thinking that you had forgotten your own primary teaching—that people do not live by bread alone. If Tikkun and NSP are going to be about giving money to people, why not just join the liberals and progressives you so often criticize?

Then I read the editorial and went to your www.spiritualprogressives.org website and read the full explanation of your strategy, and I was very encouraged. I get it now that the Global Marshall Plan is a strategy to challenge what you call the "accepted paradigm" in which peace is

achieved through domination, and to put forward an alternative that you call the strategy of generosity. Whoa—suddenly we are back into what I respect about *Tikkun* and the NSP—that it's about changing the foundational ideas, not just getting some particular piece of legislation passed.

So here is my caution, given from an old woman who has learned lots about how people lose their way in this world: stay true to yourself and don't let the chance of winning a quick victory or getting lots of media attention make you compromise away from focusing on what is really important: the strategy of generosity. Push that first and foremost. People will love to argue with you about the details of the Global Marshall Plan—but don't let them drag you away from your big challenge to the whole misguided way the media and the politicians think about security.

DORIS HALLOWAY
Dallas, Texas



The Democrats' Approach to Ending the War

BY MICHAEL LERNER

PROGRESSIVES HAVE BEEN DRAMATICALLY DIVIDED ON HOW TO ASSESS THE WISDOM of what the Democrats are doing to challenge Bush on the war in Iraq. Spiritual progressives find elements in both positions that we can respect. Most spiritual progressives share a fundamental agreement about the evil of this war, a position that *Tikkun* has taken from the moment that it was first publicly discussed in 2002. We stand behind that position: the war is morally wrong. It has led to a decrease in global solidarity, an increase in violence and in validating violence as the way to handle disputes (not only between states, but also between individuals or groups without state power), a decrease in respect for law and legal institutions, and a despair about ever being able to create a rational order in the world.

We at *Tikkun* have argued that the war should be stopped and no further funding should be made available. We urge progressive forces in this country to call upon our elected representatives to publicly repent on behalf of the United States for having started this war, support the replacement of our own troops with an international force capable of conducting an honest plebiscite to determine whether Iraq should continue as one country or be broken up in accordance with its major ethnic/religious splits, and to fund a Global Marshall Plan that not only fully rebuilds Iraq but also provides funding and changes global trade agreements. These agreements would focus on ending global poverty, homelessness, hunger, inadequate education, inadequate health care, and on repairing the global environment. If you agree with that perspective, we hope you'll sign our ad at www.tikkun.org/iraqpeace.

What we progressives do not agree upon is what to think about the validity of the strategy developed by

Democratic Congressional leaders that a) seeks to end the war by funding it and placing restrictions on the president that call for certain “benchmarks” to be met, and b) calls for an end to major troop presence by the end of the summer of 2008, but that simultaneously provides more than \$100 billion to fund the war for another year and a half.

Those who disagree with the Democratic strategy make the following points:

1. If the war is morally wrong, the only moral path worthy of respect is to stop funding the war.
2. Continuing to fund the war sends the wrong message to the American people: that their votes in the 2006 election are irrelevant, because the Democrats don't have the moral backbone to face up to challenge President Bush that stopping funding for the war is equivalent to not supporting the troops. The Democrats should take on that argument by offering to fund the troops' speedy and safe withdrawal from Iraq and from the entire Middle East.
3. The actual proposals of the Democrats are deeply flawed, not only because they give flexibility to the Administration to decide when its benchmarks have been met, but also because, rather than requiring that the United States withdraw its presence—including control over the oil fields and military bases of Iraq—these proposals only require the United States to re-position those troops out of the day-to-day combat zone of the current civil war.
4. In order to win support for their own proposal, the Democratic leadership had to:
 - a. Remove a stipulation that none of the monies should be used to fund attacks on Iran. This move sent a message to the Administration that they will not face serious challenge should they start air strikes on Iran.
 - b. Fill the bill with other irrelevant-to-the-war-issues. This has made it easy for Bush to poke fun at the bill as little more than a pork-filled measure, further confusing the issue and diluting the moral clarity.

Those who agree with the Democratic strategy make the following points:

1. The passage of the bill by the Congress has given expression to the dismay of the American people about this war, and makes it much more difficult for the president to argue that he is, in fact, pursuing a policy supported by his own country. Yet, the bill could not have passed if its demands had been any stronger, or if it had not had the “pork” in it and the challenge to an Iranian war out of it. It is far better to have a bill that passed than one that a majority of Congress could not support.
2. The passage of the bill shows the American people that something really did happen as a consequence of their vote.
3. If the bill were to have been signed by the president—in order to get the funding he says he needs—it would put serious constraints on the president and would open up the possibility of the Congress holding subsequent hearings to

decide if the conditions stipulated in the bill were being met or not.

4. Among Democrats in both the House and the Senate, passage of the bill has created a new sense of being part of a larger movement, rather than simply isolated monads representing isolated districts and being legislators whose primary concern was their own reelection. That spirit will flow forward into other issues, creating a Congress that is more likely to pass and fight for progressive legislation on other fronts. Conversations that *Tikkun* has had with progressive members of Congress substantiate the claim that something feels different to the people in Congress, which is already having an impact on the kinds of questions they are willing to ask and the degree to which they are empowered to fight for their own beliefs.
5. Passage of this bill opens up the possibility for further struggles to limit the war after the president vetoes the initial bill. So, the Democratic Party leadership in Congress has actually been very clever in creating circumstances which have pulled in to the conflict against Bush many people who would not have felt inclined to be part of that struggle had the leadership's position been simply to set a date and to end funding by that date.

“All very clever,” respond the people in the first camp, “but meanwhile you've committed Americans to be involved in another twelve to sixteen months of fighting that will make us either instigators or complicitous in the killing of thousands or more Iraqis and hundreds, if not thousands, of American soldiers. Instead of using this time to argue against the war and help the American people sharpen its understanding of why the war is wrong and why we need to repent for it, Congress will be working with the president on how the war can be fought in ‘a more efficient way.’ Technocratic discussions about the best way to ‘beat the enemy’ and media discussions about whether Congress can and should give more money or supervise a war will replace any discussion about the morality of the war. In fact, unless the Democrats spend their time deepening people's moral outrage at the war, the next Democratic presidential candidate may face a political situation in which s/he is accused of stabbing America in the back by calling for an end to the war. That possibility might drive many Democratic Party primary voters to support a presidential candidate who was her/himself conflicted about whether to end the war or just to reposition American troops inside Iraq or neighboring states.”

Our associate editor Peter Gabel responds to this argument by pointing out that what Nancy Pelosi has been doing is attempting to move the whole country closer to the side of the peace movement, but that to do that she must carefully nuance her moves. She must straddle the entire national Democratic electorate and take the symbolic and actual steps to pull it gently but firmly toward the Woolsey-Kucinich-*Tikkun*-position of ending all funding.

One symbolic step she has taken is to act like a leader virtually

equal to the president and, thus, to increase Democrats' confidence in their own ability to overcome the self-abnegating, self-loathing position they've conditioned themselves to remain in since the Gingrich victory of 1994, and really before. This can be carried out with special force by a middle-aged woman and grandmother, who traps Bush in his macho male identity in a way that a Democratic man couldn't. In this aspect Pelosi "goes to Syria" to carry out the proposals of the Iraq Study Group (thus both entrapping Bush in his erratic, arbitrary, and capricious persona and marginalizing him from the mainstream). She stands right up beside Bush and makes him look like a schoolyard jerk. That's the symbolic step.

The actual step is to pull the washed-out national Democratic constituency a) to the anti-war stance and b) to actually stand up. This must be done in stages so people don't freak out and think "we're abandoning the troops in the field to be murdered." These constituencies—the not-yet truly antiwar Congressional districts—are in what child-development experts call the "rapprochement subphase." This means that they are not yet ready to fully stand up on their own. They've just come out from behind the mother's skirts to see if they can stand on their own, and if you pull them too fast with your morally correct position, they'll run back behind the skirts. So, Pelosi funds the troops for a limited time with a deadline; then Bush vetoes it; then she funds it for six to eight months only, but with nothing about a deadline, while Woolsey-Kucinich-Feingold critique her for not going far enough.

Gabel argues that there are two aspects to the correct strategy: one is the strong position taken by the antiwar district representatives—the moral leaders in the situation. The other is the gradual and firm pull exerted by Madame Speaker on the not-really-antiwar-yet national Democratic constituency during their emergent phase (and of course, on a sector of the Republicans and independents). To succeed, the pro-Pelosi position requires moral firmness on her part, but gradualist tactics both anchored to and resisting the morally correct stance of the Woolsey-Kucinich-*Tikkun* crowd.

So, Gabel concludes that we at *Tikkun* should support this entire enterprise and take our own position of moral firmness, yet recognize the value of what Pelosi is trying to accomplish. That's what the Network of Spiritual Progressives has been doing by having Rabbi Lerner speak at major anti-war demonstrations as well as picket in front of Congresswoman Pelosi's San Francisco office—but without denouncing her. We've insisted on the morally correct anti-war stance and urged her to adopt it. And she should steadily move toward our position in a way that pulls along the national constituency required to make it politically successful. We've both been playing our roles appropriately. This may be the best way to make the moral truth into the political truth.

All this will be clarified when the president vetoes the original bill and Congress is faced with pressure to fund a war that has no serious constraints on it. That is the moment to

be watching for, and Congressional votes will then make a huge difference.

For those who opposed the funding—including courageous members of Congress like Barbara Lee, Maxine Waters, Denis Kucinich, Lynne Woolsey, and John Lewis, the question is whether or not they will be able to get enough votes against a "compromise" that is even more faulty than the current version. For the Democratic majority, the question is: when faced with either funding a bill that has no meaningful constraints or refusing to vote for funding it at all, will they stand in solidarity with the peace movement, or with the hawks who wish this war to continue indefinitely?

Or, will the Democratic majority argue that even a toothless bill at this point will be OK, because they've already stood up for "what they believed in?"

We want to acknowledge the validity of points on both sides of this debate. We also want to urge people on both sides to acknowledge the danger of the funding-the-war side: Having passed \$100 billion to fund the war (even if only in six month increments) while not being able to find funding for a single-payer health care plan, or for a Global Marshall Plan, or for anything else that is really visionary, the Democrats could face an electorate that has returned to deep cynicism about the electoral process and hence lacks the interest or conviction to excite others about the importance of voting. If this happens, we may get a rerun of the 2004 election in which the Democratic candidate for president fails to articulate a clear moral stance against the war and maybe even suggests that s/he would keep "some" troops in Iraq or nearby. If this happens, many people may despair and decide not to vote, while others will start voting for protest candidates because they cannot stomach a candidate who isn't promising a very firm commitment to end the financing of the war and bring the troops home. As that cynicism and despair about politics and the Democratic candidate grows, the likelihood of yet another Republican victory for president, or for a return of a Republican majority in one or both Houses of Congress, dramatically increases. In that case, as in the case of the Democrats pretending to be pro-war in 2004, the Pelosi strategy backfires and we get stuck with another reactionary (or a waffling liberal who is afraid of ending the war) for the next eight years.

We've been struck by the passion and integrity of many of those on both sides of this debate, and we congratulate them on fighting for what they believe to be the best tactics to end the war. But we don't think we could retain that degree of even-handedness if many of the leadership of the Democrats vote for a huge war appropriation even when it has been stripped of minimal restraints or weaken them to meaninglessness by allowing the president or the defense department to decide when conditions have been met. In that case, we too will feel deeply betrayed. ■

Chomsky on Iraq

TIKKUN: There is a narrative about the current split in Congress on whether to require Bush to get out of Iraq in 2008, which explains this split as validation of the democratic nature of our society. People came to be opposed to the war, and when they reflected that in their voting, that opposition managed to consolidate a Democratic Party that was able to take a stand—not as firm a stand as many of us wanted—but a stand nevertheless, saying that a certain date is needed to cut off the war.

On the other hand, some on the Left view foreign policy as the least likely area to be subject to democratic norms because, they argue, our society is actually governed by ruling elites who benefit greatly from policies which allow them to dominate the international economy. If we look at it that way, does the current split about what to do in Iraq reflect a split in the ruling elites of the country, and what is the nature of that split?

CHOMSKY: First, I think both of these analyses are correct. Both democratic and elite interests and ideas are involved in shaping our policy debates. The same has held true even in countries that were totalitarian. Take, say, the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. There was a ruling-class split about whether to invade. Once the invasion took place, that split continued within the very narrow ruling elite in this totalitarian system. At a certain point, they decided it wasn't worth the cost and they decided to pull out.

There was a similar split among the population of Russia. Some were caught up in the patriotic propaganda while many others thought that they shouldn't have been devoting the lives of their soldiers and resources trying to protect Afghans from terrorists and bring them development, and freedom, and so on. Others recognized the war for what it was: criminal aggression.

So you had both these things happening in Russia during the Afghan war. The balance of forces shifted in various ways and, eventually, they withdrew.

I don't want to say the United States is Russia; of course, it's not. On the other hand, the same factors prevail in how each country was driven into war. People were frightened and terrified into the belief that they had to defend themselves. When those pretexts collapsed it became possible for some people to question the war while others felt they needed to justify the already large loss of life and money, and that the way to accomplish that would be to stay involved in the war and "win."

But win what?

The Iraq War was fought, as Bush put it, because of a single

question: can the world stop Iraq from developing its weapons of mass destruction? And when the evidence failed to materialize that there had been any serious progress toward the development of weapons of mass destruction, a new reason was developed, which was the freedom agenda. We were told that the real reason we invaded was to promote freedom and democracy and to bring Iraq these wonderful things. That's the picture people have accepted within dominant groups. There was also harsh criticism of this perspective before the war, saying that this would be costly, counter to our interests, and so on. There were plenty of people who resisted the war even before its launch, in major demonstrations. All of these forces continued to resist and play themselves out in various ways over the next few years. At a certain point the Democratic Party presented itself as the representative of those who, for various reasons, thought the war ought to be wound down. Incidentally, they are not calling for withdrawal. Most of the Democratic leaders and presidential candidates who are described by the media as anti-war are calling for the removal of our troops from combat, but then for leaving them in Iraq or nearby for training, stabilizing the country, and other unspecified interventions which the president could decide upon.

Much of the scenario being played today reminds us of developments during the Vietnam war. Let's go back to, say, 1969. At that time, American elites, including the business world, wanted the war wound down. And it happened. These two wars are very different, and totally incomparable, but for the way they were described in the media here, there's a comparison. Both Vietnam and Iraq are described as quagmires, failures, too costly for us, and so on. Totally different wars and purposes, but the doctrinal version of them was quite similar. It's not unlike the Russians in Afghanistan. By 1969 the elite opinion in the United States was shifting: the war was becoming too costly. The Johnson Administration was almost ordered, and was certainly pressured, to start winding the war down before negotiations, and so on. That was a reflection of all sorts of things, including popular opinion. If you read the press at that time, you do find pretty harsh critiques of the war. You could read the explanation from someone at the extreme critical end, like Anthony Lewis of the New York Times, and see that, for him, the war began with benevolent intentions to do good, but by 1969 it was clear it was a disaster; a mistake that was too costly for us. So we had to end it.

What did the American people think at that time? Well, about 70 percent of them described the war as fundamentally wrong and immoral and not a "mistake." Those figures continue

up to the most recent polls conducted a few years ago. What do they mean by that? Well, we don't know in detail because the polling companies don't investigate. But it's possible what they meant was exactly what they said: fundamentally wrong and immoral, not a "mistake."

I suspect that, given time and information, Americans would have the same view about the Iraq war. However, we should recognize that however horrible the Iraq War is, it doesn't even approach what happened to Indochina. Go back to 1965 when there were 150,000 troops in Indochina, at that time there was almost no vocal opposition to the war. It developed much later, when the war had entered a far more brutal and destructive stage. So the fact of the matter is that there's much more protest against the war in Iraq now than there was against the war in Indochina at any comparable stage. In my opinion, that reflects the civilizing effect of the activism of the 1960s, which changed society in many ways: opposition to aggression, commitment to human rights, minority rights, women's rights, and concern over the environment. The Society simply became more civilized.

Today, the major powerful institutions take pretty much the same position they took regarding Vietnam, and that the Russian elites took in the invasion Afghanistan: "A noble effort. We're expending our energy and our brave soldiers are devoting their lives and their skills in order to achieve noble goals. But the people we're trying to help are not worthy of it. Iraqis are not worthy of it. Others are interfering. China interfered with our noble effort in Vietnam, Iran is interfering in our noble effort in Iraq, and it's costing us too much, therefore we ought to cut it back."

Here's where the differences are: in the case of Vietnam, there was only a problem that might follow if we "lost" Vietnam—a possible "domino effect" that might make us lose more strategically or economically important countries to the enemy. Vietnam itself was of no particular interest to the United States' elites. They were concerned that it might be a funnel, a vessel, and that others might follow. By the late 1960s, Vietnam was destroyed, but potential countries that might be "infected," as it was put, were under harsh military dictatorships friendly to the United States.

Iraq is totally different. Iraq was invaded because of its extreme strategic significance right at the heart of the world's energy-producing system. Iraq itself probably has the second largest energy reserves in the world, and these reserves are very easily exploitable—a natural base for U.S. power in the region. It's well understood that control over these resources, as Dick Cheney warned, can provide tools of intimidation and blackmail. Of course, he was talking about resource access in the hands of others. But the same is true for us. Brezinszki, who is not particularly in favor of the war pointed out that if the United States succeeds, it will gain critical leverage over other industrial powers—over Europe and Asia. And it is this recognition, in the face of depleting world energy supplies, that makes Iraq a critical lynchpin in the desire to maintain

U.S. power in the world.

Now, on the other hand, imagine what would happen if Iraq were granted full sovereignty. Once the United States departed by the mid 1970s, Vietnam was granted full sovereignty and they couldn't do anything with it. The country was destroyed and it took decades to reconstruct. In fact, the war was so brutal that only the harshest elements could survive, so naturally it was a horror story. That's Vietnam.

Iraq's completely different. Suppose Iraq were granted authentic sovereignty and had a certain degree of democracy. Well, it would have a Shiite majority. They would dominate. Shiite Iraq happens to be where most of the oil is. What would their policies be? Well, surely their policies would be to improve relations with Shiite Iran. In fact, they're doing that already—with real sovereignty they would move more in that direction. It doesn't mean they love Iran. But they'd rather have friendly relations with their powerful neighbor than hostile ones. Furthermore, there are many close connections. Many of the leading clerics grew up in Iran. One of the major militias that controls most of the south was trained in Iran. There are very natural trading relationships. So they want to improve relations. The United States does not want that.

Right across the border in Saudi Arabia, there's a very large Shiite population being brutally repressed. As Iraq moves even towards limited autonomy, there are pressures there for human rights, even a degree of limited autonomy themselves. That happens to be where most of the Saudi oil is. Most of the world's energy resources are right around the gulf. You can imagine the prospect of a loose Shia alliance that is independent of the United States and controls most of the world's oil.

Furthermore, it can get worse than that. Iran is already an observer in the Shanghai Cooperation Council, connected to the Asian energy security grid. These are systems developing in the growing Asian economy. It's mostly based in China, Russia's a part of it, India's on the periphery, South Korea's even further. The Central Asian states are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Iran's an observer, India's an observer, the United States has been denied that status. A potential Shiite dominated energy system right around the Gulf, where about two-thirds of the world's energy is, could have enormous effects on the entire structure of international affairs. There's a lot at stake in Iraq. There was almost nothing at stake in Vietnam.

TIKKUN: The dominant story about why the Iraqis have not united into a national liberation movement against the American presence there has been that they hate each other more than they hate us. The vast majority of deaths that have been caused by circumstances that the United States let loose have been of civilians killed by each other, not by American troops. Is that story partially true? And if it is true, how do we factor that in imagining a free Iraq? Would a free Iraq be fratricide, or would it be anything like the kind of state that Vietnam became?

CHOMSKY: In the Vietnam wars (*continued on page 63*)

The 40th Anniversary of Israel's Takeover of the West Bank and Gaza

The OCCUPATION:

Immoral, Self-Destructive, and Stupid

BY MICHAEL LERNER

FROM THE MOMENT THAT THE OCCUPATION started, Israelis with a desire for peace and reconciliation with the Palestinian people urged the Israeli government to allow the Palestinians freedom and national self-determination. It was not Israel, but Jordan, who occupied Palestine in the early years after Israel had been created—from 1948-1967. And it was not the Palestinian people, but Egypt, Syria (and then, after the war had actually begun, Jordan) who seemed to threaten Israel's existence in the months of April-June 1967. Though some Israeli historians recently have uncovered information that makes the threat of attack from Arab states at the time seem as unlikely as Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction" now seem to most Americans, at the time, most Israelis and Jews around the world did actually fear that the end was near. That June, a preemptive strike by Israel, followed by a decisive victory in the Six Day War, gave Israel reason to temporarily occupy land that was recognized by an international community as Palestinian. (Though, to be fair, we need to acknowledge the double standard of the Arab states and the UN in their failure to pass any resolution demanding an end to the Occupation when it was being done by Jordan in the West Bank and Egypt in Gaza).

Unfortunately, three factors led the Labor (weakly socialist) government of the time to embrace occupation. First was the passion of religious Zionists for a return to the ancient borders of "The Land of Israel," and the passion of some right-wing kibbutzniks to want to recapture the spirit of pioneering and conquest of the land that had long been abandoned by the increasingly bureaucratic social Democrats who were running the Israeli government, the Labor Party, and the major labor union federation (the Histadrut). Second was a misguided pragmatism by those who were concerned with security, and who had not yet realized that holding on to the land would create more vulnerability than it had supposedly solved. The final factor was a political desire to show that Israelis were "tough" and not "idealistic" or governed by merely moral concerns. Equally unfortunately, the consistent rejection by Arab states of any notion of recognizing Israel played into the



hands of the right wing in Israel, who insisted that "security concerns" dictated a need to hold on to the territory.

Israel could have held on to the territory in a way that sought to encourage reconciliation. It could have built a sewer system, generously shared water and food, and built apartment buildings throughout the West Bank and Gaza. (Despite the desire of some Palestinian leaders to reject any cooperation with the occupiers, the lure of decent food and housing would have soon broken such a boycott). Israel could have

built the infrastructure of Gaza and the refugee camps of the West Bank so that these became desirable places rather than hell holes. Every child could have been provided with a decent education in both Arabic and Hebrew and taught the story of the Jewish people and its desire for reconciliation with the Palestinians. Palestinians could either have been integrated into the Israeli economy or helped to develop an independent economy (even starting in 1993, since it had taken that long for Israel to recognize that there really was a Palestinian people with whom it would have to make peace).

Instead, like occupiers around the world (from the United States dealing with Native Americans, the French with Algerians, the Soviets with Afghans, or the Chinese with Tibetans, to the Iraqis dealing with the Kurds), Israelis treated Palestinians with arrogance and insensitivity. They sought no integration or economic advancement for the Palestinian people (the refugees were far better off in Jordan by the 1990s than they were in the West Bank). They sought to balance the growing popularity of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) by encouraging the growth of Hamas (certain that if Hamas prevailed, the peace movement in Israel and the doves around the world would be so alienated from Islamic fundamentalists that they'd concur in allowing the Occupation to continue). In the most cynical move of that sort in the past years, Israel withdrew troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005 while refusing to negotiate with the PLO's moderate and peace-oriented leader Abbas, thus allowing the Hamas forces to claim credit for the Israeli withdrawal ("we drove them out with force, not with the weakness of the Abbas/Fatah strategy of negotiated peace"), which contributed to the Hamas electoral victory in 2006.

Any accounting of the last forty years cannot put all the moral failures on the Israeli side. The Palestinian majority has supported political forces (first embodied in the PLO until it changed its line in 1993, now, in Hamas) that reject the right of Israel to exist as a state, and has been far too tolerant of terrorism. This support played fast and loose with the justifiable fears of the Jewish people whose experience of statelessness (including statelessness in Arab and Islamic countries) was always coupled with second-class status of roughly apartheid dimensions, special taxes, and vulnerability to occasional (in Arab lands) or systematic (in Christian lands) violence, murder, rape, and genocidal policies. The acts of terror against civilians in Israel undermined the peace movement and contributed decisively to the election of militarists like Netanyahu and Sharon, just as the 9/11 terror in the United States led to the dramatic strengthening of fear and militarism that provided the foundation for the war in Iraq. These random acts of violence are immoral and cannot be called "understandable" to excuse away the stupidity that they represented, except by those who really do seek a full annihilation of the Jewish people and consciously wish to undermine those seeking peace and reconciliation and a two-state solution. Nor can Palestinians plausibly call their liberation movement "non-violent"

just because it has particular non-violent demonstrations: a non-violent movement has to be non-violent in principle, articulating that principle and rejecting as a traitor to that movement anyone who resorts to violence.

Still, the primary cause of the violence is plain for all the world to see: the expulsion of Palestinians from their homes and villages in 1948, the subsequent refusal of Israel to allow those refugees to return to their homes, and then the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 and the harsh way Israel implemented the occupation, including systematic and well-documented torture and other human rights violations. In my book *Healing Israel/Palestine* (North Atlantic Books, 2003) I tell this story in a balanced fashion that acknowledges the ways each side has been insensitive to the needs of the other and how both sides have contributed to the fundamental impasse. Yet, Israel's overwhelming military power, its ability to dictate conditions for any negotiations, its daily abuse of Palestinians (from the road blocks, to the withholding of Palestinian tax monies, to the incarceration without trial of tens of thousands of Palestinians, to the frequent killings of Palestinian civilians so that ten times more Palestinians have been killed in recent years than Israelis), and the testimony of Israeli military experts who can show that in an age of rockets and guided missiles that holding on to the West Bank provides little security advantages—all these contribute to the growing world consensus that makes Israel one of the least respected countries in the entire world (confirmed by a British poll in March of 2007).

Israeli behavior might have led to anger only against Israelis, and not against all Jews, had it not been for the fact that virtually every organized Jewish community in the world claims that Israel is "the Jewish state," and then contributes large sums of money to support its activities. Jews cannot have it both ways—either Israel is a state like other states, having no special relationship to Judaism or the Jewish people except that a lot of Jews live there (as they do in the United States as well), or, if Israel is in fact a manifestation of the Jewish people and Judaism so that Jews and those friendly to the Jewish people are expected to support it, then Jews cannot be surprised if anger at Israeli policies slips over into anger at the Jewish people who claim to overwhelmingly support that state. And that anger grows dramatically when AIPAC manages to convince otherwise liberal or progressive elected officials that they dare not speak publicly about the upset they feel at Israeli policy, lest they face an organized campaign to label them as "anti-Israel" and defeat them in elections by providing financial and political support for their opponents. The anger grows stronger when Jews and non-Jews encounter the efforts in the organized Jewish community to suppress debate, and when hundreds of thousands of the members of that American Jewish community join in labeling as anti-Semitic or as "self-hating Jews" those who publicly critique Israeli policy. We have no sympathy with those who hate Jews (no matter how supposedly justified their reasons). Generalizing

anger or hatred to an entire people as a response to the behavior of some members of that people, even their elected government or the state that they support, is illegitimate. We don't accept anti-Americanism from those who rightly are outraged at U.S. policy around the world, and we don't accept anti-Semitism from those who are outraged at Israeli policies. But we also recognize that if the public perception continues to be that large majorities in the Jewish world stand behind Israeli policy, no matter how destructive or immoral, the likelihood grows of real anti-Semites becoming successful in manipulating the legitimate moral outrage people feel toward Israeli policies. So, Israel's policies are not only immoral, but also self-destructive and stupid.

We have a great deal of compassion for people on all sides of this struggle. Jews as a people—both in Israel and around the world—are a traumatized people suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In my lifetime, one out of every three Jews on the planet was murdered. It is no surprise that our people are completely disoriented, and, though seeming to function in a rational way in pursuing their own personal self-interests, is unable to think rationally about its own survival as a people and instead simply acts out on others the trauma that was acted out upon us. Similarly, though we are very critical of the role that Arabs played in the period before the creation of the State of Israel, we have compassion for how the trauma of the expulsion from their homes, the subsequent life in refugee camps, and living under Israeli occupation has led to Palestinians also becoming a traumatized people suffering from PTSD, unable to think rationally about their own

survival as a people, and, instead, embracing one false messiah after another from Nasser to Arafat to Saddam Hussein to the current leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah.

The political terms of a settlement are well known to all. You can read them in detail in my book *The Geneva Accord and Other Strategies for Middle East Peace* (North Atlantic Books, 2004). The Saudi plan takes a major leap in that direction, and many of its details make sense (though Israelis are unlikely to ever agree to an open-ended "right of return" for Palestinians unless they get a picture of how that could be consistent with them retaining Israel as a Jewish state that is a safe haven from global anti-Semitism). But all that political detail is ultimately irrelevant until there is a more fundamental change: an opening of the hearts of Israelis and Palestinians to each other, a willingness to hear and really try to understand the others' historical experience, an acknowledgment of wrong-doing and willingness to enter into a process of repentance and atonement for the way each side has been cruel and insensitive to the needs of the other, and a genuine openness to lasting peace and reconciliation in a spirit of compromise and caring for the other.

Anything short of this kind of spiritual and emotional transformation is a utopian fantasy. Politics is a manifestation of the spiritual and ethical consciousness of humanity, and it will never solve problems until we are willing to work simultaneously on all these different levels. Until that happens, we can only grieve at the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the start of the Occupation. ■

AVNERY ON THE OCCUPATION

The Miracle that went awry Has Israel lost its soul?

BY URI AVNERY

A WEEK BEFORE THE OUTBREAK of the Six Day War, I published an article entitled "Nasser has fallen into a trap" in *Ha-olam Hazen*, the newsmagazine I was editing at the time. It looked crazy, because, at the time, all Israel was in the throes of mortal fear.

A few months earlier, I had been invited to give a lecture at a Kibbutz in the north. After the lecture I was asked—as is the

custom—to have coffee with a few members. There, my host told me in secret that the Chief of the Northern Command, General David Elazar, nicknamed Dado, had been there only a week before. In the same room, among the same few reliable members, Dado had said: "Every night, before going to sleep, I pray that Nasser concentrates his troops in the Sinai desert. There we shall annihilate them."

In the middle of May, 1967, that is exactly what happened. So, while everybody around me was distraught with fright, I was not worried.

Their fright was real. There was much talking about an imminent "second Holocaust." From the beginning of the crisis up to the start of the war, for three full weeks, the fear that had gripped Israel deepened from day to day. The "Voice of Thunder,"—the Cairo radio station that broadcast in broken Hebrew and was, until then, considered rather ridiculous—was uttering blood-curdling threats. Gamal Abd-al-Nasser himself—who in reality was deadly afraid of an Israeli attack and did not dream of attacking—thought that by threatening to throw Israel into the sea he would frighten us into abandoning any idea of war. It had, of course, the opposite effect.

The chain of events that made the war inevitable resembled the outbreak of World War I, "the war that nobody wanted." Syria sponsored the guerrilla war started by Yasser Arafat on its border. Israel responded with dire threats. Syria became frightened and asked Egypt for assistance. Nasser saw an opportunity to assert his leadership of the Arab world and concentrated his troops in Sinai. He also announced (falsely) that he had mined the approaches to Eilat. To dramatize these steps, he asked UN Secretary General U Thant to withdraw UN forces from a certain sector. Misreading the situation completely, U Thant withdrew all his troops. Faced now with the possibility of an Israeli preventive attack, and believing his own propaganda that Israel was but an American puppet, Nasser sent his deputy to the United States to get the U.S. government to stop Israel. Israelis, in the meantime, saw only the gathering menace and believed that they would be attacked any minute now.

Adding to the general despair was the personality of Levy Eshkol, David Ben-Gurion's successor as Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. He seemed (quite wrongly) a bumbling, indecisive and incompetent leader. In a crucial radio speech, he stumbled over a word and seemed to be stuttering.

I can attest to the mood in the highest circles. A few days before the war, Menachem Begin drew me into a room (I was a Member of Knesset at the time) and said, with great agitation: "Uri, we have different opinions, but in this existential crisis we all have the same aim: to save Israel. You and your magazine have a great influence on young people. Please, use it to stiffen their morale!"

In the course of these "days of anxiety," as they have been known since, Eshkol had to surrender to public pressure and appoint Moshe Dayan as Minister of Defense. Prominent generals (among them Matti Peled, who later became my friend and a prominent member of the peace camp) went to Eshkol and delivered what amounted to an ultimatum, demanding an immediate attack. With almost the entire male population mobilized and waiting on the borders, all normal life had come to a standstill. The whole country was holding its breath.

When our army attacked, it was like a spring being released.

On the first day, after an emergency session about war credits, I was staying in the Knesset shelter during a shelling by Jor-

danian artillery, when a friend whispered in my ears: "We have already won the war. The Air force has destroyed the Egyptian airplanes on the ground."

This information was withheld from the public. All news of our army's incredible victories was suppressed by censors, because the government was afraid that if they became public, the UN would impose a cease-fire. Thus, the public was exposed to the ludicrous boasting of the "Voice of Thunder," according to which Tel-Aviv was burning.

In retrospect, it looks as if the whole scenario was created by a director of genius—the anxiety, the crescendo of fear, the miraculous victory. It helps to explain what happened later on.

On the fifth day of the war, just after our army had conquered the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, I wrote an open letter to Levy Eshkol proposing to use the historic opportunity and offer the Palestinian people a state of their own. I had advocated this idea since 1949, but I was convinced that now, while the whole region was in a state of shock, was the right time to make peace with the Palestinians by making them a generous offer.

Right after the war, Eshkol invited me to a private talk. He listened patiently while I explained this idea and then, with a benign smile, said: "Uri, what kind of a trader are you? In negotiations, one starts with offering the minimum and demanding the maximum. Then, gradually, one raises the offer until a compromise is achieved somewhere in the middle. What you propose is to offer everything even before negotiations have started." I answered: "That is true when one sells a horse, not when one wants to achieve a historic peace."

Contrary to his image, Eshkol was a very tough guy. This was disguised by a friendly disposition, a Yiddish sense of humor, and a syntax that drove the Knesset stenographers up the wall. He had devoted all his life to the setting up of Jewish settlements, and now saw only huge territories that could be used for new settlements.

In the following months, I made dozens of speeches in the Knesset (in addition to my articles) advocating the idea of a Palestinian state in the newly occupied territories. To my pleasant surprise, I found quite a number of supporters in the army high command.

Generals, it has been said, always fight the last war. They also look at the last peace. In 1956, President Eisenhower and the leaders of the Soviet Union had compelled Ben-Gurion to give back all the territories occupied during the Sinai War. Now, everyone expected the same to happen. Faced with this possibility, many generals preferred the idea of a demilitarized Palestinian state next to Israel, to the prospect of returning the territories to Jordan—a much bigger state that could serve as a staging area for four Arab armies. In public opinion polls, support for the idea of a Palestinian state reached an astonishing 37 percent.

That stage passed quickly. The United States, which, on the eve of the war, had secretly informed our government that it would not object to an Israeli attack, now did nothing to compel



Three top Israeli military officials walk in the old city of Jerusalem after the sector was captured from the Jordanians, June 7, 1967. From left to right: Brig. Gen. Uzi Narkiss, commander of the central front; Gen. Moshe Dayan, Defense Minister; and Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Rabin, Chief of Staff.

Israel to withdraw. Gradually, the Israeli leadership realized that there was no international pressure to return anything. Moreover, the “three no’s” adopted by the summit meeting of humiliated Arab leaders in Khartoum (no peace, no recognition, no negotiations) played into the hands of Israeli annexationists.

Teams of people from the Kibbutz movement were already swarming over the West Bank to look for favorable locations. They found them in the Jordan valley—flat, suitable for tractors, and watered by the river. Huge numbers of refugees had been driven out of the Jericho refugee camps immediately after the war. The settlement drive, which was to change the map completely, was on the way.

On the first day of the fighting, it was a defensive war. Dayan declared that we had no intention of conquest. Almost all Israelis thought so, too. A day after the fighting, and it had become a war of expansion and annexation. Completely intoxicated by a flood of “victory albums,” new songs, and religious slogans, the public took the lead. The Eshkol government, which had first officially decided to negotiate the return of the Territories, followed when it realized that there was no need to.

In an article soon after, I cited a story about how to capture monkeys. One puts an apricot into a bottle attached to a tree. The monkey puts his hand into the bottle, takes hold of the apricot and tries to pull it out, but his fist enclosing the fruit is much too big. He could get free by letting go of the apricot, but, craving for the fruit, is unable to do so. In the same way, holding on to the Occupied Territories, we were hostages of our own greed.

Soon after the war, Professor Yeshayahu (Isaiah) Leibowitz foresaw that we would become corrupted by the Occupation and would turn into a people of “secret service agents and managers of foreign labor.” (I called him “prophet Isaiah the third,” which made him furious. He said that a prophet voices the words of God, while he was speaking the language of logic.)

But it was not only a reaction to the “days of anxiety” and the victory that seemed so miraculous as to set Israel on the course of empire. Contrary to the accepted myth of the peace movement, I do not believe that 1967 was really a revolutionary break with our history, or that post-1967 Israel was radically different from the pre-1967 Israel.

From its earliest beginnings, the Zionist movement was imbued with certain basic ideas, which can be metaphorically called a genetic code. The two main ideas were a) to take possession of the whole of Eretz Israel, and b) to have a homogeneous Jewish state, a state where we Jews would be at long last among ourselves, with as few Goyim as possible. This was rarely spelled out in such stark terms, but it was, and still is, the subtext of the whole historic enterprise.

The Zionist movement, like all great historic movements, had many faces. It was imbued with incredible idealism. It gave birth to beautiful social creations, like the Kibbutz and the Moshav. It brought rich young people from far-flung lands and induced them to lead a life of backbreaking work in utter squalor. It created a vibrant, dynamic society, which in fact constitutes a new nation. But this was done in utter disregard to the people living in the country, committing a historic injustice. All this was propelled forward by the vision of Eretz Israel.

Eretz Israel has never had any fixed borders. Even today, the government will not say what it considers to be the fixed borders of Israel—they change in almost every generation. The Bible speaks about the land between “the river of Egypt and the Great River” (the Euphrates). In 1919, the Zionist movement submitted to the Versailles Peace Conference the claim for a Jewish homeland stretching from the Litani river (in today’s Lebanon) to al-Arish (today in Egypt), and from the Mediterranean Sea to the Arab Desert.

When the British Mandate was established, and, later, when Transjordan became a separate entity, the borders of Palestine from the sea to the Jordan were more or less generally accepted. Still, I learned in my school in Tel-Aviv in the 1930s that the land from the sea to the river was “Western Eretz Israel,” and that the land beyond the Jordan was “Eastern Eretz Israel.” But that definition, based on the Biblical territories of the Twelve Tribes, was by that time more geographical than political.

In 1947, the United Nations allotted Israel 55 percent of Palestine (the rest to go to the Arab state which was also envisaged). In the war of 1948, we added another 23 percent. From then on, up to 1967, the governments of Ben-Gurion and Eshkol were busy filling this land with Jewish immigrants, expropriating huge chunks of land from the Arabs—not only from those who had left (or had been driven out) during the 1948 war, but also from those who had (continued on page 65)

The Trap of A Global Marshall Plan

BY GEORGE VRADENBURG

THE CONCEPT OF A FOREIGN POLICY based on generosity is very powerful. A Global Marshall Plan that raised substantial additional development assistance every year and applied it effectively to end poverty, cure disease, and achieve environmental balance would unquestionably make the world a better place.

It is also in the United States' national self-interest to pursue those goals. With greater prosperity and environmental balance around the globe, businesses and workers in the United States would have stronger export markets; U.S. consumers would have a wider range of choices in imported goods and services; and all of us in the United States would live in an ecologically safer world.

The United States should articulate these as a primary element of its foreign policy. What concerns me deeply, however, is that specific proposals for a Global Marshall Plan would raise, and allocate, enormous sums of additional assistance through mechanisms that would produce the opposite result of what is intended. A shortage of money is not the problem; a shortage of effective mechanisms for applying existing money is the problem.

The billions of dollars spent on development assistance over the last fifty years have not produced less poverty, better health, or a safer environment because that aid has been administered by non-democratic and/or poorer-functioning regimes with neither the incentive nor the competence to improve the well-being of those living in their own countries. Those monies have entrenched the political and financial positions of autocratic or military elites and have actually widened the gap between rich and poor.

Recognizing the "inadequacy" (I would say, "barrier") of third-world regimes, the Global Marshall Plan proposes routing additional development assistance through a committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations. But the majority of the UN General Assembly is made up of those very same non-democratic nations, unable or unwilling to improve poverty or health outcomes. A committee of those very same nations would have neither the incentive nor the competence to do any better.

There are, however, additional strategies which, if pursued in tandem, could move the underlying goals of a generosity strategy forward.

By moving more nations toward democracy, it is possible to improve the responsiveness and the economic development and performance of individual countries. This strategy would require the United States and the European Union to increase their developmental assistance and to allocate it disproportionately to those needy nations that commit to democratic, as well as eco-

nomic and political reforms: anti-corruption measures, consistent application of the rule of law, the recognition of property rights, etc.

A second strategy is to create private, non-governmental structures that would largely bypass under-performing sovereign governments. The global effort led by the Gates Foundation, as well as other foundations and corporations, to attack treatable diseases like malaria, diarrhea, and HIV/AIDS, has taken this approach and has demonstrated improved outcomes in some nations in Africa.

A third strategy, with arguably the strongest track record, is the adoption by nations of market-based economic reforms and the progressive liberalization of trade policies, motivated by the increased living standards that such moves create. While the largest concentrations of global poverty are in China and India, hundreds of millions of people in those two countries have moved from abject poverty to self-sufficiency in just a few short decades as a result of embracing the world's market-based trading system (through WTO or bilateral trade arrangements). By including modest labor and environmental standards in those agreements and increasing the stringency of these standards over time, progress can be achieved in those areas as well.

These strategies are currently being pursued in an uncoordinated fashion, without the conceptual framework of a "generosity" strategy or the rhetorical branding of a Global Marshall Plan. However, these strategies are beginning to work, as evidenced by the numbers moving from poverty to self-sufficiency.

The goal of creating global opportunity, prosperity, and environmental balance is widely shared, whether on moral, religious, or purely selfish grounds. But, simply wishing it so, and simply positing the proposition that more correctly applied resources would bring about those goals, is no longer a sufficient response to world poverty, disease, or environmental imbalance. It is necessary for those promoting a foreign policy based on generosity and a Global Marshall Plan to put forward a clear implementation plan that overcomes the barrier of national regimes unable or unwilling to apply additional resources to those ends. Otherwise, we are doomed to repeat decades of investing in development assistance through corrupt and wasteful developing world bureaucracies that aggravate the gap between rich and poor. ■

George Vradenburg is co-publisher of Tikkun and often challenges our editorial positions.



God as the Suffering Servant

by Tony Campolo

IN ANY RELATIONSHIP, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO EXPRESS LOVE AND POWER at the same time. Whoever is exercising the most power is expressing the least love, and whoever is expressing the most love is exercising the least power. In expressing love a person must give up power, hence loving makes a person vulnerable.

Consider a particular married couple. He loves her and will do anything to keep her in his life. She, on the other hand, does not love him very much, and is unconcerned as to whether he stays or leaves her.

Who in this relationship has the most power? Who can dictate the terms of the relationship and call the shots in decision making?

The answer seems clear. She can because she has all the power. But note that her power is the consequence of her lack of love.

Christians should have no difficulty in understanding this relationship between love and power, because their New Testament theology posits a God who, in order to express His love, chooses to give up His power. That is what we Christians believe the incarnation is all about. We believe that 2,000 years ago the almighty God set aside His power in order to express His love. We believe that this is why the Messiah entered history, not as a conquering emperor, but as a defenseless baby in a manger. The passage of scripture that speaks to this most

clearly is Philippians 2:7-8, where we are told that in Christ, God "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant ... and humbled Himself."

The God described in this passage is a God who refuses to use His power as He seeks to save the world. In the temptation story recorded in Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus, who we believe to be the incarnation of God, refuses to establish His Kingdom here on earth through the use of power. Instead, His Kingdom will come, not in a triumphalistic imposition of His will on the nations, but through sacrificial love expressed in His death by dying on the cross. While He is hanging on Calvary's tree, Jesus' enemies taunt Him and shout, "Show us your power and come down from the cross, and then we will believe in you" (Matthew 27:39-42). But His way is not to use power and coerce humanity, but to draw humanity unto Himself through sacrificial love. (I wish those on the Religious Right would get this message.) He said that if He were "lifted up" (i.e. crucified) that this act of sacrifice would draw people to Him and to His Father (John 12:32).

When I say such things in sermons, those in the congregation say, either silently to themselves or out loud, "Amen!" Yet they seldom follow this thought to its logical conclusion, that they have a powerless God on their hands, and that what goes on in the world is not totally under His control. Instead, I hear them say such things as "whatever happens, regardless of how tragic, is part of God's plan!" When something terrible happens, like a child being run over by a bus, they often respond with such offensive statements as: "We just have to accept this as God's will!" At the funeral of Rev. William Sloan Coffin's son, who had died in a climbing accident, the preacher conducting the service said just these words. Rev. Coffin impulsively shouted back, "The hell it is! When my son died, God was the first one who cried!" This, from one of our time's most prominent Christian leaders.

I believe Rev. Coffin was right!

If God is in control of everything that happens, then there would be no such thing as human freedom. Without freedom, none of us would be able to choose to love God—and loving Him is what God wants from us more than anything else. Love is, by its very nature, voluntaristic. It is never constrained. What I am saying is that God deliberately gives up power in order to express His love for us and to give us the freedom to choose to love Him in return.

It is surprising to me that most of my Jewish friends likewise believe that God is omnipotent. They do so even though the Hebrew Bible never declares Him as such. No wonder so many of them rejected their religious beliefs following the Holocaust. "How could an omnipotent, loving God let such a thing happen?" they ask. Does it not seem more likely that their loving and merciful God groaned in agony at Dachau and at Auschwitz? That He wanted to stop what went on in these places? It would be impossible to love God if it were otherwise.

If we are to accept the truths in the Adam and Eve story, must we not accept that God created humanity to act in freedom and thus to be capable of going against His will? And what do we do with that biblical God who, at one point sees that things have gone so contrary to His will that He even regrets that He made humanity in the first place (Genesis 6:6)?

The concept of an omnipotent God came from Greek philosophers. The Greeks are the ones who defined God with such words as omnipotent. This did not come from the Hebrew Bible. The prophets of old declared that their God was more powerful than all the other gods, but they did not say that He was in control of everything. They did not define Him as a puppeteer deity controlling all of our actions. Instead, they spoke of a God who mourns over much of what goes on in our world. (Consider what Abraham Joshua Heschel says in his book, *The Prophets*, about the differences between the God of the Hebrews and the God of the Greeks, if you want to explore this further.)

In the story of Hosea, we get the picture of a broken-hearted God who suffers because of the unfaithfulness of His whoring beloved, but who never stops loving her. Such a God is not the "unmoved mover" who is the creator force spoken of by Aristotle. Instead, He is the passionate God who is marked by deep emotions and loves Israel with intensive love.

The God we find in both the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament is a God who

pleads with His people to do justice and to live out love. This is a God whom Christians call the Servant King and that Jews should acknowledge as a God who limits His power so that we might have the dignity that goes with willingly choosing to do what is right and good.

I am sure that there are times that God must wonder if the price for giving us the freedom to love or to disobey His will is too high, and there are times when all of us wish that He would take charge of human affairs. Nevertheless, it is this God who ordains freedom whom we worship. In trusting us to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8) we find in Him a God who is infinitely worthy of our love.

The good news is that our God is at work in the world, driving back evil through those who acknowledge Him as Lord of their lives. We believe that the day will come when this God shall reign on earth as He does in Heaven. On that "Day of the Lord," which is the eschaton of history, He will then be omnipotent, because on that day, we will love Him so much that we will ascribe all power and glory unto Him—forever and ever!

I know nothing of the ontological nature of God. I only know Him as a God who *chooses* to be limited in power, for our sakes. And even as I call God "Him" I reveal the limitations of my knowledge of God. God transcends both masculinity and femininity and my feminist friends are right in this. I use "Him" when I talk of God because the Bible does—and it is from the Bible that I get a glimpse of the God who is totally other than what the ancient Greek philosophers made Him out to be, and from whom too many of us formed our theologies about God. ■

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The Three Poisons, Institutionalized

by David Loy

SHAKYAMUNI, THE HISTORICAL BUDDHA, LIVED AT LEAST 2,400 YEARS AGO. Buddhism began as an Iron Age religion, and all its teachings are pre-modern. So can Buddhism really help us understand and respond to contemporary social problems such as economic globalization and biotechnology, war and terrorism (and the War on Terrorism), climate change, and other ecological crises?

What the Buddha did understand is human *dukkha*: how it works, what causes it, and how to end it. *Dukkha* is usually translated as "suffering," but the point of *dukkha* is that even those who are wealthy and healthy experience a basic dissatisfaction, a dis-ease, which continually festers. That we find life dissatisfactory, one damn problem after another, is not accidental, because it is the nature of our unawakened minds to be bothered about something.

According to early Buddhism there are three types of *dukkha*. Everything we usually identify as physical and mental suffering—including being separated from those we want to be with, and stuck with those we don't want to be with (the Buddha had a sense of

humor!)—is included in the first type of dukkha.

The second type is the dukkha due to impermanence: the realization that, although I might be enjoying an ice-cream cone right now, it will soon be finished. The best example is our awareness of death, which haunts our appreciation of life. Knowing that death is inevitable casts a shadow that usually hinders our ability to live fully now.

The third type of dukkha is more difficult to understand. It is dukkha due to “conditioned states,” which is a reference to *anatta* “not-self.” My deepest frustration is caused by my sense of being a self that is separate from the world I am in. This sense of separation is illusory—in fact, it is our most dangerous delusion. A modern way to express this truth is that the ego-self has no reality of its own because it is a psychosocial-linguistic construct. This allows for the possibility of a deconstruction and a reconstruction, which is what the spiritual path is about. We are prompted to undertake such a spiritual quest because our lack of reality is normally experienced as an uncomfortable hole or emptiness at our very core. Being a construct, the sense of self is ungrounded and therefore inherently insecure. We *feel* this problem as a sense of inadequacy, of *lack*, which is a source of continual frustration because it is never resolved.



In compensation, we usually spend our lives trying to accomplish things that (we think) will make us more real. But, no matter how hard I try, my anxious sense-of-self can never become a *real* self. The tendency is to identify with and become attached to something in the world, in the belief that it can make me feel whole and complete. “If I can get enough money ... if I become famous or powerful ... if I find the right lover ...” and so forth. None of these attempts succeed, however, because the basic problem is spiritual and thus requires a spiritual solution: realizing the true nature of the emptiness at my core, which transforms that core and enables me to stop clinging.

But what about *collective* selves? Don’t we also have a group sense of separation between ourselves “inside” and the rest of the world “outside”? We Americans (Japanese, Chinese, etc.) here are different from other people over there. Our country (culture, religion, etc.) is better than their country...

This realization has an uncomfortable implication. If my individual sense of self is the basic source of my dukkha, because I can never feel secure enough, what about collective senses of self? Is there such a thing as collective dukkha? Collective karma

In fact, many of our social problems can be traced back to such a group ego, when we identify with our own gender, race, ethnic group, nation, religion, etc., and discriminate between our group and another group. It is ironic that institutionalized religion often reinforces this discrimination, because religion, at its best, encourages us to subvert such problematic dualisms between self and other. For example, Buddhist non-discrimination does not involve privileging *us* over *them*, because selflessness provides the foundation for Buddhist social action too. In some ways, however, our present situation has become quite different from that of Shakyamuni Buddha. Today we have not only much more powerful scientific technologies but also much more powerful social institutions.

THE THREE ROOTS OF EVIL, INSTITUTIONALIZED

FROM A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE, THE PROBLEM WITH MODERN INSTITUTIONS is that they tend to take on a life of their own as new types of collective ego. Consider, for example, how a big corporation works. Even if the CEO of a transnational company wants to be socially responsible, he or she is limited by the expectations of stockholders. If profits are threatened by her sensitivity to environmental concerns, she is likely to lose her job. Large corporations are new forms of *impersonal* collective self, which are very good at preserving themselves and increasing their power, quite apart from the personal motivations of the individuals who serve them. John Ralston Saul describes this as the “amorality” of modern organizations:

AMORALITY: A quality admired and rewarded in modern organizations, where it is referred to through metaphors such as professionalism and efficiency ... Immorality is

doing wrong of our own volition. Amoralism is doing it because a structure or an organization expects us to do it. Amoralism is thus worse than immorality because it involves denying our responsibility and therefore our existence as anything more than an animal (*The Doubter's Companion*).

There is another Buddhist principle that can help us understand this connection between collective selves and collective dukkha: the three unwholesome motivations, also known as the three poisons—greed, ill will, and delusion. The Buddhist understanding of karma emphasizes the role of intentions, because one's sense of self is composed largely of habitual intentions and the habitual actions that follow from them. Instead of emphasizing the duality between good and evil, Buddhism distinguishes between wholesome and unwholesome (*kusala/akusalamula*) tendencies. Negative motivations reinforce the sense of separation between myself and others. That is why they need to be transformed into their more wholesome and non-dual counterparts: greed into generosity, ill will into loving-kindness, and delusion into wisdom.

That brings us to perhaps the most important question for socially-engaged Buddhism: do the three poisons also operate collectively? If there are collective selves, does that mean there are also collective greed, collective ill will, and collective delusion? To ask the question in this way is to realize the answer. Our present economic system institutionalizes greed, our militarism institutionalizes ill will, and our corporate media institutionalize delusion. To repeat, the problem is not only that the three poisons operate collectively but that they have taken on a life of their own. Today it is crucial for us to wake up and face the implications of these three institutional poisons.

Institutionalized greed. Despite all its benefits, our economic system institutionalizes greed in at least two ways: corporations are never profitable enough, and people never consume enough. To increase profits, we must be conditioned into finding the meaning of our lives in buying and consuming.

Consider how the stock market works. It tends to function as an ethical "black hole" that dilutes the responsibility for the actual consequences of the collective greed that now fuels economic growth. On the one side of that hole, investors want increasing returns in the form of dividends and higher share prices. That's all that most of them care about, or need to care about—not because investors are bad people, but because the system doesn't encourage any other kind of responsibility. On the other side of that black hole, however, this generalized expectation translates into an impersonal but constant pressure for profitability and growth, preferably in the short run. The globalization of corporate capitalism means that this emphasis on profitability and growth are becoming increasingly important as the engine of the world's economic activity. Everything else, including the environment and the quality of life, tends to become subordinated to this anonymous demand for ever-more profit and growth, a goal that can never be satisfied. The biosphere is converted into "resources," and people into "human resources."

The basic idea of capitalism is capital: using money to make more money. The other side of capital investment is debt. A capitalist economy is an economy that runs on debt and requires a society that is comfortable with large amounts of indebtedness. But the debt is always bigger than the original loan. Those who invest expect to get more back than their original investment. This is another way to understand the general pressure for continuous growth and expansion: because that is the only way to repay the accumulating debt. The result is a collective future-orientation: the present is never good enough, the future will (or *must*) be better.

Who is responsible for the pressure for growth? The system has attained a life of its own. We all participate in this process, as workers, employers, consumers, investors, and pensioners, with little, if any, personal sense of moral responsibility for what happens. Such awareness has been diffused so completely that it is lost in the impersonal anonymity of the corporate economic system. In other words, greed has been thoroughly institutionalized.

Institutionalized ill will. Many examples spring to mind. Racism. Undocumented immigrants. Our punitive judicial system. But the "best" example, by far, is the plague of

militarism. The United States has been a militarized society since World War II, and increasingly so. In the twentieth century at least 105 million people, and perhaps as many as 170 million, were killed in war—most of them non-combatants. Global military expenditures, including the arms trade, amounted to the world's largest expenditure in 2005: over a trillion dollars, about half of that spent by the U.S. alone. To put this in perspective, the United Nations spends about 10 billion dollars a year.

From a Buddhist perspective, the "War on Terror" looks like an Abrahamic civil war. Despite being on opposite sides, George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden share a similar understanding about the struggle between good and evil, and the need for good to destroy evil by any means necessary. Ironically, however, one of the main causes of evil has been the attempt to get rid of evil. Hitler, Stalin and Mao were all attempting to purify humanity by eliminating its negative elements (Jews, kulaks, landlords). Are we following in their footsteps?

Most recently, the second Iraq War, based on lies and propaganda, has obviously been a disaster, even as the War on Terror has been making all of us less secure, because every "terrorist" we kill or torture leaves many grieving relatives and outraged friends. Terrorism cannot be destroyed militarily because it is a tactic, not an enemy. If war is the terrorism of the rich, terrorism is the war of the poor and disempowered. We must find other ways to address its root causes.

The basic problem with war is that, whether we are "the good guys" or "the bad guys," it promotes and rationalizes the very worst part of ourselves: we are encouraged to kill and brutalize other human beings. In doing these things to others, though, we also do them to ourselves. This karma is very simple. To brutalize another is to brutalize myself—that is, to become the kind of person who brutalizes. This is the sort of behavior we would never do by ourselves, except for a very small number who receive our heaviest social retribution. In war, however, such behavior is sanctioned. Why? Because it is always justified as collective self-defense. We all accept the right and necessity to defend ourselves, don't we? If someone invades my home and attacks me, it's okay to hurt them in self-defense, even kill them, if necessary. War is national self-defense, and, as we know all too well today, national defense can be used to rationalize anything, including torture and what is euphemistically called "preventive war."

It's curious, though, that our national self-defense requires us to have at least 737 (the official number in 2005) overseas military installations, in 135 countries. It turns out that, in order to defend ourselves, we have to dominate the rest of the world. While we insist that other nations do not develop nuclear weapons, we spend almost 18 billion dollars a year to maintain and develop our own stockpile, today equivalent to about 150,000 Hiroshima-size bombs. (Since 1997 the U.S. has conducted twenty-three "subcritical" nuclear tests to help design new nuclear weapons.) Using even 2 or 3 percent of those bombs would end civilization as we know it! No matter how hard we try, no matter how many weapons we have, it seems like we can never feel secure enough.

In sum, our huge military-industrial complexes institutionalize ill will. Our collective negativity has taken on a life of its own, with a self-reinforcing logic likely to destroy us all if we don't find a way to subvert it.

Institutionalized delusion. The Buddha is literally "the awakened one," which implies that the rest of us are unawakened. We live in a dream-like world. How so? Each of us lives inside an individual bubble of delusions, which distorts our perceptions and expectations. Buddhist practitioners are familiar with this problem, yet we also dwell together within a much bigger bubble that largely determines how we collectively understand the world and ourselves. The institution most responsible for molding our collective sense of self is the media, which have become our "group nervous system." Genuine democracy requires an independent and activist press, to expose abuse and discuss political issues. In the process of becoming mega-corporations, however, the major media have abandoned all but the pretence of objectivity.

Since they are profit-making institutions whose bottom-line is maximizing revenue, their main concern is to do whatever maximizes those profits. It is never in (continued on page 67)

Jerusalem in Benares

by Nathan Katz



BENARES, KASHI, “CITY OF LIGHT” SHE IS CALLED. City of Shiva, Kashi Vishwanath. She is Hinduism’s most important of all pilgrimage centers, where the faithful immerse themselves in Mata Ganga, the Mother of all Rivers, which the British called “the Ganges.” She flows from the very topknot of Lord Shiva’s hair as He sits in meditative repose in the Himalayas.

Truly, Benares is G-d’s waiting room. From all over India, elderly and infirm stream into the many *dharamsalas*, or hospices, to await the inevitable. When the time comes, the body is wrapped in a shroud and carried on a rope stretcher to the banks of the Mother River; she is ready to receive her children with love. Bodies are washed, priests are hired, wood is purchased (it is not cheap!), and the *samskaras* (life cycle rituals) begin. To the chanting of verses from the Vedas, the pyre is lit. It is reckoned that it takes about three hours to render most of the corpse into ash. Whatever is not yet burned is tossed into the River along with the ashes. A special scavenger caste catches the remains, which they strain in large wicker baskets in search of any gold ornaments that the family felt delicate about removing. The pyres burn day and night. It is not possible for one to gaze deeply into those pyres and not be changed by the experience.

A stroll along the ghats—large steps leading from the town to the River—at dawn or sunset is one of life's memorable experiences. The ghats are something like the "riverwalks" found in many American cities today, with the significant difference that the ghats are three thousand and more years old! Amplified chants to Lord Ram or Shiva as Vishwanath (Lord of the Universe) are constant reminders of transcendence. Priests sit on platforms under large umbrellas to help pilgrims through the complex rites special to Benares. *Sadhus* (Hindu mendicants) are plentiful, sitting in rows, saffron opportunities for charity as pilgrims make their ways down to the ghats. Occasionally a sadhu breaks away from the crowd, erects a small altar to one of the many divine manifestations in Hinduism, lights a candle, and measures his prayers with a rosary of neem seeds. Meanwhile, buffalos, dogs, cows, and goats push their ways through the crowds, making walking an exercise in focusing on the transcendent above and the archetypically mundane on the ground.

Every evening just after sunset, Mata Ganga is worshipped with chants and a fire ceremony known as *aarti*. Lamps are waved in homage to the deity, accompanied by chanting. As one of my swami friends, Chidanand Saraswati, put it, "What else can we do? G-d is so great, She provides everything for us. G-d is the light. All we can do is offer our little lights to the great Light. We can only express our gratitude."

The question of one G-d versus many gods confounds every Westerner who approaches Hinduism. On the apparent level, Hinduism has many gods who are depicted by *murtis*, statues or idols. Idolatry, of course, is not only condemned in the Torah's second commandment, it even contradicts the much less doctrinaire seven Noachide commandments that are said to be obligatory for all descendents of Noah, which is to say for everyone (according to Judaism).

Yet when the swami speaks of G-d as the Light, beyond all form and distinctions, the initial understanding is put into question. And the more one delves into the philosophies underlying Hindu practice, the more the initial level is reduced to a comic book version of a profound and serious theology.

There is a religious tradition that gets embodied in traditional persons raised in that tradition's more refined, philosophic threads. A Muslim who knows his tradition, who earnestly strives to live up to the Qur'an's teachings and the exemplary life of its Prophet Muhammad, is an impressive individual. A Confucian gentleman who has improved his character by years of study, who displays elegant courtesy and moral impeccability, tells me more about Confucianism than any number of books and histories.

In just the same way, a cultured Hindu can be an inspiration for Hindu and non-Hindu alike. His affectionate acceptance of all faiths, his soft-spoken gentleness, his kindness to all life whether human or animal—these are formidable virtues. Some years ago, my wife and I were visiting Benares. I wanted to show her a place where I had resided in the early 1970s when I was studying Sanskrit and Indian philosophy at Benares Hindu University. One of the professors at BHU with whom I retained a strong friendship was L.N. Sharma, a scholar of the Shaiva traditions of Kashmir, a traditional Brahmin as well as a modern scholar.

Professor Sharma kindly invited us for dinner in his home. As the BHU campus is a long way from the city, he recommended we hire a cycle rickshaw and have the driver wait while we spent the evening with his family. It might not be easy to find a rickshaw for the return journey, he explained. We had a tasty vegetarian meal and delightful conversation. But what struck both of us was how Professor Sharma treated the rickshaw driver. One might expect a Brahmin to hardly even notice a *rickshawallah*, a low caste person. Because it was so in variance with what we thought we knew of Indian society, the kindness with which Professor Sharma brought out dinner for the rickshawallah was striking. Speaking softly and most courteously, the professor looked after the rickshawallah, making sure he had enough food and was comfortable. This menial was treated as a guest, and I knew beyond any doubt that Hinduism teaches a way of being in the world that is consonant with the biblical principle that we humans are all created *b'tselem Elokim*, in the image of G-d. Whatever we may think of her more mundane religious practices, it cannot be denied that Hinduism creates a cultured human whose actions honor both humans and our Creator.

A SEMINAR AT BHU?

PROFESSOR SHARMA'S PREDECESSOR as Head of BHU's Department of Philosophy was T.R.V. Murti, one of the most highly regarded academic philosophers of twentieth-century India. And like Professor Sharma, Professor Murti was a cultured Brahmin, a human of vast heart to complement a forceful intellect. Professor Murti was also the dissertation director of my dissertation director at Temple University, Bibhuti S. Yadav. So according to both Hindu and academic tradition, Professor Murti was my grandfather.

Murti's scholarship concentrated on India's non-dual tradition known as *Advaita Vedanta*. *Advaita* is a thread within the esoteric textual tradition known as Vedanta, based on the *Upanishads*, some of the most elevated and inspiring works of literature in human history. As Kosti, the old Polish coal miner, said incredulously to Larry Darrell in W. Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge*, a favorite novel of mine, "You've never read the *Upanishads*? You don't know so much. You really don't know anything, do you?" I agree with this sentiment entirely, and I repeat it to my students more often than they care to hear. One simply isn't educated until one has seriously studied this masterpiece.

Advaita is codified in the writings of the eighth-century philosopher-saint Shankara, arguably the greatest Indian thinker of all time. It is a strict monism, or non-dualism. The universal essence known as *Brahman* is identical to the essence of the individual, or *Atman*. *Tat tvam asi*, "That are Thou," is the dictum of the *Upanishads*, and the everyday experience of duality is our own imposition on Reality, a limitation of the Infinite, a magical display known as *Maya*. "Truth is at the back of things," say the sages, and meditation when coupled with a life of study and virtuous conduct can lead one to the transformative experience of Oneness. This experience is known as *moksha* (liberation), or *nirvana* (enlightenment). (continued on page 68)

Divine Garb: A Hasidic Teaching on the Revelation at Sinai

Translation & Commentary by Or N. Rose

The holiday of Shavuot (observed this year on May 22-24, the 6-7 of Sivan) is a celebration of both the spring harvest and the giving of the Torah by God to Israel at Mount Sinai. It is customary to dedicate the first night of Shavuot to Torah study—both of the texts of the Hebrew Bible itself and of the myriad sources of Jewish creativity that flow from it. In this spirit, we offer the following teaching (translated from Hebrew) on the revelation at Sinai by the famed Hasidic master, Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev (1740-1809). Surrounding the homily is a contemporary commentary. It is our hope that this textual exploration helps enrich your Shavuot experience.



“At the Sea of Reeds He appeared to them as a young man, and at Mount Sinai He appeared to them as an old man” (*Pesikta Rabbati* 21:5).

Behold, the Holy Blessed One constricts Himself in the worlds. However, at the Sea of Reeds, where there was a change in nature, He was not garbed in the worlds, and the Children of Israel saw him unclothed. At Mount Sinai, however, the Holy Blessed One dressed Himself such that the worlds could maintain their natural existence. Now in the writings of Isaac Luria (1534-1572) clothing is associated with hair. That is why at the Sea of Reeds He appeared to them as a young man without facial hair—without any worldly garb—while when giving the Torah He revealed Himself to them as an old man with hair—dressed in the garb of the worlds. This is alluded to in the words of our sages of blessed memory (*Mekhilta, BeShallah* 2): “At the Sea even the maidservant saw that which the prophet Ezekiel did not see.” For Ezekiel and the other prophets saw God clothed in the world, as it were, according to the measure of the worlds. But at the Sea, everyone saw God unclothed. However, at Sinai He had to garb Himself so that the Children of Israel would understand the Torah. This is why it is written (in the Rosh Hashanah liturgy), “You appeared in the cloud of Your glory”; that is to say, in clothing, by limiting His great light, for a cloud is a symbol of darkness ... But does the liturgist explain why this was so? It is for this reason that he continues by saying, “... upon Your holy people to speak to them”; meaning, He needed to speak to them so that they would understand His holy words.

Kedushat Levi, Yitro

In this imaginative text, Rabbi Levi Isaac of Berdichev explores the two great moments of communal revelation in the book of Exodus: the Sea of Reeds and Mount Sinai. The Berdichever (as he is commonly known to Hasidim) states that under ordinary circumstances, the Divine reveals Himself to us subtly through the natural workings of the world. While God is present throughout the cosmos (“the worlds,”) animating all of life, He is “garbed” or hidden within corporeality.

However, at the Sea of Reeds, God reveals Himself in an extraordinary manner by removing His worldly dress and violating the rules of nature. The Divine parts the waters, provides the Israelites with safe passage, and drowns the Egyptians. Using the imagery from *Pesikta Rabbati* (eighth-ninth century midrash for festivals and special sabbaths), Levi Yitzhak envisions God as a young warrior, Who, in Herculean fashion, boldly saves His people and crushes their enemy, demonstrating His supreme might to all.

The Berdichever then links this rabbinic image to a Lurianic teaching (from the influential Kabbalist Isaac Luria) about facial hair—another form of covering—explaining that at the Sea of Reeds God is beardless, unclothed, His power uninhibited. So intense is God’s presence at the Sea that even the maidservant—the simplest person among the Israelites—beholds a vision of God more brilliant than the apparitions of Ezekiel and the other Israelite prophets.

If the theophany (appearance of God to people) at the Sea is a model of Divine strength,

the theophany at the Mountain is a model of Divine restraint. Unlike the earlier revelation, at Sinai God does not topple the natural order. While His descent upon the Mountain causes it to smoke and quake (Exodus 19:18), the earth does not crumble under the weight of His holy presence. Levi Yitzhak teaches that this revelation must be more deliberate than the previous one, because God's goal at Sinai is to communicate with the people of Israel (directly and through Moses), to share with them the sacred teachings of the Torah. Using the rabbinic and Lurianic texts to support his claim, Levi Yitzhak now envisions the Divine as a wise elder (with a long white beard) who understands the importance of self-limitation (*tzimtzum*) in interacting with his youthful community. In symbolic terms, God is both "garbed" and "bearded," His power bounded and measured.



In the concluding sentences of this sermon, the Berditchever turns to the Rosh Hashanah liturgy to further buttress his reading of the revelation at Sinai. Why does God appear to the Children of Israel in a dark cloud (Exodus 19:18)? The answer to this question, asserts Levi Yitzhak, is found in the liturgical statement "to speak to them," meaning, the Divine "dresses" Himself in the thickness of the cloud so that He can communicate with the people of Israel without overwhelming them. While God's heroic actions at the Sea of Reeds may be necessary to impress the Israelites and to astound any would-be foes, at Sinai God wishes to provide His people with the spiritual and ethical tools to function as an increasingly independent community, no longer reliant on God's supernatural intervention in human history.

As one who is preoccupied with questions of theology, I find much of Levi Yitzhak's panentheistic vision resonant with my life experience. I believe that God is both the Creator and Sustainer of all life—the Source from which all of creation issues forth, and the One who renews creation daily. While it sometimes feels as if God is absent from the world, the Hasidic interpretation of *tzimtzum* (based on earlier Jewish mystical teachings) reminds me that the Divine is ever-present, even if garbed or concealed. Living "after Sinai" means that the divine will not swoop, like at the sea of reeds, and destroy the pharaoh-like forces—natural or human-made—that embitter our lives. God may inspire, agitate, and comfort, but humankind must act to create a just and compassionate world, minimizing the pain and suffering of all of God's creations.

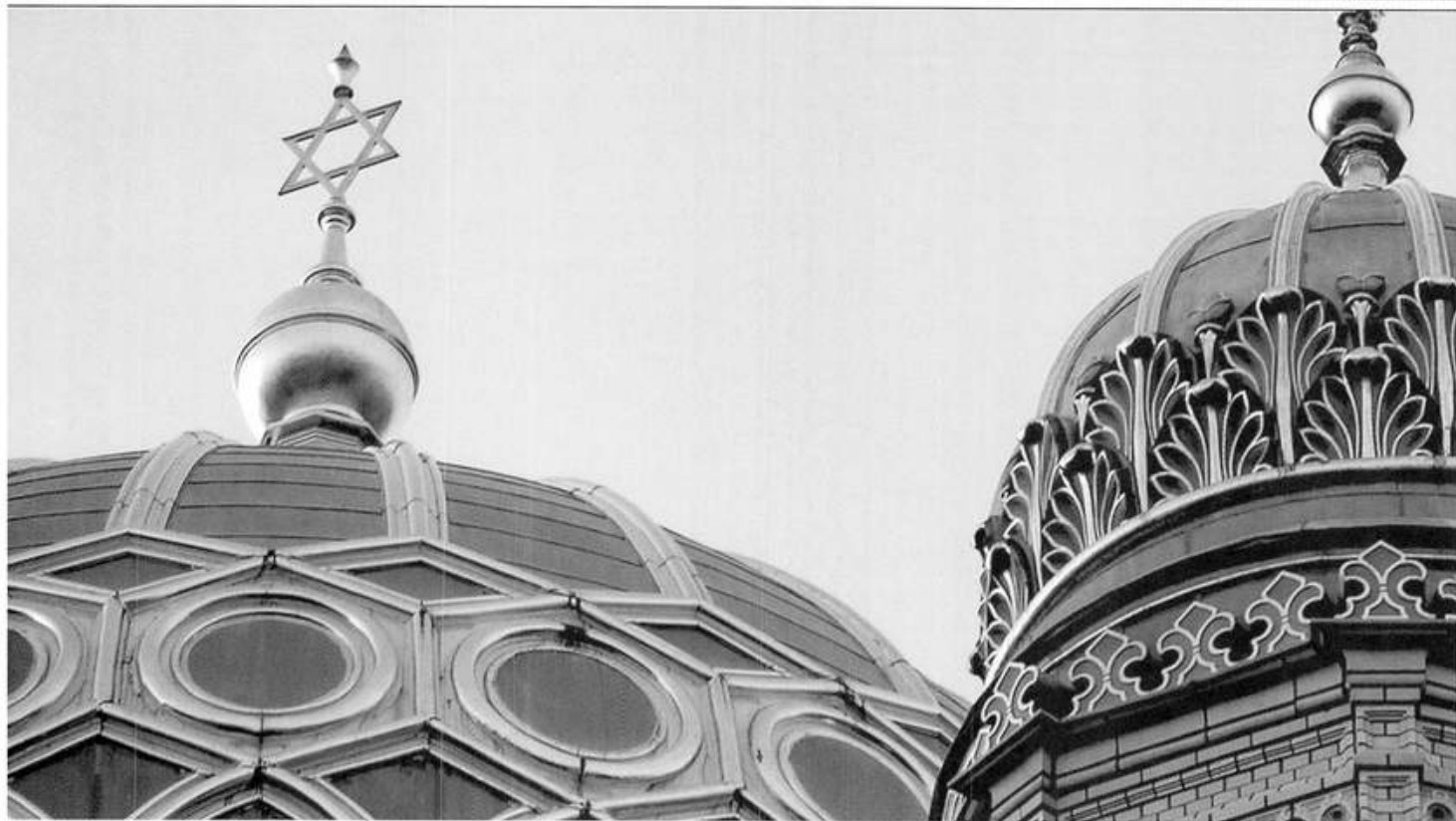
May our celebration of the festival of *Shavuot*, complete with Torah study, help us to hear the still small voice of the Divine urging us forth in our efforts at *tikkun*.

"Blessed are You, YHWH, our God, Sovereign of the universe ... Who has commanded us to occupy ourselves with words of Torah" (Morning Service). ■

Rabbi Or N. Rose, a contributing editor for Tikkun, is associate dean at the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College in Newton, MA. The author of two previous books, he is currently co-editing, Righteous Indignation: A Jewish Call for Justice (Jewish Lights, FALL 2007).

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Mending the Breach

By Richard Rohr

I AM WONDERING IF I HAVE EVER understood faith—or if I want it now that I am getting the point. The price of faith is much higher than I imagined it to be in my youthful readings about martyrdoms and lives of heroic sacrifice.

Now I know that faith is *not* believing—certain-ideas-all-evidence-to-the-contrary. It is not dogged loyalty to childhood conditioning or pledges of allegiance to sacred formulas and official explanations. It is surely not the addictive repetition of rituals or

“The ancient ruins will be rebuilt, You will build on age-old foundations. You will be called ‘Breach-Menders,’ and ‘Restorers of ruined houses.’”

-Isaiah 58:12

practices that keep God under control. These approaches give the ego comfort, but they give little comfort to truth, and even less to the scary and wonderful coming of the Reign of God.

I can only describe faith in its effects: people of real faith seem able to hold increasing amounts of chaos in one tranquil and ordered life. Faith seems to make people spacious, non-controlling, and waiting in awareness. The faith that Jesus praises as salvation (and sufficient in lepers, Samaritans, and those outside the temple system) is something very different than religion as such. It is a capacity within people to contain and receive all things, to hold onto nothing, with almost no need to fear or judge rashly. Faith-people find it unnecessary to secure themselves because they are secure at a deeper level; there is room for Another in that spacious place.

If Someone is not holding together the Big World, then I had best concentrate on making sense out of my own little corner. If No One else is finally in charge, I had best take charge. If No One else is caring for me, I had better be preoccupied with security and insurance. If No One else is naming me, I will be very invested in my own image. If the only joy is self-acquired, then any mood-altering substance will do. All the burden, anxiety, and options are back on me and I must take myself too seriously—it is the glory and the price of secular men and women. When Prometheus can no longer enjoy sitting at the fireplace of the gods, he must steal his own fire, but he pays the price forever. Such seems our contemporary exile. The human mind is enamored and burdened with itself, trying desperately to hold itself together. Trapped in our fractured worlds, we are unable to re-connect with one another.

Because people of faith are comfortable with the totality, they are the only ones who can hold the disparate parts together, make the peace, or “mend the breach.” The recurring temptation is to separate, analyze, and judge the parts, which gives us a sense of control and “understanding.” But Steve Levine speaks universal wisdom when he declares that, “Understanding is the ultimate seduction of the mind. Go to the truth beyond the mind. Love is the bridge.” Faith, driven by love, enables us to give up our need to understand, allows us to let go, and for Someone else to hold us together. It is not a giving up as much as it is an opening up and refusing to close back down for the sake of self-sufficiency and mastery. If this is indeed the character of faith for postmodern people, or any people, then I finally know why faith is so rare and why Jesus himself wondered if he would find very much on this earth (Luke 18:8).

Today, there seems to be a breach in almost every wall. Some have said, the “cosmic egg” that seemed to hold us together for a long time is now broken. “All the king’s horses and all the king’s men” find themselves unable to put it back together again. It feels like the earth moved beneath us somewhere in the mid or late 1960s: the old certitudes, the agreed-upon assumptions, the core values of Western civilization came up for major questioning. Our presuppositions dissolved and the questioning has not stopped. We now find ourselves engaged in major, and sometimes minor, culture wars on almost every personal and social issue. It is all thinkable now, and most of us are beyond being shocked by anything. We are often sad, discouraged, even alienated from the only world we live in. It was so much easier to exist inside the cosmic egg! It feels like exile from home and manifests in rampant abuse, violence, victim behavior, denial, social hysteria, or life-boat ethics. Each enclave of security seems to be clutching at its small certitudes: defiant, assertive, and substituting opinions for deeper identity.

We yearn for breach-menders who can restore our ruined houses, as Isaiah says. We long for great-souled people who can hold the chaos together within themselves—and give us the courage to do the same. In mythology, this is the gift of the queen or the king. In religion it is symbolized by the temple in Jerusalem or the cathedral at the center of the city. In the psychological world, we speak simply of mental and emotional health. In spirituality, we



dare to long for God. But our condition instead is always one of exile—"we are pilgrims and strangers on this earth" (Hebrews 11:13). It was in exile that the Jewish religion attained its most mature state. In exile, Isaiah took religious poetry and prophecy to its height. The collectivist ethics of Israel were refined and personalized by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and the story of Job emerged to push the meaning of faith beyond conventional wisdom. Maybe it is the necessary pattern. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar were good religious men, giving Job the traditional religious advice, but it was still insufficient. Exile led Israel to the edges of what it had already experienced and battered open the door to the new realm of faith, which is always more than conventional wisdom. We are in cultural and spiritual exile in America now, and long to return to Jerusalem. Or even Kansas! Maybe a new door needs to be opened.

I doubt whether having a single cultural myth or national story is now possible. That is frightening as we experience the fractured results while groups divide, encircle, and defend: male versus female, rich versus poor, liberal versus conservative, Christian versus non-Christian, pro-life versus pro-choice, renew from within versus change from without, overdeveloped world versus underdeveloped world, straights versus gays, environmentalists versus developers, hierarchies versus memberships, whites versus people of color.... The rifts and chasms are irreparable.

We must love them
both: those whose
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and inclusivity, identity
and universal
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Many are unable to offer one another basic respect, engage in civic dialogue, or honor what God is apparently patient with: the human struggle. The Catholic Church is in disbelief and panic at its inability to be a truly universal communion. But I am still advised by Thomas Aquinas who said, "We must love them both: those whose opinions we share and those whose opinions we reject. For both have labored in search for their truth and both have helped us in the finding of our own."

For the middle-part of this past century the goal seemed to be integration, homogenization, centralization, uniformity for the sake of unity, upward mobility, and acceptance. Suddenly, the pattern is reversing worldwide. Now the words are "multiculturalism," diversity, smaller units, ethnic identity, decentralization, states rights, and my rights. For such a paradigmatic shift we need a new ethic and vision for ourselves. If it was *e pluribus unum* (out of the many, one) for the past two hundred years in the U.S., it now feels like *e uno multos* (out of the one, many). How do you create a new cultural myth when you are now many cultures? Such is our problem.

The overriding temptation of both churches and nations today is to circle their wagons and worship their own Promethean fire. But the ancient ruins must be built on age-old foundations: we need to assert both exclusivity and inclusivity, both priesthood and prophecy, both identity and universal table fellowship, both holding on and letting go, both the nuclear family and global consciousness. The conservative temptation is to put all the energy into the first: batten down the hatches! The liberal temptation usually succumbs to the second: no boundaries are worth defending except the right to choose itself.

We both need to recognize our underlying cultural assumptions, the "myths" out of which we all operate. Until we can admit that largely nonrational myths guide and determine our so-called rational choices, there is little chance that we will "restore the ruined houses" of our civilization. ■

Fr. Richard Rohr is a Franciscan priest of the New Mexico Province and founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque.

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God To Cain: If You Do Right, You'll Talk

by Glen Stassen

IN THE BIBLICAL STORY, CAIN WAS A FARMER AND HIS BROTHER ABEL was a shepherd. Cain followed the agricultural technology of his time: to get your crops to grow, you place some on the altar and sacrifice them to God. But he didn't have generations of experience farming, and so his seeds didn't produce well. What made matters worse was that his brother Abel's flock was rife with new lambs, just by doing what came naturally. Cain concluded that God was not looking kindly upon his sacrifice, but *was* looking kindly on his brother's. It wasn't fair. So he had envy toward Abel and anger toward God.

God came walking in Cain's garden and saw that Cain's head was hanging low with shame and envy. So God spoke with compassion to Cain, as a mother who knows the danger of rivalry between brothers speaks to her son, "Look out! Anger is crouching at your door. If you don't do right, you'll commit the first fratricide in prehistory, and your children will repeat the error generation after generation. But if you do the right thing, then you can hold your head up high."

In another biblical story of two brothers separated by envy, Jacob tricked his father into giving him the blessing that was meant for his older brother, Esau. Jacob knew that Esau was seething with envy and anger toward him, and that he might try to kill him. So he humbled himself before God: "O LORD, I am not worthy of the steadfast love and faithfulness you have shown to me. Deliver me from the hand of my envious brother!"

God said to Jacob, "Go see your brother Esau. Make peace with your brother, but soften him up first by sending him some presents. Take some independent initiatives of peacemaking." So Jacob did. And surprise—God was right! Esau's envy was softened. Jacob found favor in Esau's eyes and the brothers were reconciled.

At the climax of the book of Genesis, envy and alienation are rife between Joseph and his brothers, but the breakthrough comes when Judah, one of Joseph's brothers, begs to be allowed to talk with Joseph, and Joseph, now the one in a position of power, allows it. Judah asks to be Joseph's slave in the place of Benjamin, the youngest of the brothers. It is written that Joseph "wept aloud" in response to Judah's actions. Then, all of the brothers wept for one another and became a united family through forgiveness and reconciliation.

Jesus taught likewise: If you offer your gift on the altar as Cain did, and realize there is envy and anger between you and your brother, look out! It can lead to yet another murder between brothers. Drop your gift and go, talk with your brother, and make peace.

Former president Jimmy Carter did likewise in 1994. He practiced conflict resolution with North Korea. They agreed to shut down their nuclear reactor and admit continuous UN International Atomic Energy Agency inspections in exchange for the offer of oil to make electricity. Talking worked.

George W. Bush did not do likewise. When he became president, he withdrew from peacemaking initiatives toward North Korea. President Kim Dae Jung of South Korea came to visit him in the White House. Kim was taking independent initiatives toward his brother Kim Jong Il, the leader of North Korea, sending rice and allowing cross-border visits. North Korea was reciprocating, acknowledging that it had committed surreptitious actions to

undermine the South Korean government, halting those actions, and allowing some opening of its borders. It was beginning to look like Jacob and Esau: brothers taking beginning actions to make peace. But president Bush publicly disparaged President Kim Dae Jung's policy of peacemaking initiatives. Then in his State of the Union address on Jan. 29, 2002, as he was planning to attack Iraq, he labeled North Korea and Iran, like Iraq, the "axis of evil." It sounded threatening.

In June 2002, the CIA reported that North Korea had gotten twenty centrifuges for enriching uranium from Pakistan. How to respond? (During the Cold War, when occasionally the United States or the U.S.S.R. suspected that the other was cheating on the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, they talked and got the problem solved. Talking worked.) James A. Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State, went to talk with North Korea in October. But neocons in the Bush administration blocked him from having any room to negotiate; he could only give North Korea an ultimatum. The North Korean negotiator responded by insisting upon his nation's right to develop nuclear weapons, without saying whether it actually had any. He accused the United States of threatening North Korea's survival, and produced a list of alleged failures by the United States to meet its own obligations under Carter's 1994 agreement. Then, he offered that North Korea would shut down its enrichment program in return for an American promise not to attack, and a commitment to normalize relations. Constrained by his instructions, Kelly could only re-state his ultimatum: North Korea must act first.

Prior to the meeting with Japan, South Korea, and the European Union to discuss a unified response, President Bush announced unilaterally that the United States would halt all oil shipments to North Korea and would press the other countries to halt them as well. So halt they did.

North Korea needed electricity from some source, so its leaders started up the country's nuclear facilities once again. They said that if the United States would sign a treaty of nonaggression and restore the oil, they would halt their nuclear reactors and allow inspections once again. But the United States refused negotiations, and North Korea has been running its reactors and producing plutonium for these five years since. Not talking did *not* work.

Finally, this year, U.S. ambassador Christopher Hill engaged in direct talks with North Korea and worked out an arrangement to restore the 1994 agreement: halt the nuclear generators, receive oil as a substitute, readmit the UN International Atomic Energy Agency to conduct continuous inspections to verify compliance with the agreement, and look forward to the possibility of peaceful relations between North Korea and the United States. It was five years and fuel for several nuclear bombs late, but finally they talked, and finally they made peace. Credit for this agreement goes to Christopher Hill and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who knows how to talk regularly with her brother, George W. Bush, and who bypassed Vice President Cheney and persuaded President Bush to affirm the agreement. They talked, and it worked. This is the practice of just peacemaking, "cooperative conflict resolution." The alternative would have been more nuclear weapons in North Korea, and, in response, a new nuclear arms race involving South Korea, Japan, and other neighbors, as well as the setting of an example for Iran to go and do likewise.

The moral is clear: If you do right, then you can hold your head up high. Trust God. Pray. It would not be surprising if God says the same thing he said to Cain, Jacob, Joseph, and Jesus. To do right is to take independent initiatives to go talk with your brother and to work at making peace. This should be a lesson for the current situation with Iran: Don't demand that your brother first agree to your demands before you ever talk. Send a few sheep and goats as presents, and then go and talk. ■

Glen Harold Stassen is the Lewis B. Smedes Professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary. He has published a number of books, including Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War, Living the Sermon on the Mount, and Kingdom Ethics, which won the Christianity Today award for best book of 2004 in theology or ethics.

Why Torture Continues

THE AMERICAN MEDIA HAS LARGELY acquiesced to the Bush Administration's strategy in reporting on the war: if American human rights violations get reported at all, they are quickly forgotten. Yet, the strong efforts by the Bush Administration to retain torture as a standard procedure in dealing with anyone it considers a terrorist or "enemy combatant" indicates a commitment to continue using torture for as long as the government can get away with it.

Torture continues at Guantanamo. It continues to produce suicides, attempted suicides, psychoses, and hunger strikes. Torture continues in dozens of detention centers and prisons throughout Iraq. And torture continues in countless other locations around the world where the United States has subcontracted its torture work to the torture experts of other "intelligence" agencies.

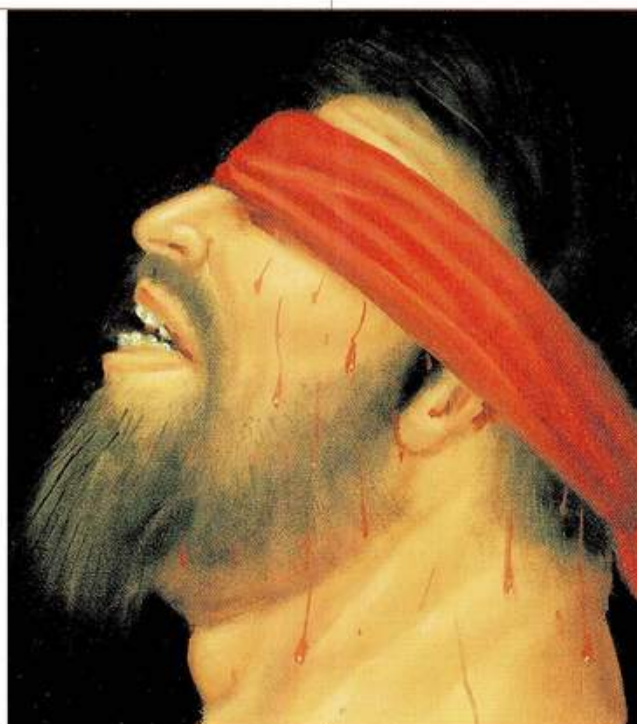
One reason that the current administration refuses to apply the right of *habeas corpus* to the "war on terror" is that it would then be constricted in its ability to torture.

For some, this is "old news." Abu Ghraib was revealed years ago, and the data on torture has been known for several years. In American society, once a problem has been aired in the media and discussed in Congress, there is a tendency on the part of many citizens to believe that "that issue has been dealt with already." In the case of torture, the opposite is true. The exposure of the problem has had the reverse impact—it has normalized the existence of torture in our national discussion, eliminating the sense of outrage that was the first reaction. In fact, that normalization may be one of the worst consequences of the war in Iraq.

We at *Tikkun* are all too aware that, when liberal members of Congress vote to continue the war until mid-2008, and do not simultaneously ban all use of torture (in any of the various formulations in which it is sometimes veiled), they are, in fact, allowing torture to continue.

What does one expect of principled people in this situation? That they refuse to cooperate in any way with the torturers, that they demand that the torturers and those who enable the policies of torture be brought to trial for violation of international law, and that international human rights observers be present at every instance of interviewing or information seeking from those suspected of terrorism or participation in acts against the U.S. government. Given the proven history of torture, the burden of proof now rests with the government, not with those who accuse the government. Until it can demonstrate that all of its institutions and collaborators have completely abandoned torture, there must be systematic mechanisms to prevent torture from continuing. Every funding measure sent from Congress for the war—or for any other military, security, or police related expenditure—ought to have provisions against torture. They should also include an absolute ban on the use of any funding to—directly or indirectly—enable the use of physical or psychological torture on those being held by the United States or its surrogates, as well as lengthy jail sentences for anyone in the government who enables this torture.

Torture continues because so many in the media, politics, the intelligence services, and the military, as well as many in the professions of law, psychology, and medicine are enabling it, often for the sake of their jobs. At the same time, we, the citizens, are not raising our voices in outrage sufficient to outweigh the determination of the Bush government, and the cowardliness of our Congress. ■



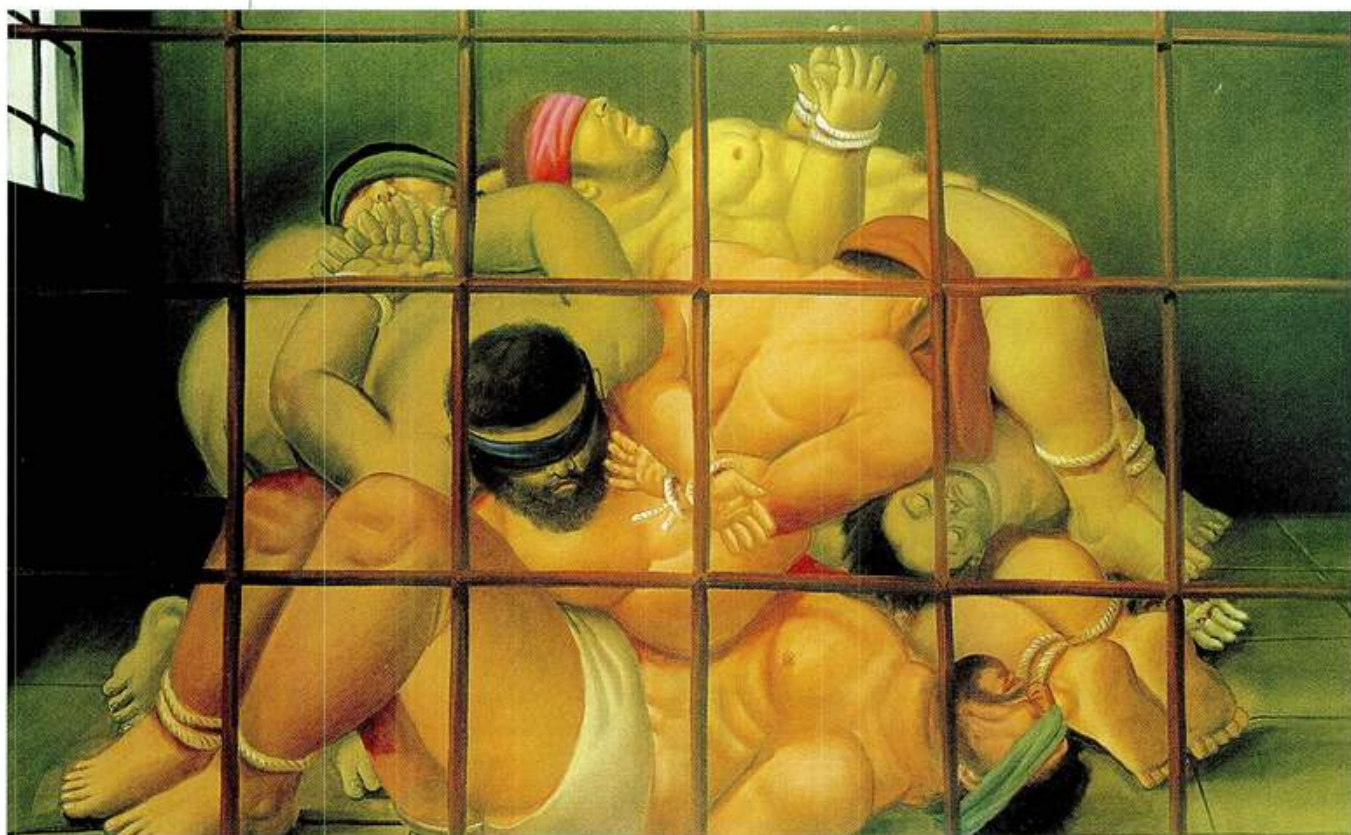
Fernando Botero's Abu Ghraib Series

No one would have ever remembered the horrors of Guernica if not for the painting. Art is a permanent accusation.

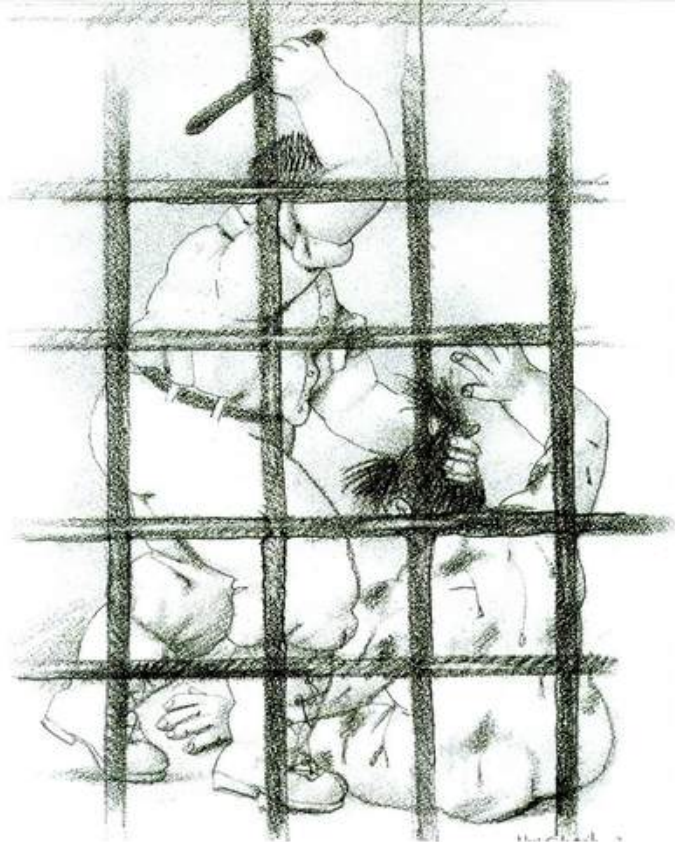
THE U.S. ART ESTABLISHMENT HAS YET TO EMBRACE FERNANDO BOTERO, despite his popular appeal in many countries. His latest works have only been shown in a commercial gallery in Manhattan and at The Center for Latin American Studies at the University of California at Berkeley. Many U.S. museums do have a Botero or two but, unlike their European counterparts, none have yet shown his Abu Ghraib series. Why?

The paintings of the seventy-four-year-old Colombian artist are loved for their color, beauty, and folk-art echoes, as well as for their exaggeratedly chubby people and animals. Although he has tackled grim political subjects before—notably the Colombian drug wars—Botero's torture paintings come as a surprise in their scale and impact. Some months after first reading about the torture practiced by U.S. personnel at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, Botero began sketching scenes from the news reports. He immediately became obsessed with the theme. Fourteen months later, when the obsession ended, he had produced eighty drawings, watercolors, and paintings, many on large canvases. None of these works are for sale. Botero says he does not want to make money from this suffering. They are a political and humanitarian statement. "Art," he says, "is a permanent accusation."

Critics have noted that Botero's paintings do something that the Abu Ghraib photographs cannot. They give dignity back to the victims. "The Abu Ghraib prisoners are not his usual pneumatic inflatables," wrote Roberta Smith in the *New York Times*; "They are immense, but monumental; muscular and solid." ■

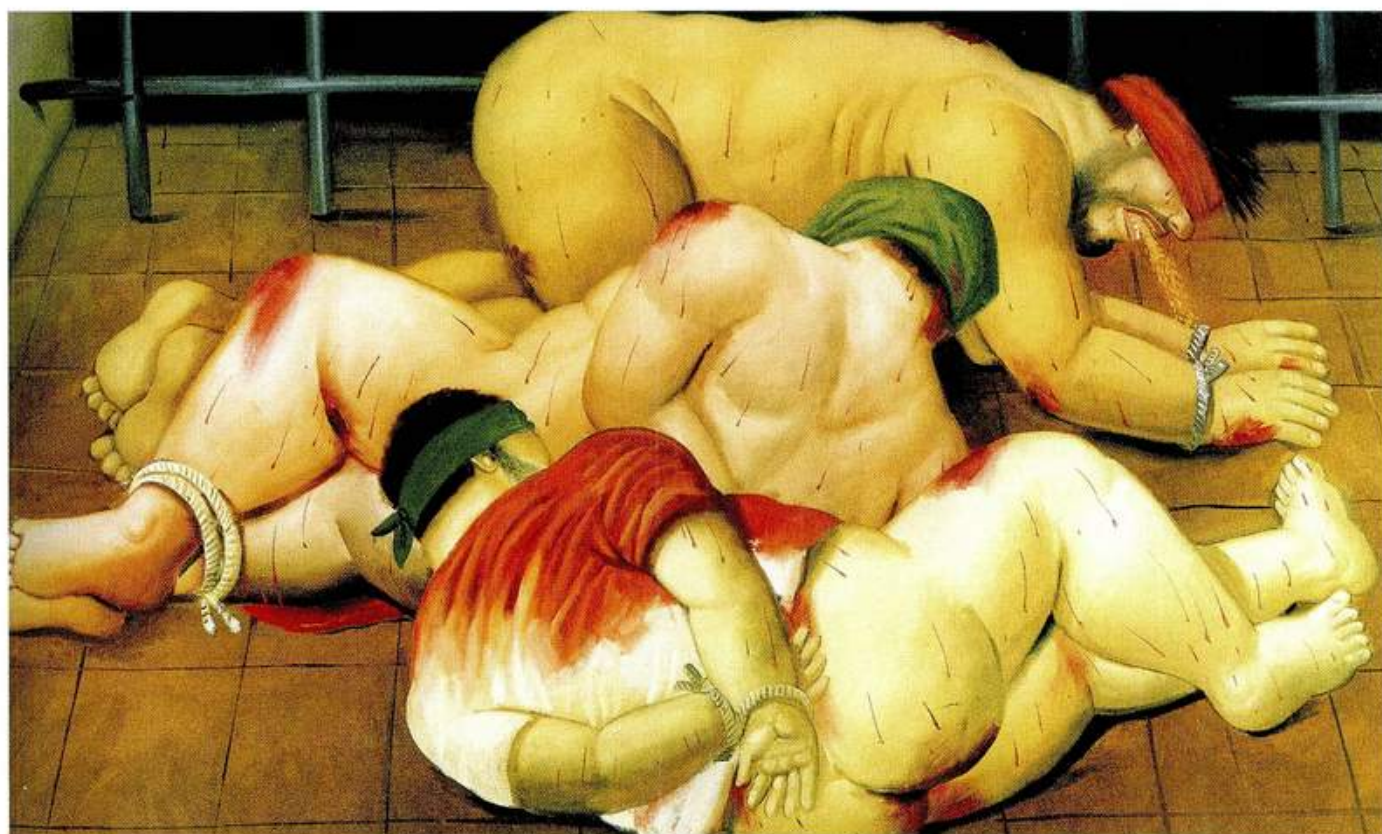


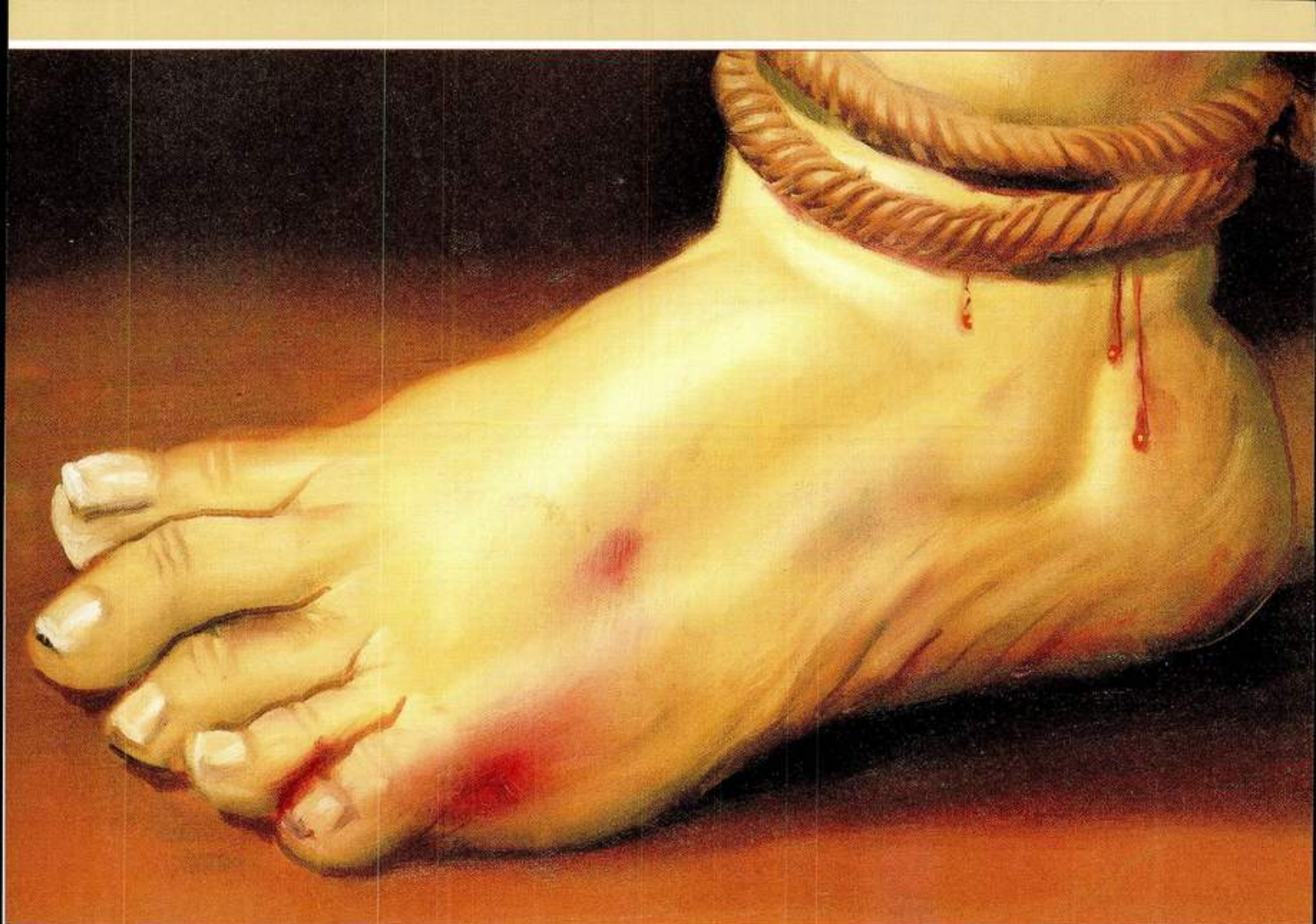
FERNANDO BOTERO



I, like everyone else, was shocked by the barbarity, especially because the United States is supposed to be this model of compassion.

- Fernando Botero





Spokes in the Wheel

An Account of Torture

by Dianna Ortiz

FERNANDO BOTERO

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SPEAK WITH YOU ABOUT MY TORTURE. Before walking down that rocky path, and although it is out of order, I would like to share with you something about myself today. I want to open a door just a little—the door to my soul. November 2nd is the “anniversary” of my torture. What a word for it—*anniversary*. For me, November has been a tomb—dark, lifeless, despairing.

In recent years, I have sought to construct a tunnel out of that tomb. Dark, yes; frightening, yes; but all the while I have clung to the realization that November would end and I would emerge into the sunlight again. This change, I presume, was an indication of some healing. Others, the non-tortured, more likely might have said that I was “getting over it.” But, of course, no one ever “gets over” having been tortured. At any rate, nearly a month and a half ago, November once again loomed before me and for the first time that tomb, that pit of despair, appeared to me as sanctuary.

November will end, you know. Again, you will come into the sunlight. Sunlight! What sunlight? The bright glare of the Military Commissions Act legitimizing torture. The re-defining of torture so that water-boarding became in the immortal words of the Vice President, “a dunk in the water.” Turning over to George Bush the right to determine what is and is not torture. In the words of law professor Jonathan Turley, revoking “over 200 years of American principles and values.” Over 150 governments in this world torture, including our own. It is not so much that we are not progressing toward the abolition of this crime against humanity, it is that things appear to be getting worse; that includes the cynical manipulations by this administration. And then, of course, our Congress grants these torturers—for that is what those who order it are—immunity for what they have done.

And so as this November drew to an end, I felt no lightening of my spirit, no relief—only a heavy grief for us: the tortured, those being tortured, and those whose torture would occur because of this vile and violent act of Congress. That is what I felt as I left, or was forced out of that tomb. Hope may still reside within me, but I assure you it is a battered, tattered hope indeed.

When survivors speak of their experiences, they risk returning to that time. Call it flashbacks or whatever you wish. The fact is that we re-experience what was done to us both as we speak and in the ensuing hours and days. Not surprisingly, this is not something we wish to do. If left to my own liking, I would not have accepted this invitation to describe my torture to you. But what I would choose is not the deciding factor here. You see, something relevant to me describing my torture to you today happened when I was locked away in that clandestine prison. It is something I have had to live with ever since that time.

As I sat naked, my back pressed against that cold hard wall, I listened to the screams of those who were also being tortured in that place. It was then that I made a fateful promise. “If I survive, I will tell the world what I have seen here. I will not forget you.” That’s what I said not knowing what it would cost me. I believe that if I had made that promise to God I would have tried to renege, tried to bargain my way out of it. But I did not promise God, I promised my tortured sisters and brothers and thus I am shackled to it. I cannot betray them, for if the tortured cannot trust one another, who is left that we can trust?

And so, what did happen in that place; what did happen to me? I will tell you some of it, some—but not all, not nearly all of what was done in that place. I went to Guatemala in 1987 to teach Mayan children. There, in a high mountain village, I found happiness, I found the place I would live the rest of my life. But then came the death threats—telling me what would be done to me if I did not leave. I thought about that; I thought long and hard. Everything said to leave, all on the side of escape—all on one side of the scale—or almost all. On the other side were only the children, the children whom I loved and was teaching not only to read and write, but to value the very culture, the rich and powerful culture of Guatemala, devalued and demeaned. And finally, the children outweighed all the rest and I chose to stay.

On November 2, 1989, I was abducted by members of the Guatemalan security forces. I was taken to a clandestine prison. I was burned with cigarettes more than 111 times on my back and elsewhere. I was gang raped. I was lowered into a pit with dead and dying bodies. There was more—much, *much* more—about which I will not speak.

Now, having told you this part of it, I am once again overwhelmed by the inadequacy of words. More than 111 second degree burns. What does that mean? Can you feel your skin on fire? Gang raped. Is there any way you could know what that meant—what that means to me? Words; you hear them, I experienced them. I experience them, even now. I'm not speaking of myself alone now. I'm speaking of all survivors—those who remain hostages at Guantánamo, those held in secret prisons. Not many who have survived speak of their torture. Often, we wonder, "What's the point? How can anyone understand?"

Often times, it is only in the company of other survivors that we can unleash all that we have experienced—there, we know they will understand—not simply the meaning of the words but the experience of them as well. To live through this horror is to come face to face with what Martin Buber called the "eclipse of God." Does this seem excessive, overwrought, or too dramatic? When my first rapist was done with me, he whispered in my ear, "Your God is dead." And he was right; for many years, the God whom I had committed my life to remained a stranger.

I continue to speak before those who have not been tortured because of the promise I made, for if the tortured are forgotten, their torture never ends. It never ends. The tortured Jean Amery said it well, "I am burdened with collective guilt, not they. The world which forgives and forgets has sentenced *me*, not those who murdered or allowed the murder to occur." Some twenty years after the Nazis ended his physical torture, Jean Amery died. It is recorded as suicide but we survivors know: twenty years later his sentence was finally completed, death by torture ordered by those this world was busy either forgetting or forgiving.

But this is not the time of Germany or France of old. It is not they I wish to focus upon, but my own country. With that understanding, let's get one point out of the way right away. I was tortured during the administration of George H.W. Bush, Republican. Not only was I given no assistance, I was slandered by several of its members. First, it was said I hadn't been tortured. But then there were all those burns so the story changed. I had been engaging in "lesbian sex that got out of hand." And the slanders continued. Perhaps this is not surprising because the boss of my Guatemalan torturers was an American and the Bush administration clearly had to hide that fact.

During the time that Bill Clinton was President, I asked for files related to my abduction. One hundred and three Members of Congress signed a letter to Mr. Clinton supporting my request. I sat in vigil across from the White House for five weeks eating only bread and water, asking that my request be granted. Mr. Clinton did nothing. His wife met with me and promised me those documents and that is the last I heard from her. In all fairness, I should say that I did receive documents—blank sheets of papers, copies of letters that I had written to the State Department concerning human rights in Guatemala, newspaper articles—all of this had been classified and was now declassified. The administration made sure to announce publicly that many documents had been declassified and given to me. They omitted the fact that none had any bearing on my case. I tell you all this because torture is not a partisan issue. Both Republicans and Democrats are culpable.

Earlier, I said that many survivors feel at home only in the company of other survivors. This was the basis for the forming of TASSC, the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International. TASSC has two major purposes. First, to support survivors and assist in whatever healing process is possible for them. Daily we confront their needs and our promise to ourselves to walk with each and every one. Did you know that in the DC Metro areas alone for example, there are 50,000 survivors and a half million nation-wide? The responsibilities we have assumed are daunting indeed.

But we have a second reason for existing: we want torture abolished from this world, period! Thus, we also exist to confront torture, no matter where it is practiced or by whom. At this very moment, TASSC has launched a special campaign to repeal the Military Commissions Act of 2006 also known as the Torture Law. We are not about to stand by and let this government do to others what was done to us. I hope that you will consider signing the petition on our website (www.tassc.org) directed to Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, calling for the act's repeal.

This government tortures. What, then, is demanded of us all? The great theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, hanged by the Nazis for his commitment to all humanity, to human decency, answers. In speaking of the church, Bonhoeffer said this, "In the first place...it can ask the state whether its actions are legitimate.... Secondly, it can aid victims of state action.... The third possibility is not just to bandage the victims under the wheel but to (jam a stick) into the wheel itself."

This is a government that takes as part of its normal functioning the use of torture. TASSC stands ready to assist survivors of this crime against humanity. But in good conscience, we cannot stop there. We must find a way to stop this part of our government's routine behavior. It is our responsibility to all who have been tortured; it is our responsibility to those being tortured at this very moment. And it is our responsibility to the next generation and the one after that. It is our responsibility to all of them to jam a stick in the spokes of torture's wheel. This is what we do. What will you do? ■

Sister Dianna founded and is the current director of Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International, an organization working to create international communities of healing for torture survivors. Her memoir, The Blindfold's Eyes: My Journey from Torture to Truth details the shattering effects of torture on her life and her efforts to bring her perpetrators to justice.

Where Were the Doctors?

Torture and the Betrayal of Medicine

by Larry Dossey

IN 1968, SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVING AT MY ASSIGNMENT AS A BATTALION SURGEON at An Khe, South Vietnam, I was awakened late one night by a drunken sergeant.

"Doc, we need your help," he said enthusiastically, "a platoon has just returned with some captured gooks. We've got the gadgets all set up to make 'em talk."

The gadgets, he explained through slurred speech, were improvised, battery-powered devices that could deliver electric shocks. I realized I was being asked to participate in torture.

At the time I was a twenty-eight-year-old physician, fresh out of the six-week training program that all physicians were given on entering the U.S. Army. We had not been provided with any guidelines about physician participation in interrogations. The Geneva Conventions, of which I was only peripherally aware, and to which our nation was and still is a signatory, had not been brought up. When the sergeant tried to enlist my help, I realized I was on my own. But that did not mean I was without direction. I knew, instinctively, that torture was wrong and that it violated the Hippocratic Oath, which I'd sworn on graduating from medical school. The classical version of the vow says, for example, "I will keep them

"The healthy man does not torture others—generally it is the tortured who turn into torturers."

— C. G. Jung



from harm.... In purity and holiness I will guard my life and my art."

"Look, Sarg," I said. "It's late. It's time we all got some sleep."

"Doc," he persisted, "we need you to make this work."

"Can't do it," I said. "Get the hell outta here."

He disappeared into the night, and I was never again pressured to participate in the torture of prisoners during my service in Vietnam.

I was aware, however, that torture probably existed. I was told that prisoners would sometimes be blindfolded, taken up in helicopters, and told by their interrogators that they would be pushed out if they refused to talk. I was informed that some were actually pushed out, blindfolded and screaming, while the helicopter hovered a couple of feet above the ground.

One young infantryman, when it came time for him to rotate back to the United States, came to my aid station. He wanted to thank me for what I'd done for him by offering me a war trophy: a pair of dried ears that had been hacked from an enemy soldier—whether dead or alive I never knew.

There is nothing new in any of this. The horror of war distorts the behavior of everyone who is sucked into its maw. The best of our young men and women, who in peacetime might be model citizens, can behave like beasts in war.

Prohibitions

STEVEN H. MILES IS A PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE, practicing physician, and medical ethicist at the Center for Bioethics at the University of Minnesota Medical School. In his book *Oath Betrayed: Torture, Medical Complicity, and the War on Terror*, he presents numerous, modern-day cases of American medical personnel ignoring and justifying torture, falsifying death certificates to cover up torture, failing to meet basic medical needs of tortured people, and practicing torture. Drawing on 35,000 government records acquired by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) under the Freedom of Information Act, Miles shows that the U.S. government, with the complicity of considerable numbers of medical personnel, has become a torturing society.

Miles tells us how the world was shocked by revelations of torture in the aftermath of World War II. The Nuremberg trials made public the immense scale of the Nazi atrocities, and other investigations revealed the crimes against humanity that had taken place in POW camps run by the Japanese. The international community was so appalled by these disclosures that a common assent arose: torture is inherently barbaric and can not be justified by the reasons that are commonly advanced to defend it, such as national security, investigative necessity, or revenge. This collective revulsion toward torture set the stage for a number of international agreements designed to prevent a reoccurrence of the atrocities.

I wish I had known about these international agreements when the sergeant came calling that night in Vietnam. Had I known, my resolve not to participate in coercive interrogation would have been stronger. All medical personnel who are involved in the current war on terror should be aware of these agreements. Here is a brief look at some of the most notable ones.

In 1948, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and became the cornerstone of international and national instruments banning inhumane, cruel, or degrading treatment or punishment and torture. The most celebrated agreement was adopted soon afterwards—the 1949 Geneva Convention:

Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed *hors de combat* (out of the fight; disabled) by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances

be treated humanely...

To this end, the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever with respect to the above-mentioned persons: (a) Violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture; ... (c) Outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment...

The 1975 Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, known as the Helsinki Accords, unambiguously reaffirmed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It states,

Article 7: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.

Many people think these documents apply only to combatants and their commanders, but they apply to medical personnel as well, as they should. There is ample evidence that physicians have behaved murderously during wartime. In 1946 and 1947, twenty-three Nazi physicians were indicted, tried, and mostly convicted because of their crimes against humanity, complicity in mass murder, and sadistic experiments in the Nazi death camps.

Following the war, private medical societies developed their own ethical declarations. Among the earliest was the 1948 document by the World Medical Association, a congress of eighty national medical associations, including the American Medical Association. In 1975, the World Medical Association adopted the historic Declaration of Tokyo:

The doctor's fundamental role is to alleviate the distress of his or her fellow men, and no motive, whether personal, collective or political shall prevail against this higher purpose.

The doctor shall not countenance, condone or participate in the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading procedures, whatever the offence of which the victim of such procedure is suspected, accused or guilty, and whatever the victim's belief or motives, and in all situations, including armed conflict and civil strife. The doctor shall not provide any premises, instruments, substances or knowledge to facilitate the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or to diminish the ability of the victim to resist such treatment. The doctor shall not be present during any procedure during which torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment are used or threatened.

Similar declarations have been drafted in the past few years by the International Council of Nurses, the World Psychiatric Association, the American Psychiatric Association/American Psychological Association, the American College of Physicians, and the American Medical Association.

How effective are declarations made by professional associations? The fact that one can complete one's professional training as a physician, nurse, psychiatrist, or psychologist without ever hearing about these decisions suggests that, for the most part, these documents sit on the sidelines and gather dust. As Miles states, "As with the international laws against torture, it is one thing to pass a medical ethics code and quite another to enforce it." When judicial proceedings arise concerning crimes of torture, it is usually soldiers and commanders who are involved, not medical personnel. Medical societies and licensing boards are left to discipline medical professionals who abet torture, but, in fact, they usually do little more than publicly condemn such behaviors. Even so, the world is better off with these declarations than without them.

Collaboration

WHEN MOST AMERICANS THINK ABOUT TORTURE, they imagine that it is practiced only by rogue regimes in third-world countries. Since April 2004, when a flood of photographs flowed to the United States from the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, we have learned otherwise. The world now knows that our country routinely engages in torture and the dehumanization of prisoners. We also know, largely as a result of Dr. Steven Miles' courageous book, that medical personnel have often been complicit in these activities.

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Miles describes six ways in which medical personnel collaborate with torturers, "Some examine prisoners to certify them as capable of withstanding harsh interrogation. Some monitor and treat persons during interrogation so that health-endangering treatment may proceed. Some conceal evidence of abuse, either by designing non-scarifying techniques, or by ensuring that medical documents or death certificates do not record injuries. Some conduct abusive research. Some oversee the systematic neglect of prisoners' needs for health care, sanitation, food, and shelter. Many keep silent as their imprisoned patients are abused."

This may sound like a non-lethal list of grievances against medical personnel, until one looks at actual cases. Miles describes specific instances of torture and homicide in American prisons in both Iraq and Afghanistan. These cases are not for the lighthearted. Many are gruesome, reminiscent of medieval torture procedures used during the Inquisition.

The *strappado* is an ancient form of torture in which a victim is suspended by means of a rope attached to his hands, which are tied behind his back. It is also known as "reverse hanging" or "Palestinian hanging," because of its use by Israelis against the Palestinians. It is believed that Machiavelli was subjected to this torture during his imprisonment in 1513, after he allegedly conspired against the Medici family in Florence. The *strappado* was also used by the Nazis at Auschwitz. More recently, this technique has reemerged in American-controlled prisons in the Middle East.

In November 2003, Manadel al-Jamadi was arrested at his home in Baghdad as a suspect in attacks on U.S. forces. When he resisted arrest he was shackled, beaten, kicked, and driven to a SEAL base, where he was interrogated. A medic watched as al-Jamadi groaned, "I'm dying; I'm dying." He received no medical assessment or care, but was transferred to Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison. Here, he became a "ghost prisoner," meaning that he was not registered, nor was he given any medical care. Instead, he was again kicked, beaten, and given a "butt stroke" from a rifle stock to his head. He was then placed under CIA supervision, during which time a soaked bag was placed over his head—a procedure intended to induce air hunger in the victim. Al-Jamadi was stripped naked below the waist and his wrists were tied and lifted high behind his back—the *strappado* in action. His arms bulged backward out of their sockets and blood issued from his mouth. When the bag was removed from his head, the CIA interrogators saw that his eyes were locked in a fixed stare: al-Jamadi was dead.

The body was placed in a bag, packed with ice, and stored in a shower room overnight. The next day a medic inserted an IV into the corpse's arm, as if al-Jamadi were merely sick. The Army Surgeon General's investigation accepted the explanation that this was not an attempt to disguise the manner or time of his death, but rather a gesture intended to prevent alarm in other prisoners.

The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) helped conceal the homicide, says Miles, by refusing to release the death certificate to the Red Cross for conveyance to the victim's family. Only after the homicide became public on *60 Minutes* did the AFIP release the six-month-old death certificate. His body was not sent to his family for burial, but to the Baghdad morgue where it remained unclaimed for six months. Had it not eventually been claimed, it would have been buried in an unmarked grave and lost to his family forever.

You can view al-Jamadi's corpse online at

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/gallery/image/0,8543,-13004919007,00.html>. Here you'll see lovely Sabrina Harman, a specialist with the 372nd Military Police Company, posing over the dead man while flashing a winning smile and a hearty thumb's up. (Harman was court-martialed and sentenced to six months in prison and a dishonorable discharge for this and similar offenses.) An extensive gallery of photos from the Abu Ghraib scandal is available on the web at Wikipedia. WARNING: These photos contain disturbing images of violence, abuse, and humiliation.

In an interview in August 2006, Miles shows the extent of medical involvement in such cases: Q (Sandip Roy): Where should the medical staff have been in a prison like Abu Ghraib?

A (Steven H. Miles): ... Doctors and nurses are frontline human rights monitors in prison. Even if they don't see abuses themselves, they are trained to see the signs. They are the eyes and ears for the human rights monitoring system in prison.

Q: What did you find in terms of reliably documented torture practices?

A: There were beatings, kickings, burns, exposure to extreme heat and cold, deprivation of food and water, degradation, sexual rape including rape with baton, nudity, and denigration of religion. People were suspended by the wrist from the ceiling or with their arms tied behind their backs or short-shackled to see the floor of the cell so they were contorted in a fetal position. Pretty much the only thing I didn't see, that one sees in other countries, is physical mutilation such as the cutting off of ears or hands.

Q: You write that Donald Rumsfeld created a new kind of army interrogation system. What do you mean?

A: Secretary Rumsfeld actually wrote the interrogation policies. He implemented these harsh techniques, despite being told they would not produce good intelligence. He also created the system for medically monitoring and constructing the harsh intelligence plans. That's why it's expected that after he leaves office European human rights groups will issue an indictment against him.... [In November 2006, a complaint was filed in Germany asking a federal prosecutor to begin an investigation, and ultimately a criminal prosecution, of Rumsfeld, Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez, former CIA director George Tenet, and other senior civilian and military officials. The complaint was filed on behalf of eleven Iraqis who had been detained at Abu Ghraib prison, and Mohammed al-Qahtani, a Saudi detained at Guantánamo. It alleges that the defendants ordered, aided, and abetted war crimes, and failed to prevent the commission of war crimes by their subordinates. German law recognizes the principle of universal jurisdiction, according to which some crimes, such as torture, war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, are considered so heinous they can be prosecuted anywhere, regardless of where they took place or the residence or nationality of the victims of perpetrators. The New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights and the International Federation for Human Rights joined in the filing.]

Q: But were the medical staff collaborating actively with torture or passively not reporting it?

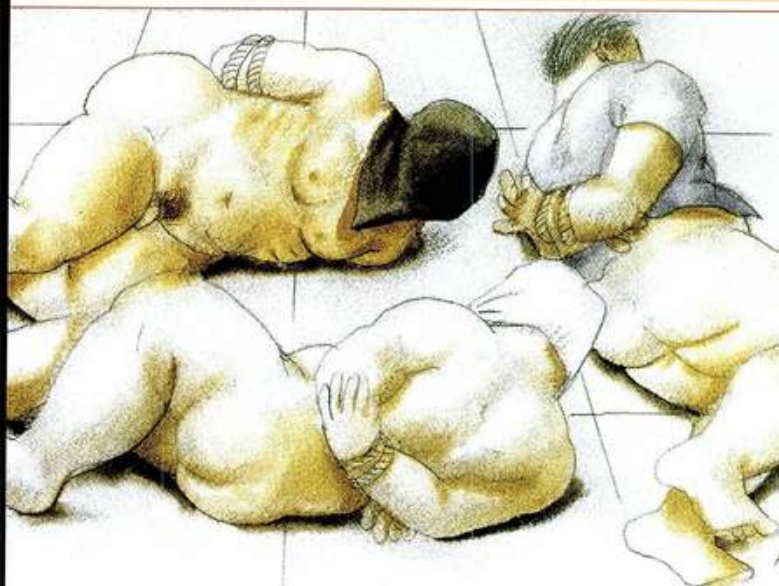
A: Both. They were actively collaborating through BSCT in design of harsh interrogation. [BSCT—Behavioral Science Consultation Teams or “biscuit”—were invented by Gen. Geoffrey Miller, who implemented Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's policy in Guantánamo. BSCT clinicians, often psychiatrists or psychologists, monitored the breaking down of prisoners and reported back to the BSCT, who then revised interrogation plans.] And they willfully remained silent as the military suppressed evidence of deaths caused by torture. The Abu Ghraib pictures were posted as screensavers throughout the prison. Everybody knew about them and the medical system remained quiet.

Q: Can you choose one story to illustrate your point?

A: Mahoush was a guy who was picked up in northern Iraq. He was told we would let his sons go if he turned himself in. We spent sixteen days interrogating him, which quickly turned into severe beating. Finally, he was stuffed headfirst into a sleeping bag that was wrapped with twenty feet of wire and an interrogator sat on his chest, at which point he suffocated. A resuscitation was attempted and then there was a public press release that said the guy apparently died of a heart attack while being questioned. The pathology report done three days later found he died of asphyxia and beatings—that report was deliberately withheld by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. If that report had gotten out, we would have had an early warning signal that something had gone terribly wrong in these prisons.

Q: Is this an overwhelmed medical staff? You quote an Army medic in 2004 as saying that there were only four doctors for 8,000 detainees in Abu Ghraib.

A: An overwhelmed medical staff provided inadequate care. But an inattentive medical staff allowed that neglect to go forward. For example, tuberculosis is so epidemic in POW



camps, the Geneva Conventions say that every POW has to be screened for TB. We didn't even do that for two years after the Iraq POW camps got started...

Denial

WHEN PICTURES OF ABUSED PRISONERS AT ABU GHRAIB circulated around the world in April 2004, I, like many people, responded with disbelief. I thought that there must have been some mistake. During my stint in the U.S. Army, I had made rounds in Army jails—visually inspecting prisoners to make sure they had no health complaints and were not being abused. I knew that physicians, nurses, and medics were always part of military prison personnel. Surely they would have blown the whistle at Abu Ghraib if torture were going on

But, as Miles shows, we Americans overlook, deny, and forget our own atrocities. All nations do. Examples in the United States include our attempted genocide of Native Americans, lynchings of

African Americans, and the violence we continue to permit in our prison system. "Such distancing," says Miles, "left Americans unprepared for how easily the plague [of torture] could infect the homeland. The Abu Ghraib photographs showed that the United States had become infected. Americans recoiled with fresh denials. Torture by American soldiers must be a different kind of torture: "torture lite." It must be an isolated event, the work of a "few bad apples" or a local command breakdown.... The prisoners are terrorists by definition; they deserved what they got. None of these denials is true. The United States is a torturing society."

As the reality of Abu Ghraib settled in, the burning question for me became: *Where were the doctors?*

Why?

THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY PHYSICIANS COMPLY WITH TORTURE. Some remain unaware that torture in any form is illegal and that they could conceivably be prosecuted for abetting it. Many of them serve in the military temporarily, and they view their time in uniform as an inconvenience that must be tolerated before returning to civilian life and private practice. To these physicians, "go along and get along" can seem the best course: Put in your time, don't make waves, and get out, they tell themselves. If they are asked to certify that a prisoner is fit for coercive interrogation, if they are asked not to mention signs of physical abuse, what the heck: cooperate; no one will know. If the physician refuses to comply, this could reverberate up the chain of command and create inconvenient complications for all concerned.

Military physicians are often intimidated by the sheer weight of command structure. If a senior officer orders them to do something, they may comply unthinkingly, without asking themselves whether or not the command is lawful. This attitude paves the way for the "just following orders" excuse that is usually the legal defense of torturers when they are hauled before courts.

But perhaps the most powerful inducement for military doctors and nurses to comply with torture is the moral miasma that has descended on our society since the beginning of the war on terror. The implicit message from the President, echoing down the chain of command, has been that "alternative methods" of interrogation are not just permissible, but necessary to "keep America safe." What are military medical personnel to think? If your commander in chief says torture is essential, what's wrong with your involvement in it?

Rationalization

PRESIDENT BUSH LED OUR NATIONAL DENIAL OF TORTURE. Even while the degradation, humiliation, and torture of POWs was taking place in American-run prisons in Iraq and Afghanistan, and even as the process of "extraordinary rendition"—the outsourcing of torture to other nations—and CIA-run black sites were on the drawing board, marking where

torture would become routine, President Bush had the audacity to say on June 26, 2003, on the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, "Torture anywhere is an affront to human dignity everywhere. We are committed to building a world where human rights are respected and protected by the rule of law. Freedom from torture is an inalienable human right. Yet, torture continues to be practiced around the world by rogue regimes.... The United States is committed to the world-wide elimination of torture and we are leading this fight by example." As recently as November 2005, Mr. Bush continued to insist, "We do not torture."

More recently, the President has reversed his stance, admitting that the CIA uses "tough" techniques to interrogate "high-value" captives—those Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in 2002 called "the worst of the worst," referring to the several hundred Guantánamo prisoners. But, as the *Los Angeles Times* documented in May 2004, many of the Guantánamo detainees were not captured on the battlefields of Afghanistan, but were kidnapped off the streets of Europe and various locations in the Middle East and sold to U.S. authorities in Afghanistan and Pakistan for bounties. Some were deliberately snatched from their beds; others were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Nonetheless, all the Guantánamo prisoners were classified as "enemy combatants"—a term the administration's legal team invented to skirt the protections for prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions. Where torture is concerned, vocabulary is important. Calling prisoners "the worst of the worst" justifies coercive interrogation in the eyes of many. But, according to William Fisher, a seasoned State Department Middle East expert, "Not even the CIA bought into Rumsfeld's 'worst of the worst' riff." Michael Scheuer, who headed the CIA's bin Laden unit and resigned in 2004, said, "By the fall of 2002, it was common knowledge around CIA circles that fewer than 10 percent of Guantánamo's prisoners were high-value terrorist operatives.... Most of the men were probably foot soldiers, at best, who were going to know absolutely nothing about terrorism." The same pattern was seen in Iraq's prisons. According to a 2004 report by the International Committee of the Red Cross, 70 to 90 percent of the prisoners detained in Iraq since the war began had been arrested "by mistake."

Facing the mid-term elections of November 2006, and fearing the loss of congressional power, President Bush did an about face. He ceased claiming "we do not torture" and, instead, began to boast about torturing. With much fanfare, he transferred fourteen "high-value" al-Qaeda operatives from secret black sites to Guantánamo Bay in order, some say, to bolster his image as being tough on terrorism. Thus, Ray McGovern, a CIA analyst for twenty-seven years and a former Army infantry and intelligence officer, said, "The president brags about how his government 'changed its policies,' giving intelligence personnel 'the tools they need' to fight terrorists, and makes it clear that the CIA was given permission to use 'an alternative set of procedures.'"

A Nation Confused

IF PHYSICIANS ARE CONFUSED ABOUT TORTURE, so too is the rest of the nation, and with good reason. Consider how the United States has dealt with torture in the few cases that have come to trial. When the Abu Ghraib prison scandal came to light, a few of the "bad apples" said to be responsible for the prisoner abuse were court-martialed. Yet, the President has successfully pushed for legislation to legalize procedures that are much harsher than those for which these soldiers were convicted. Who would not be confused by these contradictory developments?

The President has disregarded the fact that, in 2005, a Republican Congress overwhelming passed legislation proposed by the Republican Senator John McCain prohibiting torture, defined as "cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment of persons under custody or control of the United States government." McCain, a war hero, succeeded largely because he occupied the moral high ground in his dispute with the President over this issue. During the Vietnam era, Mr. Bush, with the assistance of influential friends, joined the Texas Air National Guard. According to the *Air Force Times*, Mr. Bush went missing for a flight physical and did not report for subsequent duty, which understandably prompted AWOL

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suspicious. In stark contrast, McCain was a decorated Navy pilot whose father and grandfather were admirals in the U.S. Navy. McCain was shot down over Hanoi in 1967 and was severely wounded. He spent five and a half years as a prisoner of war in the brutal prison camps of North Vietnam and was often subjected to torture. Although President Bush

signed the McCain amendment into law, he passionately opposed it and attached a "signing statement," suggesting that he had no intention of honoring it.

Thus, the nation is presented with a confusing picture: While it's illegal for individuals such as Charles Graner, Lynndie England, and Sabrina Harman to humiliate prisoners—they're doing prison time, as mentioned—torture is enthusiastically promoted by President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld.

It is not possible to evaluate the response of doctors, nurses, and medics to torture without taking into consideration the moral ambiguity that now clouds the nation. In August 2006, David Cole, professor of law at Georgetown University and the author of *Enemy Aliens: Double Standards and Constitutional Freedoms in the War on Terrorism and Terrorism and the Constitution: Sacrificing Civil Liberties in the Name of National Security*, describes this chaotic

situation more fully:

The Justice Department has maintained that the president can order torture, notwithstanding a criminal statute and an international treaty prohibiting torture under all circumstances. President Bush has authorized the National Security Agency to conduct warrantless wiretapping of American citizens, despite a comprehensive statute that makes such surveillance a crime. He has approved the "disappearance" of al-Qaeda suspects into secret prisons where they are interrogated with tactics that include waterboarding, in which the prisoner is strapped down and made to believe he will drown. He has asserted the right to imprison indefinitely, without hearings, anyone he considers an "enemy combatant," and to try such persons for war crimes in ad hoc military tribunals lacking such essential safeguards as independent judges and the right of the accused to confront the evidence against him.

In advocating these positions ... the administration has brushed aside legal objections as mere hindrances to the ultimate goal of keeping America safe. It has argued that domestic criminal and constitutional law are of little concern because the President's powers as commander in chief override all such laws: that the Geneva Conventions, a set of international treaties that regulate the treatment of prisoners during war, simply do not apply to the conflict with al-Qaeda; and more broadly still, that the President has unilateral authority to defy international law. In short, there is little to distinguish the current administration's view from that famously espoused by President Richard Nixon when asked to justify his authorization of illegal, warrantless wiretapping of Americans during the Vietnam War: "When the President does it, that means that it is not illegal."

Brig. Gen. (Ret.) David R. Irvine says, "The Army exists, not just to win America's wars, but to defend America's values. The policy and practice of torture without accountability has jeopardized both."

For most of our nation's history, humane treatment of prisoners was considered the American way, a sign of American strength and values. During the American Revolution, as captured American soldiers were being executed by Hessian mercenaries fighting for the British, Gen. George Washington demanded humane treatment of captured enemy soldiers. In the aftermath of World War II, Gen. George C. Marshall reminded American soldiers to treat their prisoners humanely. Washington and Marshall would be appalled, I suspect, to know that our current commander in chief has reversed their stance on torture and that he considers it an indispensable element in dealing with prisoners, labeling those who disagree as "soft on terror." Would Mr. Bush dare declare George Washington "soft" because he rejected torture as formal American policy?

Unreality

DISCUSSING WHETHER OR NOT PHYSICIANS ARE JUSTIFIED IN COMPLYING with torture seems surreal. Our moral compass is spinning madly; otherwise this bizarre conversation would never occur.

A sense of unreality affects many citizens these days. "How weird is it that this possibility could even be considered?" asks *New York Times* Columnist Bob Herbert, referring to the President's desire to dispense of the legal protections that are the bedrock of American democracy. Brig. Gen. James Walker, the top uniformed lawyer for the Marines, told a congressional hearing in September 2006 that no civilized country denies defendants the right to see the evidence against them. The United States, he said, "should not be the first." Author-Journalist Fareed Zakaria says that the Geneva Conventions were written with a kind of "calculated ambiguity" that deters interrogators from testing the limits. "No other nation has sought to narrow the Geneva Conventions' scope by 'clarifying' them. Does the United States want to be the first?"

Recently, those who oppose the president's pro-torture, anti-terror plan have been not only been ridiculed as unpatriotic and soft on terror, but likened by former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to pro-Nazi "appeasers" and condemned as supporters of "Islamic fascism." One wonders whether the only remaining epithet is "satanic." Torturers have always demonized those who disagree with them, while considering themselves exemplary. This evoked bitter sarcasm from British novelist Aldous Huxley, who wrote, "The people who ... torture ... are never the publicans and the sinners. No, they're the virtuous, respectable men, who have the finest feelings, the best brains, the noblest ideals."

Torturers' Insurance

NOT ALL OF THE TORTURERS, THEMSELVES, ARE SO CONFUSED. At least some of them realize they have laid themselves open to prosecution. Medical personnel who abet torture would do well to pay attention: they may not be safe from prosecution either, despite the President's best efforts to protect his torturers.

Soon after the President declared war on terror following 9/11, his administration's legal team began to craft ways of justifying torture by skirting the Geneva Conventions and the War Crimes Act of 1996. That little-known piece of legislation was passed overwhelmingly by a Republican-led Congress and signed into law by President Clinton. It defines a war crime to include a violation or grave breach of any of the four Geneva Conventions.

Even as they did so, many of those who helped President Bush rationalize torture began to realize that their actions might be seriously problematic. Some, including then-future Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez, warned the President that his interrogation policies might come back to haunt him, and that he could conceivably be charged in violation of the U.S. War Crimes Act. Thus, in September 2006, President Bush began to pressure Congress to pass laws that would immunize him from subsequent prosecution, as well as intelligence practitioners of "alternative procedures" used in coercive interrogation.

It is not just the President who is concerned about possible criminal prosecution, but also many within the CIA. Like physicians who buy malpractice insurance as a shield against their mistakes, according to the *Washington Post* in September 2006, "CIA counterterrorism officers have signed up in growing numbers for a government-reimbursed, private insurance plan that would pay their civil judgments and legal expenses if they are sued or charged with criminal wrongdoing.... The new enrollments reflect heightened anxiety at the



CIA that officers may be vulnerable to accusations they were involved in abuse, torture, human rights violations and other misconduct, including wrongdoing related to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. They worry that they will not have Justice Department representation in court or congressional inquiries, the officials said. The anxieties stem partly from public controversy about a system of secret CIA prisons in which detainees were subjected to harsh interrogation methods, including temperature extremes and simulated drowning...."

The concerns of the President and CIA interrogators about possible criminality have escalated since June 2006, when the Supreme Court ruled in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* that the Geneva Conventions were, indeed, the law of the land, and that the military commissions set up by the Bush administration to try Guantánamo detainees "violate both the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and the four Geneva Conventions." As Professor Cole of Georgetown University has pointed out, *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* "suggests that President Bush has already committed a war crime, simply by establishing the [Guantánamo] tribunals and subjecting detainees to them" because "the Court found that the tribunals violate Common Article 3 [of the Geneva Conventions]—and under the War Crimes Act, any violation of Common Article 3 is a war crime."

Ineffectiveness

MEDICAL PERSONNEL WHO GO ALONG WITH TORTURE presumably think that good may come of it. There are compelling reasons to think otherwise.

The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) is a Minnesota-based, private, nonprofit, non-partisan foundation that provides services directly to torture survivors, trains healthcare professionals to work with torture victims, conducts research on the effects of torture, and advocates for public policies that will help heal torture victims and put an end to the practice of torture. Since its founding in 1985, the Center has learned several broad lessons in working with torture survivors, which have largely been affirmed by others doing scholarly work in this field:

1. ***Torture does not yield reliable information.*** Nearly every client at the CVT, when subjected to torture, confessed to a crime they did not commit, supplied names of innocent friends or colleagues to their torturers, or gave up extraneous information.
2. ***Torture does not yield information quickly.*** Even though everyone will eventually confess to something, it usually takes a lot of time, particularly if they have been trained to resist torture and to pass along false bits of information in the process.
3. ***Torture has never been confined to narrow conditions, and will not be used only against the guilty.*** Proponents of torture often claim that they use it only against the correct suspect. Yet the clients at CVT are living examples that once used, "torture creep" occurs, in which torture becomes a fishing expedition to uncover information.
4. ***Torture has a corrupting effect on the perpetrator.*** Torturing others is a stressful endeavor, requiring the torturer to put aside his own moral code, sense of humanity, and ethical values, and it can have lasting psychological effects.
5. ***Psychological torture is damaging.*** Many advocates of torture agree that physical abuse is wrong, but that psychological torture is permissible. But the tortured clients at CVT say that it is the psychological torture that is the most debilitating over a long period. Examples include mock executions, hearing sounds of others being tortured, or various forms of humiliation.
6. ***Stress and duress techniques are forms of torture.*** Israel perfected many of these techniques in its struggle against terrorism, claiming that they fell short of torture. Yet the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that they, too, were illegitimate. The courts of all democratic nations that have reviewed these methods have concluded that they are forms of torture.
7. ***We cannot use torture and retain the moral high ground.*** The reasons advanced by the Bush administration in justifying torture—such as national security and defense of the homeland—are similar to those used by repressive governments. Despotism regimes are already copying our methods of rationalizing torture and skirting justice.

Four years ago, President Charles Taylor of Liberia adopted the Bush administration's phrase "unlawful combatants" to classify prisoners he wanted to try outside of civilian courts. Mr. Taylor is now being tried for war crimes at The Hague.

The experience of the FBI and CIA affirms many of the above points. Following the first World Trade Center attack in February 1993, the FBI did not resort to the coercive techniques currently favored by President Bush and the CIA. The FBI learned, says journalist Ron Suskind, that the "al-Qaeda members assumed their jailers would dismember them. When instead the interrogators presented a tough, but very human, face, the detainees were confused. Small amenities—an FBI agent's knowledge of the Koran, unlimited videos, and even an operation for an al-Qaeda member's child—were the kinds of things that eventually turned them. Patience was rewarded." Because the evidence the FBI obtained was not obtained through coercive interrogation, it was admissible in court—unlike the information obtained by the CIA through its current "alternative" methods.

In contrast, when al-Qaeda ringleader Abu Zubaydah was captured in March 2002, the CIA "used him as an experiment in righteous brutality that, in the end, produced very little. His interrogation, according to those overseeing it, yielded little from threats and torture. He named countless targets inside the U.S. to stop the pain, all of them immaterial."

A Senate report on prewar intelligence, released in September 2006, emphasizes the unreliability of coerced confession. Ibn Al-Shaykh al-Libi, a prominent al-Qaeda suspect, was captured by the United States soon after 9/11 and was "rendered" to Egypt. He confessed to interrogators that Osama bin Laden had sent operatives to Iraq for training in chemical and biological warfare. This became a key administration claim for a supposed link between Iraq, Saddam Hussein, and al-Qaeda, and a reason for invading Iraq. But the Senate report revealed that, following the ground war in Iraq, al-Libi admitted that he had made it all up so his Egyptian interrogators would stop beating him.

"Hostile Interrogations"

DEFENDERS OF PHYSICIAN INVOLVEMENT IN TORTURE ARE NOT RARE. Among them is philosopher and bioethicist Fritz Allhoff, of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. In a widely read paper, "Physician Involvement in Hostile Interrogations," Professor Allhoff advances arguments to justify physician participation in milder forms of prisoner abuse than the genuinely cruel, brutal "archetypal" sort. He contends that in certain situations physician involvement in torture is advisable and even mandatory. If a physician were present to a person being tortured, he or she might be able to provide life-saving medical care if the torture victim experienced a cardiac arrest, for example.

Professor Allhoff's distinction between mainly psychological "hostile" interrogation and gruesome "archetypal" torture is a fantasy engaged in not only by him, but also by Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez and attorney John Yoo, of the administration's Office of Legal Counsel. The latter two individuals are among the Bush administration's most vigorous cheerleaders for torture. For Gonzalez and Yoo, unless interrogation techniques result in



"organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death," they do not rise to the level of genuine torture and are therefore permissible. This stance opens the door for "stress-and-duress" measures, such as sleep deprivation, short-shackling, starvation, forced nakedness, noise harassment, exposure to attacking dogs, sexual humiliation, temperature extremes, listening to screams from tortured victims, desecration of sacred texts, mock executions, and so on. Since these measures are believed to jiggle only the mind and not the body, they can't cause organ failure or death and, therefore, aren't really torture. But any competent physician knows that psychological duress—abject helplessness, profound fear, or even a sudden, loud noise—can cause cardiac arrest, cardiovascular collapse, and death. Examples of this are so common they are hardly reported any more in medical journals. The distinctions between psychological and physical forms of torture that inform the thinking of Allhoff, Gonzalez, and Yoo reflect the archaic, outmoded, and discarded notion that psyche and body are separate, compartmentalized entities, and that one can be perturbed without affecting the other. Today we know that mind and body are connected through a variety of neural and hormonal cascades. No knowledgeable, twenty-first-century physician would ever assume otherwise.

Allhoff does not consider traditional ethical codes, such as the Hippocratic Oath, to be definitive restraints against physician involvement in hostile interrogations. Neither are the more recent prohibitions adopted by professional groups such as the World Medical Association, the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and others. Why? One reason is that all of these codes of conduct, he says, are comprised of mere "statements," not carefully reasoned "arguments." As such, they are not compelling. They are simply a collection of thou-shalt-nots that are superficial in terms of explanatory power. Allhoff expects more intellectual firepower from a document that purports to dictate the conduct of an entire profession.

The reason why codes of ethics that prohibit physician participation in torture are a collection of simple, straightforward statements and not complex arguments is because physicians who minister to helpless, sick patients do not require intellectual gyrations to persuade them that torturing human beings is deeply wrong. For nearly all *practicing* physicians, the case against torture is self evident and overwhelming. I emphasize *practicing* physicians—those who regularly treat sick and dying individuals. As far as I can tell, most of those who favor physician involvement in either the hostile or archetypal varieties of torture that Professor Allhoff distinguishes are either non-physicians, or, if they are physicians, are removed from hands-on clinical work.

A lynchpin in Professor Allhoff's arguments is his parsing of the doctor-patient relationship. When confronted with a person in need, a physician is always free *not* to enter a doctor-patient relationship with that individual, he says, including torture victims. If I understand him correctly, he is saying that if the physician chooses to assume that a doctor-patient relationship does not exist in a torture chamber, then that physician is not bound by any ethical code that might prohibit his or her participation in coercive interrogation.

A physician who sees a woman fall to the floor with cardiac arrest in a shopping mall is free to refuse to assist her on the grounds that a formal doctor-patient relationship does not exist. He may walk on, leaving her to her fate. But bystanders would surely consider this despicable behavior on the physician's part, and no clinician I have ever worked with would desert another human being in such a setting. A physician who encounters a victim in a torture chamber faces a not-too-dissimilar situation. The victim is totally helpless and awaits the application of measures that may extinguish his life, even though those measures may have been labeled as "only" psychological interventions. In this circumstance should the physician retreat into a labyrinth of definitions concerning the doctor-patient relationship in order to justify abetting the cruelty that awaits the victim?

Allhoff appears oblivious to the larger lessons learned from the victims of torture—for example, the conclusions mentioned above of groups such as the Center for Victims of Torture. When a physician participates in torture, the effects are not confined to that particular torture chamber; the physician becomes an unwitting vector by which torture is spread. State

the Military Commissions Act of 2006 " ... a huge sea change for our democracy. The framers created a system where we did not have to rely on the good graces, or good mood, of the president. In fact, Madison said that he created a system essentially to be run by devils, where they could not do harm, because we didn't rely on their good motivations. Now we must."

Anthony D. Romero, executive director of the ACLU, said, "The president can now, with the approval of Congress, indefinitely hold people without charge, take away protections against horrific abuse, put people on trial based on testimony literally beaten out of witnesses, and slam shut the courthouse door for *habeas* petitions."

Standing Up

WE CAN BE SURE THAT MOST OF OUR MILITARY PHYSICIANS, nurses, and medics have not cooperated with torture. We can also be certain that many of them, behind the scenes, have courageously resisted pressures to abet coercive interrogation. It is grievous that they have been unfairly tarnished by the failures of a few.

In spite of their shortcomings, my heart goes out to the young Charles Graners, Lynndie Englands, and Sabrina Harmans of our military, who, under better leadership, would probably have been good soldiers. It is true that they deserve their punishment, but it is also true that they have become sacrifices for the disastrous pro-torture policies of their superiors, who for the moment are shielded from sanction. I sorrow also for the tortured, and for the reasons that the Geneva Conventions were adopted in the first place. I am saddened for those who will carry the stain of "torturer" for the rest of their lives.

Who are we? What kind of nation—and profession—do we want to be? Where do we go from here?

The hallowed ethics of medicine and nursing are on a collision course with the pro-torture policies of the current administration. Since President Bush has succeeded in his attempts to legalize "alternative" methods of interrogation, and to absolve those who practice them, we will see more torture, not less, and the pressures on medical and nursing personnel to accommodate torture will increase.

We must make sure that in future wars no one will ask, "Where were the doctors? Where were the nurses?" Rather than sit passively by, we must make our position known. It is time for all physicians and nurses, civilian and military, to stand up to the pro-torture juggernaut and declare with one voice:

Enough, Mr. President.

We will not betray our sacred oaths. We stand united against the purposeful mistreatment of any human being, whatever form it may take. No longer will we be bullied into complying with torture, no matter what the personal cost of our refusal may be.

Henceforth, Mr. President, it is not your call to torture that we will answer, but the call of the Osiers and the Nightingales who have gone before us and have shown us a better way.

With Hippocrates, we affirm, "I will keep them from harm and injustice.... In purity and holiness I will guard my life and my art.... If I fulfill this oath and do not violate it, may it be granted to me to enjoy life and art, being honored with fame among all men for all time to come; if I transgress it and swear falsely, may the opposite of all this be my lot." ■

Note: a fuller, fully footnoted version of this article can be found at www.tikkun.org.

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sponsors of torture know that doctors are generally held in high esteem, and if a physician participates in coercive interrogation this medicalizes the cruelty and legitimizes it in the eyes of many. Governments that sponsor torture realize that physician participation has considerable PR and marketing value, and this is a major reason they are eager for physicians to be involved.

After reading Professor Allhoff's defense of physician participation in torture, I had a visceral reaction that lay somewhere between nausea and anger. Such a hairsplitting, pharisaical analysis could only have been constructed, I felt, by someone (a) whose life is not dedicated to treating those in need, and (b) who is a Cartesian dualist who believes that the mind and body inhabit completely different domains.

I cannot imagine that a serious discussion of the virtues of child molestation would ever occur in a civilized society. I am similarly unable to appreciate arguments that seek to justify physician involvement in treating others in cruel, degrading, and inhumane ways.

Perhaps the most convincing arguments against physician involvement in coercive interrogation are not rational but instinctive and fiercely emotional. That is not a weakness, for so, too, are the reasons favoring many things that matter greatly, such as empathy, compassion, caring, and love.

So, to those who champion physician involvement in torture, I say, "If you must befoul a noble profession, choose another. *Leave medicine alone.*"

Letting the President Decide

ON OCT. 17, 2006, PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH SIGNED INTO LAW the Military Commissions Act of 2006. It was a triumphant moment for him. He had completely routed thoughtful members of Congress who considered the bill an unconstitutional travesty and a betrayal of American values. Among these was Senator Patrick Leahy, who said, "Passing laws that remove the few checks against mistreatment of prisoners will not help us win the battle for the hearts and minds of the generation of young people around the world being recruited by Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda. Authorizing indefinite detention of anybody the government designates, without any proceeding and without any recourse—is what our worst critics claim the United States would do, not what American values, traditions, and our rule of law would have us do. This is not just a bad bill, this is a dangerous bill."

The act gave approval to military commissions set up to try terrorist suspects, even though the commissions have been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. It allowed coerced testimony to be entered as evidence in trials, thereby potentially legitimizing torture as a means of obtaining information. The act permits President Bush to decide which forms of torture skirt "grave breaches" of the Geneva Conventions and are permissible, and to decide who is and is not an enemy combatant and what could happen to them. Defendants were stripped of the ancient *habeas corpus* right to challenge their imprisonment in court, in spite of the fact that the Supreme Court has made it clear on three recent occasions that those whom the President labels as enemy combatants are entitled to challenge their detention before a federal judge. The law apparently put the CIA's secret-prison program and "special interrogations" back in business.

A gasp of unbelievability came from many corners in response to this act. A *New York Times* editorial described the act as "a tyrannical law that will be ranked with the low points in American democracy, our generation's version of the Alien and Sedition Acts."

Jonathan Turley, professor of constitutional law at George Washington University, called



Mending a Torn Psychic Fabric:

Torture and Tikkun Olam

by Erik Gleibermann

NO ACT MORE PROFOUNDLY VIOLATES HUMAN RIGHTS THAN TORTURE. While governments may conceivably defend certain deadly military actions as painful necessities, can any government defend deliberate torture? Widespread evidence documents that physical and psychological torture is not merely a brutal interrogation tactic. Repressive governments around the world, and apparently the U.S. military, often employ torture as a mechanism of collective control, targeting select individuals to systematically traumatize entire communities and cripple their belief in the future.

But torture survivors can restore the future. The healing stories of courageous survivors bear witness that individuals can overcome even the most egregious attacks on human dignity. While torture produces devastating psychological impact, survivors now safely residing in the United States and abroad have been able to undergo rehabilitation and begin leading productive lives. A powerful international movement to support survivors has emerged in the last twenty years led by professionally staffed torture treatment centers in major metropolitan areas, offering psychotherapy, medical aid, social services, and asylum assistance. This work testifies that the inner power to heal can overcome the destructive will of political authority, and additionally serve as a spiritual base for the long struggle to end government-sponsored torture worldwide.

Most Americans are hardly aware how extensively the invisible wounds of torture permeate our national community. Survivors from well over a hundred countries and every major continent reside in the United States. According to Immigration and Naturalization Service statistics, over two million refugees have entered the United States within the last twenty-five years, an estimated 5 to 35 percent of them torture survivors. Anywhere from 100,000 to 700,000 refugee survivors may be living in this country. If the substantial numbers of legal asylees and undocumented immigrant survivors are added, the totals may be more than twice these figures.

We may feel powerless and even ashamed recognizing the widespread presence of torture's legacy in our midst. This understanding may be particularly painful in light of evidence that implicates our own government in the use of torture at military facilities including Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, and through 'rendering' terror suspects to repressive foreign governments for interrogation.

Supporting the emerging work of the torture treatment movement challenges the belief that individual citizens have no power to address the grave injury of torture inflicted beyond our borders. At least thirty treatment centers operate in or near major metropolitan areas

across the United States, and over 200 exist internationally. Although at present only a fraction of survivors receive treatment, every individual who reclaims a fulfilling life in the wake of being tortured provides a model for others and helps repair the fabric of a torn community.

Rehabilitation is a deeply individual process that must respond to the particular complexities of a survivor's experience. The varieties of wounding are unimaginably vast. A student picked up at a demonstration, detained, and beaten in an overnight interrogation has a far different experience than an activist isolated in long term detention and forced to participate in the torture of others, or a mother who witnesses genocide and is raped in front of her children. The living situations for survivors resettling in a foreign country also vary tremendously. Does the individual have a protected legal status, adequate economic means, local family ties, functional language skills, or limiting medical conditions?



The term treatment implies a medical approach, but generally treatment centers offer practical service assistance as a first order, including living and cultural skills training, forensic documentation for asylum applications, and social service referrals. Because the aim of torture is to fundamentally paralyze an individual's and, in turn, a community's capacity to function, healing primarily involves holistically rebuilding one's ability to live with dignity in a new social environment. Helping a person to find productive work can be particularly effective. In addition to its material benefits, work can provide a sense of personal worth, social connection, distraction from emotional pain, and social respect. Many survivors, particularly women overcoming sexual abuse, face ostracism in their families and communities and work becomes critical for regaining social acceptance. Psychotherapy to address the acute psychological consequences of trauma may also be necessary, but must fit naturally into this multi-layered process.

A common starting point for the survivor who chooses to begin psychological work is to retell his or her story. Even to comprehend the torture experience as a story, as something coherent and meaningful, may be difficult because torture can so profoundly rupture self-concept. The nightmare of undergoing repeated mock execution or being forced to watch a companion being sexually tormented almost belies the possibility of narrative. Torturers aim to make victims question their own experience and sanity. Perpetrators often tell the victim that recently inflicted torture never happened, or that no one else will ever believe it. According to Dr. Uwe Jacobs, executive director of Survivors International, the San Francisco Bay Area's major treatment center, "The key is that

somebody who cares is there to listen to what has happened. The survivor does not have to fear being retraumatized by being misunderstood." Survivors often fear that recounting their experience will trigger repulsion and social rejection. A therapist who remains attentive through the telling helps the survivor regain trust.

Survivors naturally tend to frame their stories to facilitate rebuilding a core self. People's subjective experience of how torture damages the sense of self varies greatly. While one person may need acknowledgement of the most excruciating details of specific acts to reduce a sense of experiential isolation, another may need to work through tremendous shame and guilt over how others have been affected. One of the most vicious elements of torture is the perpetrator's attempt to manipulate victims into feeling implicated in their own suffering. Forced to commit humiliating acts in front of family members, they may feel responsible for degrading themselves or inflicting trauma upon loved ones.

Jacobs describes a patient whose psychological anguish was more existential, involving a lost faith in humanity that could be recovered only by understanding what could compel human beings to inflict unspeakable pain. One Bosnian survivor Jacobs treated described only the political events that led to his torture, never revealing details of what happened to him personally. Therapy manifested in this case as political testimony rather than psychodynamic inquiry.

Talk therapy as a recovery method must expand beyond the traditional one-on-

one consulting room when possible, and draw on the healing cultural traditions of the survivors themselves, especially for individuals whose cultures may find traditional Western psychological practices alien. At the Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture in Cape Town, South Africa, a group of survivors from the anti-apartheid struggle collaborated with clinicians to construct a collective storytelling process integrating songs and rituals similar to those used during the African National Congress's meetings. Former political prisoners not ready to attend the group sessions could read a printed newsletter in Xhosa and English with transcripts of the stories.

It is a myth that all survivors avoid publicly recounting their stories because they fear the experience may retraumatize them or place them in danger of retaliation. In fact, many activists discover public revelation of their experience to be empowering, a decisive refusal to succumb to the intimidation and humiliation perpetrators intend.

For others, spiritual practice precedes speech as a healing vehicle. In his recent book *Healing Invisible Wounds*, Dr. Richard Mollica, director of the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma, describes a Cambodian survivor of the Pol Pot genocide that killed all of her children. She did not want psychotherapy. She believed the only act that would allow her to survive was building a temple on the shore of the ocean. One Tibetan Buddhist activist tortured by the Chinese government experienced his recovery as a crisis of compassion. From a Buddhist perspective healing meant maintaining loving kindness and empathy even toward a sadistic assailant. He began to investigate the background of his torturer and explore how a life of poverty had damaged his spirit.

Since torture trauma expresses itself on the physical, social, and spiritual, as well as psychological levels, treatment centers offer a wide range of healing techniques that includes bodywork and massage, play and art therapy, and community building projects often initiated by the survivors themselves. In Oakland, a woman who worked as a seamstress in her native Bosnia began a sewing group for female refugees of the Bosnian War with the help of Survivors International. These women, largely isolated as refugees, built a nurturing community that helped them develop practical clothes-making skills, and embodied a symbolic ritual of collective mending.

These many powerful recovery methods by themselves will never prove fully adequate to heal unless the international community also addresses torture at its source. Survivors who undergo treatment can reclaim productive lives and recover hope within a community that acknowledges their stories, but the trauma still resonates internally in a world where torture persists. We should commend the United States for historically providing safe haven to survivors from foreign countries, but recognize that the government undercuts its own offer of safety by condoning and practicing torture at the same time.

A true commitment to healing the pain of torture will require a global attention similar to that which followed the Holocaust, when an international movement publicly brought perpetrators to justice, pursued reparations for victims, and began a worldwide campaign to keep the world's conscience in touch with history. The work of the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission can be models, provided they mindfully integrate the difficult blending of psychological healing and political justice.

The distinction between psychological healing and social justice activism must finally be considered artificial. As interconnected members of a global community, each of us, whether consciously or not, inevitably absorbs some level of the widespread trauma of torture. The direct survivors have been the ones conspicuously afflicted, but they carry the trauma of our entire society. And so their mending repairs the wider world. ■



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Getting Real about Food

by Donna Schaper

I WAS REALLY HUNGRY AND THE ONLY FOOD IN SIGHT WAS THE New York State Ramapo Thruway so-called service station, I got the car gas and went in to see what gas they had for me. It was early evening. I grew up before the Thruway went in and listened to nothing but my extended family's extended conversations about how the road would destroy upstate. Later in my life, as the contracts were let for the agribusinesses that would manage the food on the Thruway, I wrote an article about local food. I didn't know what the local food movement was, just that local restaurants instead of franchises might be a way to limit the damage up and down the automotive spine of the state. I proposed to the Thruway Commission that local owners put up restaurants at each exit. That would make driving more interesting and keep fast food from threatening the feast of life. Sauerkraut and apples available at exit 17, arugula salad at 15. You get the drift.

I realized that there were only two franchises at Ramapo. One was McDonald's and the other was UNO's, a pizza place. I settled on the pizza place only to observe that the warming tray was dead empty. I practically wept as I asked the young woman behind the counter if there was any hope for me to get a pizza. "Sure," she said, "I'll make it fresh for you." "You will! How long will that take?" My slow food thoughts were utopian but my fast food stomach gurgled. Thrilled at the idea of slow food on the Thruway, I was distraught at waiting for a freshly made pizza. She took care of my gurgle and left my utopia alone. "One and a half minutes," she said.

Welcome to my own country of ambivalence about food. I want it slow and I want it fast. I want it local and I want it cheap. Mostly, when it comes to food, I want it now. When we have it now, it tends to taste like that "fresh" pizza in Ramapo. Its virtue was that it was warm. Its sin was that it was made of something that long ago was grain—the white flour—and something long ago—the tomato—that was fruit. The cheese was no longer cheese and if the pepperoni ever *was* food, I'd be surprised.

As I wolfed down my warm glob of chemicals, I thought about the sources of my food. In Florida the tomato pickers make very little per bushel picked. Nobody could possibly pay the migrant workers anything more than a little because otherwise I'd never get that round, warm, 800 calorie, nutritionally worthless globule for just \$6.99. You have to add the truck and its gas, the middleman's middleman's middleman, the lawyers they hire to fight the migrants so they don't get more for picking the tomatoes. Then there are advertising costs to make me want the pizza, and the union-busting lawyers who make sure the woman who made it fresh for me doesn't make too much money. Then there is the package, which is at least eleven percent of the product. Later, in this article, when I make practical suggestions, you'll want to remember just how impractical all this is.

Fresh pizza is a fabulous food. It can be made without refined flour, with fresh tomatoes, and with cheese that is still cheese. It can be made fairly and locally. It can be made to taste much better by migrant workers who get a decent wage for harvesting tomatoes and by women who make it fresh even in Thruway restaurants. Another world is possible. It will be a slow food world in the twenty-first century. Slow food is feast and feast is the destination of humanity. Before we get to feast, though, we have to pull off many layers of the food onion.

One layer is scriptural. A lot is said about food in the Christian bible. Eighty percent of it is rules about eating. What you should not eat. How you should not eat it. With whom you should not eat it. I often think of scripture itself as an onion: you have to peel away a lot of dietary laws and other kinds of laws before you get to the feast of grace at the middle.

Jesus was a good Jew who often broke the rules about eating. I am going to recommend something very similar to you today: Let's break the rules about eating. Let's peel away the rules and get to the feast. The four synoptic gospels have about eighty snippets about Jesus and food. They fall into four basic categories, with the large majority being about how Jesus ate wrong. He picked his food on the Sabbath. He ate with sinners. Or Pharisees. Or drunks. Or prostitutes. He just kept showing up at the wrong tables. His manners were BAD.

Contrary to the law texts are the feast texts. These include the wedding feast (when Jesus turned water into wine), the feeding of the 5,000 and the feeding of the 4,000 (when he miraculously fed large crowds who had come to hear him). They are very few in number but they set the stage for the last supper, the Passover meal, and the Eucharist. The prohibition texts outnumber the feast texts but the feast texts are persistent. They are the positive of the negative; they show where Jesus is going with food. He is going from laws and purity codes to feast and Eucharist.

Many people justify the codes about food as being early public health policies. Others use and abuse these textual matters as a way to be anti-Semitic: improper respect is paid to the ways cultures and religions make sacred food. Jesus ignores these things. I don't know about you, but I can't imagine eating with prostitutes and thieves on the edge of town in ancient Palestine. I know I would be worried about my health. Jesus, unwisely, was not. He was showing a way to something different. The feast table, the Eucharist table was a universal one. It was public, not private. The loaves and fishes were distributed on the edge of town in

a field. In addition to the contrast between the don't-eat-it and do-feast-it texts, both of which in their own way lead to the Eucharistic table, we have a minor theme of the don't worry, be happy texts. "Do not worry about what you shall eat or wear...the body is more than food and more than raiment (Matthew 6:25)." There is a constant commingling of the spiritual and the biological in Jesus' work with food.

Obviously this little summary is too simple—but it is also the funny foundation for how we Christians think about food spiritually. Food is both fraught with rules and laws, fears and subterfuges, the right table and the right people eating food in the right way for the right reasons—and it is feast, leading to the great Eucharistic claim that someday everybody will eat well at one table. Neither Judaism nor Christianity has excelled at that promise. Between now and then, we are not to be afraid, not to be anxious.

One way to get real about food is to note just how conflicted our foundational thinking about food is. It is not simple, even at its base in ancient narrative, although the bottom of the bottom line is in the "Magnificat" (also known as the Song of Mary, sung when Mary was pregnant with Jesus). What does she say of Jesus? He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. Whether we see Jesus as Messiah or not, we see this promise as Messianic.

A second layer of the food onion is obviously psychological. Every time I read one of those articles about how to lose weight I have to laugh. The first thing the writer will say is that eating is *emotional*. That we may be doing more than satisfying biological urges when we eat. I watched a very large man eat a very large portion of Manhattan's newest delight, macaroni and cheese lollipop, which is, yes, macaroni and cheese molded on a stick. I hoped that he was deeply satisfied. I hoped that he had an answer to the psalmist's question, "Why do we

eat food which does not satisfy?" Of course, eating is emotional. When I was a kid, we had two foods, over and over again. Scrambled eggs and hot dogs. I never had vegetables, which bothers me and my dentist even to this day. But even today if I have an upset stomach I will make myself scrambled eggs. They satisfy. Are they good for me? Who cares! Eating is an emotional experience, which takes your guts, another word for stomach, right back to childhood.

A third layer of the onion is cultural. Obviously different peoples eat in different ways. I remember my church in Miami with great fondness. That doesn't mean I liked everything about it. Because some New England Yankees founded the congregation in 1925, every year on the Sunday before Thanksgiving, there used to be a pilgrim festival. The whole congregation had pilgrim outfits and pilgrim hats. The women would sit on one side of the congregation and the men on the other, just like in the days of yore. The minister would read long-winded proclamations. Tableaux of live pilgrims would be the backdrop to the altar. Someone carried a big musket he had

brought down from Boston. He led the procession with his wife who carried an old bible. Then we would have a big turkey supper.

Someone, not me, suggested the second year I was there that we might do a different Thanksgiving celebration. I foolishly and wisely agreed. We might have people from every nation that had migrated to Miami stand and wear some form of native dress and read some work from their own culture. The first year we had eleven nationalities in tableaux: one Pilgrim, one Peruvian, a Cuban, a Mayan, a Russian, a Parisian, a Haitian, a Nicaraguan, and so on. It was incredibly beautiful and moving, and made its point about who we were as a congregation. One of the sweetest older ladies in the congregation came up to me afterwards: "Please, please, please, don't tell me we have to eat their food too. It just won't be right." What we eat is full of cultural prohibitions and permissions. What we eat is either a Eucharistic feast or a human folly. What we eat is emotional. What we eat is who we are. In the *long* series of conversations that followed this retableing of the tableaux, the word "right" was used way too often. "Right" is just another way of saying "purity code." Who is to say who eats right? When we say, "I hope we don't have to eat their food too," what we are saying is



that we hope feast never comes. We hope Eucharist never comes. We hope *against* justice at table and *for* the right ways of doing things.

We dare not make too much fun of those who criticized Jesus' table manners. Simultaneously, we dare not indulge self-righteousness, particularly as Christians, against Jews who kept their cultures in Diaspora together with rules about food. All of us like to eat *right*.

Eucharist, just tabling, just food, and just humanity, will come when the Yankees learn to eat on the edge of the village, with the other folk who are standing there, just waiting for a way to come in and sit down. By the way, it is not just North Americans who think the rest of the world are sinners. Whoever, from wherever, imagines that the table is just their emotional cultural site engages a purity code. They imagine right eating when the point is feast eating.

So what is feast eating? It is expressing Genesis 2:15, when the Lord God took the humans into the garden and told them to till it and keep it. One garden, one humanity, one table coming from one garden. We take the spiritual permission to feast and the guarantee of feast coming, join it to our psychological and emotional needs for warmth in our bellies and beyond, link it to our cultural patterns and then we just eat. We eat justly. We eat for the fun of feast. We demonstrate feast.

So here comes the practical part of this fruit, which is the center of the onion. Something very strange has happened to food in the richest country of the world. We can get a bad tomato just about any time of day in any season. We eat out of paper bags and drink the magnificent beverage of coffee out of Styrofoam cups. While we are drinking the coffee, we worry about the possibility of nuclear war over oil. We eat alone. We eat while driving. We eat, but there is nothing sacred or beautiful or slow about it. My good congregants come to meetings and leave half a foreign country's worth of paper and Styrofoam behind. Just kidding. Yes, we recycle some of it. We have our coffee hour with paper cups. Kids eat chicken fingers over and over again. And slow food is organizing as (an increasingly popular and fast growing) international movement. Imagine having to organize politically for the right to eat slowly and well. The fast food economy has created a world in which we have to protect ourselves from it. Fast is the enemy of feast.

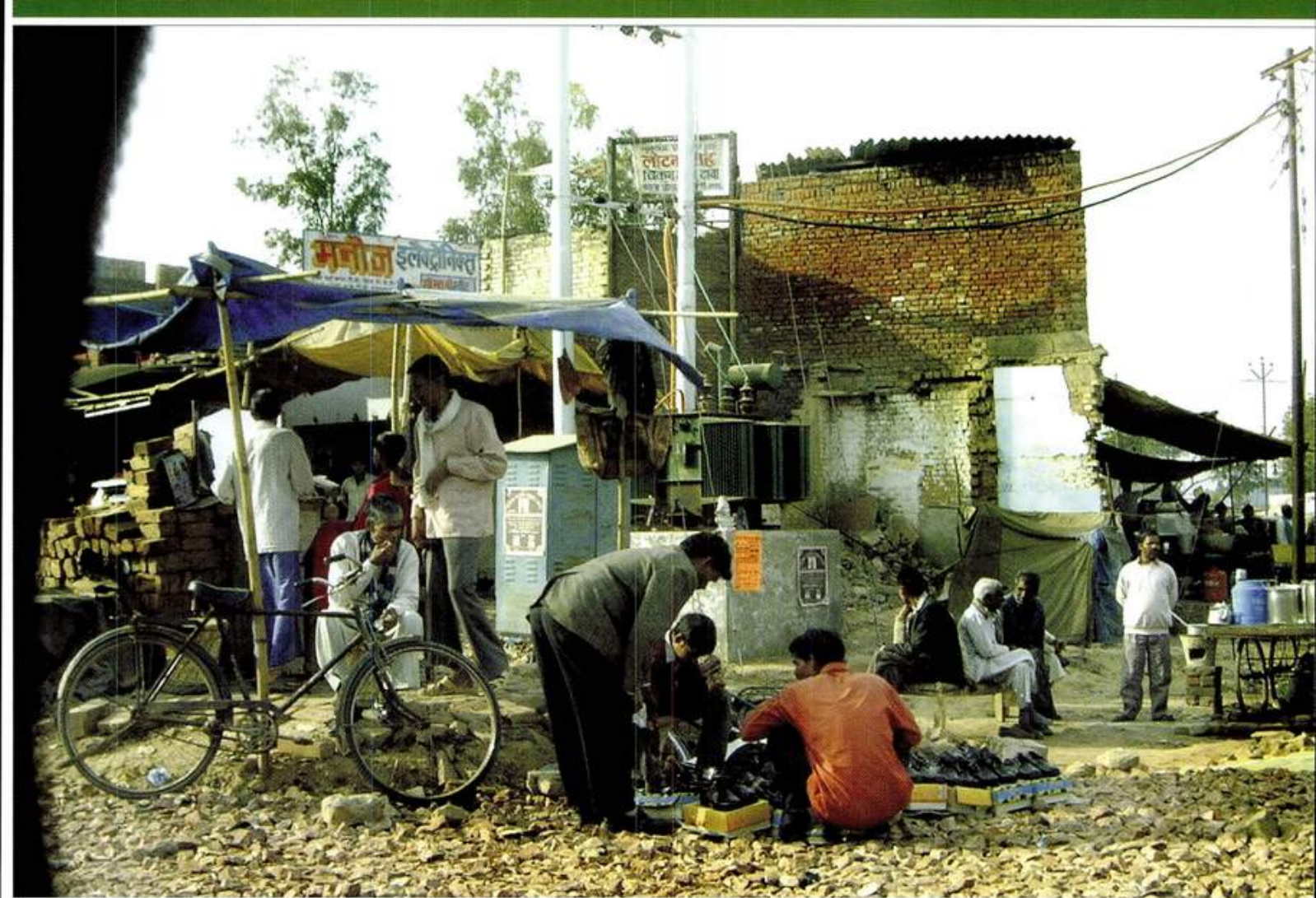
Consider these playful suggestions.

- Coffee Hour with real cups. Volunteer to wash them. One rabbi friend of mine said, "Never underestimate the value of a good *oneg* (meal after prayer services)." A good *oneg* doesn't use Styrofoam cups.
- Cooking at home with tablecloths, dishes and a studied simplicity.
- Growing a little something, somewhere, even in a pot in a window.
- Meetings that have real food at them, without packages.
- Buying 10 percent of our food locally.
- Joining Community Supported Agriculture as a congregation, a neighborhood, or a family.
- Understanding what Sacred Chow means.

I know the feast won't come tomorrow. I also know that there is no need for anxiety about this. No guilt trip here: Remember me and that pizza. There is a need instead for small actions. Small signifying actions. The kind that tell you a feast is coming and that you mean to join the world at that table. We get to the feast by breaking the rules. We do things that seem "silly" and "impossible." We do them for the sake of the feast. ■



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A Call for a Sabbath Year to Repair a Broken World

by Jacob Feinspan

MANY OF US, WHEN WE STEP BACK AND CONSIDER our place in the world, feel tremendous dissonance. Especially for those of us lucky enough to be born into privilege in the United States, our standard of living has never been better. We live longer, are more highly educated, and have more economic opportunities than ever before.

At the same time, the gulf between rich and poor in our country continues to grow every year. This gap is dwarfed by the gaping chasm between our wealth and that of the people living in the global South. Every day, 13 percent of the world's population goes hungry. One person in seven has no access to clean water for drinking, cooking or washing. All this while the

average American, earning \$36,500 a year, is richer than 95 percent of the world's population.

The brokenness of the world is staggering. With this degree of poverty and inequity, none of us can be spiritually whole. Many of us, particularly those I encounter in my work for American Jewish World Service, an international development organization, are asking ourselves the same questions: Are we doing enough? What more can we do to effect *tikkun olam*, to heal the world around us?

As individuals, there is much we can do—from volunteering with local organizations to making *tzedakah*, or charity, a significant part of our lives. These actions, however, will only get us so far. The global inequity we confront is staggering in scope—too big for any one of us to solve alone. In the face of this struggle, against what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called “the ancient enemy, poverty,” what better place to look for inspiration than our sacred texts?

In the Torah we find a vision of life in community that is liberating and just, governed by Sabbath cycles—the Sabbath Day, the Sabbath Year, and the Jubilee Year. These cycles are a powerful reminder of God's intent that all creatures enjoy fullness of life and partake in the abundance of God's world. Just as Shabbat is a palace in time for weekly individual spiritual renewal, so too was the Sabbath Year a time for communal renewal—to fortify the land and renew interpersonal relationships. In biblical times, the Israelites were forbidden from planting or harvesting every seventh year in order to allow the land to replenish itself. For the people living on the land, it was also a time of replenishment: every seventh year debts were cancelled.

The Marshall Plan of its time, this seven-year cycle of debt cancellation was a structural mechanism designed to address one of the biggest ethical challenges of all time—the cycle of intergenerational poverty. By canceling debts every seven years, and returning lands to their ancestral owners every fiftieth year—the Jubilee Year—the Torah instituted an economy where wealth was redistributed regularly. By living out the Torah's words, our ancestors prevented the rich from accumulating yet more wealth at the expense of the poor.

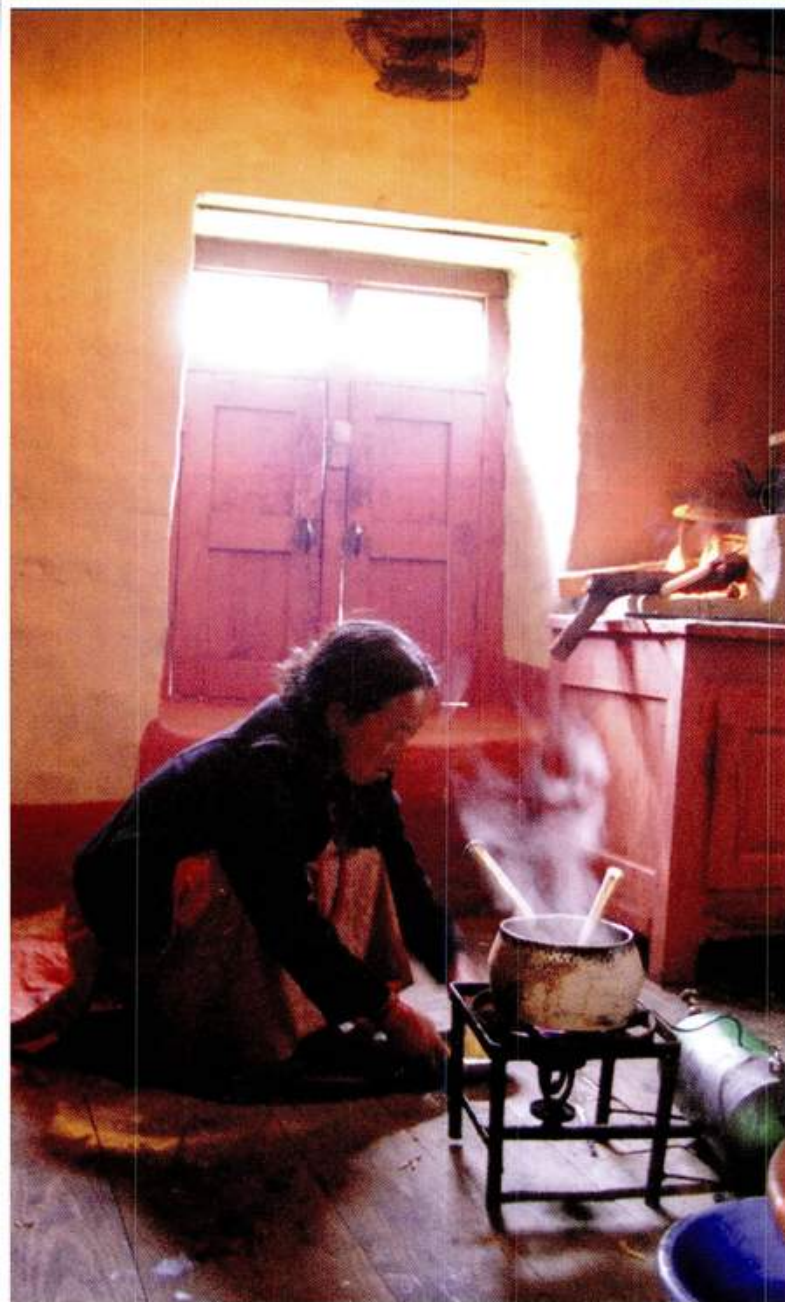
If ever there was a time to look back to this biblical structure for inspiration, it is now. Seven years after the beginning of the new millennium, we live in a world that is seriously out of balance. Never before has the gap between the rich and poor been as immense as it is today. In 1999, three men—Bill Gates, Paul Allen, and Warren Buffet—had a net worth greater than the combined GDP of the forty-one most impoverished nations and their 550 million people. Every day, 30,000 children die of easily preventable diseases due to malnutrition and lack of adequate medical care. Around the world, more than 70 million children do not go to elementary school because their parents cannot afford fees, books or uniforms.

In the face of this unimaginable inequity and poverty, the biblical vision of Sabbath and Jubilee provides reason for hope. In 2000, responding to a debt crisis that crippled impoverished countries' abilities to direct funds towards health and education, and inspired by the concepts of the Sabbath Year and Jubilee Year, millions of Jews, Christians, and Muslims worked together in the Jubilee campaign to demand debt relief for impoverished countries around the world. By speaking truth to power, we forced our elected leaders to relieve the debts of many impoverished countries, specifically those on the continent of Africa.

Debt relief has worked. Spending on health, education, and social services in countries that have received debt forgiveness has increased by 75 percent on average. Three billion dollars in debt relief enabled Tanzania to increase funding for poverty reduction by 130 percent over the last six years. New investments in education in that country enabled approximately 1.6 million children to return to school, almost overnight. Debt relief enabled Mozambique to make strides in combating HIV/AIDS. By 2002, twenty-four testing and counseling offices opened; fifty offices will be operating by the end of this year.

Though we won victories in the Jubilee 2000 campaign, we have not yet ended the global debt crisis. Twenty-one nations in Africa and Latin America have had their debts to the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and African Development Bank cancelled. But this is merely the beginning of what is needed. Only one in ten people in the developing world will

Debt relief works. Spending on health, education, and social services has increased 75% in debt-relieved countries and global consciousness.



benefit from the debt cancellation provided to date. For too many countries, demands of powerful creditors force a downward spiral of deepening poverty by forcing these nations to prioritize debt payments over clean water, adequate housing, AIDS prevention, basic health care, and schooling for their citizens. Moreover, in many cases undemocratic and authoritarian regimes, such as the Duvaliers in Haiti, Charles Taylor in Liberia, Mobutu Sese Seko in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Suharto in Indonesia, incurred the debts and used them to repress the very people who are now struggling to pay them back. At least forty-five additional countries require debt cancellation to have any hope of reaching the Millennium Development Goals, which are internationally agreed upon anti-poverty targets for 2015.

In 2007, seven years after the victories of Jubilee 2000, communities of faith are calling on world leaders to observe a Sabbath Year by canceling the unjust debts of impoverished nations in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Canceling these debts will allow countries to invest more in the lives of their citizens: more children will attend school, more people will receive life-saving AIDS medications, and more families will have access to clean drinking water. This debt cancellation is a critical component of the Network of Spiritual Progressives' prophetic Global Marshall Plan that promotes security through generosity.

When our ancestors lived in the land of Israel, with the memory of slavery in Egypt still fresh in their collective conscience, could they have known the impact they would have on us, their descendants, by living their lives through the rhythms of Shabbat, the Sabbath Year, and the Jubilee Year? Perhaps. God's words to Moses were still fresh in their ears, "For I the LORD your God am an impassioned God...showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My Commandments" (Exodus 20:5-6).

Today, we have the opportunity to bring justice to generations of our own descendants by doing our part to repair our broken world. Our ancestors' actions inspired the worldwide Jubilee movement, and the imperative to complete what was started in 2000 remains: to lift the excruciating burden of debt that continues to siphon resources from impoverished countries that should be used for health care, education, and clean water.

As Americans we enjoy much good fortune, and we understand that from those to whom much has been given, much is also required. As citizens of a rich country whose government played a role in the accumulation of these debts, we are uniquely placed to advocate for justice in solidarity with our brothers and sisters living in extreme poverty. If we care about the future of the world community, we must all do our part. We can start by calling on our elected officials in Washington, D.C. to pass the Jubilee Act, bold and prophetic legislation that would provide debt cancellation to many more of the countries that need it. This is not something we do for them. This is something we do for us—for all of us. ■

Jacob Feinspan coordinates advocacy on international debt cancellation and HIV/AIDS at American Jewish World Service, an international development organization motivated by Judaism's imperative to pursue justice, and sits on the board of the Jubilee USA Network, an alliance of more than seventy-five organizations dedicated to cancellation of debts.

CHOMSKY ON IRAQ

(continued from page 10)

much of it was Vietnamese killing each other. There was a Saigon army fighting a civil insurrection of Viet Cong who were supported by North Vietnam.

TIKKUN: But there was a political difference, not an ethnic or religious difference.

CHOMSKY: Because Vietnam had not just come out of a brutal dictatorship where the country had been practically destroyed by sanctions. So there's a background difference. Vietnam was part of the effort, as a whole region to gain freedom from the colonial powers. That struggle led to very ugly outcomes in many places. Vietnam was a particularly ugly outcome because the United States took over from France after 1954 and insisted on imposing U.S.-friendly regimes that could only rule by using extreme brutality on their own population. That led to bitter civil conflict. Wars of aggression quite typically end up with civil conflicts that envelop the society.

In the case of Iraq, until pretty recently, Iraqis were confident that there would never be sectarian conflict. They were confident because the Shiites and Sunnis were integrated, intermarried, and living together. There were problems, but they could be overcome. The hideous problems that have arisen are the direct result of the aggression and the occupation.

Now, what would happen if the United States left? Let's go back to the Russians in Afghanistan. People were asking the same questions in Moscow in 1986 about the consequences of leaving Afghanistan that some people ask today about Iraq. They were saying, "What will happen if we leave? They'll all murder each other. We have to stay to bring freedom and justice, and to prevent them from killing each other." Were they wrong? No, unfortunately they were right. When the Russians left it turned into an absolute horror story. The U.S.-backed terrorist Islamic forces went berserk. One faction started destroying life in Kabul. It was so awful that the population actually welcomed the Tal-



iban when they came in, not because they actually liked them, but because at least they'd put an end to the hideous bloodshed.

Was that an argument for the Russians to stay in? In fact, in Moscow, was it their business to decide whether the Russian forces should stay? Unfortunately not. It was the business of the Afghans to decide. And in our case, we can make our own completely uninformed judgment about what might happen, as uninformed as the CIA and the Pentagon. We can personally make those judgments, but they don't matter. The judgment that matters is what the Iraqis want. Now, it happens in this case that we know from Western polls and from U.S. polls what they believe. They believe that the occupying forces are forces that are instigating violence.

Maybe others perpetrate the violence, but it is because of the occupying forces that are extending the violence. And they believe this by an overwhelming majority. Maybe they're right, maybe they're wrong, but it is their decision to make, not ours.

TIKKUN: But the argument is "we broke it, now we own it"...

CHOMSKY: It's not "we broke it, now we own it," it's "we broke it, now we give it to the people whom we broke and we help them do what they want to do." We don't "own it" anymore than the Russians owned Afghanistan or the French owned West Africa or Algeria. If you "break it" it's your responsibility to pay for what you broke, to hold those who broke it accountable, and to pay attention to your victims. This goes for Algeria, the Belgians in the Congo, the

United States in Iraq, or any other case.

Now, what would Iraqis decide? Well, the Kurds have a moderately democratic system—there is some expression of public opinion. The public wants independence. The leadership does not, for good reasons. They understand that it's just not viable. If the Kurds were to gain independence, what would they do? They're surrounded by hostile enemies. Turkey would certainly not favor it, to put it mildly. In fact, they might invade. They'd have no access to the outside. They'd lose their markets in Iraq. They're not going to get any help from Syria or Iran, certainly. They would be in real trouble. The leadership, at least, would prefer to be an autonomous region within a kind of federal Iraq.

As far as the Sunnis are concerned, the same is probably true. The Shiites will, of course, want to dominate. Is it going to be pretty if the United States leaves? No, it's going to be ugly. The more we stay the more ugly it'll get. Just as it wasn't pretty when the Russians left Afghanistan, or when the British left India. In fact, the conflict (on the Indian subcontinent) still goes on. It almost led to a nuclear war a few years ago. Kashmir is a horror story. So yeah, that's what happens. Same in Rwanda, same in Congo, or wherever you look. The consequence of imperial conquest is typically extremely ugly. That's not an argument for the continuing interventions that are making it worse and worse. It's not an argument for that. It's an argument for doing what we can to overcome the crimes that we committed, or that the Russians committed, or that the French committed, and so on.

That's what it should be, and it's up to the victims to decide. Can Iraqis work out a way to make something viable out of this country that the British put together for their own imperial interests? Well, who knows? We know what the British did. They drew the boundary with Turkey in such a way that Britain, not Turkey, would gain access to the oil resources in the north. They imposed the principality of Kuwait in order to prevent the Iraq they had cobbled to-

gether from having easy access to the sea, so it would be more easily controlled, so it would be a quiet state. In fact, the British didn't even grant nominal independence to Kuwait until after the Iraqi revolution in 1958, which overthrew the British dominated state. At that point—we have the records—the British and Americans decided that Britain should grant nominal independence to Kuwait—just nominal; it was still mainly controlled by Britain—to prevent the spread of nationalism, which they feared. These are lingering consequences of imperial conquest, which raise all sorts of problems, just as the horrifying sectarian conflict in Iraq is our fault.

We should read the Nuremberg Tribunal judgments. The United States isn't the Nazis; nobody says that. But the Tribunal judgment does apply. In fact, Justice Jackson, the chief counsel for the prosecution, was very explicit about that at the end of the trial. He said—and we should listen to his words—that those who are sentenced here, we are handing them “a poisoned chalice,” and if we ever sip from it we must be subject to the same punishment, otherwise, this trial is a farce. Important words. What does the Nuremberg Tribunal say? The main charge against the Nazi criminals, maybe the worst criminals in history, was that they carried out crimes against peace. They carried out what was called the “supreme international crime”: aggression, which differs from all other crimes, in that it encompasses all the evil that follows. That's why it's the supreme international crime.

Well, the United States committed the supreme international crime when it invaded Iraq, and it differs from all other crimes in that it encompasses all the evil that follows. That means the horrifying crimes in Falluja and in Abu Ghraib, the sectarian violence, the Samarra atrocities, anything you can think of, that's included in the supreme international crime, and we should pay attention to Justice Jackson's words. Either we accept the judgment of those

sentenced there or we concede that the whole Nuremberg Tribunal thing was a farce.

TIKKUN: There is growing speculation that the Bush Administration has decided that the way to deal with the growing unpopularity of the Iraq War is to start a war with Iran.

CHOMSKY: If the United States and Iran were functioning democratic societies, this problem would probably be easily resolved. The reason is—and we know this again from Western-sponsored polling data—that Iranians and Americans are in very close agreement on nuclear issues and on other issues. Both Iranians and Americans are in overwhelming agreement that Iran should not have nuclear weapons, but that it should have the right, under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to develop nuclear energy. They are in overwhelming agreement—overwhelming—that nuclear weapons should be eliminated from the world. They are in overwhelming agreement that Middle East region should be made a nuclear-arms free region. Nuclear free: that includes everything from Iran, to Israel, to U.S. forces in the region. All nuclear weapons should be eliminated. Well, those are pretty sensible proposals, and they happen to have overwhelming support, both in Iran and in the United States. So, if these two countries were functioning democracies, meaning, systems in which popular opinion reflects itself in public policy, we could probably move towards a resolution of this conflict. Now, that tells us something. Our prime goal should be to make the United States a functioning democratic society. We can't do a lot in Iran, although we can help those reformers instead of harming them, as we're now doing by threats, which certainly harms them. But we can do something important here in our own country. We can help them in Iran, and that itself is a very positive proposal, one that is within our reach, by making our own society democratic and thus reflecting the peace-oriented desires of the American majority. ■

HAS ISRAEL LOST IT'S SOUL?

(continued from page 15)

remained. That was an unrelenting drive. More than 400 "abandoned" Arab villages were completely obliterated; hundreds of new Jewish settlements took their place. In the 1960s, it seemed that this urge was satisfied and that Zionism had attained its goals.

The war of 1967 changed this mood completely. The new territories were beckoning. It seemed that nothing could stop the drive to acquire them and fill them with settlements. The historic conflict between the Zionist enterprise and the Palestinian people had entered another phase.

The new factor was that Israel had taken possession of the heartland of Palestine, that it was now ruling over an entire other people, turning the Israeli republic into an empire with colonial, and even some apartheid, features.

Looking back, it is now clear that the "miraculous salvation" of the Six Day War has turned into a national catastrophe. The corruption that fills our daily newspapers in Israel, the blunting of our moral senses, the general brutalization of Israeli society—all these started, or were at least radically worsened, by the forty years of Occupation.

The conflict has been likened to a clash between an unstoppable force and an immovable object. The Israeli drive to expand and settle the land is meeting the stubborn resistance of the Palestinian people.

All Israeli governments since 1967 have promoted the settlement enterprise by every possible means, open and secret. Not only were all settlements manifestly illegal under international law, but many of them also violated Israeli law. On the diplomatic level, everything was done by both the Labor and Likud governments to gain time to expand the settlements and set up new ones, while mouthing slogans about peace.

The "disengagement" from the Gaza Strip, and the melodramatic dismantling of the settlements there (which had been set up by the Labor governments), was actually a *tromp l'oeil*. Ariel Sharon had

no change of heart, as many believed. His was a logical strategic decision to get rid of a burdensome piece of land in order to concentrate on holding on to the seventeen times larger, and by far more important, West Bank, half which Sharon wanted to annex. And, of course, the disengagement itself was a sleight of hand: while withdrawing "unilaterally," Israel imposed a blockade that cut off this impoverished stretch of desert from the world, leaving it completely at the mercy of the Israeli army.

Jewish history has always known kings and prophets—kings who have decided the fate of their people and prophets who have warned and protested. From the earliest beginnings of the Zionist movement, there were those who protested against oppressive practices—from Ahad Ha'am, through Martin Buber and Yeshayahu Leibowitz, to today's peace activists.

The most prominent present example of this is the Battle of Bil'in—a small Palestinian village where every Friday, for more than two years now, courageous Israeli youngsters have joined the local inhabitants and international volunteers in protests against the "security obstacle"—the voracious monster—part wall, part fence—which is gobbling up Palestinian land for Jewish settlements. Facing teargas, stun grenades, rubber-coated steel bullets and sometimes live ammunition, these young protesters personify a different Israel.

The Israeli peace forces, supported by like-minded Jews abroad, have a huge task: to change the national consensus—the "genetic code" of the movement—in order to turn Israel away from its present course and put it on new tracks.

On the surface, this effort looks like a complete failure. The peace forces are small and scattered. But, viewed against the historical background, a different picture emerges. Over decades, Israeli consciousness has indeed changed significantly.

Fifty-eight years ago, when my friends and I said that we must make peace with the Palestinian people, we were laughed out of court. There were hardly a hundred

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people in the entire world who subscribed to this idea. A Palestinian people? "There is no such thing," Golda Meir pronounced even twenty years later.

When we said that, to have peace, there must be a State of Palestine next to the State of Israel, the reaction was the same. Today the "two-state solution" has become a worldwide consensus, and even Israeli politicians who abhor the idea are compelled to pay lip service to it.

When we said that we must negotiate with the PLO, the terrible terrorist organization, there was a general outcry. In 1993 the State of Israel signed an agreement with the PLO on the White House lawn.

When I met with the arch-terrorist, Yasser Arafat, in Beirut during the 1982 siege, I was the first Israeli to meet him. Four Israeli ministers demanded to put me on trial for treason. All four later met with Arafat.

The settlers, once the darlings of the Israeli public, are now almost universally rejected, even loathed.

When we say now that we must negotiate with Hamas in order to include the entire Palestinian people in the peace endeavor, the majority of Israelis seem to agree with us.

Public opinion polls show that most Israelis are ready to accept peace terms that come close to the so-called "Clinton parameters"—the terms set forth in Bill Clinton's final address just before he relinquished office. These terms are almost identical to the Geneva Initiative and, indeed, the Peace Treaty formulated years ago by Gush Shalom.

What remains is, alas, the huge legacy of 125 years of conflict, mutual hatred, stereotypes, myths, propaganda slogans, and mistrust—mainly mistrust.

This we have to overcome, if we want to change the disastrous course of Israel, a course of oppression and moral insanity.

The task is daunting. Looking at daily events, it is easy to despair. One of the symptoms of such despair is the emergence of utopian visions, which take hold of some of the most idealistic people in dark times. In our history, Shabbetai Zevi is a warning example.

One such vision is the "one-state solution." Let's abolish the cruel Zionist state, let's live together, Jew and Muslim, Israeli and Palestinian, in one good state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan, serving in the same army, paying the same taxes, electing the same Parliament—the very fulfillment of the prophetic vision of the wolf lying down with the sheep. (A cruel Israeli joke says: "No problem, you just have to provide a new sheep every day.")

The problem is not only that 99 percent of Israelis, and almost the same percentage of Palestinians, reject this "solution" out of hand, but also that this utopian state would be a nightmare, compared to which the South African apartheid state would be paradise. Israeli preponderance in nearly all fields of endeavor would guarantee Israeli exploitation and oppression. Palestinians would suffer for generations to come—first, until such a state would come into being (if at all), and then in the state itself.

A beautiful dream, meeting reality, can easily turn into a horrible nightmare. The way to hell is, as has been said, paved with good intentions. The better the intentions, the worse the hell.

Messianic visions are no remedy for a tragic reality. It's a reality we have to change—not only in order to remedy, as much as possible, the injustice done by us to the Palestinians, but also in order to cleanse Israel and turn it into a state that we can be proud of.

* * *

Has Israel lost its soul? After forty years of Occupation, many people, both inside and outside the country, think so.

I do not.

The dark cloud of the Occupation is hiding the sun of our humanity. But the cloud will pass, and the sun will come out. ■

Uri Avnery is Chair of Gush Shalom, the pre-eminent peace activist organization in Israel.



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DAVID LOY

(continued from page 22)

advertising revenue, their main concern is to do whatever maximizes those profits. It is never in their own interest to question the grip of consumerism. We will never see a major network TV series about a happy family that decides to downsize, to live more simply so they can have more time together. Thanks to clever advertisements, my son can learn to crave Nike shoes and Gap shirts without ever wondering how they are made. I can satisfy my coffee and chocolate cravings without knowing the social conditions of the farmers who grow those commodities for me, and without any awareness of what is happening to the biosphere: global warming, disappearing rainforests, species extinction, and so forth.

An important part of genuine education is realizing that many of the things we think are natural and inevitable (and therefore should accept) are in fact conditioned (and therefore can be changed). The world doesn't need to be the way it is; there are other possibilities. The present role of the media is to foreclose most of those possibilities by confining public awareness and discussion within narrow limits. With few exceptions, the world's developed (or "economized") societies are now dominated by a power elite composed of the government and large corporations including the major media. People move seamlessly from each of these institutions to the other, because there is little difference in their worldview or their goals: primarily economic expansion. Politics remains "the shadow cast by big business over society," as John Dewey once put it. The role of the media in this unholy alliance is to "normalize" this situation, so that we accept it and continue to perform our required roles, especially the frenzied production and consumption necessary to keep the economy growing.

It's important to realize that we are not simply being manipulated by a clever group of people who benefit from that manipulation. Rather, we are being manipulated in a self-deluded way by a group of people who think they benefit from it—because they buy into the root delusion that their ego-selves are separate from other

people. They too are victims of their own propaganda, caught up in the larger web of collective illusion that includes virtually all of us. As the famous satirist Karl Kraus once said, "How do wars begin? Politicians tell lies to journalists, then believe what they read in the newspapers." According to Buddhism *samsara* is not only a world of suffering, it is just as much a world of delusion, because delusions are at the root of our suffering. That includes collective fantasies such as the necessity of consumerism and perpetual economic growth, and collective repressions such as denial of global climate change.

Realizing the nature of these three institutional poisons is just as important as any personal realization we might have as a result of spiritual practice. In fact, any individual awakening we may have on our meditation cushions remains incomplete until it is supplemented by such a "social awakening." Usually we think of expanded consciousness in individual terms, but today we must dispel the bubble of group delusion to attain greater understanding of

dualistic social, economic, and ecological realities.

If this parallel between individual dukkha and collective dukkha holds, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the great social, economic and ecological crises of our day are also spiritual challenges, which therefore call for a response that must also have a spiritual component.

A BUDDHIST SOLUTION?

SO MUCH FOR THE PROBLEMS from a Buddhist perspective. What can Buddhism say about the solution to them? We can envision the solution to social dukkha as a society that does not institutionalize greed, ill will, or delusion. In their place, what might be called a *dharmic* society would have institutions encouraging generosity and compassion, grounded in a wisdom that recognizes our interconnectedness.

So far, so good, but that approach does not take us very far. Is a reformed capitalism consistent with a dharmic society, or do we need altogether different kinds of



MIKE KRAUTTER

economic institutions? How can our world de-militarize? Can representative democracy be revitalized by stricter controls on campaigns and lobbying, or do we need a more participatory and decentralized political system? Should newspapers and television stations be non-profit, or more carefully regulated? Can the United Nations be transformed into the kind of international organization the world needs, or does an emerging global community call for something different?

I do not think that Buddhism has the answers to these questions. Nor, I suspect, does anyone else. There is no magic formula to be invoked. The solutions are not to be found, they are to be worked out together. This is a challenging task but not an insuperable one, if men and women of good will can find ways to work together without the deformations of pressure groups defending special privileges. Needless to say, that is not an easy condition to achieve, and it reminds us of the transformative role of personal spirituality, which works to develop men and women of good will. Yet Buddhist principles can contribute to the development of solutions. For example:

The importance of a personal spiritual practice. The basis of Buddhist social engagement is the need to work on oneself as well as on the social system. Why have so many revolutions and reform movements ended up merely replacing one gang of thugs with another? If we have not begun to transform our own greed, ill will, and delusion, our efforts to address their institutionalized forms are likely to be useless, or worse. If I do not struggle with the greed inside myself, it is quite likely that, when I gain power, I too will be inclined to take advantage of the situation to serve my own interests. If I do not acknowledge the ill will in my own heart as my own problem, I am likely to project my anger onto those who obstruct my purposes. If unaware that my own sense of duality is a dangerous delusion, I will understand the problem of social change as the need for me to dominate the socio-political order. Add a conviction of my good intentions, along with my superior understanding of the situation, and one has a recipe for social as well as personal disaster. History is

littered with examples.

Commitment to non-violence. A non-violent approach is implied by our non-duality with "others," including those we may be struggling against. Means and ends cannot be separated. Peace is not only the goal; it must also be the way. We ourselves must be the peace we want to create. A spiritual awakening reduces our sense of duality from those who have power over us. Gandhi, for example, always treated the British authorities in India with respect. He never tried to dehumanize them, which is one reason why he was successful. Buddhist emphasis on delusion provides an important guideline here: the nastier another person is, the more he or she is acting out of ignorance and dukkha. The basic problem is delusion, not evil. If so, the basic solution must involve wisdom and insight, not good attempting to destroy evil only to discover that it is looking in a mirror.

Awakening together. Social engagement is not about sacrificing our own happiness to help unfortunate others who are suffering. That just reinforces a self-defeating (and self-exhausting) dualism between us and them. Rather, we join together to improve the situation for all of us. As an aboriginal woman put it, "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is tied up with mine, then let us work together." Many Buddhists take bodhisattva vows, which means that they will devote themselves to helping everyone spiritually awaken. The point of the bodhisattva path is that none of us can be fully awakened until everyone "else" is too. The critical world situation today means that sometimes bodhisattvas need to manifest their compassion in more politically engaged ways.

To sum up, what is distinctively Buddhist about socially-engaged Buddhism? Emphasis on the social dukkha promoted by group-selves as well as by ego-selves. The three collective poisons of institutionalized greed, institutionalized ill will, and institutionalized delusion. The importance of personal spiritual practice, commitment to non-violence, and the realization that ending our own dukkha requires us to ad-

dress the dukkha of everyone else as well, because we are not separate from each other.

Present power elites and institutions have shown themselves incapable of addressing the various crises that now threaten humanity and the future of the biosphere. It has become obvious that those elites are themselves a large part of the problem, and that the solutions will need to come from somewhere else. Perhaps a socially-awakened Buddhism can play a role in that transformation. If, however, Buddhists cannot or will not participate in this transformation, then perhaps Buddhism is not the spiritual path that the world needs today. ■

David R. Loy is Besl Professor of Ethics/Religion and Society at Xavier University in Cincinnati. He is the author of A Buddhist History of the West and The Great Awakening: a Buddhist social theory.

NATHAN KATZ

(continued from page 25)

To read Shankara's texts with a master is to bathe oneself in the purest mystical philosophy; it is inspiring, elegant, beautiful not only for the language and ideas themselves, but for where those words and thoughts transport the student. To have read these jewels with Professor Murti is one of the great intellectual intoxications of my life.

It really wasn't so surprising, then, when a foreign Christian student at BHU got carried away. He came to Murti with great emotion, and told his teacher that he was so taken with Advaita that he wanted to convert to Hinduism to follow it as his life's mission.

It was the only time this student, or any of Murti's students, had seen the professor become angry. "If you think you should convert to Hinduism," he told him, "then you have utterly misunderstood everything I have been trying to teach. You insult both Hinduism and your own Christianity." With angry gesture he dismissed the crestfallen student and never spoke to him again.

I sympathize with both the student and the professor. The student fully expected to be embraced into Hinduism just as one born Hindu might be welcomed should he decide to become Christian. This view is part and parcel of the student's religious worldview. But just as foundationally, the professor saw Advaita as a way of understanding a religion and not a religion in itself. Therefore, a Christian who appreciates non-dualism should bring that understanding to his Christianity.

For traditional Hindu and Buddhist teachers, religion is not a banner or an allegiance. It is a way of improving people, of enhancing compassion and wisdom. To switch religions is impossible because one is born into a society and a family for important reasons, and the anguish a conversion would cause to one's own community is utterly, thoroughly unjustifiable and ultimately selfish.

In this spirit, the fourth-century Hindu lawgiver, Manu, wrote that to desire another person's religion is a sin akin to adultery: lusting after something that is not properly one's own. Therefore, Manu concluded, the wise king must outlaw conversion as a prerequisite for social and familial harmony.

Manu's view is also rooted in the unshakeable Hindu conviction that all religions are paths leading to the same goal. Metaphors to make this point abound, but it is a cultural bedrock assumption in India, and it gently challenges an equally bedrock assumption of most of the Western world, that religions are by nature competitive and truth must reside in one, but not all. Conversions are celebrated as triumphs, the heartbreak caused to families and disruption to society be damned.

LAMPS, LIGHT AND FESTIVALS

MY MOST RECENT VISIT TO BENARES coincided with the festival of lights, Diwali in 2004. After sundown the ghats became even more magical than they usually are. Here in the city of Shiva, the Mother River is worshipped as devotional hymns to Vishnu's incarnations are blended with paeans to Shiva. Such embodied ecumenicism is woven into Benares' social fabric.



Perhaps it is no coincidence that weaving has been the economic mainstay of this area for a thousand years.

Aarti to the Mother River commenced as a huge, red moon rose above the horizon. *Bhajans* (spirited devotional songs) accompanied the graceful *aarti* offering of lamps. By the time the moon hung above the River the *bhajans* were replaced by a concert of classical vocal music. Blazing wicks on folded leaves floated by. Nearby, devotees constantly rang bells to hail G-d or the gods. It was the kind of spiritual and aesthetic beauty I have found only in India, and I felt deep satisfaction as I drank in the ambience.

BENARES AND JERUSALEM

ALL AROUND BENARES, but especially in the sacred areas near the ghats, I was surprised to see signs and placards in Hebrew. Most invited Israeli tourists to cheap hotels, silk factories, or restaurants offering a version of Middle Eastern food. Some announced a meditation retreat, sitar classes or a *kriya yoga* course—all the usual fare of tourists to Benares. Listening to the sacred Hindu chants, in the audience I heard Hebrew spoken as frequently as English or German. Many shopkeepers in Benares assume there are approximately as many Israelis in the world as there are

British or Germans. The obvious presence of so many Israelis made me think of Jerusalem, and my thoughts flitted between the Benares before my eyes and the Jerusalem of my mind's eye.

Benares and Jerusalem. These two cities could be joined together in one sentence because there is no city anywhere that compares with either. Each city bears a continuous culture of more than three thousand years. The palpable spiritual presence of each draws pilgrims and tourists, like iron to a magnet.

And each is a focus of followers of offshoot religions: Buddhism and Christianity. Lord Buddha preached his first sermon at nearby Sarnath, and pilgrims from Japan, Thailand, Sri Lanka and the West pay respects there, just as Christians and Muslims have special relationships with Jerusalem, the former especially. I chuckled to see a ritual rivalry between Thai and Tibetan Buddhists as each group circumambulated the huge *stupa* (a bell shaped reliquary) erected by the fourth century BCE pious Emperor Ashoka, one of history's most enlightened rulers and even today a model for a religiously pluralistic polity. The Thai group, led by saffron-robed monks, chanted in the Pali language, while the Tibetan lamas in maroon robes led their western students in chanting



mantras and performing worship. It reminded me so much of a visit to Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where Jesus is said to have been crucified, buried, and resurrected. In the church a foreign group of Roman Catholics said their mass at Golgotha, and it seemed the Greek Orthodox priests couldn't wait for them to finish so they could wave their own incense to cover over the offending aroma of the Roman offering.

Most of us think of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as the "three Western monotheisms," as though monotheism never existed in India. Some politely refer to them as the "three Abrahamic faiths," as Abraham is taken to be the father—either in a literal or spiritual sense—of each. These western religions are assumed to be distinct from "Eastern religions," which are characterized by a cyclic view of history and multiple deities. Indeed, that is one way to make a general distinction.

But it is not the only way, as I tell my students. The Western/Eastern distinction conceals as much as it reveals, and when one's attention is focused on Judaism and Hinduism, another model presents itself. This is the old/new distinction. The world's ancient religions—by these I mean Judaism, Hinduism, and the Chinese tradition, which we have come to call Confucianism. Beside a history of some four

thousand years, these ancient faiths address all aspects of life—from ethics to law, medicine, painting and sculpture, politics, philosophy, literature, social theory, astrology, and the performing arts. They fill all these roles because during ancient times knowledge had not yet been fragmented into discrete fields, and religion was knowledge. The newer religions—Buddhism, Christianity and Islam—could focus their interest. The first two of these, the original offspring, developed around a charismatic leader who accepted the basic worldview of the parent faith, but chose to focus on spirituality. Just as Jesus was born, lived, taught and died as a Jew, so too the Buddha was born, lived, taught and died as a Hindu. Christianity, for example, simply accepted the Judaic worldview of creation and went on from there. The Buddha's famous lack of cosmological interest was due to the absence of any need to develop one because the Hindu stories held the day. In both cases, for reasons more cultural or political than religious, followers of the Buddha and of the Christ ended up creating new religions named for their "renegade" founders. Islam is something of a special case because it, in many ways, tried to restore Judaism's social ethos, rejecting Christianity's spiritualized otherworldliness, while at the same time retaining Christianity's "universalism," or

missionary zeal.

This old/new paradigm opens up new perspectives on other features of the two types of faiths, including the tendency for old religions to remain wedded to a land and/or a people, whereas the new ones seek to spread their convictions through empires. Christianity became insignificant in Israel, just as Buddhism all but vanished from India. Each found more fertile soils outside of the motherland. On another track, the new religions had to articulate reasons why the old ones were unsatisfactory, resulting in some pretty unkind views of their parents. The central point is that when one's examples are Judaism and Hinduism, what we go on to generalize about religion is quite different when our data are rooted in Christian categories.

The juxtaposition of Jerusalem and Benares invites such speculations. And now such speculations are reflected in a linkage between these two most sacred cities in the world. When I visited BHU, faculty and students were abuzz about recently established, long overdue links with Jerusalem. The deep cultural resonance between them has been acknowledged by generally unimaginative academic administrators and bureaucrats. Benares Hindu University, the largest residential university in Asia, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a bastion of secularism in one of the world's most holy cities, have discovered one another.

Some may believe that "East is East and West is West." Whatever truth there may have been to this adage, both timeless spiritual truths and contemporary globalization demonstrate its limitation. The twain have met in Benares. ■

Dr. Katz is professor and director of the Center for the Study of Spirituality at Florida International University. He is co-editor of the Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies. This article is adapted from his forthcoming book, The Swami, the Lama and the Rebbe: A Spiritual Memoir (Hara Press, 2008).

Culture

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[TV]

Fox News: Joker or Joke?

The 1/2 News Hour BY PAUL LEWIS

THE PREMIER of Fox News's weekly comedy program, *The 1/2 Hour News Hour*, raises questions about the network, comic creativity, and the political impact of satire. Long pilloried by progressive comedians including Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert, Fox is determined to strike back, laugh for laugh. But can the target of so many parodies wipe off its "gloomy mask of tragedy" and "put on a happy face"?

If this seems like a daunting project, then Fox may have been wise to entrust it to Joel Surnow, the co-creator of *24*, a program that updates *Mission Impossible* for a terrorist-ridden, post-9/11 world. Or maybe not, since humor is banished from the lives of Jack Bauer and the other crisis responders on *24*, who live minute-by-minute with no time to luxuriate in reflection, affection, or joking. Someone who dared to impede Bauer's investigation with a wry observation or comic suggestion would probably end up being tortured. "If you say 'knock-knock' one more time," Jack would shriek, "you'll find these electrodes up your nose!"

Progressives taking note of the premiere of the program, and wondering if conservatives can be funny, reveal their own bias. Dennis Miller, Ann Coulter, Rush Limbaugh, and Scott Ott (creator of *ScrappleFace.com*) can be amusing, especially when they are provocative, angry, and raw. And why not?

Though we like to think of humor as positive, even life affirming, it can serve a

full range of purposes that run the gamut from approval to aggression. Mockery can advance any idea. It can associate John Kerry with windsurfing or pretend to pity George Herbert Walker Bush for having been born with a "silver spoon in his mouth." Though it can be difficult to laugh with people one dislikes or disapproves of, no particular ideology or outlook has a monopoly on wit.

The 1/2 Hour News Hour will rise and fall on the strength of its talent. *The Daily Show* works because it employs a large staff of writers who consistently find ways to dramatize the absurd hypocrisy and folly of politicians, mostly on the Right. Surnow has argued that Democratic gains in the 2006 elections have provided new targets on the Left who should be skewered in "a fair and balanced way."

Perhaps, but his first program went after Barak Obama in ways that failed to demonstrate the presence of strong writers. The senator's nickname in college, we're told, was "gassy," and his campaign is putting out a magazine called "B.O." Get it? Barak Obama, body odor? Please, take a moment to slap your knees and when you've recovered, continue reading. What will follow? A feature on Hillary Clinton's naval lint or John Edwards' bad breath? And the lesson of this, beyond the schoolyard taunting of "nah-nana-poopie!" is what? Vote for Republicans; they keep themselves nice?

Surnow and his team may incline to ad hominem attacks, directed at people not policy, because they sense that satire based on ideas is most effective when

aimed at the powerful and wealthy from positions of righteous indignation occupied by underdogs. Since the American Right has worked with unfettered zeal in recent years to promote the interest of the few and wealthy at the expense of everyone else, it's hard to see how it can now move beyond mean-spirited ridicule to persuasive satire.

And the timing, so crucial in comedy, is inauspicious for Fox. When Dennis Miller joked about the cowardly French in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, mainstream entertainers like Jay Leno and David Letterman piled on. When Rush Limbaugh lashed out at "nutso," "dunderheaded alarmists" and environmental "wackos" in the 1990s, many were amused. But *The 1/2 Hour News Hour* will need to exercise a level of restraint not yet associated with the network if it features stories based on these now-discredited ideas.

This predicament is apparent in a sketch from the first show. In it, "former game show host and noted climatologist" Dr. Samuel Pinker insists that global warming is the cause of every problem on the planet, from increased crime rates in Houston to Britney Spears' refusal to wear panties. It's true that conservatives have enjoyed characterizing environmentalists as Chicken Littles, but it's also true that anxiety about this problem, along with sea levels and worldwide temperature, is on the rise. While laughing at incompetent experts is a staple of popular comedy, gags like this may inadvertently remind viewers of the risks we've run in

recent years by relying on "gut instincts" rather than informed advice. At this point, the one thing less funny than a concerned climatologist may be a drowning polar bear. Bada-boom!

The novelty of the program, scheduled for an initial run of just two shows, attracted media attention for a few weeks. Though thirteen additional episodes have been ordered, if the writing staff is unchanged the audience will probably shrink to diehard fans of the network. Eventually, one expects, only far-right bloggers pounding their keyboards late into the night will look back fondly on a project that, despite its clever flatulence humor, was never that much of a blast. ■

Paul Lewis, a professor of English at Boston College, is the author of Cracking Up: American Humor in a Time of Conflict.

[MUSIC]

The Flaming Lips

AT WAR WITH THE MYSTICS by The Flaming Lips, Warner Bros. Records, 2006
Review by Kyra Holman

RECALL MENTION OF THE FLAMING Lips in a conversation I had with another music-obsessed person some time ago. He raved about how wildly innovative they are. I was amused by the imagery engendered by their name. Those nutty punk rockers! I imagined what their concerts must be like: pure spectacle, fire-breathers, fire-eaters, jugglers, magicians, exotic dancers, explosions, confetti. Recently, I happened to catch a DVD documentary chronicling the outfit's storied and stormy history. The concert footage essentially confirmed my expectations. Actually, it was even more fantastically bizarre than I could have imagined. Here was this guy, in a 1970s style leisure suit, evidently encased in a giant semi-transparent orb, tumbling gleefully over a bewildered audience. Now *that's* interesting! After being so enthralled watching the band's many emotional collapses and reconciliations that I

was made late for work, I *had* to hear what these guys' albums were like. It was then that I came across *At War With the Mystics*. Weighing in at a lean and mean twelve tracks (one of their releases, *Zaireeka*, was a four CD suite meant to be played on four separate players at the same time), I demoed it in-store. Sufficiently impressed with what I heard, I decided to take a chance on it.

Although they once were, the Flaming Lips are not a punk band, and this is not a punk album. They are wildly innovative though, even while drawing on obvious influences. I would describe their music as overdriven pop rock, heavily influenced by 1970s AM radio and experimental electronica. The proceedings get underway with the hit, "The Yeah Yeah Yeah Song"—a jaunty, infectious cautionary tale about the corruptive nature of power. The group's front man, Wayne Coyne, sings, "If you could blow up the world with the flip of a switch, would you do it?/If you could make everybody poor, just so you could be rich, would you do it?"

In a United States reeling from the machinations of the Bush administration, the political overtones of this and other songs on *At War* are clear. Juxtaposing a dour message with the relentlessly upbeat refrain from "The Yeah Yeah Song" (I can't help singing with it every time) somehow works perfectly and sets the tone for the rest of the album. The following song, "Free Radicals," keeps up the assault on people whose views cause them to behave in extreme, irrational ways. Coyne affects an early Prince-like falsetto, while a nasal guitar riff rumbles over a delightfully lopsided rhythm time signature. All the while, random sounds drop in: sweeps, ringing, buzzing, something reminiscent of someone's stomach rumbling. The off-kilter guitar effects—various flanges, detuned chord endings, clipped reverbs, etc.—add to the distinct-



ly Seventies ambience. The pitched down, basso profundo vocal snatches bring to mind Parliament-Funkadelic.

The next few songs—"The Sound of Failure," "My Cosmic Autumn Rebellion," and "Vein of Stars"—are heavily indebted to Pink

Floyd's gloomy psychedelia. "Sound" appears to be about a woman whose angst results from an unsuccessful attempt at pop stardom. "Autumn" is an ode to transcending death and decay. Here, Coyne's voice is at its most vulnerable and touching. Amidst shimmering synthesizer flourishes which give way to those fuzzy guitar tones featured in songs like the Chi-Lite's "Have You Seen Her," we are lifted high over the tumult and collapse of the material world. "Vein" is one of the mellower numbers on the album and contains, to my thinking, one of its most evocative passages: "Who knows/maybe there isn't/a vein of stars calling out my name."

Lyrical dexterity is, for me, one of the few areas in which *At War* falls short. Coyne's writing tends to be simplistic. Lines from "The Yeah Yeah Song," that suggest blowing up the world and forcing everyone else to work "while you just lay on your back" have a sophomoric feel to them. But at times the lyrics are naively, heartbreakingly poignant. Take the song "Mr. Ambulance Driver," where Coyne is at the side of a dying woman. He sings wearily, "Oh, we can't trade places/our lives are strangely our own/Mr. Ambulance Driver, tell me/for everyone that dies, someone new is born." Resigned-sounding four-on-the-floor drumbeats undergird the melancholy fender Rhodes keyboard, guitar, and strings on this one. In "Free Radicals," he quips, "You think you're radical/but you're not so radical/in fact, you're fanatical ... Fanatical!" I hate to be nitpicky and snobby—my apologies to the band's admirers—but 'radical' is not the opposite of 'fanatical.'

Word obsessed Hip-Hop cat that I am, the album's lyrical missteps are well

compensated for by its beats. "The Wizard Turns On" is a tense, dark instrumental with deliciously ominous, flanged, digital delayed drums. Again, the influence of Pink Floyd is obvious. But the 'dunt, da-da-da-dunt' motif is also reminiscent of Isaac Hayes' bad-ass remake of Dionne Warwick's classic, "Walk on By." Loose, chunky beats and overdriven bass lay the foundation for the big, dumb fun of "It Overtakes Me"—a number with a distinctly T-Rex vibe to it. About halfway through, the bashing reverberates out into a dreamy, atmospheric confession: "And I'm there, looking up at the sky/and I'm scared, thinking 'bout the way that I/I don't understand/anything at all ..."

"The W.A.N.D.," an acronym for The Will Always Negates Defeat, is one of the more compelling politically-themed anthems in recent memory and must be a real blast to experience live. The riffs are sufficiently driving and edgy and the beats roll thunderously as Coyne lays it down for the people's uprising: "Time after time those fanatical minds try to rule all the world/Telling us all it's them who's in charge of it all/But I got a trick, a magic stick, that will make them all fall/We got the power now, mutha****s, that's where it belongs ..." This song also contains one of his flyest lines: "We're the enforcers/The Sorcerer's orphans/and we know why we fight!"

"Pompeii Am Gotterdammerung" is a frenzied, distorted, perfectly mad paean to the joys of being immortalized in ash by burning hot lava—part Floyd, part Kraftwerk/Tangerine Dream. The album ends with a song about the impending end of a relationship, "Goin' On." Minimalist to the extreme with its low-tech piano and Farfisa organ patches, it's more whimper than bang. And yet, every time I listen to it, I enjoy it a little bit more.

In spite of its sometimes less-than-spellbinding lyrics, I find *At War With the Mystics* to be a thoroughly engaging and entertaining piece of work. It is a curious mix of innovation and imitation. We're all pretty much re-interpreting something somebody else has already recorded. I think it's easier to roll with *At War* if you understand its many stylistic

reference points, which I certainly do. It's one of the very few contemporary rock projects I can truthfully say I dig. I look forward to seeing them live. I'll just make good and sure to wear a really thick hat, in case they decide to break out that giant orb again.■

Kyva Holman is a musician and social/political activist. He recently recorded an album called Nyambezi, Enter the Black Bodhisattva.

[BOOKS]

Towards a Meaningful Universe

COSMOS & PSYCHE: INTIMATIONS OF A NEW WORLD VIEW, by Richard Tarnas. Viking, 2006. Review by Jordi Pigem.

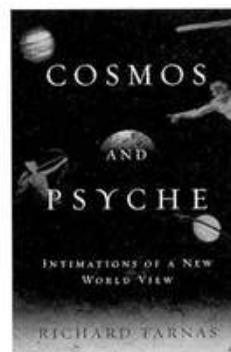
IN 1991 RICHARD TARNAS published what is still the clearest history of the Western intellectual adventure in a single volume, *The Passion of the Western Mind*. Now he has released another book, colossal in size and scope. *Cosmos and Psyche* harvests thirty years of research and challenges one of our most deep-seated assumptions: the view, pervasive in science, education, and the media, of the cosmos as a soulless, impersonal, and unconscious background, devoid of purpose or meaning.

In the last four centuries science has taken as truly real only that which can be counted and measured, relegating most of our direct experience (colors and flavors, feelings and impressions, pleasure and pain) to a set of delusions that can be explained away by quantifiable physical units (e.g., the red you see is not the real thing, the real thing is a wavelength of about 700 nanometers in the electromagnetic spectrum). This approach that reduces reality to numbers and abstractions is behind many of the technological wonders that surround us. It is also be-

hind the increasing spell of barcodes, indices, prices, rates, and statistics in our lives. And yet we feel that we are more than numbers. Everything that art and literature tell us about the passions of the human soul feels strongly at odds with what science tells us about a universe of lumps of mute matter and heedless energy bumping into each other in blind obedience to obscure mathematical laws (laws that, even for the experts, are becoming more and more unintelligible). Tarnas puts this in a nutshell, "Our spiritual being, our psychology, is contradicted by our cosmology. Our Romanticism is contradicted by our Enlightenment, our inner by our outer." We live today in "an age between worldviews, creative yet disoriented, a transitional era when the old cultural vision no longer holds and the new has not yet constellated." We long for a saner cultural vision, more meaningful and more compassionate, overcoming the barriers that cut us off from each other, from nature, and from the cosmos. But this new vision cannot emerge as long as we lack a coherent cosmology that allows us to feel truly at home in the universe. We need to reassess our place in the cosmos and our understanding of ourselves in order to face the deep challenges of our time. Tarnas' new book is a groundbreaking work in this crucial direction.

The first part of *Cosmos and Psyche* articulates the most lucid analysis I know of our contemporary cultural situation, in the context of the whole unfolding of the Western mind, and points to the self/world split at the root of our

many current crises. We know from history and literature that our ancestors, up to at least the twelfth century, did not see themselves as radically different or separate from nature and the cosmos. In the last few centuries we've transformed the world as much as we've transformed our image of ourselves. It seems indisputable that we've gained many blessings along this journey. And yet we feel ultimately estranged from nature today, cut



off from the universe and from our fellow human beings—unsurprisingly, because mainstream science suggests that we are no more than ephemeral accidents in a purposeless universe. “Our deepest spiritual and psychological aspirations,” writes Tarnas, “are fundamentally incoherent with the very nature of the cosmos revealed by the modern mind.” In this situation, “an integrated worldview, the natural aspiration of every psyche” is unattainable. An unconscious but widespread awareness of this missing dimension in our worldview underlies the lure of religious fundamentalism, with its narrow and predictable mindscapes, and its more secular manifestations, like neocon totalitarianism. At another level, the general meaninglessness behind the shiny mirages of our time can be seen at the root of our increasing epidemics of depression. To quote Tarnas at length:

Since the encompassing cosmological context in which all human activity takes place has eliminated any enduring ground of transcendent values—spiritual, moral, aesthetic—the resulting vacuum has empowered the reductive values of the market and the mass media to colonize the collective human imagination and drain it of all depth.... The underlying anxiety and disorientation that pervade modern societies in the face of a meaningless cosmos create both a collective psychic numbness and a desperate spiritual hunger, leading to an addictive, insatiable craving for ever more material goods to fill the inner emptiness and producing a manic techno-consumerism that cannibalizes the planet. Highly practical consequences ensue from the disenchanted modern worldview.

We are told that our disenchanted worldview, in which nothing is sacred and everything can be exploited, is the result of a mature perspective that transcends all naive anthropocentrism. And yet, as Tarnas rightly argues, what could be more anthropocentric than to see the whole universe as completely bereft of intelligence—“to assume that the exclusive source of all meaning and purpose in the universe is ultimately centered in the

human mind, which is therefore absolutely unique and special and in this sense superior to the entire cosmos”? Perhaps, suggests Tarnas, “The modern mind has been projecting soullessness and mindlessness on a cosmic scale ... Have we been living in a self-produced bubble of cosmic isolation?”

This penetrating cultural diagnosis would be enough to class *Cosmos and Psyche* as a masterwork; but the book does not stop at the diagnosis. It also begins to articulate a new vision responsive to our needs. This is partly built upon the depth psychology of Carl Jung and on the work of James Hillman, while bringing to the fore Jung’s ambiguities and his limiting Kantian assumptions. In particular, Tarnas clarifies the notion of synchronicities (unexpected, deeply meaningful coincidences that most of us experience at some time or another) and adds a new dimension to Hillman’s archetypal psychology, extending its locus into our cosmic environment.

Archetypes crystallize most clearly in human myths and collective aspirations, but according to archetypal psychology, they are present in everything we imagine and everything we do. As Hillman writes, “All psychic reality is governed by one or another archetypal fantasy.” In *Revisioning Psychology*, Hillman describes archetypes as “the deepest patterns of psychic functioning, the roots of the soul governing the perspectives we have of ourselves and the world.” Jung wrote about the power of these archetypal forces, vastly more powerful than “all other powers on earth,” in his book *Civilization in Transition*: “The gigantic catastrophes that threaten us today are not elemental happenings of a physical or biological order, but psychic events. To quite a terrifying degree we are threatened by wars and revolutions that are nothing other than psychic epidemics. At any moment several millions of human beings may be smitten with a new madness.... modern man is battered by the elemental forces of his own psyche.” (An insightful, although somewhat repetitive, Jungian description of today’s situation is Paul Levy’s *The Madness of George W. Bush: A Reflection of our Collective Psy-*

chosis). To be aware of the archetypal influences shaping our perceptions and our social environment is not just a useful way to self-knowledge: it is an essential skill for navigating troubled times like ours. The remaining parts of *Cosmos and Psyche*, after the initial theoretical analysis, offer a rich archetypal interpretation of a range of cultural and political events, helping the reader to develop the intuitive and imaginative intelligence that Hillman has described as an “archetypal eye”—a skill displayed by the great poets of earlier times but now eclipsed by our more quantifying, matter-of-fact gaze. If, just before the French Revolution, Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* transformed the modern mind by showing that our experience is always strongly colored by our own mental structures (what Kant called *a priori* forms and categories), Tarnas is now showing how our personal and cultural experiences take place in a wider environment of archetypal influences.

It is common to see whole epochs permeated by a certain zeitgeist or spirit of the times. In a detailed analysis of dozens of cultural and historical periods (and many cultural and historical figures), Tarnas sheds light on the archetypal patterns at work in them, and—here comes the challenge—shows how these moments and periods correlate with certain geometrical alignments of specific planets and with the traditional archetypal meaning associated with them. For instance, the emancipatory, transformative, and radically progressive spirit of the 1960s coincided with a Uranus-Pluto planetary alignment, active throughout 1960-1972. Archetypally these two planets seem to correlate with remarkable consistency with impulses towards emancipation, innovation, and radical transformation. This Uranus-Pluto alignment was at work in previous times that showed a comparable zeitgeist, such as 1787-1798, in the French Revolution’s pervasive aspiration for *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. And the climactic times of emancipatory struggles (like those for equal rights for black people and women) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also happen to correlate with this Uranus-Pluto cycle. This cycle is now

coming back into alignment, for the first time since 1960-1972, during 2007-2020. Judging from the wealth of historical examples provided by Tarnas, this new alignment could bring forth the right archetypal climate for a much-needed transformation of our consciousness and our world. If and how this may happen depends on us.

This approach to cultural history is a contemporary unfolding of a whole intellectual tradition (from Plato to Shakespeare and Goethe) that perceives clear resonances between microcosm and macrocosm, the human self and the wider world. Plotinus wrote that "the stars are like letters" in a world that is "full of signs" and where "everything breathes together." Tarnas sometimes refers to this tradition as astrology, and yet one needs no sympathy with astrology to appreciate Tarnas' insights and correlations. *Cosmos and Psyche* has no relation with Sun-sign popular newspaper horoscopes (words like Scorpio and Sagittarius are never mentioned in the book). In fact, Tarnas explicitly criticizes the naiveté, lack of rigor, and potentially harmful effects of much of what today goes by the name of astrology. The correlations presented here are based on astronomical data used by NASA and on undisputed historical and biographic facts. In *Cosmos and Psyche* there is nothing of the fateful predictions that we would associate with astrology. According to Tarnas, "The planets do not 'cause' specific events any more than the hands of a clock 'cause' a specific time. Rather, the planetary positions are *indicative* of the cosmic state of archetypal dynamics at that time." The human sense of freedom is never threatened. On the contrary, it is empowered in a double direction. Inwardly, our freedom is strengthened by an increased awareness of our archetypal dynamics. Outwardly, our freedom finds a wider context of meaning and a living cosmos in which to participate. As Tarnas puts it, "Archetypal awareness brings greater self-awareness and thus greater personal autonomy."

The field that Tarnas is charting here is enormous, and complete account of it couldn't be summarized in a single book.

For most of us trained in the modern scientific worldview, looking at correlations between human and macrocosmic events may seem absurd. I've been following Tarnas' research on these matters for the last ten years, and I wasn't at all convinced at first. Yet the more I've been examining this research, the more I've accepted its sound and powerful implications. We should guard against acting like the mainstream academics and theologians who refused to look through Galileo's telescope. Tarnas' correlations, like any research that involves interpretation, cannot be assessed by statistics or double blind experiments. They involve looking through the archetypal telescope—and, as happened with Galileo's telescope—this requires time and some stretching of our minds and our senses. Galileo's claims were deeply challenging to his contemporaries. Earlier in the 1540s, it sounded absurd when Copernicus proposed that the Earth spins on its axis and revolves around the Sun. At the time, and for at least the rest of the sixteenth century, that proposal was a leap of faith, without the slightest scientific proof to support it. It didn't work mathematically—that had to wait until Kepler—or physically—that had to wait until Newton. Copernicus had no answer to the simplest objections: if the Earth revolves, how come things don't fly off everywhere? If it continuously turns eastwards, how come things dropped from a high tower fall by its base and not further west? And yet, even today Copernicus is our archetypal scientific hero. A new worldview, if it's truly new, will necessarily sound absurd to the current worldview that it is called to overcome.

Cosmos and Psyche is like an Archimedean lever that could lift the modern world into a fuller awareness of its psychological depths. The evidence it provides ushers us into a universe that is "a fundamentally and irreducibly interconnected whole, informed by creative intelligence and pervaded by patterns of meaning and order that extend through every level ... a universe in which mind and matter, psyche and cosmos, are more pervasively related or radically united than has been assumed in the modern

worldview." From the mechanical, impersonal, slumberous universe we inherited from Descartes and Newton, we wake up to a participatory, mindful, and ensouled web of synchronicities. This is not a return to a premodern past, but a step towards a transrational awareness that integrates modern and transmodern developments (Nietzsche and Freud, Einstein and Planck, Jung and Hillman).

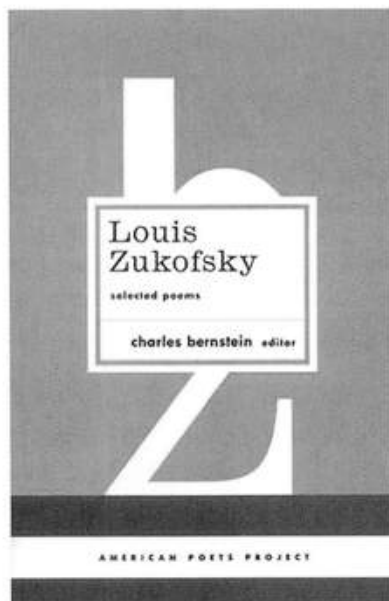
In the last ten years, landmark works like David Abram's *The Spell of the Sensuous*, Derrick Jensen's *A Language Older than Words*, and David Kidner's *Nature and Psyche* have been reflecting and kindling a growing awareness that nature is not merely a sum of molecules obeying physical and chemical laws, but a living, sensuous, and ensouled matrix in which we fully participate and belong. Tarnas' *Cosmos and Psyche* extends this rising awareness beyond the bounds of the biosphere. Our psyche is not only deeply connected with our immediate natural environment, but with the whole of the cosmos encompassing us, with the rhythms of the planets we can see above us on clear nights. Searching beneath the depths of the psyche, Tarnas has found the heights of the cosmos. *Cosmos and Psyche* may radically transform the way we see cultural and political history, individual life journeys, and our sense of participation in the universe. ■

Jordi Pigem is a writer and philosopher, formerly a lecturer in the history of science at Schumacher College in England. He is the author of *La odisea de Occidente* and *El pensamiento de Raimon Panikkar*.

Finding His Voice

LOUIS ZUKOFSKY: SELECTED POEMS edited by Charles Bernstein. *The Library of America*, 2006 Review by Bob Perelman

LOUIS ZUKOFSKY WAS ONE of the most accomplished American modernist poets, but a quarter century after his death it's still not an ironclad certainty that he won't be confused with a very different kind of American poet—Charles Bukowski—or that his name



won't be misspelled "Zukovsky" in anthologies or critical articles. So it's a sign of poetic justice that the canonically-minded Library of America has published Zukofsky's *Selected Poems* in an attractive little hardback of 175 pages. Contemporary poet Charles Bernstein uses these pages skillfully to present a compact but diverse selection of Zukofsky's writing, and he supplies a cogent introduction to both the biography and the poetics. Zukofsky himself insisted that, often, poets' works comprised a single long poem, and that there was no interesting distinction to be drawn between the writing and the life: "The words are my life" was his emphatic summary. Yet the usefulness of *Selected Poems* is not that it provides a single, concentrated sense of Zukofsky's poetry, but precisely the opposite, that it offers glimpses of a remarkably multifarious body of work. While Zukofsky described his poetics as "An integral / Lower limit speech / Upper limit music," this collection should draw our attention not to the integral but to how wide a range there is between those limits.

There's Zukofsky the epic poet, whose long poem "A" (the quotes are part of the title) belongs in the company of Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, William Carlos Williams' *Paterson*, Hart Crane's *The Bridge*, and H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt*. There's Zukofsky the lyric poet, writer of exquisitely delicate miniatures;

Zukofsky the fanatical game-player, who wrote a number of the most intricately-patterned works in the language; Zukofsky the poet of class-struggle; Zukofsky the Jewish cultural provocateur; Zukofsky the family sentimentalist; Zukofsky the cultural dandy. All of these modes have distinct tones. While Zukofsky was remarkably attentive to the sound and placement of each syllable he wrote, he never lavished that care on the creation of a characteristic personal style—he never, as they say, found his voice. Instead, he used writing with emphatic variousness: to speak of his father, "The miracle of his first job / On the lower East Side"; to wax lyrical, "River that must turn full after I stop

dying / Song, my song, raise grief to music"; to anatomize English into an approximation of Catullus's Latin,

"Mool 'tis homos, 'Naso 'n' queer take 'im mool 'is ho most *he* / descended"; to leave discursive syntax behind and to sing, "tongues commonly inaccurate talk viable / one to one, ear to / eye loving song greater than / anything."

Zukofsky was born on the Lower East Side in 1904 to Yiddish-speaking parents, attended Columbia, became an ardent student of modernist poetry, and soon got in touch with Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams. Thanks to Pound's efforts, he edited an issue of *Poetry* magazine in 1931 where he introduced a group of poets that he labeled

POETRY

Every True Religion Is Bound to Fail

Only the Divine truth reveals itself
In lies, smarter truths Disguise themselves as
Fundament or wise. On the way from dusk
To Dark, slip to slap, pitch to black, a Haze
Cries sudden slow, searing sworn, Betrays de-
lay's sullied song. Ev'ry true monument
Lays in shards, layered with tongues. The trip to
Caution foment Alarm, as lulled to
Passion, Action never reverses Wrong –
no Certainty ever could Cancel right.

Tried syrup for a while, round of sweetness
For ton of Tears. Fault of fellows, rusty
Melons that mock the girls and make us dry.
Mock the curls and make men sigh.

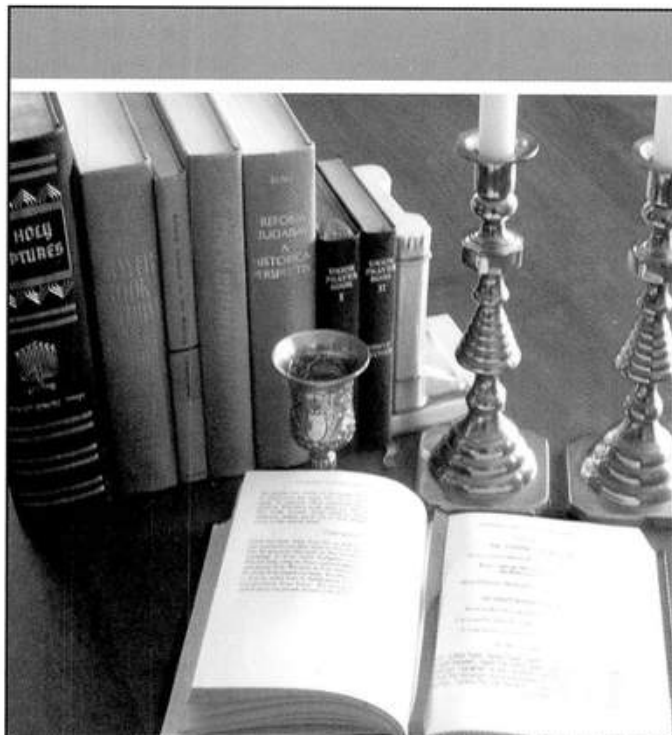
- Charles Bernstein

"Objectivists." As with "A," the quotes were part of the label, though now Zukofsky, George Oppen, Charles Reznikoff, Lorine Niedecker, and Carl Rakosi are referred to simply as Objectivists. Succeeding generations of poets and critics have increasingly seen them as an important chapter in modernism, but initial readers such as Horace Gregory expressed skepticism, detecting unappealing hints of urbanism, Marxism, and Jewishness.

Tepid as the reaction was, this was the high-water mark of Zukofsky's literary visibility until near the end of his life. He continued to write, conceiving and completing a remarkable array of work—his epic "A" in twenty-four sections, the last seventeen of which are written in highly varied styles (close to *Ulysses* in that respect); books of short poems; a play; a novel; a book of criticism; a 500-page cento of philosophy in homage to Shakespeare; a homophonic translation of Catullus—but his audience was limited. At one point he describes his wife Celia as "my one reader who types me." Eventually, Zukofsky did attract other readers. In the 1950s, poets Robert Creeley, Denise Levertov, Robert Duncan, and Cid Corman discovered his work with an enthusiasm that eventually diffused itself, so that by the time of his death in 1978 his work was more widely available and he himself was considered a major predecessor by avant-garde poets such as the Language writers.

Zukofsky's writing is fascinating for many reasons. The extremity of his formal ambitions is striking. The most famous example is the ninth section of "A," where Zukofsky uses the intricate template of Guido Cavalcanti's thirteenth-century *canzone*, "Donna mi Prega," to present a précis of Marx's doctrine of commodity fetishism. He takes his vocabulary from *Capital* and a textbook on quantum physics, while matching the original rhyme scheme: "An impulse to action sings of a semblance / Of things related as equated values, / The measure all use is time-congealed labor . . ." To my mind, equally remarkable is his early response to T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," entitled "Poem beginning 'The.'" Whether it is to be taken as a parody or homage remains an open question. Either way, it furnishes an apt emblem of the difference that ultimately fueled Zukofsky's lifelong exertions toward wholeness: "Assimilation is not hard, / And once's the Faith's askew / I might as well look Shagetz just as much as Jew. / I'll read their Donne as mine, / And leopard in their spots / I'll do what says their Coleridge, / Twist red-hot poker into knots." ■

Bob Perelman has published over fifteen volumes of poetry, most recently The Future of Memory and Ten to One: Selected Poems. He is a professor in the Department of English at the University of Pennsylvania.



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The Colors of Jews

Excerpt from **THE COLORS OF JEWS: RACIAL POLITICS AND RADICAL DIASPORISM** by Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007

THIS BOOK DEPARTS FROM SEVERAL assumptions about Jewish life with the explicit intent of changing them. That all Jews came from Eastern Europe and spoke Yiddish. That Jewishness is only religion; that secular Judaism is a contradiction in terms; that real Jews are born Jewish. That calling (all) Jews "white" explains anything. That calling (all) Jews people of color explains anything. That American Jews and African Americans used to be best friends and are now enemies. That Jews and Arabs were always enemies and could never be friends. That life in the diaspora has always been a vale of tears which all Jews aspire to escape.

I write this book to overturn these assumptions, but also to strengthen the identity and practice of Jewish anti-racism, including the often-buried strand of economic justice. To heighten understanding among Jews of diverse backgrounds/cultures/ethnicities that we need each other in part *because of* our differences. To help Jews grasp that those Jews who are cultural minorities within a hegemonic Ashkenazi community are often best equipped to help the Jewish world reckon with our multiculturalism, and that this multiculturalism is an enormous asset when it comes to combating racism and anti-Semitism, and to building social justice coalitions.

I name this identity and practice of Jewish anti-racism "Diasporism."

The common Jewish practice is to name our experience differently from those with whom we might share it. Jews say *antisemitism*, not racism against Jews; Jews say *Zionism*, not nationalism for Jews. We cling to the term Holocaust as ours only, anxious about whether other genocides deserve the name. All this separate naming makes it harder to

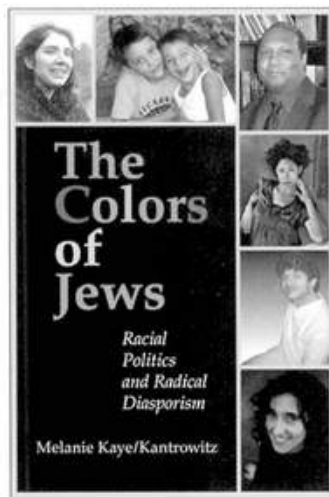
identify and analyze commonality and difference.

I want to contextualize Jewish experience in a common language. Diaspora—of Greek origin—has had a Jewish life; *galut* in Hebrew and *goles* in Yiddish: both mean exile. But centuries of migration for many mean many live in diaspora, and not always—Jew or not—experiencing diaspora as exile. Ella Shohat, whose family migrated from Iraq to Israel, stands on its head the exilic psalm, "By the waters of Zion, we sat and wept, when we remembered Babylon."

Diaspora, in the early twenty-first century, emerges in post-colonial and postmodern discourse as a dynamic concept to name the experience of many peoples. The African Diaspora; the Chinese Diaspora; the South Asian Diaspora; and of course the Palestinian Diaspora.

Diasporism, then, embraces diaspora, offers a place we might join with others who value this history of dispersion, others who stand in opposition to nationalism and the nation state, who choose instead to value border-crossing as envisioned by the late Gloria Anzaldúa in her work about *mestiza* consciousness, or by the founders of the New Association of Sephardi/Mizrahi Artists & Writers, International (Ivri/NASAWI); "*ivri* ... means border-crosser, predates the word Jew. Jew is what the Romans called the Israelites, and we thought *ivri* was actually what Hebrews called themselves." Diasporism joins those who see borders as lines to cross, who seek the memory or possibility or value of motion, fluidity, and multiple visions.

I name this ideology and practice *Diasporism* as a deliberate counter to Zionism. Zionism/Jewish nationalism is one choice Jews make, but not the only choice. It's time someone named and explored and pressed into existence the choice most Jews are making in practice.



And *radical* Diasporism? Because this is no casual invitation to perpetually wander. The diasporism I have in mind recognizes the persecution and danger that have made many long for home and passport, yearn to leave the wandering behind. Inside this longing, diasporism represents tension, resistance to both assimilation and

nostalgia, to both corporate globalization that destroys peoples and cultures, and to nationalism, which promises to preserve people and cultures but so often distorts them through the prisms of masculinism, racism, and militarism. Radical Diasporism, *sans* army, *sans* military heroes and victories, meshes well with feminism in valuing a strength and heroism available to those without armies; and suits queerness, in rejecting the constraints of traditional gendered existence. ■



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Dear Swami:

Swami Beyondananda's 2007 State of the Universe Address

HUMANIFEST DESTINY: FROM SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST TO THRIVAL OF THE FITTINGEST

Another earth year has passed, and I am happy to report that once again the universe is doing just great, thank you, purring with perfection, ever-changing, same as always. Light is still cruising along at 186,000 miles per second, and the expanding universe shows no signs of contracting. At this rate, it won't be long before they'll have to let the photon belt out another notch.

Meanwhile, back here on our own little center of the universe, the human race seems to be racing against time. Those Concerned Scientists have just moved the Doomsday clock up to five minutes til midnight, and even some of the unconcerned scientists are getting concerned. With all due respect to Wilson Pickett, if this midnight hour ever comes it won't be love that comes tumblin' down. Well, maybe tough love.

ARE WE AS SMART AS OUR CELLS?

If you used to hate it when your parents compared you to someone else saying, "If so-and-so can do it, why not you?" you're probably not going to like what I'm about to tell you—but here goes. Our cells may be smarter than we are. At least they've figured out how to live together in peace and harmony. According to cellular biologist Bruce Lipton, we have a thriving 50 trillion cell community under our skin where every participating cell is cared for. Universal health care, full employment—truly no cell left behind. And the cells that do the most important work for the body as a whole get "paid" more. Our organs seem

to get along too. You hardly ever hear about the liver cruising up the bile canal, invading the pancreas, and laying claim to the Islets of Langerhans.

Meanwhile, back in the jungle, we pursue Manifest Destiny and survival of the fittest as our supposed biological imperative, except for one small detail: it doesn't matter how fit the individual is, if the species doesn't fit, then out it goes. If you thought *Man Without a Country* was a sad story, wait until you see *Man Without a Planet*. I hate to say it, but global warming may be nothing more than the Earth running a fever in the hopes of shaking a virulent parasite called *homo ignoramus*.

Now don't get me wrong, there have been some really great people: Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Elvis. (That's right, Elvis. I've been following his threefold path for years: "Love me tender ... please surrender ... return to sender.") But anyway, there have been lots and lots of lots of really wonderful individuals. Individually, you won't meet a nicer species. But put a bunch of us together, and we're hell on wheels. Did you know that during the twentieth century, war caused 260 million deaths? Why, if someone did just one 260 millionth of

that, it'd be all over the six o'clock news with details at eleven. If any one of us did what we allow "all of us" to do, we'd be put away forever. They must have modified the Ten Commandments while we weren't looking: thou shalt not kill, except in extremely large groups.

I've said it before, but maybe it bears repeating. It could very well be that ten commandments are just too many. Maybe we should start with One Suggestion: we're all in this together. Maybe we children of God manifest our destiny as humanity by finally becoming adults of God, and realizing we are the Creator's creation, created to create. In other

words, we're not here to earn God's love, we're here to spend it! I call it supply side spirituality.

Imagine all the nations of the world thriving together—in a great thrivalry—and manifesting our destiny as a humanity ... to re-grow the Garden from the grassroots up, and have a heaven of a time doing it.

Can we do it? Well, there is a field of infinite possibility out there. And it's not a battlefield, it's a playing field.

So let's take the field.■



By Steve Bhaerman.
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ROBERT THURMAN:

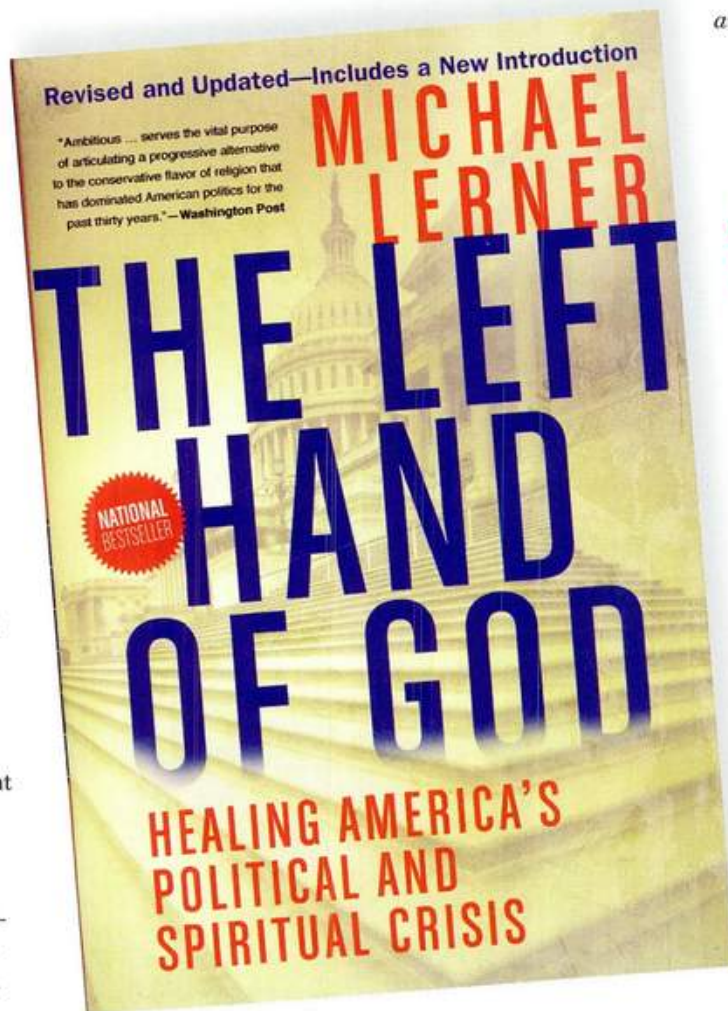
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