

Tikkun

POLITICS+SPIRITUALITY+CULTURE

(tē·kūn) To mend, repair, and transform the world. SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2007

WHAT COULD
DEMS DO...
WHEN BUSH SAYS NO?

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The Israel Lobby

Bad for the U.S., Bad for Israel,
Bad for the Jews



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Designer Babies...How far can science go?
Elders Could Rebalance the World | Perkins on
Jackals & Hitmen | Vets Aren't Crazy: War Is

If This Be Jews

Now that Jews are no different from anyone else,
do we have to prove it by being as bad as anyone else?
Of course, why shouldn't Jews be as bad as anyone else?
Who says we have to be better?
Except of course, we're Jews....

You used to have to be at least a genius
in order to beat the quotas at Ivy League colleges—
I'm afraid I wasn't, and couldn't,
when I tried to get into Columbia.
We weren't even considered Caucasian—we were Semites,
and in my town that meant practically Negro.

But that was before Israel.
My God, how life changed for us.
The Restricted signs came down from hotels,
and they practically begged us to join the country club.
Now we can live in the classiest neighborhood,
and like real Americans
play tennis, go skiing in Aspen.

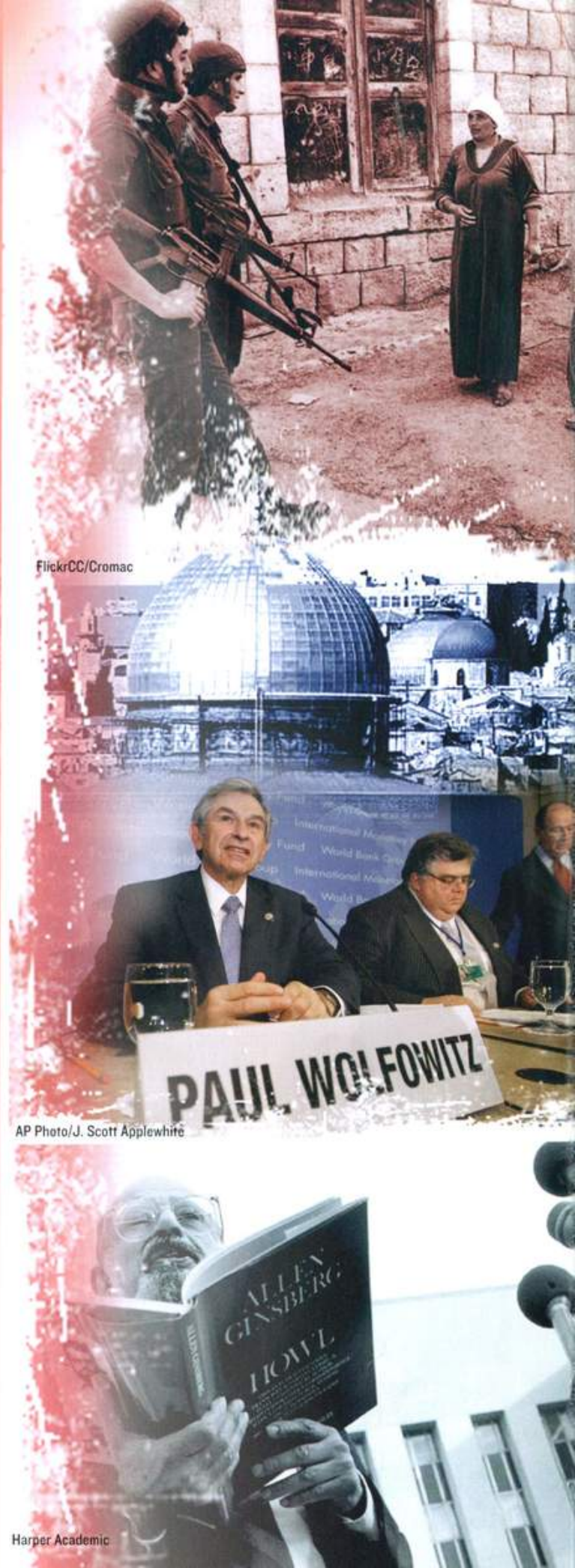
There were always token Jews in every field,
but after Israel, Jackie Kennedy
even invited New York Jewish Intellectuals to the White House,
and made us celebrities—I say us because they were us, the tribe.
What any Jew does is on all our merit badge sashes.

That may have been the first step on the downward path,
for at the same time, other Jews were being persecuted as reds
and those inner-circle Jews were silent about it or approved.
To our credit, outsider Jews like Allen Ginsberg
shot their mouths off. He had a big mouth.

George W. even includes Jews in his war cabinet—
probably so we could be blamed if anything went wrong,
as it has—tragically, though predictably wrong.
But what are Jews doing in this government?
Wasn't civil liberties always a Jewish passion?
Could Jews really be for invading other countries,
locking people up in cages without a trial,
sending them to other countries to be tortured?
How can any Jew send the army out to conquer the world
for MacDonald's and Halliburton and Standard Oil,
not to speak of occupying for forty years
a people, no worse, no better than us,
and grinding them into the humiliating dust?

Nobody ever said it was going to be easy being a Jew
but if these be Jews, I want out,
except, sorry Jewboy, you can't defect—
Hitler taught every one of us that.

- Edward Field



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Auschwitz Birkenau

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Readers Respond

IMPEACHMENT

I WAS THRILLED TO SEE the current *Tikkun* [July/August 2007] with "Impeach" emblazoned on the cover. We, the Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP), have great courage and clarity to advance, without shame or apologies, our bold vision of a world based on peace, compassion, generosity, and spiritual principles through our Spiritual Covenant with America and our Global Marshall Plan.

At first, I was deeply disappointed that we have not yet taken a stand on impeachment, but realized that the editorials, interviews, and articles are presented as a foundation for discussion and reflection so that we can formulate and decide how we, as spiritual progressives, should approach holding our leaders accountable, just as our nation and community did when trying to heal from the atrocities of Hitler during the Nuremberg trials and as they did in South Africa, during the accountability,

peace, and reconciliation acts.

The principal question on the impeachment of Bush, Cheney, and other administration officials is: Do we wish to maintain our Constitution as a moral and legal foundation upon which we can protect and shape our humanitarian values, principals, rights, and freedoms?

Do we plan to work within this existing, lawful framework, or can we simply ignore the fact that this administration has already eroded the Constitution to the point where we, as American citizens, do not have the privilege of Habeas Corpus or the right of privacy or the right to freedom of speech or assembly?

I am not asking us to be anything like Gandhi, who defied unjust laws. I am asking us to follow the "rule book" and hold our leaders accountable. I am asking that we decry to Congress and this administration the crimes and complicity against humanity through torture, invasion and occupation, corporate tyranny and war profiteering, and contempt for our Constitution and the rule of law.

Let us take a step toward clarity and away from corporate politics. Let us call for impeachment: Accountability, rule

of law, true morality, ethics and human rights.

NATALIE MORRISON
Madison, WI

POWER OF A DIFFERENT KIND

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT many (most?) male theologians would deepen their thinking on the issue of power if they spent a lot more time reading and rereading Judith Plaskow and Riane Eisler. The concept of power as Domination and the Dominating Other is what so many people worldwide are so sick of. But the alternative is not "powerlessness," as Tony Campolo implies in "God as the Suffering Servant" [*Tikkun* May/June 2007]. It is not a choice between power and no power. The alternative to power-as-domination is

power of a different kind—the power to inspire, support, and empower rather than to conquer, kill, and destroy. As Eisler puts it, it is the power of mutuality, the power of partnership/respect rather than domination/control. The choice to partner rather than to dominate is not the negation, loss, or limitation of power and, in fact, may increase feelings of power.

I would also guess that most progressive feminists still associated even peripherally with Christian theology would be appalled and frustrated by the persistent notion that G-d's power supposedly comes "through sacrificial love expressed in His death by dying on the cross." Dolores Williams, Rebecca Parker, and many others have powerfully and

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repeatedly deconstructed this most entrenched of all doctrines in Christian theology. These very different readings need deep reflection because the focus on Jesus' murder rather than on his life distorts everything.

In one reading, focus on Jesus' murder as G-d-ordained sacrifice entails the macabre notion that the grotesque Roman death system was actually "part of G-d's plan" to effect a human sacrifice supposedly needed to appease G-d's own implacable rage at the disobedience of [His] beloved human creatures in the Garden of Eden. What kind of a G-d requires blood lust or a human sacrifice to "satisfy" [His] own rage at [His] own creation/children? In

a different reading, similar to the one Dr. Campolo seems to be taking, even Huston Smith (*The Soul of Christianity*) appears to subscribe to the notion that in the crucifixion G-d allows [Him]self to be killed as a way to show humanity how much [He], our Creator, loves us. What child would ever want a parent to sacrificially die as an expression of "love"? Or would feel anything but horror at such an act? Children want loving parents to live, not to die.

The point is that Jesus' use of power in his life was to heal. And that, I would suggest, is the model to focus on, not this endlessly morbid focus on his brutal murder at the hands of Roman death squads. In staying true to his under-

standing of Reality, Jesus knew that the Dominator system might kill him, and it did. The fact that even death couldn't conquer life, however, was a mind-boggingly powerful revelation for Jesus' followers, past and present. But there is a point at which that "new" revelation (now 2,000 years old) is no longer so "new" and the fixation on it no longer appropriate. Life after death, however powerful, compelling, comforting, or reassuring, does not preclude or take precedence over life before death.

The model of power that women have been suggesting is not the model men have imposed on women for millennia, based, for some, on the

distorted notion of Christianity as self-sacrificial death; rather it is a model of mutuality in life, as Jesus demonstrated with his disciples—including women—and with the ill, the lame, and the despised. The model of power-as-domination, of G-d as Dominating Other, whether masquerading as masculinity, religiosity, or invincibility, is an ancient model that doesn't work and needs to be replaced with models of life and living defined not as "sacrificial love in death" but as mutuality in making life what it could be when undertaken as "respectful love in life."

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High Holidays 5768 | Tikkun

Repentance in a Time of War

In the United States, Israel, and most other advanced industrial countries, this year's High Holidays come at a period of massive hypocrisy, nationalist chauvinism, repression of civil liberties, and denial of the most critical issues facing our planet. We continue to ignore the basic problems that plague the global human community (starvation, disease, impending ecological crisis), choosing instead to persist in the "war against terrorism" to justify military aggression against countries whose regimes we abhor. There will be little talk about the 2.8 billion people on the planet living on less than two dollars a day, or the 850 million people who are hungry, or the 20–30,000 children who, according to UN estimate, die every single day of starvation or of preventable diseases related to malnutrition.

Few American leaders will use this period to ask what America can do to rectify the damage done to the social, ecological, and spiritual environments of the world's peoples. Meanwhile, hundreds of billions of our tax dollars will continue to be allocated to fighting a misguided and useless war in Iraq. And yet many will continue to vote for elected officials who have refused to support an immediate withdrawal from Iraq or a cut-off of funds for that war—telling themselves that they "have no choice" because their opponents are even worse.

Nor will most of us honestly and deeply confront the fact that the war in Iraq, which we initiated, has now led to the deaths of over 600,000 Iraqis. Our media will list (and sometimes tell about) the lives of Americans lost through the stupidity and immorality of the invasion of Iraq, but it will not list or tell about the lives of Iraqis killed in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion. Nor will most of us challenge our members of Congress on why they didn't refuse to bring to the floor of the House any authorization for military defense until our troops were out of Iraq (a move that would not need the approval of the President and would effectively force the Administration to choose between its war and its defense budget). We will jump on the hopes elicited by candidates for president who say they oppose the war, but never ask them to reject the strategy of domination that is the key element in perpetuating this and other wars, never ask them to embrace publicly the Global Marshall Plan, never ask them to affirm that they are not going to leave any troops in or around Iraq even renamed as "advisors," and never ask them to renounce any use of military force to get our way with Iran. We will be timid about calling for the Network of Spiritual Progressives' version of the Global Marshall Plan, and timid precisely for what makes it most appropriate to discuss on High Holy Days—its commitment to use 1–2 percent of the GDP each year for the next twenty to end global poverty and environmental degradation. And we might be timid about raising the fundamental new idea, which is actually the deepest spiritual truth of all the spiritual traditions: that what we really need

is a rejection of the idea that security comes through domination, and a commitment to live by a new idea, that security can come through a Strategy of Generosity and open-heartedness toward others, based on the recognition that our well-being depends on the well-being of everyone on the planet. How many of us will be ready to take that idea seriously and insist upon it publicly?

Many of our synagogues will condone Israel's behavior toward Palestinians and once again deflect the conversation to the sins of the Palestinian people. They will rightly decry the violence of Hamas and the intransigence in not unequivocally recognizing Israel's right to exist.

But they will neglect to say that Israel has kept the Palestinian people occupied and encircled for forty years, that three times as many Palestinians as Israelis have died in the ongoing struggle, that the Palestinian people use (in our view, immorally) acts of terror as the only weapon available to a people under occupation who have no army, no tanks, no airforce (thankfully, from our perspective)—in fact, the very tactics used by some factions of the Zionists against the British before the creation of Israel in the 1930s and 1940s.

You may hear laments about the Israeli soldiers who have been "kidnapped" by Hamas or Hezbollah, but you'll hear very little about the thousands of Palestinian civilians who have been "kidnapped" by the Israeli army and brought to detention camps where they have been held for months, sometimes years, without charges or trial, often subjected to torture (a claim validated by the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem as well as by international organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International).

Some of the speakers in our synagogues will rightly point to the despotic nature of many of the surrounding Arab states, most will go on to praise Israel as a "democratic society," ignoring the fact that over three million Palestinians have lived for forty years under Israel's rule without ever having a vote or say in the Knesset, and ignoring that Israel's own Arab population continually but unsuccessfully challenges the racial inequalities they face in their daily lives.

It's unlikely that you'll hear anyone talk about the distortions in Jewish life and in American politics generated by the Israel Lobby, the suppression of honest debate, the labeling as "self-hating" those Jews who criticize Israeli policy and as "anti-Semites" those non-Jews who raise public criticisms.

All this sounds one-sided. But from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur the task is not to justify ourselves by pointing out how bad everyone else is, but to be deeply self-critical and honest about our own ways of "missing the mark" (that is what it means to sin—to have strayed from the inner beauty and goodness that we all are as embodiments of the God energy of the universe, to have allowed ourselves to get off course).

Nor will we likely hear many rabbis or speakers in our syna-

gogues challenging the “old bottom line” that generates so much materialism and selfishness in American society.

You'll hear the Haftorah on Yom Kippur in which Isaiah recounts God's message: “Is not this the fast that I desire: to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and unloose the bonds of oppression”; and yet, you'll find few synagogues making the connection between the reality of world hunger and the specific reality of the Israeli Occupation—the techniques of cutting off electricity and hence denying water or refrigeration to a million people in Gaza, or starving an entire population in Lebanon, or denying adequate food, water, and health care in the West Bank.

Tikkun wants to support you in challenging this hypocrisy. We want to encourage you to stand up for the vision of the prophets for a world of peace, justice, and love.

It's easy to feel righteous indignation about the distortions of the United States or Israel, but don't let that keep you from facing your own personal issues as well. Just as we advocate compassion for the United States and Israel, and celebrating the good parts of them while strongly critiquing what is wrong with them, so also we urge you to use this period from the evening of September 12th (Rosh Hashanah, 5768) to nightfall on

September 22nd (end of Yom Kippur) to do your own inner work with compassion for yourself, while still being honest enough to really evaluate and then form plans for how to change those aspects of your own personal being that need transformation.

This workbook serves as an aid in the process of teshuvah (repentance or returning to our highest selves). The great message of these High Holy Days is that change is possible—we are not stuck. That's why the Network of Spiritual Progressives and Tikkun celebrate these holidays with great joy—because we recognize that the ultimate power of the universe is YHVH, the force of healing and transformation, the God that makes it possible for us to overcome our own stuck places and come back to our highest selves.

We invite you to bring this workbook to Rosh Hashanah services, use it throughout the intervening days of repentance, and bring it with you to review on Yom Kippur. You don't have to be Jewish to use this process as a powerful tool for self and community transformation. You are invited to make copies of this and share it with friends, neighbors, and people in your community.

In each case, write down what part of a problem you might have contributed to, and how your behavior in each relationship might have been part (not the entirety) of the problem. How might you begin to work on that part during this *teshuvah* period?

What is spiritually out of alignment in my relationships with...

PROBLEM	WHAT YOU CONTRIBUTE TO IT
<i>Parents</i> 1. 2.	
<i>Spouse or Partner</i> 1. 2.	
<i>Friends</i> 1. 2.	
<i>Children</i> 1. 2.	

How spiritually nourishing is your work?

What have been the problems you've faced here? Have you had good relationships with co-workers? Have you felt fulfilled in your work? Have you been involved in collective efforts to change the workplace, or the union, or tried to organize—or have you felt powerless and unable to envision changing anything? If you were in a supervisory position, did you treat your supervisees with the respect that they deserve? If you were unemployed, what efforts did you make to change that? Or were you feeling more defeated

than necessary? If your work is unfulfilling, did you blame yourself inappropriately, or involve yourself in struggles to change the workplace? Did you discharge anger from work by punishing yourself (e.g., through alcohol or drugs) or by dumping on friends or lovers—or did you express that anger at the appropriate targets or through collective action? What could have been different? Have you taken any of the steps to fight for “a new bottom line” at work that values love and caring, awe and wonder?

How spiritually nourishing is your work? (continued)

PROBLEM

WHAT YOU CONTRIBUTE TO IT

Relationship with coworkers.

Relationship with supervisors or supervisees.

How healthy were your coping mechanisms with stress at work?

Did you inappropriately blame yourself, or dump anger inappropriately on others?

What kind of political action did you take in relationship to work?

Did you show adequate respect for your body?

Did you care for your body this past year? If not, what didn't you do that you should have done?

Eating

Exercise

Vacations

Clothing and Appearance

Self-Presentation

Quiet Time or Meditation

Are you taking enough time to nourish your soul?

Did you care for your soul this past year? If not, what didn't you do that you should have done?

In what ways did you care for your soul this past year?

In what ways did you neglect your soul?

Did it give you any messages that you ignored? What were they?

Did you take time to read the books that would have expanded your awareness of spiritual life? If not, what do you want to read this next year?

What courses (evening schools in liberal arts or a new profession, art programs, Hebrew, Jewish studies, studying a new musical instrument, learning a martial art, learning about another culture or philosophical tradition) did you take to expand your horizons? What would you like to take this next year?

What pleasures did you give to yourself this year? Which do you want to expand or initiate this coming year? Did you allow yourself to go to art exhibits, plays, musical concerts, poetry readings, discussion groups, community political action activities, or other events that would have given you pleasure? What do you want to do in this regard in the next year?

In what ways did you explore your relationship with God this past year? In what ways did you ignore that dimension of life? Did you read any books or attend lectures or courses or dedicate time to exploring the spiritual dimension of your life?

Are you giving real energy to Tikkun Olam, to healing and repairing the world?

Which of our society's political, economic, or social institutions have destructive consequences to the environment, social justice, or our capacity to be loving and compassionate human beings?

What concrete steps have you taken to be involved? How will you face the coming years in which George Bush in the United States and Ariel Sharon in Israel pursue a political agenda at variance with your own? What will you personally do to change the status quo?

If you haven't been involved, what were the reasons you gave yourself? Which of those reasons presupposed a "surplus powerlessness" (a way in which you were actually assuming yourself less able to initiate things or take leadership than is "objectively" true)?

If you tried to be involved, and had hassles or disappointments with other people in the process, what were those and what part did you have in making or sustaining them? What did you do to confront the problems directly? If you tried to confront the problems and failed, did you give up or did you attempt to form another group addressing the same problems, but this time under your own leadership and direction? If not, what could you have done in this direction?

In what ways did you buy the message that "They will never listen," or "I can never get things to happen," or "I'm not powerful enough to start something so I'll wait for someone else to do it," or "Other people are too untogether or too immoral or too passive, so there's no point in me trying to mobilize them," or other similar messages?

Did you help build a connection to Judaism and the Jewish world?

How much did you seek to deepen your knowledge of Judaism, Jewish history, Jewish texts, or the culture of the Jewish people or of Israel? What opportunities were there and what were the reasons you gave yourself for why this year wasn't the right time?

Did you allow yourself to take 25 hours out of your busy schedule to observe Shabbat in a traditional way? If not, what part of Shabbat did you observe? How fulfilling or spiritually deep did you allow it to be? If it wasn't, what explanations did you give yourself for why it wasn't working? What would you have wished it to be?

Did you allow others to convince you to separate the religious from the social/political transformative aspects of Judaism? How did that happen in your life?

Did you involve yourself in any activity, or help financially support, Tikkun, New Israel Fund, Peace Now, or some other Jewish group in which you believed? What held you back?

If you oppose the Occupation, or support the return of the settlers to the pre-1967 borders of Israel, what have you done to make that known to your own government and media or to the Israeli government and media? If you oppose torture, demolition of Palestinian homes, denial of water and medical care—what have you done to make that known? If you want the Palestinian people to shift to non-violence, while still pursuing their rights, what have you done to make that known to them?

Did you give public political support (e.g., by writing letters, demonstrating, urging others to get involved) to those in the Jewish world who come closest to articulating what you personally believe in, or did you let the conservative, conformist, and spiritually dead continue to speak as though they represented you? Did you join the Network of Spiritual Progressives? Did you allow others to convince you to separate the religious from the social/political transformative aspects of Judaism? How did that happen in your life?

ועל כלם אלוה סליחות, סלח לנו, מחל לנו, כפר לנו.

Teshuvah "Partner" or Support Group

We encourage you to get a Teshuvah partner—someone who can support you to be serious about the process and someone who doesn't have a personal stake in the decisions you make about how you will live your life this coming year.

The partner's task is not to make concrete suggestions, but to encourage you to explore all the possibilities that you might face as you consider how you might wish to transform your life. After you've done this exploring, switch roles so that you become the facilitator, and you encourage your

Teshuvah partner to face the possibilities of change.

Do not convey the impression that you know that a particular road is the right one for this person. Instead, keep asking about a wide variety of options, and help the person consider these options through asking, whenever a stumbling block appears, whether that person can think of any ways to get around it. After Yom Kippur, check in with each other once a month to see how you are doing on keeping to your current intentions.

Partner's name or names of people in the support group:

(Use a separate piece of paper if necessary)

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

CHECKING IN WITH EACH OTHER

During the week, arrange to talk to your Teshuvah partner every day (yes, every day). The phone call can be as short as, "Did you get to your Teshuvah work today? If not, do you want to do it now on the phone? If not now, is there some time later today we can discuss it?" On Shabbat and Yom Tov, arrange for a time to get together (one hour, half of which goes to one person, half to the other, to explore their issues and the steps they are taking).

For Our Sins

A Supplement to the High Holiday Prayerbook

We invite you to use the following along with the traditional confessional prayer, Al Cheyt, recited on Yom Kippur. Bring your own list to Yom Kippur services—don't just go through the rote of reading the traditional "sins" that don't actually speak to our contemporary reality.

FOR OUR SINS

On the Jewish High Holidays we take collective responsibility for our own lives and for the activities of the community and society of which we are a part. We affirm our fundamental interdependence and interconnectedness. We have allowed others to be victims of incredible suffering, have turned our backs on others and their well-being, and yet today we acknowledge that this world is co-created by all of us, and so we atone for all of it.

While the struggle to change ourselves and our world may be long and painful, it is our struggle; no one else can do it for us. To the extent that we have failed to do all that we could to make ourselves or our community all that we ought to be, we ask God and each other for forgiveness—and we now commit ourselves to transformation this coming year.

Ve-al kulam, Eloha selichot, selach lanu, mechal lanu, kaper lanu.

For all our sins, may the Force that makes forgiveness possible forgive us, pardon us, and make atonement possible.

For all our sins, may the Force that makes forgiveness possible forgive us, pardon us, and make atonement possible.

For the sins we have committed before you and in our communities by being so preoccupied with ourselves that we ignore the larger problems of the world in which we live;

And for the sins we have committed by being so directed toward outward realities that we have ignored our spiritual development;

For the sins committed in the name of the American people through our invasion of Iraq and the violence we used to achieve our ends;

And for the sin of not rebuilding what we have destroyed in Iraq;

For the torturing of prisoners around the world and in American detention centers and the denial of Habeas Corpus and other fundamental human rights;

And for the sin of allowing morally challenged and spineless politicians to reject the electoral mandate of 2006 to end the war in Iraq, and instead to find justifications for "how difficult it would be" for them to

speak and then act in an unequivocally peace-oriented way;

For the sin of hoarding the world's wealth and not sharing with the 2 billion people who live on less than \$2 a day;

And for the sin of supporting forms of globalization that are destructive to nature and to the economic well-being of the powerless;

For the sin of electing leaders who undermine ecological safeguards and accelerate the destruction of our natural environment;

And for the sin of not caring enough to get involved in social change movements or electoral activity;

For the sin of allowing civil liberties to be undermined;

And for the sins of blaming all Muslims for the extremism of a few and ignoring the extremism and violence emanating from our own society;

For the sin of being cynical about the possibility of building a world based on love;

And for the sin of dulling our outrage at the continuation of poverty, oppression, and violence in this world;

For the sin of not doing enough to save the environment;

And for the sins we have committed by allowing our food and our air to be poisoned;

For the sin of not being vigilant stewards of the planet and instead allowing the water resources of the world to be bought up by private companies for private profit;

And for the sin of not fighting much much harder for universal single-payer government sponsored health care for every person on the planet;

For the sin of not doing enough to challenge sexist and homophobic institutions and practices;

And for the sin of turning our backs on the world's refugees and on the homeless in our own society;

For the sin of not sharing responsibility for child-rearing;

And for the sin of not taking time to help singles meet each other in

a safe and emotionally nurturing way, but instead making them fend for themselves in a marketplace of relationships;

And for the sin of allowing media indoctrination to convince us that others are motivated solely by money, power, or narrow self-interest;

For the sin of accepting a world in which the "bottom line" is money and power, and not fighting for a new bottom line of love and caring;

For the sin of being so concerned about our own personal tax benefits that we failed to oppose tax cuts that would bankrupt social services;

For the sin of not opening the emails of those who tried to inform us of what was going on in the world that required our moral attention;

For the sin of spreading negative stories about people we know;

And for the sin of being passive recipients of negativity or listening and allowing others to spread hurtful stories;

For the sin of being "realistic" when our tradition calls upon us to transform reality;

And for the sin of attachment to our own picture of how our lives should be—and never taking the risks that could bring us a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

For these sins we ask the Force of Healing and Transformation to give us the strength to forgive ourselves and each other.

For the sins we have committed by not forgiving our parents for the wrongs they committed against us when we were children;

And for the sin of having too little compassion or too little respect for our parents or for our children;

For the sin of cooperating with self-destructive behavior in others or in ourselves;

And for the sin of not supporting each other as we attempt to change;

For the sin of being jealous and trying to possess and control those we love;

And for the sin of being judgmental;

For the sin of withholding love and support;

And for the sin of doubting our ability to love and get love from others;

For the sin of insisting that everything we do have a payoff;

And for the sin of not allowing ourselves to play;

For the sin of not giving our partners and friends the love and support they need to feel safe and to flourish;

And for the sin of being manipulative or hurting others to protect our own egos;

Ve'al kulam, Eloha selichot, selach lanu, mechal lanu, kaper lanu.

For the sins we have committed by not publicly supporting the Jewish people and Israel when they are being criticized or treated unfairly; or for not challenging unfair singling out of Israel for criticism by our allies in the anti-war movement;

And for the sins we have committed by not publicly criticizing Israel or the Jewish people when they are acting in opposition to the highest principles of the Jewish tradition;

For the sin of not taking anti-Semitism seriously when it manifests around the world or among our friends or in our community;

And for the sin of seeing anti-Semitism everywhere, and using the charge of anti-Semitism to silence those who raise legitimate (though painful to hear) criticisms of Israeli policies;

For the sin of allowing the Jewish community to portray itself as the innocent victim and for allowing Holocaust trauma to legitimate oppressive treatment of others;

And for the sin of being so disheartened that we stopped paying attention to the details of what is happening in the West Bank and Gaza;

For the sin of blaming the entire Palestinian people for (inexcusable and murderous) acts of violence by a handful of terrorists—and then cutting off water, food, and access to medical care to over a million people;

And for the sin of bulldozing Palestinian homes, killing Palestinian children, torturing, assassinating, and oppressing the Palestinian people;

For the sins that Israel committed by the checkpoints that make travel an unbearable hassle for many Palestinians, and by allowing Israel to create a separation wall that effectively grabs up more portions of Palestinian land;

And for the sins that American Jews have committed by giving blind loyalty to the Israel Lobby and believing that the critics of that

lobby must somehow be disloyal or alienated from the Jewish people or from Israel;

And for the sins we have committed by not wanting to hear the details or denying that they happened;

For the sin of teaching hatred of Palestinians and Muslims, and then claiming that it is only they who teach hatred;

And for the sin of portraying every Palestinian or Muslim as a hater;

For the sin of condemning their extremists as typical, while "understanding" our own and claiming that they are exceptions to our normal generous and kind attitudes;

And for the sin of tolerating our own teaching of hatred and ignoring the ways that our communities too frequently teach our young to demean Palestinians, Arabs, and sometimes even all non-Jews;

For the sin of denying that most Palestinians have the same desire that most Israelis have to live in peace and pursue their own lives;

For the sin of insisting that there is no "moral equivalence" between the deaths of innocent Israeli civilians and the deaths of innocent Palestinian civilians;

And for the sins of tribalism, chauvinism, and thinking our pain is more important than anyone else's pain;

For the sin of allowing Jewish institutions to be governed by those with the most money rather than those with the most spiritual and ethical sensitivity;

And for the sin of not putting our money and our time behind our highest ideals;

For the sin of not learning the Jewish tradition and not studying Jewish history, literature, and holy texts and not learning the depth and wisdom and meaning for our lives that can be found in Jewish spirituality, prayer, and in a Jewish path;

And for the sin of thinking that our path is the only path to spiritual truth;

For the sin of allowing conservative or insensitive leaders to speak on behalf of all American Jews;

And for the sin of not showing up when Tikkun and other progressive Jewish groups offered us an opportunity to amplify the voice of Jews who care for social justice and peace;

For the sin of not providing public support and financial backing to the few Jewish leaders, organizations, and publications that do actually speak our values;

And for the sin of being passive when the courageous among us are publicly attacked;

For the sin of saying we want to be "spiritual" but not "political" as a way of hiding from painful realities—thereby distorting the fundamental Jewish insistence that spirituality without tikkun olam, healing the world, is actually another form of idolatry;

And for the sin of not recognizing and celebrating the beauty and grandeur of the universe that surrounds us;

For the sin of not seeing the spirit of God in others;

And for the sin of not recognizing and nurturing the spirit of God within ourselves;

For the sin of not praying, not meditating, and not giving adequate attention to the needs of our souls;

And for the sin of focusing only on our sins and not our strengths and beauties;

For the sin of not adequately rejoicing and celebrating the beauty and grandeur of God's creation;

And for the sin of not transcending ego so we could see ourselves as we are: manifestations of God's loving energy on earth.

Ve'al kulam Elohai Selichot, selach lanu, mechal lanu, kaper lanu.

For all these, Lord of Forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

In some congregations the service stops after this is read, and people divide into small groups of four or five to discuss what particular aspects of this prayer make most sense to them, what they are going to do differently in the coming year, what support they need from others to help make changes in their lives, and what they are going to do to secure that support.

Make copies of these prayers and workbook—send them to friends and family and distribute them for free in your synagogue. Repentance is not meant only to be an exercise to feel better, but also the beginning of organizing our personal and communal lives to begin the process of changing. To join with others in this sacred work, connect with the Network of Spiritual Progressives, www.tikkun.org; 510-644-1200; rabbilerner@tikkun.org. (Composed by Rabbi Michael Lerner, editor, Tikkun magazine, for Yom Kippur 5768; September 2007.)

or respond to any Tikkun articles by emailing magazine@tikkun.org

AUTHOR TONY CAMPOLO RESPONDS:

THERE ARE ALWAYS shortcomings in short articles. My article, "God as the Suffering Servant," certainly had shortcomings.

First of all, allow me to say that I agree with most of the criticisms that were leveled at me and my article. It may be that a fuller expansion of my thoughts would have allayed some of the concerns that were raised by my critic.

You talk about "another kind of power," and the good news is that within the Christian tradition (and am sure this would probably be true for the Jewish tradition) there is something that transcends power and that is "authority."

Max Weber, the famous sociologist, differentiates between power and authority by letting us know that power is the ability to coerce. When the state trooper pulls me over for speeding, I yield. The trooper doesn't have to pull a gun on me, but I know that the trooper has the ability to use coercion should it become necessary to achieve my compliance.

Weber contrasts power with authority. The latter has an air of legitimacy to it. When a person speaks with authority, there is a willingness to comply with what is requested without any coercion existing, or even being implied.

When Jesus was among us, he spoke as one having authority (Mark 1:22). In my preaching as a Christian, I declare that authority is achieved through sacrificial love. As a case in point, whatever my mother asked me to do, if it was possible for me to comply with the request, I would do it. It was not because she had power. She had no ability to coerce me after I had come of age. I did what she asked because she had authority and that authority was gained by the sacrifices that she made for me over the years. Her loving sacrifices earned her an authority that could not be ignored.

When I consider Jesus, I am aware that through his sacrifices for all of us, He has earned the authority to be heard. I seek to follow His leading, not because He coerces me to obey Him with the use of power, but because I am indebted to Him for the sacrifices that He made for me and the entire world.

I believe that both men and women have to stop playing power games with each other. I believe that America has to stop playing power games with the world. I think that as individuals and as a nation, we should live out sacrificial love to meet the needs of others. Then when we speak, we would speak as Jesus did—"as one having authority."

On quite another subject, you should be aware that there is a great deal of discussion about what re-

ally happened when Jesus went to the cross and why He subjected himself to a Roman crucifixion. Christian theologians have come up with a variety of explanations as to what took place there. No single theology of the cross tells the whole story. They all point to a profound reality that goes beyond theological description.

The penal-substitutionary doctrine of the atonement to which you alluded, is only one way of looking at the cross and interpreting its saving influence on humanity. Space does not allow me to explain a variety of other explanations, but I'm sure you realize that for Christians, the cross is central to their faith, and while Con-

stantine used the cross as a symbol to conquer through power, there are many of us who look at the cross as a call to sacrifice our affluence and our power in service to other people.

ON JEWISH NATIONALISM

IS JEWISH NATIONALISM consistent with universal principles of democracy and human rights? I, for one, have been saying the answer is clearly no, and that this is the essence of the conflict. Zionism puts Jewish nationalism above human rights and has therefore justified and led to the violation of the human rights of non-Jewish people. Palestinians and their sympathizers all strongly believe this, while

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العربي والإسلامي في تونس

رؤية القادر على رفع تحدي

A Call for Heresy

Why Dissent is Vital to Islam and America

Anouar Majid

AUTHOR OF *Freedom and Orthodoxy*

A Call for Heresy discovers unexpected common ground in the deepening conflict between the Islamic world and the United States. Anouar Majid argues that the Islamic world and the United States are both in precipitous states of decline because orthodoxies have silenced the voices of their most creative thinkers. The solution, Majid argues, is a long-overdue revival of dissent.

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Jewish nationalists, even the most humanitarian supporters of a two-state solution, strongly disagree.

A gradual process of reunification, of converting Israel from a Jewish state to a state of all persons residing in it, of integration of the occupied territories, of resettlement of Palestinians living in refugee camps and crowded in the prison of Gaza to good locations in the greater Israel/Palestine area, could result in a democracy where Jews, even if they were not a majority, would remain a very powerful minority in no danger of losing their civil rights, and such an Israel, a state of all its citizens, would continue to be a world center of Jewish culture and religion. If this would sat-

isfy Jewish nationalists, then as far as I am concerned we might have a deal.

TONY WICHER
Ontario, CA

EDITOR'S RESPONSE

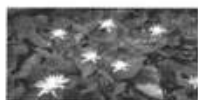
NATIONALISM TODAY appears to be a major factor preventing the human race from uniting to build a global economic and political structure that can save the planet from ecological and nuclear destruction. While the tendency to put one's own group's interests first and ignore the needs of others has been with humanity for thousands of years, ever since the emergence of class societies, it's only in the last 500 years that this tendency has gotten to

the level where it endangers the survival of the human race. So a major task of spiritual progressives is to help people overcome this form of selfishness and recognize that our own well-being depends on the well-being of everyone else on the planet and on the well-being of the planet itself.

I don't think it's plausible to begin that process by trying to identify who are the worst offenders and then trying to shame them out of their nationhood. If you did that, I don't think we would plausibly start with the Jewish people or any other nation that has developed nationalism in response to a history of oppression when they didn't yet have a nation state. That would indeed be a

senseless, immoral, and self-defeating strategy for those of us who want to save the planet.

When Jews were without a nation state and an army, we were murdered, raped, robbed, and thrown out of country after country, or, in the case of Muslim countries, allowed to stay in apartheid conditions. To ask Jews to be the first group to give up nationalism is ludicrous and anti-Semitic. But to call for an end to all nationalisms, and to ask that the Jewish people join this process is reasonable as soon as 20 percent of the world's nations do so (including the U.S., Russia, China, Japan, India, Iran, U.K., France, Germany and Saudi Arabia).



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Current THINKING

MOVIES THAT SEEK TO INSPIRE...

...are often dull and don't keep your attention. So what a pleasure to find something different in:

Sicko

THOUGH WE'VE ALWAYS been fans of Michael Moore and his political agenda, we've felt that some of his films were unlikely to have a big impact because of the way that they seemed to be cynical and put-downish of ordinary Americans, and disrespectful toward those with whose politics they disagreed.

Not so in *Sicko*. This is film making that is respectful, serious, engaging and so overwhelmingly smart and convincing that we feel sure it could have a huge impact if seen by a majority of Americans.

Problem is: how to get people into the theatres.

A recent conversation with two doctors who work at Kaiser and who have not seen the movie convinces us that the film opens the conversation but does not finish it. These doctors were reluctant to see it because they already agree that the system is not working well but insist that no matter what system we have, the "rising costs of

health care" will make any system somewhat dysfunctional.

But prices don't come from heaven or from some unchangeable aspect of the universe. The essential reason that costs are exorbitant here and yet affordable in other countries that provide better health care at less expense than the United States is that we have to bear the cost of rewarding private enterprise corporations (drug companies, insurance companies, and profit-seeking hospitals and medical practices) and health-care personnel who have become profiteers.

"That's just human nature," we're told. "No one good would become a drug researcher or a doctor or nurse or develop medical technologies unless they were going to be rewarded at a level comparable to what the U.S. provides for them today. And that's where the high cost of medicine comes from."

The notion that human beings in our society could be motivated to do work for the

common good on the basis of their ethical or spiritual commitments seems so counter-intuitive to many Americans that it is almost a non-starter.

And this is precisely why no health care program, even one backed by Michael Moore in his powerful film, will generate enough support to withstand the political assault of the medical profiteers until it is accompanied by a new understanding of human needs that includes ethical and spiritual needs. All the clever technocrats of the Left who have their various health care plans will keep on losing the battles in the Congress and the state legislatures for anything but health care that is unreasonably costly (because seeking to provide "enough" for the medical profiteers and the large corporations) until they adopt a Spiritual Progressive strategy—one that explicitly seeks to challenge the cynicism about what people "really want" in life. Unfortunately, that element is missing in Michael Moore as it is in the various campaigns

for single payer health care.

So, the Network of Spiritual Progressives' approach to changing consciousness by promoting a New Bottom Line is not some idealistic vision that we can get to after we've won the needed reforms—it is the indispensable precondition for winning the fundamental changes America needs.

Praying with Lior

WE MIGHT NEVER HAVE gone to see a film about a child with Down Syndrome's Bar Mitzvah, but, because of our close relationship with and love for Lior's family, we went to the film's world premier at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival. Film-maker Ilana Trachtman has created a moving and dramatic portrayal of a family that discovers that their son's Down syndrome, far from being a burden, opens him to a spiritual sensitivity that both amazes and inspires everyone who meets him.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah" you might say, "all the political

correctness that always accompanies any contemporary dealing with disability.” We understand the skepticism, and shared it until we actually got to know Lior a bit through this movie. And honestly, he’s an astounding being. So too is the family and religious community that provides him with support.

The film is unsentimental and doesn’t pretend that Down syndrome is some wonderful state of being to be sought out. It portrays the pain, frustration, and disappointments that face Lior and his family. But it also raises questions in the minds of all those who, before seeing this film, were sure that abortion was the only possible response to a prenatal test that predicted a Down syndrome baby. Precisely because it avoids all this kind of preaching, the film becomes a powerful voice not only for disability rights (which in principle every progressive supports), but also for a greater spiritual attentiveness to all that can be learned from the Otherly-abled.

A Mighty Heart

THE STORY OF THE beheading of Daniel Pearl, investigative reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, is told through Daniel’s wife’s struggle to get authorities in Pakistan to focus on rescuing him from his Islamist kidnappers rather than to assume, as they do at first, that the whole thing is a plot by Hindu India to embarrass Muslim Pakistan. It’s a true and heart-breaking story.

What’s best about the film, however, is that it captures, perhaps unintentionally, the arrogance and

insensitivity of Pearl himself and of the Westerners that try to help free him. The viewer is left with a series of questions that apparently never occurred to the filmmaker: Why would the *Wall Street Journal* send, and Pearl accept, an assignment to represent one of the leading Western media cheerleaders for an impending war against Iraq in a quest to meet leading Islamic terrorists with a history of violence? Is this just obliviousness to what the U.S. has just done in its war in Afghanistan and its declared war on all terrorists, which the *Wall Street Journal* supports? Is it a conscious attempt to put this Jewish journalist in danger? Or is it

the cowboy mentality of some American journalists who imagine that they deserve divine protection from the pains and suffering of ordinary people? What kind of mentality lead Pearl to openly proclaim his Jewishness to terrorists who are outraged at the creation of a Jewish state in the Middle East which was established at the cost of expelling hundreds of thousands of Palestinians? Why does no one in the film ever question the U.S. policy of refusing to negotiate the release of “terrorists” held in U.S. detention camps? Is the torturing of the crew at Guantanamo in violation of international human rights norms really worth even a

single hair on the head of this innocent journalist? And how innocent is a journalist who chooses to work with the leading voice of America’s militarism and capitalist globalization and who doesn’t understand how these policies affect the lives of ordinary people in a world in which some 20,000 to 30,000 young children die every single day through starvation or malnutrition-related diseases that could have been saved had the richest country in human history been a bit more willing to share its wealth with the rest of the human race?

Watching this movie is anything but boring!

TALKING TO AN ENEMY

THE FEAR OF TALKING to an enemy state was temporarily reduced in the 1960s when President Kennedy established a “hot line” to the Kremlin, and then President Nixon went to visit China.

So it may seem more than bizarre that Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama crossed swords over what Clinton described as Obama’s “inexperience” when he said he would meet with “our enemies” during the first year of his presidency (Hillary promised she would not).

Failed U.S. peacemaker for Israel/Palestine Dennis Ross, now comfortably situated at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and hoping for a run at Secretary of State in a Democratic Administration, provides Solomonic commentary:

Both sides are right, depending on the circumstances.

Duhh.

But what’s interesting about Ross’ article, published by the cynical *New Republic* on July 30, 2007, is that it unintentionally demonstrates that both liberals and conservatives frame foreign policy in terms of the overriding goal of the U.S. getting its way in the world. While right-wingers are quick to assure us that military power is the only way, liberals like Ross make it clear that the use of force is always and necessarily part of their “means” to achieve American global power. When they talk of diplomacy, it is always understood to be the “soft” way to advance the American elites’ megalomaniacal and narcissistic agenda, without much concern for

the rest of the world.

There is a very different spirit needed for our Global Marshall Plan to work. It must not be promoted primarily as part of the old and failed language of diplomacy, but as part of a new strategy of generosity that affirms the fundamental interconnectedness of all people on the planet. Some of that spirit comes through in a speech delivered by the new UK Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, to the UN on July 31. His attempts to galvanize world leaders and major corporations to combat the global emergency of deepening poverty are a hopeful prelude to our campaign for a Global Marshall Plan. When we think through that framework, talking to “the enemy” is so obvious it need not be debated.

Where's the American Jewish Debate?

BY GEORGE VRADENBURG

There is a cacophony of voices in Israel about Israeli policy toward the Palestinians. Is the Occupation of the West Bank wise? Is it moral? Is it in the interests of Israel or the Jewish people? Is it furthering the historic struggle to realize the Jewish people's goal of a secure homeland, Israel living side-by-side in peace with its neighbors?

Where is that debate among American Jews? In the American lobbying context, there is only one well-financed, highly organized political voice for American Jews: the American-Israeli Political Action Committee (AIPAC). Any Member of Congress who expresses doubts about Israeli policy is immediately bombarded with critical calls, letters, and emails from "the Jewish community." Virtually without exception, the Member learns that questioning America's policy of uncritical support for Israeli security policy is a career-shortening political step with American Jews.

Assuming for the sake of argument that the only loyalty of American Jews is to the security of Israel, why is there not the robust debate within the American Jewish community that, in Israel, would be considered a normal part of the political dialogue?

The first argument I hear is that Israel is a sovereign democratic state in a hostile environment whose elected leaders embody the best informed judgment about Israeli security, and that the Israeli government's views should be accepted and respected by American Jews.

But I think this proves too much. If there are many inside Israel who make strong, well-informed, and well-intentioned arguments that Israel's interests are better served by a different policy, and if that debate is of value to Israel, wouldn't extension of that debate into the Diaspora be equally valuable?

It is fine to debate "within the family," AIPAC might say, but, as American Jews, we should not present ourselves as divided in the American political arena because doing so would threaten to weaken U.S. support for Israel and its security.

This might be true were the alternative American Jewish voices ones which did not support the existence of a secure Israel, but that is simply not the case. Rather, unconditional American support for whatever the current Israeli policy might be may not further Israel's security, and debate on that issue here is valuable to Israel. For example, if Israel is itself unable to broker a peace deal on its own, the United States may be required to play the "honest broker" role in the peace process.

The refusal to respect and pursue the Clinton-initiated Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, the follow-on Taba negotiations, the Geneva Accord process, and a negotiated rather than unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, as well as its unquestioning support for Israel's military intervention in Lebanon, has diminished America's ability to play that role. And it is also the case that Israel may be seriously misreading the consequences of its own actions. A "critical friend" with a different perspective, capable of criticism as well as friendship, might help it to a better outcome.

U.S. policy elsewhere in the Middle East may be adding to a volatile mix hostile to Israel. Historic U.S. policy has promoted undemocratic Arab regimes traditionally hostile to Israel's existence; post-9/11 and post-Iraq intervention, foreign policy establishment voices are urging us to support those Arab regimes in order to foster Middle East stability. And yet, bolstering those regimes may be strengthening Islamic religious insurgencies hostile to Israel's existence.

That unstable and potentially explosive environment only enhances the need for more dialogue and debate within the American Jewish community about U.S. policy in the Middle East and about Israel's policies. Historic and current American foreign policies have certainly not produced a secure environment for Israel. More options and alternatives need to be put on the table, including the alternatives put forward in this magazine. The challenge to the American Jewish community is to see and understand the complexity and diversity of the forces at work in the Middle East and to find a way through that complexity in order to produce an outcome that accommodates the existence of Jewish and Arab states in historic Palestine. One voice, and in particular, AIPAC, does not foster that debate.

An apocalyptic view of the world, in which Israel is viewed as surrounded by implacable, monolithic, and hostile forces, where the only response is military might unconditionally supported by a powerful United States, risks the very existential battle that Israel must avoid. To create a more realistic path to a future where Israel and Palestine live side-by-side in peace requires a diversity of American Jewish voices in the political arena. ■

George Vradenburg is publisher of Tikkun and often challenges our editorial position.

What Could the When Republicans Block

IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT PUBLIC APPROVAL of Congress has dropped since the Democrats failed to stop the war or pass immigration reform.

While friendly media frames the issue as an inevitable result of Republican control, they never ask the obvious question: Why were the Republicans able to pass legislation and fund the war when the Democrats were in the

minority?

The answer, in short, is the Democrats' wimpiness. A quality that, we've argued in the past, stems from their lack of a shared worldview in which they believe. The Democrats fear being challenged for lack of civility, because it is civility and commitment to "the process" that is their only shared value. They put that above saving the lives of tens of thousands of Iraqis and thousands of Americans who will die as the Democrats dither.

So, what could they do?

The Speaker of the House has the power to decide what pieces of legislation get taken up by the House, and when. She could have announced that once the President vetoed the House authorization for his surge (because it contained wording requiring a gradual withdrawal from Iraq by early 2008), that she would simply not bring to the floor new authorizations for the war or any other Defense Department authorizations until the President presented and publicly committed to a full withdrawal by early 2008. Republicans and some Democrats would have screamed about abandoning our troops, and the liberal Dems could have screamed right back that "Bush lost Iraq, and now wants to kill American soldiers right into 2009 so as to cover up for his own failure, but we care about the troops, and the only way to care about the troops is to stop using them for Bush's cover-up and bring them home immediately!"

Instead, Pelosi and the liberal Dems rolled over and gave Bush \$100 billion to continue his war and his cover-up. Similarly, on August 4, 2007, the Democratic leadership capitulated to Bush's charge that they were "soft on homeland security" and allowed passage of an extension of his authority to wiretap phones in the U.S. and abroad, sacrificing our civil liberties instead of putting forward a different notion of how best to provide safety to Americans.

There are Congressional liberals with more guts, and they have begun to issue subpoenas to Administration officials involved in the cover-up of Bush's deceit in starting the war and

wrecking the careers of officials who sought to tell the truth, and his cover-up of the political purge of U.S. attorneys who would not use their office to play politics in accord with the desires of Rove-Cheney. Bush's response: if the Congress issues contempt-citations and asks the Justice Department to enforce them, the Administration will simply ignore those requests.

What could the Congress do? Pelosi and the Democratic leadership could announce that ignoring Congressional contempt citations would be adequate grounds for impeachment of the President.

But what did she do? She announced that "impeachment is not on the table." In so doing, in the face of Bush Administration contempt for Congress, she might just as well have said, "Don't bother paying attention to anything we do or say. Bush and his Republican supporters can do whatever they want, and all we can hope for is that in the 2008 election the American people will be so fed up that they will give Democrats an overwhelming landslide control of both houses of Congress."

And what is the American people's response to Pelosi? "No way. You guys lack backbone and principles. We have more respect for those Republicans even when we disagree with them, because they actually stand behind what they say they believe in, whereas you, Nancy Pelosi and your weak-kneed liberal majority in the Democratic caucus, don't believe in anything except your own desire to stay in power. And that gives us so little inspiration, we might not even bother to vote in 2008."

The same story repeats in the Senate. When the Republicans were the majority, they dealt with the threat of a filibuster by Democrats in a powerful way: they threatened to change the rules of the Senate to eliminate the filibuster rule (it's not in the Constitution, and it could be changed at any time by a majority vote). They threatened this "nuclear option," so the Democratic minority backed down and voted approval of their reactionary choices for the Supreme Court (who have gone full-speed ahead to dismantle the desegregation decisions of the Warren Court of the 1950 and 1967).

But when Senator Harry Reid faces the same situation, there's no talk about eliminating the filibuster. Instead, the most dramatic move he could think of was to keep the Senate in session all night for one night and then capitulate to the Republican threat of filibuster the next day! In the days when people actually cared about the issues as matters of principle, and

Democrats Do... their Legislation?

Southern Democrats joined with Republicans to oppose civil rights legislation, then Senate Majority leader Lyndon Baines Johnson kept the Senate in session day and night for weeks, thereby demonstrating to the country how a minority of racists were managing to keep the Senate from doing any other business. But don't expect that from the wimps who now fill the position of U.S. Senators.

The Democratic leadership fears that standing by principles would split the Democratic Party, which has no shared principles but is only a loose coalition of interests. "To go to the mat would win nothing," they claim, "because the right-wing of the Democratic Party would follow the lead of people like Senator Lieberman who regularly votes with the Republicans on foreign affairs issues."

Let's play out their fear scenario. Imagine if the majority of the House Democratic Caucus agreed to prevent the House from considering authorization of funds for the Defense Department until the President agreed to end the war at an early date in 2008. The minority of Democrats, in the worst-case scenario, would vote to overturn the House leadership and give the House back to the Republicans to control. As unlikely a scenario as this is, because they themselves might lose positions of influence on the committees on which they now serve, you can "understand" why Pelosi would not want to lose her position as Speaker of the House. And yet, precisely the willingness to take personal risks on behalf of principle is what we mean when we talk about "courage." In that light, we can imagine a best-seller starring the current Democrats in the Congress: we'd call it "Profiles in Cowardice."

But wait, you say, this is a terrible time to risk losing the Presidential elections by becoming principled fighters for an end to the war. What if, with the split that occurred among Dems, the Democratic party became a minority party? And wouldn't that happen if the Dems really stood for something and were willing to "play hard-ball" to get it? Well, what happened when the Republicans acted in the same way? Sure, the media was filled with stories of how moderate Republicans were being offended by the "radicals" like Gingrich and Delay and Hastert and others who took control and acted with neither civility nor respect for tradition as they advanced their agenda. But because they had an agenda and a clear vision, they were soon able to win over majority support, first taking the Congress, and then the White



House, and arguably that is where they would have remained but for the unbelievable incompetence and stupidity of George Bush and Dick Cheney's particular strategy for advancing the American empire.

In short, fighting, breaking tradition, and showing that you are committed to your principles more than to your immediate victory, is usually a winning ticket.

Again, take the worst-case scenario: the liberals are left with a Democratic Party that is "shattered" because it has taken a principled stand. De facto, they would be creating a new party. That party would appear on the scene as the contemporary version of what happened in 1860 when the Republican Party suddenly emerged on the scene with a commitment to end slavery. Just as that upstart party suddenly became the majority party, so a principled peace and justice party committed not only to ending the war, but to the Strategy of Generosity and the Global Marshall Plan, and to a global plan for saving the environment, would become the winning party in 2008 and for many decades to come.

Why won't that happen? Because the Democrats, even many of the liberal Democrats, don't have a vision and a set of principles for which they are willing to fight, and even to lose. And if you don't care enough about your principles to lose with them, you won't be able to convince anybody that you are principled enough to deserve their respect.

This fear that traumatizes liberals is the one and only reason why they could still lose both the presidential and Congressional elections in 2008. ■

The Spirituality of Messianic American Leadership

by Gilbert I. Bond

AS GEORGE BUSH ENTERED HIS FIRST TERM OF OFFICE IN 2000, Evangelical Christians greeted him with both political approval and messianic expectations. Now, seven years later, while many Evangelicals are disappointed with Bush's performance and amid revelations of his true attitude towards this particular camp of his Christian supporters, Americans are still manifesting messianic expectations, but towards another presidential candidate. We no longer believe that our president can "rid the world of evil"—a promise not even Jesus Christ made. The horizon of our expectant gaze is not global, but introspectively domestic.

A number of American voters now want a candidate for president who is without the sin of originally endorsing the war in Iraq. Senator Barack Obama, unlike the majority of the members of Congress and most of the current crop of presidential candidates, has always been against the war and never voted for it (since he was not a member of the U. S. Senate in 2003). Obama represents the latest version of a deeply ingrained American optimism, which believes in the inevitability of a better future for our country and its many different peoples.

Senator Obama's political campaign has overtones of a religious movement. The sub-text of American presidential campaigns is the Christian revival meeting. In a revival, the evangelist appeals to the crowd of believers to trust Jesus and be born, again. Evangelists are the rock stars of Christianity. Their charisma leads people to make a confession and a commitment, and in doing so, the evangelist convinces the believers that nothing they might have done in the past, nor anything that is wrong with their lives today, matters. Mistakes are forgiven, sins of commission and omission are expunged, and the future is the realm where our best life will be lived.

Our successful presidential candidates promise that voting for the man (and now woman) of the moment will lead to a new life and a better future. Michael Dukakis, who came from a Christian community that places more emphasis upon liturgy and sacrament than on exhortation and conversion, neither understood nor participated in this fundamental evangelical structure, to the disastrous demise of his campaign.

Bill Clinton, on the other hand, lives and breathes this evangelical pattern of appeal since he came from a Christian community whose primary understanding of the faith is rooted in the revival service. Each communal gathering is both an opportunity for new believers to come forth and join and for old believers to have their faith revived.

Senator Barack Obama's movement is a companion to American Christianity, one that walks at times ahead or behind her evangelical cousin. Senator Obama is the latest representative of the American religion of optimism, the faith that our lives and our future will simply be better, not based on programs, work, suffering, repentance; life will simply

be better since the future is ours and we are entitled to a better life if we just think positively and chose a candidate who doesn't remind us of our past mistakes, or how difficult repentance and transformation truly are.

I am not contending that Senator Obama is a purveyor of this ersatz Christianity. His appeal, however, has tapped the reservoirs of optimism that reside in America's body politic. One doesn't have to be a Christian to belong to the American church of positive thinking. One simply needs to believe in the future and the future will manifest as the fulfillment of our American hopes.

The religion of optimism, however, offers forgiveness without confession, new life without repentance, transformation without suffering, and a resurrection without a death.

Symbolically, Obama offers America an opportunity to overcome America's original sin of racism, born of slavery, since he is ironically black but without the ancestry of slavery whose ghosts perennially haunt the house that our founding fathers built. Senator Obama offers the promise of hope—for our country and for our personal lives—since he is the hero of two great American narratives: both the Native Son's and the Immigrant's tale of success. He is probably the most important political symbol we have had since Ronald Reagan.

I would like to remind my fellow Americans that it was Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who was the author of Senator Obama's most famous political quotation. Dr. King, however, evoked the "audacity of faith,"—a faith rooted in Christ, and Him crucified—and a profound belief that collective suffering, inspired by divine love for sinful humanity, could result in personal and social transformation.

Senator Obama has so far offered, contrary to his oft-repeated phrase, not the "audacity of hope," but the "audacity of optimism." The difference is that his secular hope and American optimism do not engage the forces that can subvert and potentially destroy its promise. The velocity positive thinking achieves is the result of not having to carry the baggage of past mistakes or the weight of current tragedy, which in the mature religions of the world gives birth to new life, if like Jesus, one turns one face to Jerusalem, or like David, descends into the valley to do spiritual battle with the forces antithetical to one's greatest hope and deepest faith.

Turning toward Iraq is the place to begin. The Christian understanding of repentance is rooted in the New Testament term, *metanoia*, which means "a change of mind." Turning away from the well-orchestrated dissemination of misinformation that led us into war and the falsely manufactured fear which led millions of frightened Americans to believe that our security as a nation depended upon committing violence upon the population of Iraq is a first step.

Senator Obama, if elected President, must be willing to enter into conversation with the leadership of Syria and Iran, including their religious leadership, if he wants to offer real hope of interrupting the cyclical violence in the region. He must also be willing to undertake the reconstruction of our tattered alliances, which were damaged by the current administration's unilateralism.



"The subtext of American Presidential campaigns is the Christian revival meeting."

Billy Graham, Teddy Roosevelt, and Barack Obama.

The United States has much to offer in terms of material assistance, but we are woefully underdeveloped in terms of assisting human beings who exist impoverished in the midst of modernity and affluence. This paradoxical juxtaposition is due to our intergenerational neglect and disregard for the poor within our own national borders. As a people, we have demonstrated an enduring capacity to tolerate or ignore the suffering of a large population of our fellow citizens whom most of us are reluctant to claim as our own flesh and kin. Poverty and alienation follow as the dark underside to the many positive developments of modernity. Due to the collective neglect of our own poor, we do not understand the varieties of religious fundamentalism that millions of global citizens who have become the human flotsam to the forces of modernity find attractive and embrace as a palliative. Hamaz and Hezbollah indicate their understanding of these forces by offering education, social assistance, food, and medical care to its underserved clients, services which also create excellent opportunities for enrolling recruits for their religious based terrorist agenda.

To correct this neglect, we need national leadership that first recognizes the fact that approximately 40 million U.S. citizens live in poverty. Senator Obama is in a prime position to rekindle the hope and excitement ignited by the promise of governmental assistance and cooperation with "faith-based initiatives." He can do this by first acknowledging his faith in a God who is larger than the triune-issue deity of abortion, gay marriage, and stem cell research. The God of Isaac, Ishmael, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, is also the God who reserves a sacred space in the heart of God for the widow, the fatherless, the poor, the stranger, and those still caught in multiple forms of modern bondage and slavery.

Next, Senator Obama can convene a national conference of religious leaders from all religious communities who have struggled to respond to God's call to care for the poor and vulnerable in our midst. These men and women have acquired wisdom and understanding of the more intractable forces that debilitate the full development of human beings shackled in poverty, and they have learned what is needed to transform conditions of poverty into opportunities for empowerment. By garnering recommendations of these leaders, Senator Obama can generate opportunities for new involvement in the life of our citizens who deeply desire an opportunity to effect change in our country. Hurricane Katrina proved that Americans from across the spectrum of religious belief are willing and able to wade into harsh conditions to help fellow citizens downtrodden and devastated. Governmental cooperation with religious-based partnerships devoted to human and community development would draw upon the faith, energy, and compassion of our citizens, create opportunities for the poor to work in the rebuilding of their own communities at home, and give us a better understanding of similar conditions abroad.

Finally, the next president will have to work to create concrete opportunities for Americans to participate in altering our current course of ecological disaster. We need more than tax incentives to build solar panels on our homes. We need a national laboratory to develop practical applied technologies that effect domestic culture and consumption in ways that allow Americans to recognize the difference personal choices can make to the global good.

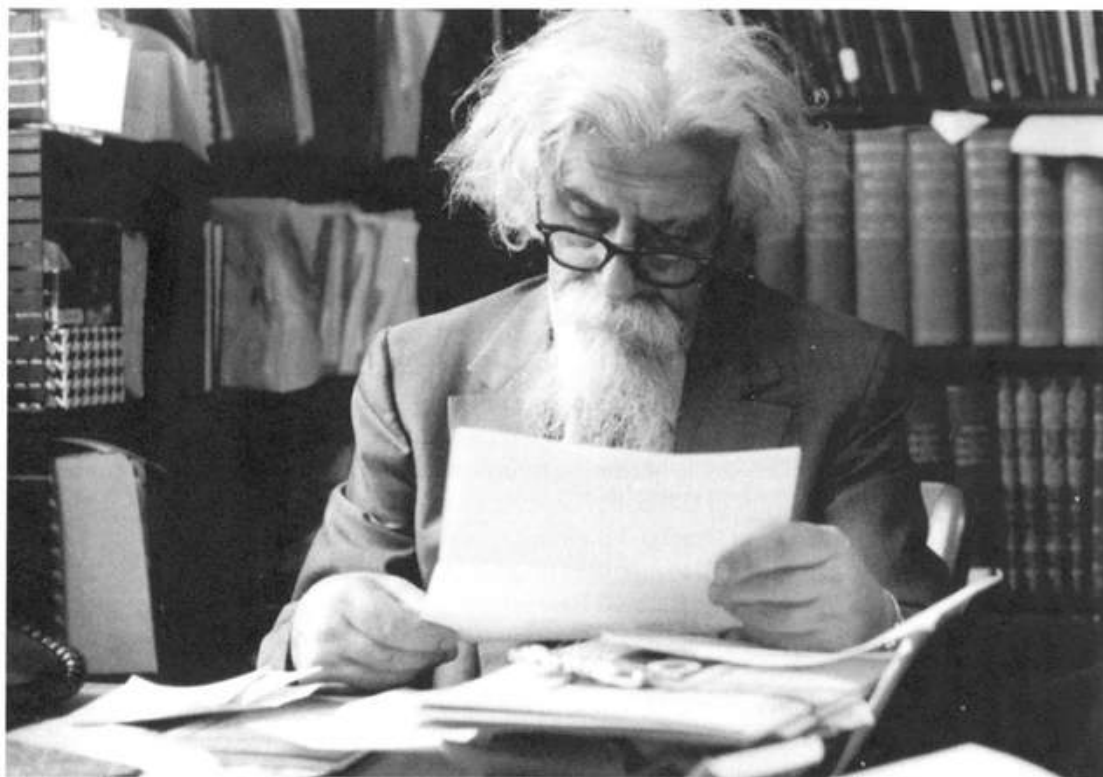
Christian hope, unlike American optimism, emerges in the aftermath of the tragic consequences of Calvary and affirms the audacity of a God capable of bringing new life out of the wreckage we have made of things, if we but turn away from the false and face the truth of how difficult but life-giving the work of hope can be. ■

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Heschel on Vietnam

Protest & Political Action

by Edward Kaplan



Abraham Joshua Heschel in his office.

Abraham Joshua Heschel was one of the most significant Jewish theologians of the twentieth century. Part I of "Heschel on Vietnam," [Tikkun July/August 2007] described how Heschel co-founded the National Emergency Committee of Clergy Concerned About Vietnam (CCAV) in January 1966. Heschel became the most visible traditional Jew in the anti-Vietnam war movement. Part II continues the story.

THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY COMMITTEE CONTINUED its "middle ground" strategy of attempting to persuade the government to decrease bombings and press for a negotiated settlement. Deciding that the organization should remain in existence until the end of the war, a group composed of [John] Bennett, [Abraham Joshua] Heschel, [William Sloane] Coffin, [Richard John] Neuhaus, and David Hunter (the deputy general secretary of the National Council of Churches) hired a full-time executive director, Richard Fernandez. This young, brash, witty minister had served in the army; later, as part of his campus work, he had participated in the civil rights movement. In May 1966 the committee changed its name to Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam (CALCAV) to become more inclusive. A new era of religious resistance began.

Fasting and prayer were Heschel's favored tactics of spiritual opposition. Through

In a free society,
some are guilty, all
are responsible.

such acts of repentance, he hoped to bring others to a recognition of error or sin, and thus to positive acts of restoration. The clergy were innocent of the crimes they "repented," but as Heschel often insisted, "in a free society, some are guilty, all are responsible." One such occasion was the Fourth of July 1966, at which CALCAV transformed a secular holiday into a national religious rite by staging a public fast in New York. There they called for an immediate end to the bombing of North Vietnam.

Heschel, Daniel Berrigan, and Neuhaus led the two-day observance, in the sweltering heat of the Community Church. Heschel introduced the actions with a dire warning: "We have gone beyond the policy of brinkmanship; we may have started to descend into the abyss. America has been enticed by her own might. There is nothing so vile as the arrogance of the military mind." Neuhaus and Berrigan also spoke. *The New York Times* and local media regularly reported on the event, as they did at many CALCAV protests, increasing their political impact.

... In September 1966, [Heschel] published a fierce sermon, "The Moral Outrage of Vietnam," in *Fellowship*, the magazine of the interfaith pacifist organization Fellowship of Reconciliation. To these readers Heschel offered graphic images to dramatize the national dilemma. He opened with this surrealistic scene: "It is weird to wake up one morning and find that we have been placed in an insane asylum while asleep at night. It is even more weird to wake up and find that we have been involved in slaughter and destruction without knowing it." Heschel was obviously shaken to the roots of his being.

His feeling for the God of pathos magnified his empathy with the Vietnamese victims: "God is present whenever man is afflicted, and humanity is embroiled in every agony wherever it may be," Heschel wrote in the *Fellowship* article. The idea of an enemy was "obsolete," he asserted, since "yesterday's enemy is becoming today's ally." In addition to developing political criticisms of U.S. policy deploring its habitual support of dictators, he praised the rise of "engaged Buddhism, as evidenced in the growing involvement of the Vietnamese monks in the daily life of the people."

CALCAV frequently featured Heschel at mass meetings, all documented by the FBI. At a June 1966 event sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, close to 1,200 people gathered at New York's Town Hall to honor Thich Nhat Hanh, an activist Vietnamese Buddhist monk. Included in the tribute were speeches by Heschel, Berrigan, Robert McAfee Brown, the poet Robert Lowell, the playwright Arthur Miller, and the playwright and poet Ishmael Reed. The FBI was present and reported Hanh's moderate message: "He stated that he wants the United States to end the bombing in Vietnam and have all shooting cease, leaving the United States troops for defense purposes only... Hanh commented that his presence in the United States indicated the Vietnamese still had faith in the Americans; however, he feared for his life when he returned to his country." "There were no incidents or arrests," another FBI report concluded blandly.

The FBI also documented Heschel's participation in another political protest, at which some two hundred people marched from Bryant Park, at Sixth Avenue and 42nd Street, to the New York offices of Senators Robert F. Kennedy and Jacob K. Javits at Lexington Avenue and 45th Street. A delegation of two women and two male clergy delivered messages to the senators' offices, after which the parade went on to U.N. Plaza.

When CALCAV wanted to play political hardball, Heschel generally exercised a moderating influence. Early in 1966, the Columbia University engineering professor Seymour Melman, an expert on international disarmament, proposed that CALCAV commission a book documenting American "war crimes" in Vietnam. A representative group of clergy, he reasoned, had a special obligation to condemn an American policy that violated not only international law but also basic ethical norms (the law being defined as the lowest standard of morality that civilized people agree to live by). Such a book would convincingly publicize "the erosion of moral constraint in Vietnam." Heschel, an acquaintance of Melman's, immediately vetoed the (continued on page 70)

Praying with the Other

by Leah Lax

In the heavenly court and in the earthly court, by consent of God and by consent of this community, we are permitted to pray with avaryanim.

THIS IS HOW WE BEGIN YOM KIPPUR, at the Kol Nidrei prayer. But who are these *avaryanim* that we have to be granted, or grant ourselves, permission to pray with this group? We loosely translate the word as “sinners,” but let’s go deeper.

Avaryanim comes from the root verb *avar*, to cross over or move from one place to another. The word *avar* as a present tense verb is pronounced “oveir” and is probably where we get the English word “over.” *Avaryanim* is a plural noun form, and it connotes people who have done just that—they’ve crossed over some defined line, like Jewish law, and come to a new place. There is also a connotation to this word of something, or someone, who is foreign.

In ancient Egypt, we are told, the Egyptians coined a name for the family of Jacob who had recently arrived in their midst. They called them *Ivrim*. *Ivrim* is spelled with the same letters—*ayin, bet, resh*—of the Hebrew word *avar*; it has the same root. The word *Ivrim* implied at the time, “those who have come over here from across the river Jordan.” *Me’ever hayarden*. *Ivrim*. It was a term of suspicion put on the family of Jacob by the Egyptians, and it was almost an epithet. It was just like saying “they’re not from here.”

But we Jews kept that name. We turned its meaning into a badge of identity that we continue to use to this day. We are *Ivrim*. Hebrews. The name became a reminder through the 240 years of exile in Egypt that no, we’re not from here. We are our own, distinct people, with a history. With a land. With our God. We mustn’t forget—we must remain who we are, and treasure that. And so, when the *Ivrim* were ready to leave Egypt, they managed to remain an intact people. Identity as a hedge against assimilation—this is a very modern theme.

For a large portion of 2006, I worked on a project for which I interviewed people from seven different immigrant communities in Houston. I spoke with Houstonians from Africa, Vietnam, Pakistan, India, Jews from the former Soviet Union, and people from Mexico and Central America, and I asked them to tell me their stories. Through this unforgettable experience, something tugged on me, some sense of vicarious identification. I heard, in all these interviews, about escape from danger, the Passage, meeting obstacles in the new country, culture shock, language struggles, economic struggles, the fear of assimilation and loss of culture, that driven immigrant determination... and success, or not, and it all felt familiar.

There were funny similarities to Jews—the people who told me, “Oh, in *our* culture, family is very important” or “We don’t seem to have any boundaries. Everything is every one else’s business” or “For us, education is *very* important,” everyone associated these things with the uniqueness of their own culture. Most worried about their language and religion getting lost in future generations.



A worker looks over the fence between Mexico and the U.S., trying to find a moment when the Border Patrol may not be looking so that he can cross.

And every one of the immigrants I met feels a kind of fierce love for this country coupled with a sense of strangeness, otherness, that won't go away. Some of it comes from inside of them. Some of it comes from our society.

A few months ago I was walking downtown and found a demonstration of Latino immigrants marching through downtown to City Hall. I saw fathers, mothers, children, workers, and many sympathizers of all colors. There was such an exuberance to them, and something so modest about what they were asking for, hoping for, that I was terribly moved. Soon, I was walking with them.

As I walked, I thought about how the Latino community in Houston is nearing almost 40 percent of the city's population. I thought about my own family as immigrants, and how they were forced out of Poland and Russia because Jews were always considered to be the Other there, no matter how hard they worked to become contributing members of society. In Poland, there were Jews in Parliament, in manufacturing, etc., but none of that mattered. The branding remained: they were a somewhat tolerated Other. *Avaryanim*. And when the Jews were killed out, towns were left without 30, 50, 70 percent of their populations, proving by sheer numbers how very mainstream they had been. But few among the Poles had noticed that the Jews were mainstream. And afterwards, very few wanted to notice.

Another meaning of the term "*avaryanim*," as it's used in the prayer before Kol Nidrei, is to refer to philosophers, rationalists, the *epicorsim*, or those who challenged their faith by asking radical, even heretical questions about God, Torah, justice. In ancient times, these people boycotted the Jewish community most of the year. In truth, the term *epicorsim* was not a complementary one, and most of the year these people weren't too welcome in the synagogue. But when Kol Nidrei came, they felt a tug, rational or not, and wanted to come in and pray. To calm resentments and suspicions, the congregation had to be told, "You are granted permission to pray together with them" in the hope that the congregation would not be divided into "us" and "them" during the holy time of Yom Kippur. The hope was that they could pray together as one.

And then there were the terrible years of the Spanish Inquisition, and the secret Jews who once bore the epithet *Marrano*, or pig. As we know, many Jews converted under that repression but continued to secretly lead a Jewish life. Many eventually managed to emigrate with the hope of rejoining the Jewish community in their new countries. But their lives were changed by their experiences and fears. Some continued, out of inbred fear, to hide their Jewish identity in public even in their new homes. I imagine these secret Jews showing up in the local synagogue on Yom Kippur, feeling both at home and foreign at the same time, grateful to their new country, but ever aware of the suspicion of some of the local community and of the name, *Marrano*, that followed them like an odor. Some say that the permission given us to pray with *avaryanim* refers to them.

Marrano was a name probably created by Jews to derisively connote those Jews who publicly professed to be otherwise and, thus, these once secret Jews were forced to carry the image of, well, pig eaters. They were labeled for what Jews accused them of eating. I've often wondered how many of the secret Jews eventually called themselves *Marrano*, in the way that the oppressed can internalize the attitudes of their oppressors, absorbing into their own being the attitudes of others and turning it into self-hatred, self-doubt and cynicism. This is the corrosive effect of living within one's own society and finding within it rejection and hatred.

But they have been renamed *anusim* in Hebrew—the forced ones. People who made a decision under duress. People who had no choice.

(continued on page 72)



Marranos celebrating Passover in secret, Belmonte, Portugal, 1988.

From Frédéric Brenner's film The Last Marranos. Brenner has documented the lives of Jews on five continents, creating the first exhaustive visual anthology of the Jewish Diaspora.

Into the Fire:

A Story of Repentance & Renewal

by Or N. Rose

EVERY SUMMER, IN PREPARATION FOR THE HIGH HOLY DAYS, I search for new textual materials to aid me in my personal process of *teshuvah* (repentance and renewal), and to share with students and congregants. This year, I came upon the following Hasidic story that has proven to be an important source of guidance for me during this intensive period of introspection.

The story centers on the peculiar ritual of *Kapparot* ("Atonements"), in which on the day before Yom Kippur one takes a live chicken in hand and swings it around one's head proclaiming the following words in Hebrew: "This is offered in exchange for me; this is my ransom; this is my atonement. This fowl will go to its death, and I will experience a long and pleasant life of peace." The animal is then slaughtered and given to the poor for their final meal before the daylong fast begins.

This act of symbolically transferring guilt from the human being to the animal is an extension of the ancient "scapegoat" ritual described in the book of Leviticus (chapter 16), about which we read on the morning of Yom Kippur. While most Jewish practitioners no longer perform this rite with a live animal, but with coins, there are still those in traditional religious communities in Israel and elsewhere who continue to carry out this ritual as in earlier generations.

What about this bizarre ritual, you may be asking yourself, could possibly be meaningful to contemporary, progressive spiritual seekers—Jewish or non-Jewish? Why is this young rabbi focusing his attention on this strange and archaic observance?

Here is the story...

A devoted hasid once visited his rebbe (spiritual master), Rabbi Elimelekh of Lizensk, during the Aseret Yemei Teshuvah ("Ten Days of Repentance" between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) with a special request: "Master, as a devoted member of the holy community of Lizensk, I have been blessed to witness you perform many of God's sacred commands. However, I have never seen you perform the ritual of Kapparot. Would it be possible for me to do so this year?"

Reb Elimelekh replied, "While I am honored that you want to see me perform the mitzvah of Kapparot, I must tell you that my enactment of this particular command is rather unremarkable. If you want to see someone carry out this ritual in a special manner, go to Moishe the innkeeper."

And so, on the morning before Yom Kippur, the young hasid made his way to the home of Moishe the innkeeper to observe a special performance of the mitzvah of Kapparot.

Moishe began by sitting in a wooden chair in front of the small fireplace in his living room. After positioning himself comfortably in the chair, he asked his wife to bring him his "two books of repentance." Moishe's wife dutifully brought her husband two tattered notebooks from his study.



Moishe opened the first book, read its contents carefully, and then began to weep. The young hasid listened intently as Moishe read a list of (rather minor) sins the innkeeper had committed the previous year. After completing his reading, Moishe took the tear-soaked book, swung it over his head and threw it into the fire.

He took a deep breath, repositioned himself in his seat, opened the second book, and repeated the ritual. This time, however, he read a somewhat longer list of sins—sins that God had committed the previous year. After completing his reading, Moishe took the tear-soaked book, swung it over his head and threw it into the fire.

The innkeeper was then ready for Yom Kippur.

What is it about this story that moves me? To begin with, I greatly appreciate Rabbi Elimelekh's response to his admiring disciple. Rather than pretend that he is the master of all things Jewish, the rabbi is humble enough to send his student to the "Kapparot specialist," Moishe the innkeeper, who is not a famous rabbi, but an important spiritual guide, nonetheless. The motif of a renowned mystical master learning from or sending his disciple to learn from a hidden *tzaddik* (holy man) is common in many Hasidic tales.

I also admire the ritual sensibility expressed in the story. While Rabbi Elimelekh and his disciples observed all of the rites and practices of traditional Judaism (despite the claims of their opponents), following in the footsteps of the Ba'al Shem Tov, they believed that the *mitzvot* were *means* not *ends*. One performs these sacred acts in order to strengthen his or her relationship to God. For the early Hasidim, this meant that in certain circumstances, individuals needed to alter (within the flexible bounds of Jewish law) their religious practices in order to reach a particular spiritual goal. In this case, Moishe the innkeeper transforms the ritual of Kapparot from an act of sympathetic magic into a dramatic, emotional encounter between the individual and God.

It is this encounter that is the climax of the story. Much of the traditional High Holy Day liturgy focuses on human sinfulness and the need for repentance. In these texts God is usually depicted as an infallible king or judge, who scrutinizes (albeit mercifully) the behavior of his weak human subjects from his heavenly abode. During the New Year season, we pray that the Divine will inscribe us in "the book of life."

In contrast to these texts, our story presents a different relational model. Here, the human being and the Divine are not presented as vassal and lord, or judge and defendant, but as covenantal partners, each in need of repentance and forgiveness. Moishe knows that life is not fair—at least by human standards: good people suffer and wicked people prosper. What role (if any) does God play in this topsy-turvy world? Seeking to renew his relationship with his Creator, Moishe speaks openly, and with great sorrow, about his own failings and those of the Divine (in the spirit of Abraham and Job). This is not a manipulative attempt to absolve himself of his wrongdoings, but an important part of a heartfelt act of reconciliation.

Even today, when most of us do not engage in the ritual of Kapparot—either with a chicken, coins, or notebooks—I believe the message of this story remains meaningful. It acknowledges that atonement will remain incomplete if we only beat our own breasts, without articulating our disappointment in and sadness about the workings of God's world. Only when we give voice to, and eventually let go of, our anger and frustration, do we engage fully in the process of *teshuvah*. ■

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A Just Peacemaking Ethic

by Glen Stassen

WHEN I TEACH OR PREACH ON PEACEMAKING IN CHURCHES, I'm often asked, "But what about the 'Old Testament?'" The questioner is still stuck in the pro-war, anti-war debate. He (it's usually a he) fears that my talk about how to make peace threatens his commitment to make war now and then. So he turns the Hebrew Bible into his defense for making war.

So I ask him, "Who brought us 'nation shall not lift up sword against nation' and 'beat their spears into ploughshares?'" Answer: My favorite prophet (and Jesus' favorite prophet), Isaiah. In the Hebrew Bible.

In American culture many quickly revert to war as the one way to do something active about a wrong; not making war feels to them like not doing anything. These people lack imagination about the practices that work to correct injustices without the devastation of war. If war is not the answer, then what *is* the answer? With *nonviolent direct action*, millions of people toppled the violent dictator Eric Honecker and The Wall in East Germany. In that revolution, not one person died. By practicing cooperative conflict resolution and independent initiatives, Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat (with a little help from Jimmy Carter) achieved enough peace that Israel has not fought with Egypt or Jordan since. So did Northern Ireland, by practicing conflict resolution, with a little help from Senator George Mitchell. By practicing economic justice and human rights for Kurds, and thus separating the people from the terrorists, Turkey ended the PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan) movement that had killed 30,000 people. The resultant peace lasted until recently the Iraq War has stirred up some rebellion again. In other examples, just peacemaking practices have brought significant correction to injustice and healing where there was war, or the near likelihood of war: Gandhi in India, Martin Luther King, Jr. in the United States, the peoples' movement in the Philippines, the grassroots human rights and democracy movement throughout Latin America.

Nonviolent direct action, cooperative conflict resolution, economic justice, human rights, transition to democracy from below—these are all practices of the new ethic of just peacemaking. They are bringing healing where there was injustice and dictatorship—without making war.

In order for members of our Abrahamic faiths to rally support for specific practices of peacemaking that work and are scripturally supported, we need a widely known ethic that identifies those practices. It needs to be a publicly known ethic with a specific list of practices. The Ten Commandments is not just a vague essay with scattered suggestions. We need something like The Ten Practices of Just Peacemaking.



When the question that people are asking is whether it is sometimes OK to make war, many evangelical Christians (mis)use the Hebrew Bible to defend waging war. Guided by that debate, what they see in the Hebrew Scriptures is wars. They are so focused on war that they lack imagination about what practices provide alternatives to war and fail to see those practices in the Scriptures.

Now a new ethic is emerging: just peacemaking theory. It's not about debating whether war is ever acceptable. It's about focusing on the practices that work realistically to prevent war. My father volunteered to fight in World War II. Surely he believed in the right to fight some wars. But he came back saying, "Glen, war is so horrible we have to do all we can to prevent World War III and nuclear war." He loved my focus on the ethics of practices that prevent wars. Many veterans know better than the rest of us how devastating war is.

When people's guiding question is whether to support practices that make peace, the Scriptures come alive in refreshing ways. We notice the peacemaking practices of prayer and independent initiatives carried out by a fearful Jacob on his way to seeing Esau after fourteen years of exile. We see Judah asking Joseph, "Can we talk?" after years of tense separation. We notice how Cain should have made peace with Abel by practicing conflict resolution. We see the prophets calling for justice and faithfulness to God in order to prevent the judgment of war's destruction. We notice Isaiah, Hosea, Jeremiah, Micah, Jonah and their practices of peacemaking.

Recently, twenty-four top scholars, including myself, from the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian faiths (eight from each faith) met at Stony Point, New York for a working conference on practices that offer alternatives to war. We met because we have long been frustrated with debates in our traditions only about whether to support various wars. We want to turn to debating whether to support particular peacemaking practices. As the NSP puts it, "The anti-war movement has not yet become a peace movement." We want to move the discussion in our own traditions from debating whether it's acceptable to make war to teaching just peacemaking practices that are in fact working to solve injustice and prevent war.

In preparation for our working conference, Reuven Kimelman and Robert Eisen drafted the Jewish paper, Susan Thistlethwaite and I drafted the Christian paper, and Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Jamal Badawi drafted the Muslim paper. Kimelman and Eisen said that all three faiths are text-based, so we should refer to both texts that are used to legitimate wars and texts that point to specific practices of peacemaking. This pleased my evangelical Christian Bible-believing heart, and we all agreed. We also wanted to analyze what recent political history shows is working realistically to prevent wars. We had done much preparatory thinking, discussing, and writing. We found that the texts and the practical politics supported each other.

The chair of the Islamic Society of North America and the chair of the Shura Council of Southern California (representing half a million Muslims) participated. One Muslim participant pointed out that these top leaders are so busy they have never come to the same conference before. We all sensed the importance of what we were hoping to accomplish together.

Participants remarked that they had never experienced a conference that produced such concrete results in just one gathering. We had prepared well. We found a sense of urgency and gratifying agreeableness in each other, repeatedly taking each other's concerns seriously. We had a sense of God's presence. We gave thanks to God for the process and for the outcome.

When Muslim, Jewish, and Christian scholars agree on an ethic that calls their members to scriptural teachings on realistic practices of peacemaking rather than just general and vague ideals, that is surely a sign of spiritual renewal.



We focused on three questions:

- What are the texts and teachings of my religion that some use to justify the use of political and/or military violence between our faith communities?
- How might my religion counter that interpretation of those texts and teachings?
- What does my religion teach about the measures that can be taken to prevent war and establish peace?

The Jewish paper was clearest in confronting texts that some use to justify violence, focusing on the problems of political messianism, the war against Amalek, and the wars of conquest against the seven Canaanite nations because they get used to legitimate violence against Palestinians. The Muslim paper acknowledged that radical Islamic groups have used certain Quranic verses and Hadith sayings to legitimize extreme violent measures such as suicide bombings and public beheadings. These radical groups ignored core Islamic beliefs in moderation, gentleness, and compassion. The paper articulated careful guidelines for interpreting the Qur'an. Christians pointed to texts that say "the LORD is a Holy Warrior." They especially noted how some Christians use of the Book of Revelation to call for crusades and to oppose peacemaking initiatives even though in Revelation the followers of the Lamb do not make war. It is the beast (the Emperor) and his followers who make war; and the beast is defeated by the prophetic word, the sword that comes from the prophet's mouth. The followers of the Lamb do the will of God as taught by Jesus (Rev. 2:2, 19, 23, 26; 3:8, 10; 9:20-21; 12:17; 14:4, 12; 16:11; 19:10; 20:12-13; 22:11).

Most impressive was that all three groups committed to developing an ethic of just peacemaking with specific peacemaking practices that are based in each of our holy texts, and that are, in fact, working in the world to prevent wars and to build justice and peace. The preparatory papers each identified peacemaking practices that are both textually based and have recently proved their realism. The lists differed some, but they included: acknowledging and taking responsibility for our own complicity in war and injustice; preserving, protecting, and achieving human dignity with equal human rights; supporting and growing international community with toleration of diversity; poverty relief with almsgiving and social justice; collaborative conflict resolution with solidarity; practices of nonviolent action; repentance and forgiveness rather than judgment; and international cooperation rather than unilateralism. In our discussions, sometimes we used these practices as a plumb line to measure the inadequacy of nations, including our own, that avoid the effective alternatives to war. Primarily, however, our focus was on working together to develop a new ethic of just peacemaking that we can all support. We don't just mean "nice ideals," rather we are focusing on what is working in real history to prevent wars. We are focusing on what members of our faiths can add their support to, instead of just vaguely hoping for peace or worse, jumping to faith in war as the answer before considering practical peacemaking initiatives.

We committed ourselves to ongoing work together to develop a new trifaith ethic of just peacemaking. More specifically, we have formulated three different parallel and analogous, but mutual supporting ethics of just peacemaking. We reached eleven points of agreement—beyond what I can delineate in this brief essay. We all agreed that the concepts of Holy War or Crusades are neither compatible with the will of God nor with the true spirit of our religions and that there is no religious justification for terrorism that targets innocents/non-combatants. We stated:

- We all believe that just peacemaking is the best option to resolve human conflicts and to work actively towards eliminating conditions that lead to violence.



- We all believe that we need to look both inward to our traditions as we do this work, and look outward to share results and receive feedback.
- We recognize we have continuing tensions, unresolved issues, and tasks....
- We all agree to mine our own religious traditions to further develop the Just Peacemaking practices.

We plan a monograph and a book, and further meeting to specify our trifaith just peacemaking ethics. You will be hearing from us.

Every person who moves from just being anti-war to working for specifically identified just peacemaking practices that are of proven effectiveness moves us toward spiritual renewal. When significant segments of our three faiths move to supporting specific just peacemaking practices, we are participating in a movement to heal the world. ■

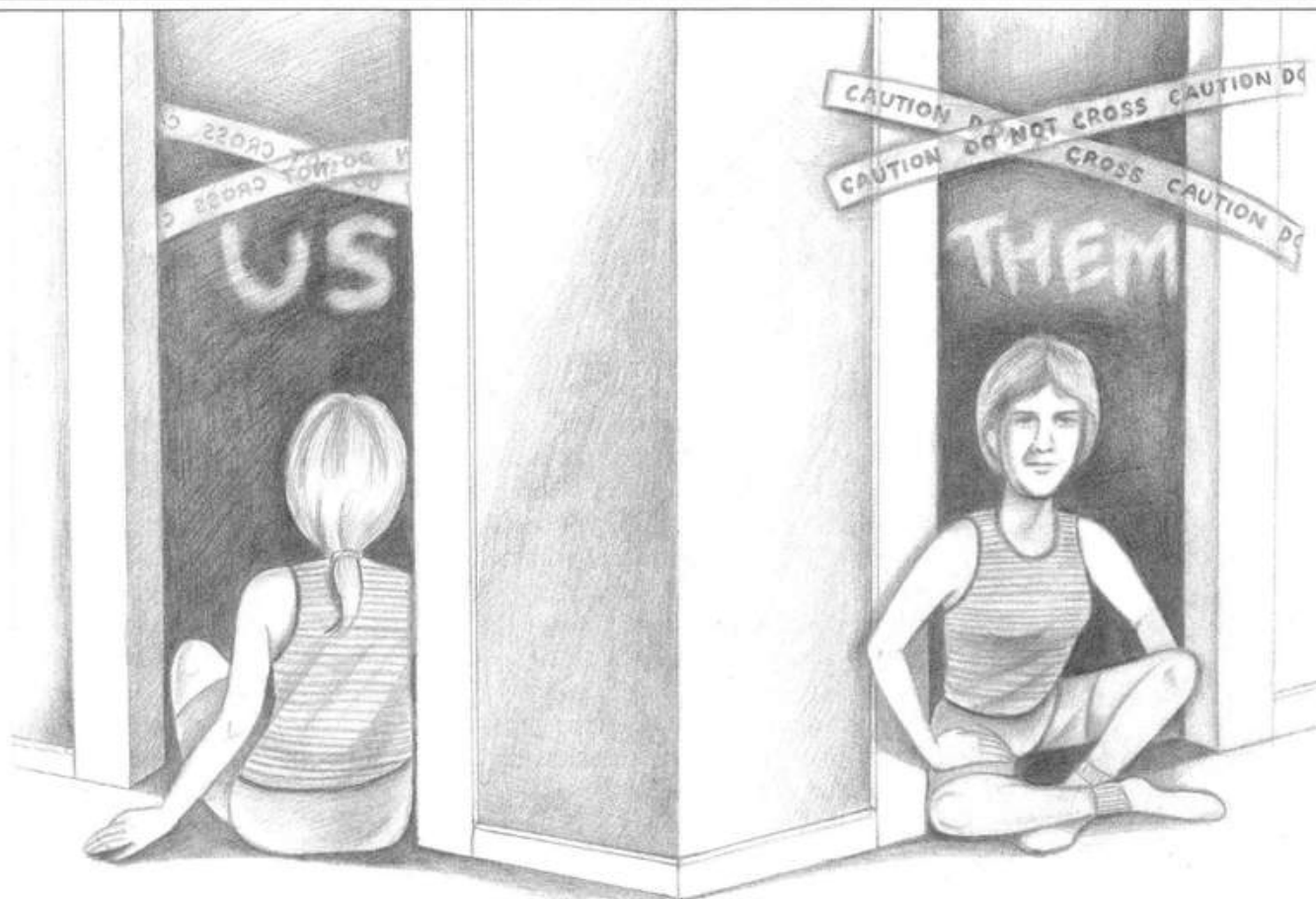
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On the Edge of the Inside: The Prophetic Position

by Richard Rohr

ONE IS STRUCK, IN THE STUDY OF SAINTS, angels, and gods, by a pattern that seems quaint and harmless, yet it is so common that I know there must be a deeper meaning. There always seem to be guardians and spirits of doors, bridges, exits, and entranceways. I saw it all over Asia, read about it in Egypt and Mesopotamia, and am familiar with it in Greek mythology, guardian angels, and Catholic saints like St. John Nepomuk, St. Christopher, and even St. Peter. What is going on here?

Ancients knew that you need guidance, patronage, and protection as you move from one place or state to another, whenever you cross a bridge. There are boundary issues that must be dealt with, dues and respects that must be paid, and you better not enter or leave anything until you know what you are doing. "Don't move your boundary markers before you know the price and you have the right inspiration." Even Charon, who ferried the dead Greeks across the River Styx into Hades, would not do it unless the dead had been properly buried and they carried his payment in their mouths.



The edge of things is a liminal space—a very sacred place where guardian angels are especially available and needed. The edge is a holy place, or as the Celts called it, “A thin place,” and you have to be taught how to live there. To take your position on the spiritual edge of things is to learn how to move safely in and out, back and forth, across and back. It is a prophetic position, not a rebellious or antisocial one. When you live on the edge of anything with respect and honor, you are in a very auspicious position. You are free from a place’s central seductions, but you are also free to hear its core message in very new and creative ways. When you are at the center of something, you usually confuse the essentials with the non-essentials, and get tied down by trivia, loyalty tests, and job security. Not much truth can happen there.

To live *on the edge* of the inside is different than being an insider, a “company man,” or a dues paying member. Yes, you have learned the rules and you understand and honor the system as far as it goes, but you do not need to protect it, defend it, or promote it. It has served its initial and helpful function. You have learned the rules well enough to know how to “break the rules” without really breaking them at all. “Not to abolish the law but to complete it” as Jesus rightly puts it (Matthew 5:17). A doorkeeper must love both the inside and the outside of his or her group, and know how to move between these two loves.

I am convinced that when Jesus sent his first disciples on the road to preach to “all the nations” (Matthew and Luke) and to “all creation” (Mark), he was also training them to risk leaving their own security systems and yet to be gatekeepers for them. He told them to leave the home office and connect with other worlds. This becomes even clearer in his instruction for them “not to take any baggage” and to submit to the hospitality and even the hostility of others. Jesus says the same of himself in John’s Gospel (10:7) where he calls himself “the gate” where people “will go freely in and out, and be sure of finding pasture” (10:9). What an amazing permission! He sees himself more as a place of entrance and exit than a place of settlement. Funny that we always noticed the “in” but never the “out!” *There is a place and time for being outside, or you never really understand or appreciate the inside.* A gatekeeper stewards the doorway in both

directions, and knows the right motivation and timing for both. Like a good shepherd, she leads to the best pasture at the best time. I remember when a Bishop once told me: "Many of the best Catholics in my diocese left the church for a while—and then came back for adult and right reasons." One does not hear that kind of wisdom much anymore. Today it is all about being a consummate insider, which now is called "orthodoxy." Jesus clearly was much more concerned with journey, integrity, and what we would call "ortho-praxy" (correct practice) more than mere correct ideas or correct group.

Jesus was not teaching or maintaining any purity system (which is to say a "belonging system"), but Jesus used everything, even people's mistakes or "impurity," to bring them to God! Good news for everybody, if they are honest. He was into a process of transformation more than a belonging system. For example, he says lovingly to an inquisitive scribe: "You are not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark 12:34). Jesus is affirming this scribe's particular stage on the journey without telling him to *go all the way right now*. He wanted searchers more than settlers, prophets more than priests, honest journeys more than gatherings of the so-called healthy. He had been taught well by his own Jewish exodus and exile.

All of these situations describe the unique and rare position of a biblical prophet. A prophet is always on the edge of the inside. Not an outsider throwing rocks, not a comfortable insider who defends the status quo, but one who lives precariously with two perspectives held tightly together. Not ensconced safely inside, but not so far outside as to lose compassion or understanding. Like a carpenter's level, the prophet has to balance the small bubble in the glass between here and there, between yes and no, between loyalty and critique. The prophet must hold these perspectives in a loving and necessary creative tension. It is a unique kind of seeing and living, which will largely leave the prophet with "nowhere to lay his head" while easily meriting the "hatred of all" who have invariably taken sides in opposing groups (Luke 21:16-17). The prophet speaks for God, and almost no one else, it seems.

People inside of belonging systems are very threatened by those who are not within that group. They are threatened by anyone who has found their citizenship in places they cannot control. Christians called this place "the kingdom of heaven." When one has found their treasure elsewhere, and is utterly grounded in the passion and pathos of a transcendent God (to use Walter Brueggemann's magnificent words), they are both indestructible and uncontrollable by worldly systems. Without it, they will seek their treasure and payoffs inside of each passing kingdom.

If you look at some who have served the prophetic role in modern times, like Martin Luther King, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Dorothy Day, John XXIII, Simone Weil, and Oscar Romero, you will notice that they all hold this exact position. They tend to be, each in their own way, orthodox, conservative, traditional clergy, intellectuals, or believers, but that very authentic inner experience and membership allows them to utterly critique the very systems that they are a part of. You might say that their enlightened actions clarified what our mere belief systems really mean. These prophets critiqued Christianity by the very values that they learned from Christianity. Every one of these men and women were marginalized, fought against, excluded, persecuted, or even killed by the illusions that they exposed and the systems they tried to reform. It is the structural fate of a prophet. You can only truly unlock systems from within, but then you are invariably locked out.

When you live on the edge of the inside, you will almost wish you were outside. But on the outside you are merely an enemy, a pagan, a *persona non grata*, and can largely be ignored or written off. But if you are both inside and outside, you are the ultimate threat, the ultimate reformer, and the ultimate invitation. ■

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What Would Jesus Do About Iraq?

by Tony Campolo

MAHATMA GANDHI ONCE SAID THAT EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT Jesus taught—except for Christians. Sadly, this is far too true for far too many Christians, and especially for those who constitute the Religious Right. Nowhere do we get better evidence of this than when we examine the attitudes of most Christians toward what has been happening in Iraq.

Recently, at Eastern University, I had a debate with Frank Gaffney of the Center for Strategic Studies concerning America's policies for the Middle East. As part of the program, there was an opportunity for questions to be raised from the audience. One of the questions asked was, "If Jesus were determining what America does in Iraq, how would it be different from what America is presently doing there?"

Among the points I tried to make in answering that question, I cited Jesus' teaching that what we would not want others to do to us, we ought not to do to them (Matthew 7:12). Therefore, I explained, "It is safe to say that Jesus would not make torture an acceptable policy in the interrogation of prisoners."

Dr. Gaffney responded to my comments by saying that while he had no expertise in answering this question, in his opinion America has to pursue policies that are practical, suggesting that torture might be a necessary evil in a world in which torturing a prisoner might glean information that could save thousands of lives.

Unfortunately, it was no surprise to me that most of the Christians in the audience agreed with Dr. Gaffney. Practical realities, for them, took precedence over the teachings of Jesus. Gandhi was proved right!

When it comes to war, you don't have to be a Christian to recognize that any reading of the Sermon on the Mount should require followers of Jesus to be non-violent resisters. In this passage of the Christian Bible, Jesus directs his disciples to love their enemies. So far as I am concerned, that undoubtedly means that we shouldn't kill them!

When Jesus preaches that when we are attacked we are to "turn the other cheek," we might not consider that to be a practical thing to do—but then, Jesus never was much for pragmatic solutions to the horrendous problems and threats that we must face in life. When he rejected the kind of justice that prescribes an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, and taught instead that we must return good for evil and overcome evil with good (Matthew 5:38–42) he wasn't fitting into the scheme of realistic politics. But then, Jesus was never into realistic politics. He told his disciples that, unless they were willing to "deny themselves" and be willing to be crucified rather than live contrary to this new ethic he was prescribing, they could not be part of his kingdom (Matthew 10:38).

Even the Apostle Paul, who some liberal theologians contend departed somewhat from the radical ethics of Jesus, supported non-violent resistance. In his Epistle to the Romans, he wrote: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

Before these words are written off as unrealistic for foreign policy, consider what might have happened if Christians had embraced them and did for the Iraqi people what Paul suggested that we should have done. For ten years, following the first Gulf War, America placed an embargo on Iraq, and the Red Cross estimates that this embargo affected the food supply and the availability of medicines in that country. This, in turn, was indirectly responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of children among Iraq's poorest of the poor.

Suppose Christians of America had done what their Bible told them to do for their



enemies. Imagine what might have been if our churches, using their vast resources, had purchased medicines and food for the Iraqi people, shipped them to Jordan, and, from there, transported them to the desperate people in Iraq. Might the invading American soldiers then have been greeted with roses thrown at their feet, as Vice President Cheney had predicted? The Apostle Paul suggested that that kind of response to Saddam Hussein might have brought down that evil dictator. That is what Paul predicted when he said that through such loving acts of kindness we would "bring down coals of fire" on our enemy's head (Romans 12:20).

G. K. Chesterton, the British author, once said, "It is not that Christianity has been tried and failed. It is that it has never been tried."

On the eve of this present war in Iraq, a group of my students, along with some other Christians, decided that their commitment to Jesus required that they should put his teachings into practice in Iraq. They flew to Jordan, hired a couple of vans, and, with limited financial resources, bought some desperately needed medical supplies which they loaded into the vans. They then traveled across the desert to deliver them to the people of Baghdad. When the bombs started to fall on Baghdad, they wanted to be there, volunteering in the hospitals, helping the Iraqi doctors and nurses to do their ministries of healing for the wounded. These young people were able to stay there until the American troops occupied the city. Then they were forced to leave.

As this group of Christian peacemakers traveled back toward Jordan, one of *their* vans had a blowout on one of its front tires, resulting in a devastating crash. Several of these young heroes needed hospital care. The good news is that some Muslim Iraqis, who were even then engaged in battle and under attack, took these injured Christians to a hospital in a nearby town and arranged care for them without asking for any kind of payment in return. They recognized in these young Christians what their prophet Jesus had taught his disciples about caring for those in need, regardless of who they are.

On another subject, Jesus would have had something to say about capital punishment. When Saddam Hussein was put to death, most of my Evangelical sisters and brothers were horrified at the grisly videos of the hanging that were broadcast on television, but they had little objection to the concept of capital punishment. How do they think that it is possible to reconcile that hanging with Christ's teachings about being merciful? Jesus said: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 6:7).

Any survey of the Religious Right will reveal that these Christian brothers and sisters support capital punishment more readily than does the general population. Without hesitation, they stood behind the executions that President Bush ordered when he was governor of Texas. The New Testament teaches that it is never too late to repent and to make a commitment to live out the teachings of Jesus, but it should be done now! Our scriptures say: "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

Jesus taught, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Now is the time for Christians, especially for those fundamentalist Christian brothers and sisters who insist on taking the Bible literally—to literally live out the words of the one whom they call Lord!

Also, it is time for Muslims to give attention to the teachings of the one they acknowledge as "prophet." And for Jews to consider the teachings of the one they themselves call "Rabbi." Of course, this can only happen if Christians begin to obey the commandments of the one who taught us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39). ■

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Muslims and Darfur Neglected Responsibilities

by Omair Ahmad

MY FATHER TOLD ME A STORY ABOUT AN ATTEMPTED AIRCRAFT hijacking that took place in Lucknow, India. The hijacker was armed with a pistol, but not with a great deal of sense, as he began his attempt while the aircraft was still on the ground. During the long standoff, one woman, with a baby in her arms, finally lost her patience as her child started wailing.

Rising from her seat, she declared that the gunman could do as he wished, but she was leaving. As she proceeded to make good on her threat the gunman tried to convince her that he was a dangerous man with a pistol in his hand, but she left anyway. One by one the rest of the passengers followed her out, leaving the frustrated hijacker to be arrested by the police.

HIJACKING ISLAM

THIS IS AN AMUSING STORY OF A MORE INNOCENT TIME FROM A CITY that has often been synonymous with grace and good manners in Northern India, and maybe its lessons are not applicable in current times. Nevertheless, it came back to me recently while I was talking to an Indian friend. He comes from a very learned family and is easily one of the better-informed authorities on Islam in the world, through his work as a political commentator. He is somebody whose knowledge and accomplishments I deeply respect, but he said something that I disagree with.

He used a phrase that I have heard many times about the radicals that we have grown to know (but not necessarily to love), remarking in frustration that, "These madmen have hijacked Islam!" In one form or the other I have heard this phrase used, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom after the attacks on September 11, 2001.

As a Muslim foreigner studying and working in international politics in the United States at that time, I followed the commentary of Muslim spokespeople very closely. Somebody coined the phrase, "These terrorists didn't just hijack the planes. They hijacked my religion." In one form or another it caught on and has remained in circulation since then. It fills a number of needs: the need to place the blame on specific individuals for their crimes; the need to explicitly assert that religion is being used to justify illegal and immoral actions; and the need of the literate, liberal elite to express their disgust, frustration, and deep humiliation at their inability to guide people to the true understanding of Islam.

And yet, there is a deep failure among those of us who have had the privilege of an excellent education in both politics and Islam. To a certain degree we must share the blame

in allowing Islam to be hijacked in the first place, and not doing anything to get off the plane, or wrest it back into our control.

ADDRESSING DARFUR

IN RECENT WEEKS A NUMBER OF GROUPS HAVE PROTESTED ABOUT THE KILLINGS in Darfur, the huge number of refugees, the uncounted dead, the raped women, and the starving children. With the fine exception of *Q News*, a British magazine, I have heard very little from any “Muslim” source on the misery in this predominantly Muslim country, on the poor that will die and be forgotten by the world while we remain counting the “more important” dead.

That does not mean that the concern is missing. I raised the subject of Darfur while having coffee with a Sudanese friend in Delhi. A subject that I can do little about in my present capacity, and which I have followed over the last two years through only newspaper reports and the occasional paper by organizations such as the International Crisis Group. He raised his hands and said, “It’s a problem. A big problem, and one I wish we could do something about.”

We can at least speak about Darfur, complain, yell, state bluntly that what is happening there is horrible, and that the excuses do not hold any water any more. Yes, the conflict is complicated; yes, many people are guilty and there are no heroes; yes to all of that. But the simple truth is that innocents are being killed and the unarmed are being terrorised. This is unacceptable in any time or place.

SPEAKING FOR THE OPPRESSED

IF WE DO NOT SPEAK FOR THE MARGINALIZED, SOMEBODY ELSE WILL. If we don’t speak for the oppressed, for those that are persecuted for being from the wrong tribe, for being the wrong person in the wrong place, who are killed simply because they are poor and therefore insignificant, then, because of our silence, somebody else with destructive intent will.

A huge part of the “Islamic world” lies in poor, post-colonial, developing countries. Their peoples have been manipulated by foreign governments as well as their own. They have seen a world that is deeply unfair, in which nobody speaks for them. They live with that reality whether it is in Grozny, Falluja, Mogadishu, or Darfur. If somebody walks up to them and offers a gun in the name of Islam, we who let this hijacking take place, will also be to blame.

And, putting all that aside, can we not just speak of how horrible this situation is? Just because it is the poor killing the poor, just because it isn’t the West perpetrating this particular tragedy, just because it isn’t F-16s dropping one-ton bombs on residential buildings, doesn’t mean it is any less of a tragedy, and that these deaths don’t deserve to be mourned and condemned.

BEING MUSLIM

ACCORDING TO AN AUTHENTICATED *HADITH*, THE PROPHET WAS ASKED ABOUT the definition of faith. He answered that faith meant that if a person saw a wrong being committed they should act to stop it. And if they were too weak to act, they should at least speak against it, and if they were too weak to do even that, they should at least condemn it in their hearts.

How long will most Muslims keep condemning these things in their hearts, if at all? When will we have the courage to speak, at least, against atrocities, to be Muslims more than just in name? And how long will we allow ourselves to believe that our silence allows anything except another “hijacking” to take place? ■

Omais Ahmad grew up in Saudi Arabia and India, and studied International Politics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and Syracuse University, New York. His novel on the radicalization among a section of Indian Muslims, Encounters, was published in 2006.

Be Fruitful and Save Seeds

by Rachel P. Kriger

AUTUMN IS NEAR, DAYLIGHT IS DECREASING, and the plants are heavy with fruits. Nature begins her descent back to the ground. Soon, each leaf will have its one chance to dance to the earth's surface. We are about to enter the spiritual New Year as we cleanse our bodymindspirit from that which no longer serves us. We will look high into the heavens and deep within our souls, and when that's over, we celebrate the harvest of the first fruits.

It is a strange time of year, as modern day Jews, especially when the High Holy Days fall during the middle of the week. How do we really get into the beginning of the school year? How do we balance our work with our prayer? As a Jewish farmer in America, it is also strange. There is much work to be done to bring in the harvest, to prepare the beds with manure and cover crops before they rest for the winter, and to save seeds and store food for the winter. On the other hand, this is a highly spiritual time of year and there is not much time to do all of this physical work.

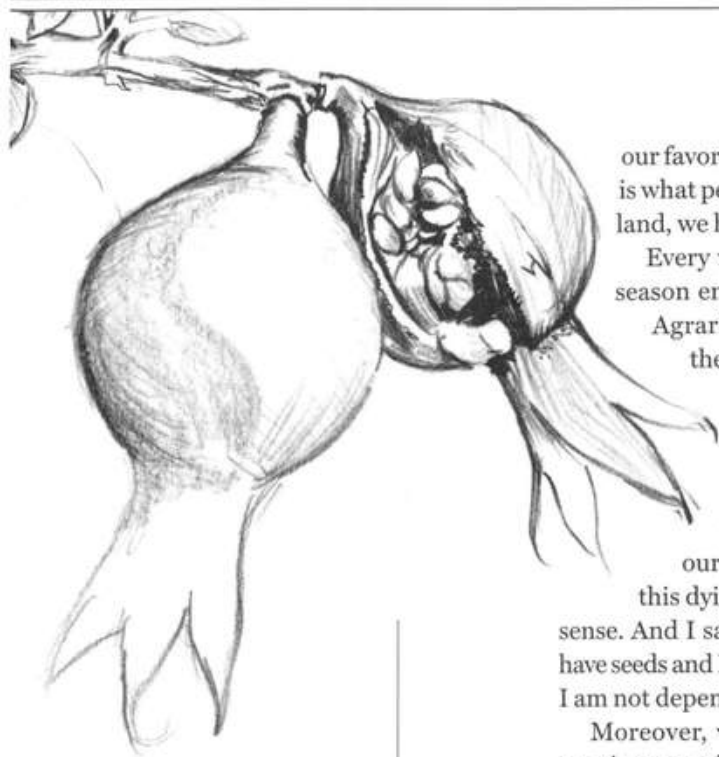
In Chinese Medicine, the organs corresponding to autumn are the lungs and large intestine. We focus on the lungs to help us stand centered between heaven and earth as we take inspiration from above. The colon's job is to push out the waste, but first it must absorb the essential minerals into the bloodstream. Like the ancient Chinese, we too can dedicate this time of year to that which is truly essential. When we do our work in the world and in ourselves, let us only do the most important tasks, and let the rest go as we celebrate that which we value most about ourselves and our communities.

To get a little bit of perspective, let's imagine what it would be like if we were ancient Israelites getting ready to make a pilgrimage to the Temple. We have worked hard and have been watching our crops grow and our fruit ripen. Instead of eating the first fruits, we will journey with them across the desert to offer them to the Priests at the Temple. When we return, we will build booths in our vineyards and dwell in them so that we can guard our crop and complete the demanding work of the harvest in good time.

This lifestyle is drastically different from our modern systems of land ownership, supermarkets, and even Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms. I say there is one act that we can do, to put us back into the shoes of the ancient people. We can save seeds. And I suggest that we learn to do this physically, spiritually, and metaphorically.

What is seed saving? It is the process of extracting seeds from the best selection of





our favorite, most resilient crops so that we can plant new seeds in the spring. This is what people did before seed catalogues and garden stores. When we lived off the land, we had to ensure that we would have crops every year.

Every vegetable crop has its own inner survival instincts, and, as its growing season ends, each plant produces seeds to ensure its life in future generations. Agrarian humans have developed the knowledge to extract the seeds, cure them, and store them. They have even understood how to select for tolerance against pests or weather conditions, or simply for what tastes the best and has good looks.

When we think in terms of sustainability, the overall goal of seed saving is to maintain a diverse gene pool of many varieties of fruits and vegetables that are most suitable to our climate, our land, and our taste buds. As a modern American, I choose to save seeds to remember this dying art form and to understand what used to be knowledge and common sense. And I save seeds because it keeps me connected to my own food cycle. When I have seeds and I know how to grow them and when my environment allows for abundance, I am not dependent on major corporations for my food supply.

Moreover, vegetables are not just part of the food pyramid to fulfill my "daily requirements." They are living stories of the small plots of land upon which I have learned how to grow. Seeds also make wonderful gifts and great metaphors for life. When I plant seeds in the ground, I think metaphorically about what "seeds" I am planting in my life. I know that not all of them will germinate, grow, and produce more seeds. When I am blessed with the opportunity to harvest seeds, I can see the fruits of my labor and receive encouragement to keep doing this dance.

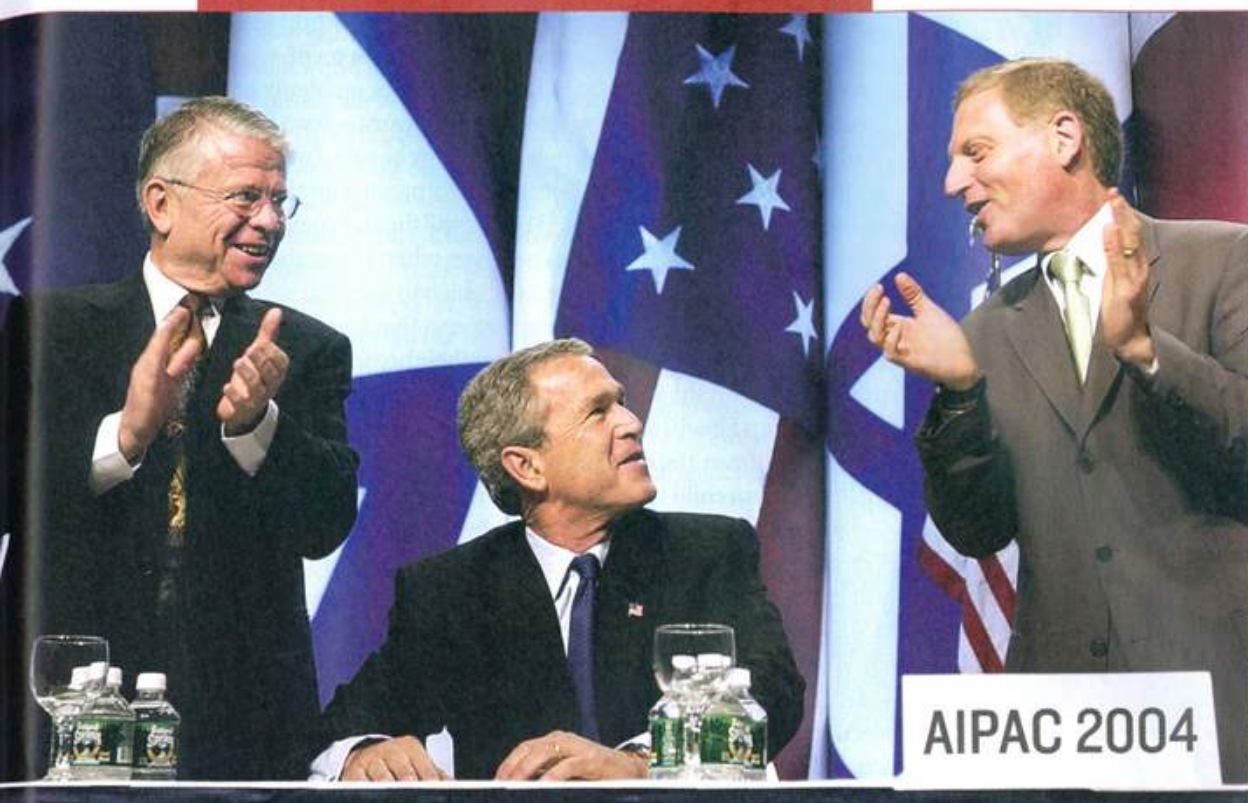
Now let us return to the Temple in Jerusalem. We are ancient Israelites carrying our first fruits, which are a gift to God. All of these fruits contain seeds. As we near the Temple Mount, we encounter all of the other Israelites living on this land with their first fruits and prized livestock. And before we get there, we meet each other. We admire each other's produce and animals. "How unique and rare is that bright red pomegranate? And that deep purple one? And look at that huge one that he has!" Perhaps we could even trade some of last year's seeds. All of the abundance from the entire Land of Israel is an offering here. In other words, the Priests get to see *all* of the varieties that grow throughout this land. In my imagination, the Temple was also a huge seed bank.

When I think about rebuilding the Temple, I see it as an agricultural information center/seed bank housing potential life from many ancient and heirloom crops. We can only begin by restoring ancient wisdom and appreciation for nature.

For this spiritual New Year, here is the practice that I suggest to inspire us with nature's potential. Cut open a cucumber lengthwise. Admire how many seeds it contains. Hold one seed in your hand. This seed could grow an entire cucumber plant. Each plant can produce about eighteen cucumbers, each containing so many seeds. Try this with winter squash and tomatoes and peppers. Do this exercise at your dinner table with guests. Go around the table and share with each other what metaphorical seeds you will be storing this winter to plant into action in the spring. And perhaps plant a metaphorical seed to learn more about seed saving (a great website is www.growseed.org).

We really are a community coming together to celebrate our harvest and to give thanks and praise. Our faith is what is essential during this time of year. We can gain inspiration from witnessing the abundance that nature has to offer. And we can let go of the illusion of scarcity as we regain knowledge of how to preserve this abundance. ■

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President Bush receives a standing ovation prior to speaking to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, an influential pro-Israel lobbying group, in Washington Tuesday, May 18, 2004. At right is AIPAC president Howard Kohr and left is committee member Robert Asher.

The Israel Lobby

by Michael Lerner

1. A Zionist Boy Reads the Prophets—How I came to critique the Israel Lobby

I GREW UP IN THE HEART OF WHAT WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME THE ISRAEL LOBBY in the U.S.

My father and mother were national leaders of the Zionist movement in the U.S. My mother used to talk proudly of how, at five years old, I was standing outside the local bank on Bergen Street in the mostly-Jewish Weequahic section of Newark New Jersey, holding a Jewish National Fund (JNF) box, singing "Hatikvah," and collecting money to plant trees in Israel. When my mother won election as local chair of Hadassah and my father as chair of the Zionist Council, the elation at home was even greater than when she was appointed the administrative assistant in charge of political affairs for the U.S. Senator she helped elect, or when my father became a judge. All the external political accomplishments, I was led to believe, were really not what counts in the world except to the extent that they allowed my parents to help Israel gain support in the U.S.

To me, this seemed a very noble enterprise, and I'm sure that I learned from my parents that activities for a social movement were really far more important than personal advancement. They were idealistic and motivated by a genuine concern for the Jewish people. Their Zionism emerged in the 1930s and 1940s when Jews were being attacked and discriminated against in the U.S. and eventually murdered in the millions in Europe. The staggering refusal of the U.S. government to allow refugees fleeing Nazism into this country unless, like the atomic scientists and some other well-known Jewish intellectuals, they

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had special skills that could be “useful” to the government, was only the tip of the iceberg. Country after country around the world shut their doors to the Jews. No wonder, then, that the Zionist movement, which had seemed far-fetched and unrealistic in its first decades, suddenly began to receive majority support from Jews after the Holocaust—Jews felt that the world had shown that the Jewish people could only be safe if we had our own country and our own army. I’m still proud of my parents for their commitment to an ideal outside of themselves. Their idealism and commitment to a larger movement made a big impact on me, even when I later chose different ideals and a different kind of movement with which to identify.

Nobody ever mentioned to me in the years that I was growing up that there had been a major expulsion of Arabs from their homes in 1947–49 and though I heard about it from the Left in the 1960s, I found it hard to take seriously until Benny Morris, an Israeli historian, published in *Tikkun* a summary of some of his findings gained from the opening of the historical archives in Israel in the late 1980s. But even as a child I knew that there were Palestinian Arabs who had stayed in their homes and who were in the 1950s living under martial law in Israel. And when I began to question this and the purity of the Zionist movement that my parents were leading, I was quickly led to believe that anyone raising questions of this sort would be dismissed as a “self-hating Jew” or a budding anti-Semite. Those terms are not specific to the last two decades—they have been thrown around quite loosely by the leaders of American Zionism for at least the past seventy years (I first heard these epithets being used to describe the American Council for Judaism, a Reform movement based group that dared question the assumption that a Jewish state in Palestine would be the best strategy for Jewish survival). It was taken for granted in my household that anyone who didn’t buy into Zionism was in fact a Jew-hater.

The repression of open discussion about Israel except to talk about how best to get people to support the new State was quite a departure from the norm of family discussions. Every evening my sister Pat (now Trish) and I would be invited to participate in lively discussions of politics, religion, school and television by parents who were liberal supporters of Adlai Stevenson, haters of McCarthy and the anti-communist crusade that dominated the 1950s, and early opponents of the war in Vietnam. While my sister honed her skills as an early stand up comedienne at these daily dinners, I tried to engage with the politics, and was encouraged to take any stance I wanted as long as it did not challenge whatever policies Israel happened to be following at the time. When my parents had Israeli Prime Minister Ben Gurion and, later, Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban visiting our dinner table, I was given a clear message to keep my mouth shut about anything other than how much I loved Israel. The same message was there at my Conservative synagogue where I was bar mitzvahed and even in the public Weequahic High School where we discussed world affairs from a liberal perspective, led by Jewish history teachers who were later identified as communists by the House Un-American Activities Committee, teachers who never allowed any discussion that might be critical of Israel.

There was only one place where I learned that Jewish nationalism was suspect and could be used in destructive ways: at Camp Ramah (a summer camp run by the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and reflecting the more orthodox wing of Conservative Judaism). At Ramah we read the prophets and commemorated the Jewish Fast of Tisha B’Av, which seeks to explain the many calamities that befell the Jewish people as a product of our own faithlessness to God’s teaching that it was our responsibility as Jews to create a society of love, generosity, justice, and special caring for the most oppressed and for the Other (Heb: *ger*). When I studied with Abraham Joshua Heschel and Yochanan Muffs at JTS I learned that the prophetic teachings were at the heart of one way of understanding Judaism, but that way was under severe attack from those who sought to build a Judaism that was more compliant with the ethos of the American society into which Holocaust-traumatized Jews were desperately seeking to assimilate, a Judaism that celebrated itself as perfect and the Jewish people as the eternal victim.

The Prophets: "Do not oppress the stranger"

THE PROPHETS WERE FACED WITH A SIMILARLY SELF-CONGRATULATORY JUDAISM as pervaded the Jewish world in America; a Jewish community that had lost its moral foundations but were nevertheless sure that God would always be on its side. From Moses to Jeremiah and Isaiah, the Prophets taught a very different message: that the Jewish claim on the land of Israel was totally contingent on the moral and spiritual life of the Jews who lived there, and that the land would, as the Torah tells us, "vomit you out" if people did not live according to the highest moral vision of Torah. Over and over again, in one form or another, the Torah repeated its most frequently stated *mitzvah* (command): "When you enter your land, do not oppress the stranger," (the Other, the one who is the outsider of your society, the powerless one) and then not only "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" but also (and almost never mentioned in the mainstream—and hence totally Zionist-oriented—synagogues of post-Holocaust America), "you shall love the Other," the *ger*.

As I studied the Prophets more deeply at JTS, I began to realize that they were not only criticizing the values of ancient Israel and pointing to the ways that Judaism itself had become distorted by those who were its official spokesmen, but that they also provided a framework to criticize the dominant values of capitalist society.

Orthodoxies Take Over

AFTER STARTING MY STUDY FOR A PHD IN PHILOSOPHY at the University of California, Berkeley, and working for six months on a kibbutz in Israel, I became aware of the unfair treatment of Palestinians within Israeli society, something never discussed at JTS. As an American proud of all the good in this country, I had no choice but to speak out and become an active organizer against American racism and the war in Vietnam. Similarly, when I began to learn the shocking truth about racist treatment of Palestinians by the state that claimed to be the State of the Jewish people, I felt that my deep commitment to Judaism gave me no option but to speak out and critique Israeli policy as a violation of Jewish values and norms. But that wasn't so easy. Almost all of my Jewish friends in the anti-war movement had had such bad experience in the Jewish communities and families of their childhood that they had totally rejected Judaism. The only time they even wanted to identify as Jewish was at moments of critiquing Israel. So for them, my critique of Israel (based on universalist principles, my love for Judaism, and my commitment to a prophetic movement in Judaism that strongly condemns the "realists"—those who believe that power, not ethics, will redeem us) was too pro-Israel for them. From my perspective, the Left's critique is frequently articulated with so much one-sidedness and anger at Israel as to make it a distortion of the history and contemporary reality of Israel/Palestine (I tell a more balanced account in my book *Healing Israel/Palestine* [North Atlantic, 2003]).

My friend (and former leader of the Free Speech Movement) Mario Savio (not a Jew), shared that perception about the misguided harshness of Left critiques of Israel and joined with me in creating an organization that would be my first attempt at a "Middle Path" that was both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine and that would support a demilitarized Palestinian state, an international force to provide security for both Israel and Palestine, reparations for Palestinians, and a return of Israel to the pre-1967 borders with minor border changes so that Jews could continue to live in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem and worship at the Kotel (Western Wall)—it was called "The Committee for Peace in the Middle East."

I was, at the time, chair of the Berkeley chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and had been part of the more confrontational "action faction" that picketed and held disruptive sit-ins to challenge the CIA and the ROTC when they sought to recruit on campus. I was also a spokesperson for a set of rather militant anti-Vietnam-War demonstrations (e.g. sitting on the train tracks to stop trains bringing new recruits to the



1961 photo at the Lerner's home; from left to right: Former Gov. Bob Meyner, Former U.S. President Harry Truman, Beatrice Lerner, Governor of N.J. Hughes, and Judge Joseph Lerner

war and closing the streets of downtown Oakland with thousands of demonstrators to prevent young people from getting to the Oakland army induction center where many of them were processed and sent to Vietnam). But the moment I extended my voice beyond Vietnam and racism toward Blacks, and got into this position of advocating a middle path on Israel/Palestine, I was dismissed by many of my SDS colleagues as a Zionist whose views (not only on Israel, but on everything including strategies for the anti-war movement) need no longer be taken seriously.

Shortly thereafter the other shoe fell. An article I had written which described the vision of the Committee for Peace in the Middle East was published in the American Jewish Congress-sponsored journal *Judaism*. The A. J. Congress had been a major Jewish voice for liberalism and free speech, integration, and civil liberties but when I discussed the issue of Israel in a somewhat critical way, the leadership stepped in and fired Stephen Schwartzschild, the magazine's editor, for publishing this article (an act so outrageous that it generated a news article in *The New York Times*). So much for civil liberties and free speech if it questioned Israel or the values of the American Jewish community.

I learned this lesson and hoped when I formed *Tikkun* magazine in 1986 that our call for peace and reconciliation between Israel and Palestine would not undermine our ability to be the voice for Jewish liberalism, challenging the conservative values that had come to the fore in most Jewish institution and national organizations in the Reagan years of the 1980s. Things went well at first. But two years after we began, the Palestinian Intifada made it impossible for us to quiet our voices in critique of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and its response to Palestinian demonstrations (the words of then-Chief of Staff of the Israel Defence Forces Yitzhak Rabin: "Break their bones" was meant quite literally as an order to Israeli troops). But the moment we published an editorial critical of Israel's response to the Intifada, I was suddenly labeled a "self-hating Jew," my invitations to speak at synagogues quickly disappeared, and the many Jewish institutions and donors who had shown interest in *Tikkun* as a voice of Jewish liberalism lost interest in our enterprise.

Over and over again, authors would tell me that they had been similarly attacked for publishing their articles in *Tikkun*. Some reported feelings of strong disapproval coming from senior Jewish faculty at the colleges or universities at which they taught, and worried about their own careers. Others told me that the other places that they had previously published were now communicating to them their lack of interest in publishing anyone who had written for that "anti-Israel" publication *Tikkun*. Our literary editor told me that he had received strong negative messages about his involvement with *Tikkun* from the outspoken right-wing Zionist Cynthia Ozick. Some of the most famous younger Jewish authors who today represent the mainstream of American Jewish fiction or literary writing admitted to me off the record that they felt reluctant to write for *Tikkun* because of the vulnerability they felt being associated with a magazine that was willing to publicly voice criticisms of Israel. The small but powerful group of neo-con Jews for whom support of Israel's expansionist policies was the fulcrum of their worldview on almost all other domestic and international issues had powerful ties that shaped the consciousness of *The New York Times* op-ed page, culture sections, book review, and magazine and through that managed to intimidate many publishers into a narrow view of "what would sell" which dictated what books they'd publish (though their power now in 2007 only shapes the cultural coverage, the book review, and *The New York Times Magazine*, but not the editorial pages).

2. What Would The Prophets Say to the Israel Lobby?

Who is the Israel Lobby?

THERE ARE TWO PRIMARY ORGANIZATIONS THAT COMPOSE THE ISRAEL LOBBY. Then, as now, the American Jewish leadership was working to promote Israel's policies to the Jewish world through the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, and to promote Israel's interests to Congress through the American Israel Political Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

When I talk about the Israel Lobby, however, I mean to refer not only to AIPAC or The Conference of Presidents, but to a range of organizations (including the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the World Jewish Congress, B'nai Brith, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Hadassah, the Wiesenthal Center, the Federation, and the United Jewish Appeal (UJA), the various Jewish Community Relations Councils, most of the local Hillel Foundations on college campuses, most of the Hebrew schools and day schools introducing their students to Judaism or Jewish culture, the array of Federation sponsored newspapers that are distributed in almost every Jewish community in America, as well as media like *Moment* and *The Forward* which opportunistically respond to the most powerful voices and funding in the Jewish world) and informally affiliated projects, political campaigns, and political action committees (PACs) that work together to advance Israel's agenda in the U.S. But there are two very important qualifiers here.

First, the Israel Lobby cannot be understood apart from the vast number of Jewish institutions and even individual communities, synagogues, and families that impose on their members a certain discipline that goes well beyond any normal political party or force, challenging the human, ethical, and Jewish identities of anyone who disagrees with its fundamental assumptions. In the broad sense that I'm using the term "Israel Lobby," I'm referring to everyone who enforces—on the individual or public communal level—what I describe as Jewish Political Correctness.

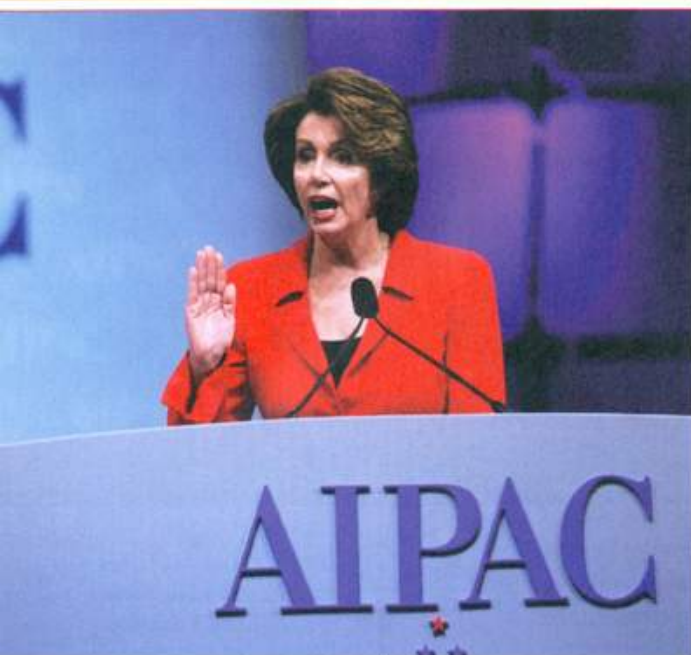
Second, the Israel Lobby has since the 1980s increasingly developed a politics that is right-wing in its assumptions about the world, taking it, at times, far away from the liberal instincts that still characterize a large majority of American Jews on most other issues. That right-wing bias makes it a good ally for Israel when the Israeli government is being run by right-wingers or Labor Party militarists, but it was not a loyal ally when Yitzhak Rabin decided to pursue a policy of peace and reconciliation (for details on this, read Yossi Beilin, who was Rabin's representative who negotiated the Oslo Accords, and his account of the ways that AIPAC sought to undermine Rabin's policies). While the vast majority of members of the organizations affiliated with AIPAC and the Conference of Presidents are more liberal than the core activists and leadership and while most American Jews are far more liberal than the members of these organizations (and hence voted 78% for Kerry in 2004 and 80% for Democrats in Congress in 2006), most of them are unfamiliar with the hard-core right wing spin that led delegates to the recent 2007 AIPAC convention to be cheering on the Bush-Cheney agenda in Iraq and to be pushing the President and the Congress to take military action against Iran.

Third, there are a handful of liberal organizations that do not share all of the Israel Lobby's agenda who joined as affiliates of The Council of Presidents or AIPAC because they imagined they could have some moderating influence from within, but whose actual track record seems more influenced by rather than influencing the actual direction of either AIPAC or the Presidents grouping. So please understand that the Israel Lobby does not refer to one organization, but to a whole group of organizations, many of which have other issues on their agenda, and which work in tandem to put forward a very similar position on anything touching on Israel's perceived interests.

It is perfectly legitimate for any group in America to decide to form an organization or a lobby to advance its interests, and so also with the Israel Lobby. There is nothing fundamentally illegitimate about the enterprise. But for many of us in the Jewish peace-and-justice community, and in the interfaith Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP), the issue is not whether AIPAC, The Council of Presidents, and the Israel Lobby understood in its broadest sense is legitimate, but rather: is it good for the world, good for the U.S., or good for the Jewish people? And there I side with many who have come to the conclusion that on all three counts the answer is "no." The National Rifle Association is also legitimate, but



Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon jokes with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y. during an AIPAC conference, May 24, 2005 in Washington.



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi of CA gestures during an address before the AIPAC policy conference, March 13, 2007 in Washington.

it's not good for the world or for America. Ditto David Duke and his organization or the remnants of the White Citizens' Councils, or the mosques that foster Islamic extremism or the churches that foster the demeaning of non-Christians. We support their rights and their legal entitlements, but we challenge their wisdom and decency.

Bad for the World

THE ISRAEL LOBBY HAS BECOME A MAJOR PERPETRATOR OF THE fear orientation in politics that the NSP believes to be at the heart of many of the problems facing the world. The Israel Lobby sees threats everywhere, and hope nowhere except in Israel retaining military superiority and using American weapons to bolster its capacity to resist reasonable demands for a Palestinian state and for resisting negotiations leading to peace with its neighbors. The Lobby's solution for Israel is that the country be involved in endless struggle with evil enemies who will always be there, rejecting any more complicated or sophisticated view that might point to the interactive nature of conflict, the way in which conflicts are

frequently a product of both sides taking provocative actions. The "security" strategy that results from the Israel Lobby's fear-orientation is the Strategy of Domination: we must conquer or dominate others before they conquer or dominate us.

Tikkun and the NSP have been engaged in trying to popularize a different worldview—that homeland security can come through generosity and caring for others. So whereas the Israel Lobby people are now trying to push the U.S. and Europe into a war with Iran, the NSP has been advocating for a Global Marshall Plan to eliminate hunger, homelessness and inadequate health and educational resources, and to repair the global environment. As long as the Israel Lobby has an important impact on public discourse, it will strengthen the political hold of the worldview of fear and domination. It is this worldview which is central to creating the framework within which wars seem rational to the political leadership.

Bad for the United States

THE ISRAEL LOBBY IDENTIFIES THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE U.S. with those of the Israeli right-wing, and that right-wing engages in activities against the Palestinian people in particular and against surrounding neighboring states, which have inflamed global public opinion not only against Israel but against the United States which is seen as its puppet. The conspiracy theory about Jewish power in the U.S. is a distortion and mostly a falsehood but the alignment of the U.S. and Israel on foreign policy matters is not a falsehood as long as the U.S. continues to act from the standpoint of the strategy of domination. That strategy finds its most articulate spokespeople in neo-con journals like *Commentary* and *The New Republic*, and also in the many policy institutes and think tanks in which Israel-Lobby-aligned thinkers get paid to suggest the kinds of distorted policies that led to the War in Iraq and might yet, if Bush and Cheney get their way, lead to military strikes against Iran. All of this is destructive to the best interests of the U.S., which lie in reconciliation and mutual understanding with the peoples of the world.

Bad for Israel

THE ISRAEL LOBBY STRENGTHENS THE HANDS OF THE MOST RIGHT-WING FORCES IN Israel while reinforcing the view that the U.S. is going to back their intransigence and militarism and that, hence, they have a blank check to do whatever crazy and self-defeating scheme they come up with, including the war in Lebanon in the summer of 2006, the dropping of cluster bombs on southern Lebanon, the refusal to give up land of Syria's conquered in 1967, the holding of thousands of Palestinian civilians in Israeli prisoner camps, the use of torture, the violation of the rights of Israeli citizens who happen to be Arabs, and the refusal to acknowledge any responsibility for the Palestinian refugees.

Israel will some day face a reckoning from Arab states and from the peoples of the world for the gross arrogance and insensitivity of their government's policies, and people

will some day look back at the Israel Lobby in the U.S. and realize that it was destructive to Israel's long-term survival interests.

Bad for the Jews

FINALLY, THE ISRAEL LOBBY IS BAD FOR THE JEWS. For the last two decades many in the organized Jewish community have been agonizing over their inability to keep a large number of the younger generations connected to their Judaism. In the late 1980s and early 1990s I did empirical research and discovered the set of reasons that people alienated from the Jewish community. First and foremost was the spiritual deadness and materialism they encountered in the Jewish world, but second, and almost as important was the anger and frustration that young Jews experienced facing Jewish Political Correctness around Israel and the extraordinary way that the values of the Israel Lobby were permeating every ounce of Jewish life (from the synagogue to the country clubs, from the suburban community centers to the fundraising for the United Jewish Appeal and the Federations), repressing intellectual curiosity and any form of criticism of Israel, and labeling as "self-hating" those young Jews who persisted in questioning. I published this information in my book *Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation* [Putnam, 1994]. Sadly, the Jewish world simply refused to listen to the evidence: their blind loyalty to the approach of the Israel Lobby was destroying their ability to speak to their own children.

Jewish Political Correctness— Like Any other Kind—Will Backfire

THE ISRAEL LOBBY'S "JEWISH POLITICAL CORRECTNESS" HAS PUT A STRAITJACKET ON public conversations about Israel. Reporters and even newspapers that report the complicated and two-sided truth of the Israel/Palestinian struggles are quickly labeled anti-Israel or anti-Semitic. Catholics, Protestants, and secular Americans knew that they would face immediate labeling as anti-Semitic if they said what they were seeing in front of their own eyes—that Israel's treatment of Palestinians seemed to be violating the democratic and human rights norms the upholding of which had been a primary argument for a special relationship between the U.S. and Israel.

This Jewish Political Correctness, like every other form of political correctness, will eventually backfire. The millions of people who have felt constrained and resentful that on this one topic they were not allowed to say what they thought will some day find their voice, and, when they do, the legitimate support that Israel does deserve from the Western countries will quickly dissolve and irrational anger will be expressed at all Jews, not just those who supported Israeli policies. The coming outbreak of anti-Semitism in the next decades will be totally illegitimate and must be fought. But it will happen primarily because of the legacy of the Israel Lobby and the Jewish Political Correctness it has fostered, not because the growing numbers of people who are angry with Jews for having repressed public discourse are people who were born racist and were just waiting for the opportunity to hurt Jews. And part of the fault will lie with many liberal Jews who, feeling the harsh responses to criticism from the Israel Lobby, have walked away from the Jewish community entirely rather than joining and supporting the organizations (and magazines) that are trying to change all this and provide a different kind of leadership.

21st Century Idolatry

THE MOST DECISIVE REASON THE ISRAEL LOBBY IS BAD FOR THE JEWS IS THAT IT strengthens idolatry in the Jewish world by reinforcing our tendencies to believe in power and domination rather than in love, generosity, compassion and open-heartedness. As such, the Israel Lobby is the direct inheritor of the power-worship ideology that can be traced from Thrasymachus' position in Plato's *Republic* to Machiavelli's *Prince* to the forms of fascism that thrived under Franco in Spain, Mussolini in (continued on page 74)



Former North Carolina Sen. and Democratic vice-presidential candidate John Edwards gestures while addressing AIPAC's Policy Conference 2006, March 6, 2006 in Washington.

Designer Babies

The Problem with Genetic Engineering

by Michael Sandel



Michael Sandel, professor of government at Harvard University, is one of America's foremost political and moral thinkers.

In his new book, The Case Against Perfection:

Ethics in the Age of Genetic Engineering, Sandel argues that the pursuit of perfection through genetic enhancement represents a bid for mastery and domination that could profoundly undermine values of equality, democracy, and community.

The first part of this article is taken from a recording of a talk he gave on the subject in Berkeley, California in May 2007.

THERE'S A GROWING DEBATE ABOUT WHAT LIMITS, if any, should be put on genetic engineering. We are on a path in which in the not-too-distant future scientists and technicians will be able to select genes and may be able to shape characteristics of your children. Some people already argue that using that to select the sex of your child is fine, or perhaps for medical reasons. But what about other features? What if we could choose their hair color and type, their eye colors, their sexual orientation, their level of intelligence, their musical or writing ability or sports, dance, or artistic aptitude?

There is a long tradition that defends eugenics in the name of "lifting up." Now we know that the eugenics movement has a very dark history, though it was a very respectable movement in the early part of the twentieth century. Eugenics was discredited by the Nazis, by genocide, the Nuremburg Laws, by the forced sterilization laws that were enacted by the majority of American states in the 1920s and 1930s. Yet, in its earlier days, eugenics was endorsed and embraced by social reformers, by American progressives: Theodore Roosevelt was a great supporter of eugenics, Margaret Sanger, who began Planned Parenthood, was a defender of eugenics. Oliver Wendell Holmes, in a famous Supreme Court case *Buck v. Bell*, upheld a forced sterilization law, with the notorious line that "three generations of imbeciles is enough." Oliver Wendell Holmes! So eugenics has a very respectable lineage if you look at the people who supported it, and yet it led to forced sterilization. It ultimately leads to genocide, even though it was first done in the name of those who have been burdened or disadvantaged.

What's the moral of the story of the dark history of eugenics? Some say it's that eugenics, in its earlier version, was coercive. State laws mandated sterilization in the so-called "feeble-minded," or in the criminal classes, and, of course, in Hitler's genocide. There are many today who say the only thing wrong with eugenics was its coerciveness, and if we could imagine a eugenic program that was not mandated by the State, that was not coercive, but was chosen by the individual parents trying to help and lift up their children, then there's nothing wrong with eugenics.

But I think that's a mistake. I think that coercion was not the only thing wrong with eugenics. What we have today with designer children is privatized eugenics, free market eugenics, individualistic eugenics. Without the broad social ambitions for everyone, it's really now an instrument for privileged parents to give their kids a competitive edge. Privatized eugenics reflect a deflation of the ideal of eugenics, perverse as that ideal was in its enactment, because it's no longer trying to uplift humanity, or entire societies, but just trying to get a competitive edge. I think what's wrong with eugenics, beyond coercion, is the fact of its ambition to try to control or exercise dominion over the genetic traits of the next generation. That's morally troubling, whether done on a society-wide basis or done by in-

dividual parents trying to give their kids a competitive edge.

Of course, there are objections about whether doing this can be made safe and predictable. And there is another question about making it available in a fair way, so that it would not only be an option for rich people. But what would be your objection if the designer child were an equal option for all, publicly subsidized as part of a universal health care system, and it could be done in a way that was safe and predictable?

Is there a moral objection to this genetic engineering, beyond safety, beyond fairness? After all, we tend to praise parents who give their children every advantage they can: offer them music lessons to learn an instrument, play catch with them to learn how to be coordinated in sports, help them do their homework so that they can more fully learn what they need to learn. So what's the objection to parents wanting to give their children the advantage of genes that make it easier for them to succeed in creating a pleasant life for themselves?

It seems to me that there is a reason for a set of moral considerations that go beyond safety and fairness. What makes us most uneasy about the use of genetic engineering to enhance or to create something, has to do with the fact that the drive to create children of a certain character reflects an aspiration to freedom, mastery, and control, and to exercise our human will and our ability to remake human nature to serve our purposes and satisfy our desires. It seems to me there is something flawed but deeply attractive about that.

This uneasiness, I believe, connects to a recognition that there is a way in which who we are is a gift from the universe. And this is to say that not everything we are is a product of our own doing, and not everything in the world is open to any use we might desire or devise.

An appreciation of the giftedness of life might induce in us a certain humility. What I'm trying to articulate here is, in part, a religious sensibility, but its resonance reaches beyond religion.

Let's go back to the example of designer children. It's very hard to make sense of what's precious or special about the relationship between parents and children without drawing, at least a little, on the ethic of giftedness. To appreciate children as gifts is to accept them as they come, not as products of our design or instruments of our ambition. Parental love is not contingent, or at least it shouldn't be contingent, on attributes that the child happens to have. We choose our friends and our spouses at least partly on qualities that we find attractive, but we do not choose our children—that's an important moral fact about parenting. Even the most conscientious parent cannot be held wholly responsible for the child that they had. This is why parenting teaches us what the theologian William May calls "an openness to the unbidden."

The problem of genetic engineering lies in the hubris of the designing parents. Even if this disposition doesn't make parents tyrants to their children, still it disfigures the relation between parent and child and it deprives the parent of the humility, the human sympathies, and the openness to the unbidden.

Now, to appreciate children as gifts and blessings from God is not to be passive in the face of illness. It's true that medical treatment intervenes with nature, but it does so for the sake of health. It doesn't represent the same bid for mastery. Even strenuous medicine, to treat or cure diseases, doesn't constitute a Promethean assault. Medicine is at least governed by a certain norm, the norm of preserving and restoring, and that is what constitutes good health.

What counts as "good health" is open to argument. There is research about whether deafness or other disabilities should be cured, or if they should be part of an identity that is cherished. But even then, the disagreement comes from the assumption that the purpose of medicine is to promote health and cure disease.

Now there is a complexity with this idea of resisting the temptation to manage, direct, and protect our children. Because we do that as parents. Parents want to educate their children, give them every opportunity, help them learn an instrument, develop athletic skill.... What then is the difference, and this is not an easy question to answer, but what is

the difference between providing help with health and training, and providing this help with the use of genetic enhancement? Parents spend all this money educating their children and giving them special advantages. If that's accurate, why isn't it equally as admirable for parents to use whatever genetic technology has been developed, provided it's safe, to enhance their children's chance at life, to give them a competitive edge?

The answer I would give to this question is that the defenders of genetic engineering are right to say that there is not such a bright line between the use of genetic technology to enhance children, and the kind of heavily managed, high pressure child rearing practices that are common these days. But this similarity, this parallel, does *not* vindicate genetic enhancement. To the contrary, it highlights a problem with the high-pressure hyper-parenting tendencies that we see in our society today. We see the frenzy of parents at soccer game sidelines or at little league. It is a frenzy, or an anxiety even, of the parents to manage, to hold, to direct their children's lives. I don't think there is such a clear line between these two practices, but this suggests that the overreaching in genetic parenting may actually shed light on the kind of overreaching frenzied parenting that we see now.

So, let me say a word about the larger moral stance if the account I have given is right. Some people would say of this drive for mastery and life control: "That's parents exercising their freedom to give their kids the best, and who are *we* to criticize that freedom?"

What would happen if biotechnology dissolved our sense of giftedness? There are two answers to this question. One of them is the religious answer (which suggests that using biotechnology has us assume a role in creation that seeks to make us on par with God). Biotechnology is, in a sense, "playing God."

The moral stakes can also be understood in secular terms. One way of seeing this is to consider what would be the effect on our moral landscape if the practice of designer parents became the common way of parenting? At least two key features of our moral culture would be transformed. One of them is humility and the other is solidarity.

Let me say a word about humility and why it matters as a social ethic. Parenthood is a school for humility. We care deeply about our children but cannot choose the kind we want. Humility teaches us to reign in our need for control and to live with the unexpected. One of the blessings of seeing ourselves as creatures of nature or God is that we are *not* always responsible for the way we are. The more we become masters of our genetics the greater burden we bear for the talents we have and the way we perform. So with the erosion of humility comes an explosion of responsibility.

Consider the use of genetic testing. In the past, giving birth to a child with Down syndrome was a matter of chance. Today, parents of children with Down syndrome are judged or blamed. Because people will say to them "why did you bring this child into the world?" So the responsibility is greater because we have a choice. Parents should be able to choose what they want to do, but they shouldn't be free to choose the burden of choice that this new technology creates.

Along with the explosion of responsibility over our own fate and that of our children, comes, paradoxically, a diminished sense of solidarity with those less fortunate than ourselves. Here's why: the more open we are to chance in the control over our own success, the more reason we have to share our fate with others. Why, after all, do the successful owe anything to the least advantaged members of society? The answers to these questions lie very heavily in the notions of giftedness. They lean on the idea that our success has nothing to do with hard work, or other things within our control, but on good fortune—the result of the genetic lottery. If we regard our genetics as gifts rather than achievements for which we can claim credit, then we have no basis to claim that we are entitled to the good things in society.

A lively sense of the contingency of our gifts can be used in a "meritocratic" society like ours to prevent us from sliding into the idea that the rich are rich because they are more deserving than the poor. If genetic engineering enabled us to override the results of the genetic lottery, if it enabled us to replace chance with choice, it's likely that the gifted character of human powers and achievements would recede, and with it, perhaps, our capacity to

see ourselves as sharing a common fate. The successful would be even more likely than they are now to see themselves as self-made and self-sufficient, and those at the bottom of society would be seen not as disadvantaged, but simply as unfit. The meritocracy would become less forgiving. So that's why humility and solidarity as features of our moral culture can help us preserve a lively sense of giftedness of our nature, of our talents, and of our achievements

A related case is the use of Ritalin in classrooms. Admittedly, it is difficult to precisely draw the line between clinical Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and a squirmy kid in a classroom. It is a difficult line to draw and it involves judgment on the part of the parent, the teachers, the doctor, the psychologist, and the kid. I would not for a moment say that Ritalin should never be prescribed for ADHD. There are cases, clearly, of clinical ADHD where it can help a child function and overcome a real deficiency. But Ritalin is often used either to control children in the classroom who are simply squirmy and should be dealt with by closer individual attention by the teacher, and by smaller classroom size, and so on, or by college students who do not have any prescription, simply to improve their performance on a test. The line can be difficult to draw between the medical use of Ritalin and the performance enhancement use.

In order to draw this line, we must have, not just some statistical understanding of the normal, because that can shift over time, but a substantive, normative conception of what human flourishing consists of. So parents are often pressured to consent to Ritalin, and I fear that they might face even greater pressures to participate in genetic engineering.

We can't just blame parents for responding to these pressures. How could we expect them not to? We have to take a step back and ask what is the source of those heightened, intensified pressures? There has been an enormous increase in those types of pressures having to do with the economy and society and also the educational system.

So, to go back to the question with which I began, beyond safety and beyond fairness, what is the source of our unease about designer children? I think it has something to do with our big questions about human nature and the limits of the Promethean project of mastery and control. It is tempting to think that bioengineering our children and selves is an exercise in freedom, but it really isn't. Because changing our nature to fit the world rather than the other way around is actually an ethical defeat. It distracts us from reflecting critically on the world. It deadens the impulse for social and political improvement. So rather than increase our genetic powers to fit ourselves into society, we should do what we can to create political and social realms that are more hospitable to the gifts and also to the limitations of imperfect human beings.

After completing his talk, Michael Sandel met privately to discuss his ideas with Tikkun. Here is a selection from that Q&A:

TIKKUN: What if we want to enhance our children's capacity for intellect and musical talents because of the inherent goodness of these capacities—not because they will bring any reward to them, but because we have experienced them ourselves, and know that we would have deeper pleasure in our own life if we were more advanced intellectually or musically? We would have deeper pleasure in music, if we had musical talents. So out of a generosity based on our own experience, and not out of a desire for them to compete, we want to enhance their capacity, or *all* people's capacity to enjoy the world. Wouldn't a communitarian society or a spiritual society want to (continued on page 84)

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Vets Aren't Crazy— War Is

by Paula J. Caplan

I THINK I MUST BE CRAZY," said the Iraq War vet. "At a welcome-home ceremony the city arranged, I didn't know they were going to fire ceremonial cannons. I was holding a bottle of champagne, and when they started firing, over and over and over, I went nuts! I hurled the bottle at a tree, stuck my head between my knees, and shook until it stopped. Crazy, right?"

As a psychologist, I can report that after telling me how they feel, most people end with some equivalent of, "That means I'm crazy, doesn't it?" But the veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan ask this question with an intensity that is especially disturbing, whether they speak with me in my capacity as a professional, a journalist, or just an interested citizen. The degree of their anguish and alienation from their loved ones makes it especially hard to persuade them when the word crazy does not apply to them. Their words reveal the vividness of their torment and their despair.

Julia had been home for six months after the year she spent in Baghdad, where she heard half a dozen explosions every day. Since her return, not one night had brought restful sleep. She awoke every day in a state of complete exhaustion.

All her life a sociable person, Julia was stunned to be filled with rage "at friends and family who had done nothing to me" and at herself. Driving her car, she was seized by the impulse to swerve and crash into a mountain. Only digging her fingernails into her palms until they bled and yanking hunks of hair from her head kept her from making that swerve.

"Iraq was terrifying because I had no idea how to explain my feelings," Julia said. "There were all those explosions, and my regular assignment was doing pat down searches of Iraqis who might have been friends or might have been wearing explosives. If a pat had located a bomb," she explained, "before my mind registered it, I'd have been dead. And it was rough when this larger-than-life soldier we all loved died from a roadside bomb. But I keep thinking how many thousands of soldiers have gone through this and been just fine. Not a single soldier in Iraq ever told me they were scared or angry or crazy. They were sad when the big guy died, but nobody lost control."

The thought of "maybe if I kill myself, I'll stop feeling so angry and will be able to get some sleep" churned constantly through her mind. Julia considered therapy but feared "seeing a military shrink, because that could wreck my plan to retire on a nice pension when my twenty years in the Army National Guard are up." Julia's family never had much money. "If I tell an Army therapist all this crazy shit, they'll kick me out."

Private therapists are expensive, but for six weeks, Julia saw "a very nice psychologist" and talked about her emotional numbness, which alternated between rage and despair. The therapist encouraged her to let her guard down. But Julia clung to the numbness, believing it protected people from her irrational anger. She also thought, "If I'm redeployed, I can't have my feelings exploding all the time."

Military ethos discourages soldiers from talking about their fear, frustration, helplessness,

and uncertainty about the progress of the war. Julia only once told someone about her feelings. While doing pat searches, she had said to a soldier, "Any of those people could kill us." He responded, "Aw, no, they won't!" Never again did she say anything less than gung-ho about her work. In no official or unofficial instruction did her sergeant or commanding officer say these reactions were normal. Someone would occasionally say that anyone who felt depressed or anxious should tell their squad leader who would send that person to a chaplain or counselor, but the nonverbal message was that needing help was unsoldierly. For the men, it was unmanly. For the women, it proved that women should not be soldiers.

Officially, the military recognizes that going to war can be upsetting. But for the most part, they have not found solutions to its resulting emotional carnage. Their top priority is to produce soldiers who, above all, continue to function. During World War II, when a soldier broke down after seeing his buddy blown to bits, the armed services usually sent him far from combat and gave him time to recuperate. In recent years, asserting the importance of protecting soldiers from "survivor guilt," they switched to the PIE approach: proximity, immediacy, and expectation. In practice, this means keeping soldiers in proximity to the combat zone when they are overwhelmed by war's horrors; getting them back to the combat zone immediately, perhaps after a few days' rest; and conveying the expectation that they will soon be fine. Of course, soldiers sent back are even more likely to see still more comrades die, thus increasing the chances they will have survivor guilt.

Often, anti-depressants are handed out liberally to soldiers. Yes, the pills can distance the soldiers from their feelings. But those feelings do not vanish, and if they don't come out immediately, they will later.

Transition times are excruciating, according to Ray, a vet who flew home on a two-week leave after being holed up near Kabul for six months. In preparation for leave, he was called to a one-hour group meeting where the soldiers were told not to hit their wives. (No parallel instruction was given to women soldiers.) Ray says, "That's all the advice we got." When he landed in his small hometown, everyone asked, "What's it like over there?" Ray was dumbfounded. How could he possibly convey to the citizens of this peaceful, Midwestern place what he had seen? The power of the warlords, the constant, battering uncertainty about friends and enemies and the life-and-death stakes of a wrong guess. Even if he could convey it, *should* he? "Soldiers have a duty to protect folks back home by fighting wars abroad but also to protect them from our emotional nightmares," he said. People thought Ray was weird because he wouldn't speak when asked about the war. Chasms grew. His best friend stopped calling. Family interactions were awkward.

Julia was grateful that emotional numbness made it so much easier to protect her loved ones from both the horrors of the war and the dangers she felt within herself. She stopped going to therapy, partly because she wanted to remain numb and partly because she needed to feel like her old self. "I've always been independent and strong and I thought, 'I don't need a shrink. I can do this myself.'" But do what? She didn't know where to begin.

A college professor invited Julia to speak to her class. The previous year, home from Iraq on a brief leave, she had spouted what she now calls "the Army's book, what they want you to say." This year was different. Though trying to stay calm, she spoke freely about what she had seen, the sleep that brought no rest, the numbness. She described the self-hatred she felt when watching a TV series about the war and seeing a character handle a situation better than she had. One student asked why she was so hard on herself and why she liked staying numb. Struck by the student's compassion and the directness of the question, Julia felt it was time to tell the whole truth. "I feel like if I kill myself, maybe I can get some sleep." That night, she slept soundly for the first time in months.

What made the difference? Someone, a virtual stranger, had wanted to understand, and twenty other students were also present, listening. It was easier to talk to strangers



than to the loved ones she felt more responsible to protect.

In our culture, we send traumatized people behind the closed doors of therapists to seek help that presumably only experts can provide. And, after all, who else really *wants* to hear about the real horrors of war? It's easier all around if we send vets to professionals, asking them to close the door behind them. In this way, we avoid the emotional carnage of war. But is that healthy for the vets or for us?

Good therapists can help. But soldiers and vets have been held to impossible standards of concealment of deeply human, natural feelings, and sending them to therapists carries the message that they are mentally ill, that they should be "over it" by now. And although Posttraumatic Stress Disorder accurately implies that their anguish results from trauma, PTSD is located in the official listing of mental disorders, thus branding their response to war as abnormal and marginalizing them even more than the war experiences have. Furthermore, decades of experience with veterans from Vietnam and the first Gulf War indicate that providing psychotherapy and/or drugs may help, but that the suffering of many persists, wreaking havoc with relationships and jobs and often leading to addictions and eventually homelessness.

Every American can help. We can tell vets that it's not crazy to feel rage, despair, self-hatred, and self-doubt in response to being helpless in the face of constant danger, ambiguity, and ever-changing explanations of why Americans are in Iraq, of trying to match a John Wayne image that even John Wayne never matched in real life. If vets' emotions about those circumstances are signs of mental illness, then what, exactly, would be a healthy, human response? In his new book, *What Really Matters*, Harvard University psychiatrist and anthropologist Arthur Kleinman proposes that what we should ask is how someone could *not* have such feelings, a question that is all the more important the greater the deception and doublespeak involved—as in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—in the initiation and prosecution of the war.

On September 11, 2001, Drew went straight from high school to enlist in the military, consumed with avenging all those deaths and defending his country. What he had not counted on was the part of basic training when they order you to run around a field aiming a gun, yelling "Kill! Kill!" Horrified, he became obsessed with images of suicide. Compared to the thought of killing "the enemy," he found it easier to think of killing himself. One night, the pull toward suicide became so powerful that he panicked, went AWOL, and flew home. The military court-martials for such conduct, but Professor Kleinman would say that Drew was exhibiting moral, caring behavior. If this is a humane world, then it is important to feel fear and horror about violence. *Not* to feel such emotions, Kleinman says, is to have a moral disorder.

A psychologist who is asked to assess a person who compulsively lies, whose lies repeatedly lead to devastation and death, and who appears to feel no remorse about the lying or its consequences will readily diagnose that person as a psychopath. It should be obvious that George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and their cronies fit that description, that that is where the true psychopathology lies, although the scale of their misconduct actually leaves psychopathology in the dust and leaps to the realm of evil. The same goes for the psychologist who is asked to assess a person who repeatedly claims that X is true; when it is patently obvious that X is false (e.g., "We're bringing democracy to the Middle East," or "They love us over there"). The psychologist would likely conclude that the person is out of touch with reality to the point of psychosis. When arrogance or greed impel the distortion of reality, rather than cognitive or emotional factors beyond the person's control, it makes more sense to call it not mental illness but villainy.

War can transform a soldier into someone they have never been and never thought they'd be. Think what it would do to most of us to live for a year in constant mortal danger with no real way to protect oneself or one's comrades; to hear many times a day the sounds that signal the deaths of other living beings, many of them your fellow citizens, and to know that these might be the sounds of your own death. If you have always had a



I'M COMPLETELY DETACHED FROM WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND ME, WHICH MAKES ME FEEL REALLY ISOLATED.

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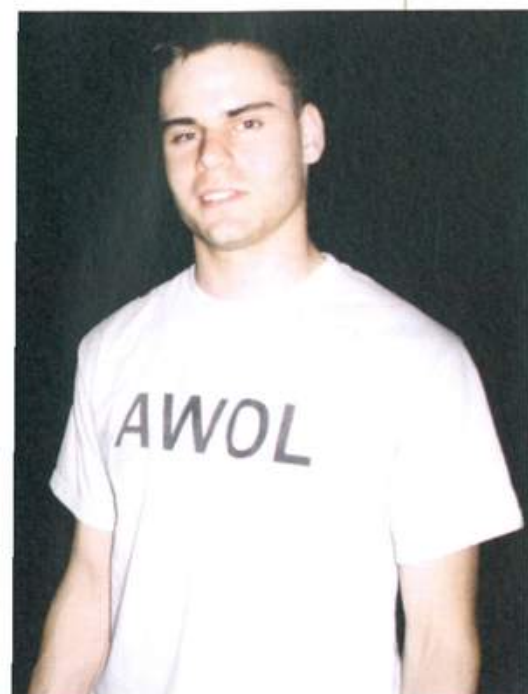
nurturant nature, a sociable character, a peaceful soul, what happens to your sense of identity when you are expected to relish the order "Kill! Kill!?" No matter how you feel about "the enemy," at what cost does one forget that that enemy is composed of human beings?

The war is all the more crazy-making for the many soldiers who joined up for reasons other than the wish to overpower and to kill, like the ones who told me they signed on right after September 11, 2001 because they wanted to protect their country. These then-seventeen-year-olds imagined that they would be guarding airports and harbors, checking for explosives, or perhaps learning codes to work in the intelligence sphere to spot and head off attacks on the United States. Others joined the reserves or the National Guard when this country was not at war because they were too poor to pay for college or job training, and the reserves or the Guard gave them these opportunities. And every soldier who told me they signed up while in or soon after high school was devastated to learn that their recruiter blatantly lied to them, assuring them that they would never see combat and that they would have the job opportunities they most desired.

When soldiers come smack up against the realities of war, turning to military therapists for help may be useful for some but has compounded the damage and danger for others. One young man who later went AWOL said a military psychiatrist reviled him for wanting out of the service, called him a coward, and said he could be locked up for a long time for trying to fake a mental illness in order to get out. Of the many soldiers I have interviewed who went AWOL, every one described first their struggle with shame and self-blame, thinking they must be overly sensitive to the military's obsession with violence and the frequent humiliation of those who are less than gung-ho about it, and feeling viscerally the emotional and sometimes physical dangers of speaking within the military about the lies and hypocrisy of these wars. For soldiers to overcome the lifelong indoctrination—intensified in basic training—of the belief that America does no wrong is a monumental task, especially after being told that they face life terms in military prisons if they try to leave. "When my Sergeant told me that's what would happen, I believed him," Drew told me. Not until he went AWOL and, months later, having hidden in a relative's home in almost total isolation and fear, happened across the American Friends Service's GI Rights Hotline, was he on the way to learning that the sergeant had misinformed him.

The truth that soldiers know about going AWOL is that the military contacts civilian police forces with the names of those who are AWOL and instructions to pick them up on sight and return them to their bases. Describing a close call he had when a policeman rang the doorbell of the place where he was in hiding, Drew's terror was palpable, even though he has been officially discharged from the Army for months. The purposeful terrorizing of soldiers who hate these wars and want to leave the military keeps many of them on their bases until, as many have told me, for the first time in their life they have massive panic attacks or, often, consider suicide. Drew was off the base at a sandwich shop when his first panic attack hit. He was headed for Iraq within days. He said that nothing in his life—not his parents' divorce, not major personal problems with which he

Iraq War vet Melissa Wheeler sees Cora, the sexual trauma specialist, at the Vet Center. Doonesbury 6/27/2007.



Neal Howland models the T-shirts he made after his official discharge. They look like the official Army physical fitness T-shirt—with just a couple of differences: they reflect his certainty that he did the right thing, and his wish to urge others to do the same. Place an order at denhowl@comcast.net.

had grappled—had ever made him think of killing himself, but at that moment, he knew that suicide was the only alternative to the path he took: He walked out of the shop, hailed a taxi, flew home, and went into hiding.

Then there is Neal Howland, who was promised training as a videographer, only to learn when it was too late that he was headed for Iraq and that his job would keep him in combat zones, repairing exploded vehicles. Neal began to have vivid images of driving a car into a tree, hoping to be so maimed so that he would be discharged. Only when those images became nearly irresistible did he go AWOL. Why hadn't he left before? Because the military psychologist he saw had told him that "faking a mental illness" would likely lead to court martial and a long incarceration that would keep him from home, family, and friends until his hair turned grey.

Despite such attempts at intimidation, it appears that the phenomenon of going AWOL is more extensive than most people realize. When Neal turned himself in at Fort Knox, one of the two soldiers guarding the gate as he approached asked why he had come. After Neal said, "I've been AWOL, and I'm turning myself in," that guard turned to his fellow and said, "We got another one!" And in the one week that Neal was there, he met more than fifty soldiers who had come to Knox for the same reason. According to Pentagon figures, more than 28,000 soldiers "deserted" between the beginning of 2002 (the war in Afghanistan began the previous autumn) and the end of 2006.

To call the devastating effects of war "mental illness" is to make the colossal mistake of thinking that the problem springs solely from within the person's psyche. Individuals vary in how they react to horror, but it would be absurd to think that everyone traumatized by war was mentally ill, rather than understandably devastated. Are Ray and Drew mentally ill? No, they're just compassionate. Are Julia and Neal masochists, who, unlike the rest of us, *enjoy* suffering? No, they want what we all want: life, safety, and tranquility.

If we ignore vets' numbness and silence, helping them to protect us, who then will protect them? Connection with and care from one's community have enormous power to heal. A wealth of research shows that social support is often the *most* important factor in emotional healing. Better still, it heals without adding to the sufferer's burden the shame of being considered crazy. We need to decrease vets' emotional isolation by creating opportunities for plentiful human interactions that will remind them that they are more than the sum of their reactions to war, thus reminding them of who they were and who they still can be.

What helped Julia, Ray, Drew, and Neal can help other vets while also helping heal a country divided by these wars. Without discouraging them from also seeking professional help, we all can offer vets a chance to speak their truth to us, to tell them that, for as long as they want to talk, we will listen. We can say that we would have reacted the same if we had been there. Just hearing those words can bring a person back toward connection and personhood and can broaden their repertoire of ways to cope. Disconnection and fear of being insane are major risk factors for severe depression and unbridled rage against oneself and others. To tell vets that we are open to hearing the horrors and shame that plague them is to take some of that poison away, to take what they have seen and felt out of the realm of "too awful to be spoken, except to a therapist who is used to craziness." We can say that as citizens of this country and as human beings, we take seriously our obligation to help veterans reconnect with those who were lucky enough to have escaped deployment, to help them back to a place of greater physical and emotional safety than perhaps they ever hoped to find again. And in reaching out to these vets, we learn and teach others the full measure of the devastation wrought by war and therefore make it less likely that, as a nation, we will go to war quickly and unthinkingly again. ■

All vets' names in the article have been changed to protect their privacy, with the exception of Neal Howland, who gave his permission to use his name and photographs.

Paula J. Caplan, Ph.D., is a clinical and research psychologist at Harvard University and the author of They Say You're Crazy: How the World's Most Powerful Psychiatrists Decide Who's Normal.



Educational Genocide, Eco-Violence, and Poverty Pimping: The Cry of Faith in Urban America Today

by Mark I. Wallace

AS AN EDUCATOR AND A CHRISTIAN, I NOW WORK IN THE CITY OF Chester, outside of Philadelphia, where the “American Dream” has failed for urban families mired in failing schools, dangerous environmental conditions, and low-paying, dead-end jobs—or no jobs at all. The ground of my activism—Christian hope—is best captured in a newly painted Chester wall mural (reproduced here) where a little girl with a crown of thorns on her head is reaching out to the viewer with a dove of peace in her hand. The mural resonates with my hope that Jesus rose from being dead on the cross, and animates my expectation that Chester, left for dead, can rise again in new life. This hope is the fiery nucleus at the center of my life. It is the basis of my conviction that the demons of grinding poverty and joblessness can be conquered, that good schools and safe neighborhoods can take root and flourish, and that political hacks and corrupt officials can be pushed aside and, in some cases, punished for their crimes against local residents. Like the girl in the mural, I believe that Chester, crucified, will rise again into a new future.

Four years ago, I forged a covenant relationship with clergy and activists in Chester and the nearby town of Swarthmore. I had heard about some of Chester’s urban prophets, and I wanted to be part of the transformation and hope that these agents for change were bringing to the city. I too wanted to be a leader in a cause bigger than myself; to give back to others after so many had given to me over the course of my life. At that time I co-founded, and now meet monthly with, the Chester Swarthmore Learning Institute to advance political change and social transformation within the communities of these two towns. Chester is a gritty urban community. Swarthmore is a leafy green college town. My Chester colleagues and I have crossed racial and cultural divisions in order to make our institute work. This has not been easy. Mistakes have been made and misunderstandings have arisen. But I believe real change happens when people from different walks of life come together in collegiality and trust to see how they can mutually strengthen the well-being of others. My life has been transformed through my partnership with friends in Chester. In turn, I hope that these friends and the communities they



Detail of girl with dreadlocks from the mural created by Chester artist, Joseph Church, with adult volunteers, business owners, children and teens, and several Swarthmore students.



Living in Chester is like living in any other place: People have roots in community, family, and spiritual practice. Ebony Gordon (left) and her mother, Linda, hug on Third Street.



Vacant lots fill with trees, flowers bloom on rusting fences, and the blue water of the Delaware beckons. Nature's hand is everywhere in Chester.

serve have also been enriched through our association.

At present, Chester is known primarily as a poverty-stricken city of 35,000 people that exists on the fringes of America's global economic dominance. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. did pastoral training and received his ministerial degree from Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester in the early 1950s. Continuing King's legacy, it is a place of strong families, gifted young people, committed churches and mosques, and visionary leaders who care deeply about the city's future. However, today its average household income is \$24,000 per year, its unemployment rate hovers around 30 percent, its violent crime rate is two to three times the national average, and it has the highest infant mortality rate in the state. Many of Chester's residents now inherit the ranks of the dispossessed—the forgotten leftovers of the current economic boom who do not have access to the good schools, workforce development, clean environments, and quality health care that many of us consider our birthrights.

The Resurrection: the source of my hope for Chester

THE CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL IS STRAIGHTFORWARD: follow Jesus by committing oneself to radical personal and social transformation. St. Paul writes in the Book of Philippians: "Have the mind of Christ, who was in the form of God, but emptied himself, became a servant, and suffered death on a cross—and therefore, God raised him up." This is the model all disciples of Jesus are to follow: be like Jesus who emptied himself, became a servant, suffered death, and was raised up. To follow Jesus through self-emptying and resurrection hope, this is the Christian way. Self-emptying is abandoning narrow self-gratification in order to serve the interests of others. Resurrection hope is the confidence that God is able to raise up everyday people to revolutionize systemically distorted structures, no matter how hopeless and entrenched these structures might appear to be. Such hope is impossibly expectant that life can emerge from death—that new beginnings can be generated out of the detritus of broken dreams. No matter how bad things get, even in the moment of death, God is able to create new life under the most dire social conditions.

Jesus' death was final. He was executed as a criminal by the Roman state and buried in a cave. But three days later, according to the Christian story, he walked away from his own grave to continue his ministry. Unlikely? Perhaps. Impossible to verify? To be sure. But it is this story—what Christians call the gospel—that inspires many urban change agents like myself to work for renewal and justice in blighted communities.

I cannot work in Chester without such hope. For me, the dysfunction is too deeply embedded, the pain and suffering too long-standing to be overcome without such hope. Resurrection hope propels me toward a sustainable and robust commitment to the well-being of my Chester neighbors; it carries me through the crushing disappointments and spiritual assaults that come with such work. I cannot speak for others, but hope in resurrection keeps me focused and forward-moving in the face of seemingly impossible odds. This hope is not layered onto an already existing social commitment; it does not provide a religious patina to a pre-formed political agenda. This hope, rather, is the genesis of my politics as such. It is this hope *itself* that is the wellspring of my long-term commitment and enthusiasm for this work. Without it, I could not continue. Without it, I fear that the forces that have brought this once thriving city to its knees would defeat me as well.

Of course, Christians are infamous for translating resurrection hope into vapid pie-in-the-sky foolishness. Antebellum white ministers were notorious for telling African slaves that the object of Christian hope is not changed social conditions in this world, but blissful existence in the world *beyond*. Today as well, many clergy counsel the faithful to avoid large-scale justice movements in favor of personal salvation and morality. But this type of politically indifferent, otherworldly religion is a Christian heresy. It has nothing to do with the religion of Jesus. Indeed, it is a betrayal of everything that Jesus taught and did. At the inauguration of his public ministry in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus quotes the Book of Isaiah saying, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach good

news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and to set free all of those who are oppressed." Remembering Paul's mandate to have the mind of Christ, the real Christian message is clear: be like Jesus through solidarity with the poor, the incarcerated, the disabled, and all others who are oppressed in any way. This revolutionary social theme is the essential thread that ties together the whole Bible.

In the face of urban blight but charged with resurrection hope, I am angry and ripped up inside by the misery and despair that characterize Chester's good people and hard-working families. As a boy, my father gave me the 1897 book *In His Steps* by Charles M. Sheldon, the fictional story of a mid-western Protestant minister who invites his congregation to confront the urban dysfunction and political problems of the Gilded Age by asking the question, "What would Jesus do?" In Jesus' steps, as it were, so-called social Christians begin to disinvest in, and then rehabilitate, slum-lord tenements; work with local newspapers to expose corruption in city government; and persuade well-endowed churches to fund and staff labor development programs and city-wide settlement houses for the working poor and new immigrant families. The book impressed upon me the invigorating truth that faith working toward justice has the power to infuse one's life with meaning, purpose, and prophetic zeal. Since that time, I have seen that the founders and practitioners of many of the world's great religious traditions—from Hillel and Jesus to Martin Luther King Jr. and Thich Nhat Hanh—all teach that a life of justice-seeking faith is a joyful life worth living. Following the example of Jesus, the Christian gospel is a liberating force to be reckoned with.

In spite of the promising history and basic goodness of Chester residents, how did things get so bad? As in many drug-infested, inner-city areas, the social and economic fabric of Chester has been shredded by three equally powerful forces: toxic education, ecological violence, and poverty pimping.

The worst schools in Pennsylvania

CHESTER'S SCHOOLS ARE THE WORST IN PENNSYLVANIA. Until recently, the school district was managed by a for-profit education vendor that propelled the schools' downward slide toward low test scores, chronic absenteeism, and occasional shootings and riots on school grounds. Then, through early 2007, it was run by a politically appointed part-time overseer with a track record of financial misconduct and political cronyism. The result is that most students from grades one through twelve cannot read at grade level, the high school dropout rate is 50 percent, and almost as many high school students commit crimes and become incarcerated as graduate and go to college (about 5–6 percent in both cases).

As the superintendent recently put it, "My school is a pipeline to prison right now. When you lose more than 50 percent of your children to the streets in four years, where else are they going? And many of them do go right to prison." Chester schools have become educationally and personally debilitating for scores of students. One teen recently told a Swarthmore student of mine that all of the students in one of his classes had been kicked out of school for a week because a classmate had thrown a paper airplane during a lesson.

But there is hope amidst the despair. Both the for-profit school manager and the corrupt overseer have been thrown out in favor of a new state-appointed oversight board. The community worked tirelessly to bring down the previous manager and overseer and is guardedly optimistic that the new school board will move away from the "plantation" management style of the past to fully incorporating the voices and interests of teachers, parents, and children in the decision-making process.

Enabling local stakeholders to be active participants in shaping the future of their schools is the key to urban renewal today. Continually fueled by resurrection hope, I part-



An annual revival/barbecue weekend held in August at the New Jerusalem Church of Chester is called "Healing the City: Life and Love."



Chester resident Angela Logue and her three-week-old son, Tyler, live across the street from the Delaware County Waste Treatment Facility, where all all solid waste from the County is incinerated. When asked how she felt about living so near this facility, she replied, "Where else do I have to go?"

ner with local clergy and community leaders to insist upon accountability from school officials, and I provide Swarthmore College students as after-school mentors and tutors for Chester young people. My colleagues' and my direct intervention in the school district is designed to tear out the poisoned roots of mismanagement, influence-peddling, and cynicism that characterize this system. With the ouster of the preceding top officials, many of us believe a new day dawns for genuine educational reform in Chester.

Dumping on the Poor

CHESTER'S ECONOMY IS NOW PARTIALLY DEPENDENT UPON THE PRODUCTION and management of toxic wastes. In economically distressed communities, the waste industry's assurances of a stabilized tax base and jobs for unemployed residents are impossible to resist. But what is the real cost of such promises? Five waste treatment facilities now make Chester their home: a sewage treatment plant, a metal-recycling plant, a regional incinerator, a paper mill, and a medical-waste autoclave (currently not operating). The clustering of waste industries only a few yards from residential areas has brought about an infestation of rodents, the presence of hundreds of trucks a day at all hours in the neighborhood, and toxic air emissions that have contributed to lead poisoning and have raised the specter of cancer to two-and-a-half times greater than the average risk for other area residents.

Predominantly African American, Chester is a stunning instance of environmental racism. It has become one of metro Philadelphia's toxic sacrifice zones—what the former mayor called a "killing field"—where waste from surrounding affluent and white municipalities is disproportionately dumped. Resurrection hope propels me and other area residents to resist the imposition of environmental apartheid here. My faith in Jesus' resurrection from death sustains my long battles against eco-injustice. We march in the streets, meet with community officials, and attend numerous regulatory hearings to fight against toxic racism. I hang my hope on the slim reed of occasional victories against the eco-domination system.

Recently, the state did not approve the siting of a soil treatment plant, the paper mill was not allowed to burn tires for fuel, a biotech firm that would have increased overall pollution in the area was kept out, and the sewage treatment plant was successfully sued by local residents for violating federal and state air pollution laws. Still, the waste facilities in the killing fields of Chester continue to operate. We live in hope that the corrupt regime of unequal waste management will end. Hope never fully realized is not hope destroyed, however, and so the battle for justice against the big industrial polluters rages on.

Gambling and the oppressed

CHESTER BOASTS A SPECTACULAR WATERFRONT ON ITS SOUTHERN border facing the Delaware River, just west of Philadelphia. The waterfront used to be home to shipbuilding and manufacturing jobs. As in much of the United States, this industrial base collapsed two generations ago, rendering the waterfront a wasteland of empty factories and crumbling infrastructure. Since that time, the waterfront has become a zone of economic opportunity—attracting, among other industries, a casino—with the promise of making lots of tax-free money for developers, since new businesses in such zones are exempt from property taxes until 2013. Instead of measurable commitments to workforce development as a prerequisite for setting up shop, however, the new casino and other developers are grabbing up valuable riverfront real estate for pennies on the dollar and offering little to local workers in exchange.

In the casino's case, studies show that economic opportunity and quality of life is generally undermined by gambling development. The casino will likely introduce more crime, bankruptcies, and family disruption—an inevitable byproduct of gaming in disadvantaged communities. But while poverty pimping (producing profits at the expense of the poor) is rampant, there is a small ray of hope. The casino and other new ventures will

eventually generate millions of dollars in tax revenues for the city.

A group of local clergy and others have formed the Fair Deal Coalition to pressure city government to allocate these funds to education and job training to finance the workforce—and skills—development necessary for Chester's poor to share in the coming economic boom. Chester's new economic order will be built on the backs of low-income, minority residents, unless city officials can be persuaded to redirect these funds toward long-term sustainable economic development for the most disadvantaged of local residents. Resurrection hope animates this struggle to incorporate the disenfranchised in the long-awaited economic revival of the city. The Fair Deal Coalition is a bright star in the dim universe of chronic poverty and joblessness.

The Joy of Resistance

"WHEN JESUS CALLS A PERSON, HE BIDS HIM 'COME AND DIE,'" Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Lutheran theologian and martyr who joined the resistance to kill Hitler, wrote these words in his book *The Cost of Discipleship*. Not all of us are asked to give up our lives, as Bonhoeffer did, to combat systemic evil. But all of us—as Christians, Jews, and other people of faith, or no faith at all—are called to sacrifice our private interests to serve a greater good. For most of us, such acts are not true sacrifices. For example, parenting my children, teaching a class, or meeting with Chester activists to generate social change is not a sacrifice, but a joyous and life-sustaining commitment to the well-being of the commons. In these commitments I am no longer an automaton in service of the capitalist machine, but a member of a global resistance movement fighting the spreading tentacles of the domination system. Belonging to this movement, I make common cause with all people of good faith. Some of my colleagues in Chester are prophetic clergy, others are secular activists, but all of us are driven by common visionary sources—Paulo Freire's radical pedagogy, Saul Alinsky's community organizing, Wangari Maathai's environmental activism—that sustain us over the long haul of our respective work challenges in Chester. Together we draw deeply from the religious and non-religious wells of our own backgrounds and traditions in order to keep ourselves fresh and alive in the face of continuing adversity.

I am not imperialistic about religion in this regard. I do not think religion is necessary for social change. While I need the strength of resurrection hope to propel me forward, it is not necessary to make religion, Christian or otherwise, a requirement for sustainable social action. What is necessary, rather, is to plumb the depths of one's own life-source—be it ethical, literary, religious or otherwise—and therein be nurtured, fed, and energized to re-enter the fray and battle the forces of oppression.

The powers of resurrection hope and biblical justice enable me to combat the mean-spirited politics of greed and power that drive the downward cycle of Chester and many other American cities today. These twin engines—robust hope founded on Jesus' victory over death, and a passion for fairness fueled by anger over the grim poverty suffered by the working poor—enable my push toward social transformation.

Today, the Christian gospel has been coopted by politicians and preachers who trumpet personal morality at the expense of fighting against the structural conditions that lock down America's underclass in depraved and dehumanizing urban environments. This is a betrayal of the Christian message. The defining feature of Jesus' ministry is solidarity with the poor and oppressed. To be a revolutionary Christian today is to follow in Jesus' steps and care for the marginalized and forgotten in our midst. When despair for the world overwhelms me, the problems of Chester and of the world seem impossible to overcome. But then I recall Jesus' life of compassion and liberation, I remember the girl in the mural wearing her crown of thorns and reaching toward me with outstretched hand, and I am empowered to live to fight another day. ■

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The evolving and growing complexity of the human brain allowed our ancestors the ability to question, wonder, and consider new possibilities—to be creative. Life altering advances were the result. Is unconditional adherence to dogma (whether religious or secular) at odds with this evolved capability and our full potential as creative beings?

Neuroscience and Fundamentalism

by Kenneth M. Heilman and Russell S. Donda

SOMETHING CHANGED. Whether it happened gradually over several hundred thousand years, as noted anthropologists Sally McBrearty and Alison Brooks suggest, or quickly in a “great leap forward,” as Jared Diamond puts it, we are at least certain of this: early humans became dissatisfied with their circumstances and began to diverge from what was practiced and known. Stone implements gave way to the more easily shaped and versatile bone. Bare cave walls were brought to life with paintings. Adorning jewelry was carefully fashioned from ordinary objects previously ignored. Simple weapons, somehow now seen as insufficient, gave way to more complex and multi-piece devices. The notions to plant instead of gather, to breed captive animals rather than hunt them, took hold.

Humans have altered their environments and enhanced their well-being unlike any other life form on the planet. This unique capacity to diverge from what is, and create something which has never before existed, resides solely within the domain of humanity. The gifts of diverse artistic expression, societal development, and technological innovation all result from the ability to question—and to conceive of things beyond—the status quo. And this magnificent and advanced capability results, not unexpectedly, from an evolved and complex brain.

Clinging or adhering to a currently accepted practice, for example believing stone tools are perfectly fine, and questioning and searching for new tool solutions (in other words, to wonder if bone might make a more suitable implement) represent two very different ways of dealing with current circumstances. Adherence begets consistency or stability; questioning, searching, and discovering innovative alternatives, which is *creativity*, leads to change.

Certainly, human acts of consistency or creativity require a highly elaborate and functional brain. If stone was an adequate tool material, we at least had the good sense to continue using it after the first try. Still, there is something special about the desire for novel alternatives. No other being with which we share the planet demonstrates the human capacity to continuously spawn newness. It is the height of evolution and stems from some of the most evolved and sophisticated parts of the brain.

The implication that adherence behavior could involve a more primitive or phylogenetically older portion of the brain should not be an altogether startling notion. After all, given the most basic understanding, we would expect that early humans eventually became unstuck from various conditions because of an increasingly evolved reasoning power. Our capacity for creativity expanded and so we conceived of new and often



better ways to do things.

Could this same logic begin to offer some insight into why, today, some people seem unwilling to break free from certain beliefs or ideologies which are contrary to sound science, or worse, lead to terrible acts of inhumanity? Especially when those beliefs stem from an unconditional adherence to religious fundamentalism? While there have been many reasons offered about why people differ in their interpretation of authoritative texts like the Koran and Bible, most seem based on environmental/educational influences. But perhaps there is another explanation worth exploring.

A common thread that may weave its way through fundamentalist extremism was perhaps aptly expressed by three so-called reformed fundamentalists during the American Public Media special, "The Power of Fundamentalism." Representing each of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, they implied they were taught to believe as they were told, and that personal interpretation and imagination were to be marginalized. Deviation and creativity were unacceptable.

If this is the case, how is it that one person can find it utterly intolerable to believe anything other than a given interpretation of religious doctrine, while another appears comfortable with adding his or her own meaning to the same literature? It is conceivable that the mystery underlying these distinct approaches arises from a not often considered, yet key difference in brain function.

A Difference in Reasoning

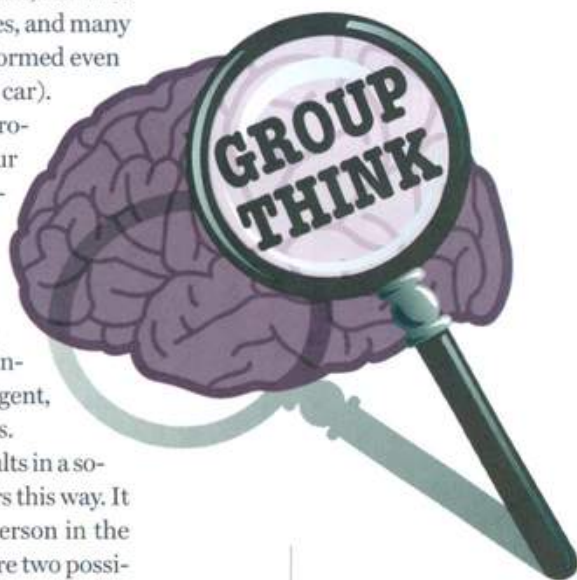
A NUMBER OF THE BEHAVIORS WE EMPLOY ARE EITHER GENETICALLY programmed or imprinted at an early stage of development by observing the behavior of parents, relatives and others. Many are controlled by motor know-how or procedural memories, and many of these procedural motor memories are so well established they can be performed even without conscious awareness (e.g., chewing, drinking, and even driving a car). More complex problems, however, might not be resolvable by these routine procedural memories. In this case, declarative memories, formed throughout our lives as we acquire additional knowledge from multiple sources, are often activated to address them (e.g., preparing a meal, fixing a car, or organizing a family vacation).

Still, such learned strategies are often insufficient for dealing with many of the issues and problems that frequently confront us. Fortunately, the sophistication of the human brain provides us with capacity to move beyond indexed memories: We can *reason*. In its two major forms, convergent and divergent, reasoning is the most essential means of solving the problems that confront us.

Convergent reasoning involves an assembly of known information and results in a solution within the realm of what is already known. Most problem solving occurs this way. It is instilled, for example, in medical school students. If a physician sees a person in the emergency room that has a fever and is comatose, they are taught that there are two possible disorders that might give these signs: an infection or a heat stroke. If this patient is found to have a stiff neck, the physician considers the possibility that the patient's fever and unconsciousness are related to an infection of the central nervous system, such as meningitis. To obtain further converging evidence the resident doctor may perform a spinal tap; if the analyzed spinal fluid reveals certain indicators there is now sufficient converging evidence to make a diagnosis of meningitis and to start antibiotic therapy.

Divergent reasoning, on the other hand, enables a person to arrive at a previously unknown solution (at least unknown to the person who is doing the reasoning). When a person is confronted with a problem and decides that the existing information is insufficient to develop a satisfactory solution, he or she may diverge from the information and imagine, or reason about, new possibilities. William James, who first put forth the concept of divergent reasoning, stated:

Instead of thoughts of concrete things patiently following one another in a beaten track of habitual suggestion, we have the most abrupt cross-cuts and transitions from



one idea to another ... unheard of combinations of elements, the subtlest associations of analogy ... we seem suddenly introduced into a seething caldron of ideas ... where partnerships can be joined or loosened ... treadmill routine is unknown and the unexpected is the only law.

The human capability for divergent reasoning results in a nearly limitless range of creative outcomes, from entirely personal to world changing. Surely humanity's earliest innovations were life altering, as were the many that followed. Recall our eventual acceptance (against initially unyielding church doctrine) of Copernicus's unfathomable idea that the Sun, and not the Earth, was at the center of our solar system, or Einstein's affront to the known laws of physics with his concept that matter and energy are different forms of the same thing. But even more mundane activities, like resolving an unacceptable marital situation by seeking conduct on the part of one of the partners that was previously not considered, discovering a treatment solution for a heretofore incurable disease, creating a work of distinctive art, finding an alternative to war in a tense geopolitical situation, a chef's creation of a new recipe, carefully arranging flowers in vase, or making up a bedtime story, are examples of creative acts resulting from the ability to diverge from current circumstances and consider or enact new possibilities. Certainly, both convergent and divergent reasoning serve to enhance our well being. But it is an individual's ability to diverge from what is familiar and move beyond the known into a new understanding which is the essence of creativity, and that which gives rise to advancement. In the words of Frank Zappa, "Without deviation from the norm, 'progress' is not possible." Whether a person chooses to question and think on his or her own or remains unconditionally adherent to religious dogma, might relate to how specific areas of the brain are utilized—or not.

A Difference in the Brain

BASED ON WORK PERFORMED ALMOST FIFTY YEARS AGO, neurologist Derek Denny-Brown of Harvard demonstrated that animals and people with a frontal lobe injury display an odd, but fascinating, behavior: Even when not appropriate, they touch or grasp things and then have trouble letting go. Termed physically "adherent," such brain-injured subjects are incapable of letting go or disengaging from the adhered-to object. In 1966, Oliver Zangwill of Cambridge expanded Denny-Brown's observations by showing that frontal lobe damage or dysfunction was clearly associated with a disruption in divergent reasoning.

In 1984, Brenda Milner of the Montreal Neurological Institute showed that patients who had surgical removal of parts of the frontal lobe (for the treatment of medically intractable epilepsy) were impaired at divergent reasoning as assessed by the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test. In this test subjects are required to sort a deck of cards according to a shared feature such as shape, color, size, or number. The subjects are not informed of the sorting principle (*e.g.*, shape) but must try to decipher the correct strategy based on the responses of the examiner after each sort. Throughout this test, however, the sorting principles change (*e.g.*, from shape to color, color to number, etc.) and the subject must again switch strategies based on the examiner's responses.

The impairment displayed by Milner's patients was not related to the performance of the initial sort, but rather to their inability to diverge from a successful sorting strategy even when provided with the information that this strategy was no longer correct. These patients were locked in a "mental adherence" and could not let go—they were stuck.

While the ability to figure out the first sorting criterion is an example of convergent reasoning, the ability to switch strategies would seem an example of divergent reasoning (think of the earlier mentioned remark by William James: "Instead of thoughts of concrete things patiently following one another in a beaten track of habitual suggestion, we have the most abrupt cross-cuts and transitions from one idea to another...").

Active areas of the brain have an increased blood flow that can be observed using newly discovered brain functional imaging technology. Using this technology, Berman and colleagues at the National Institute of Mental Health studied normal subjects performing the

Wisconsin Card Sorting Test; Carlsson and colleagues at Lund University studied subjects while they were performing another divergent reasoning test (similar to tests in which subjects are asked to provide alternative uses for an ordinary brick). Subjects performing both tests demonstrated an increase in frontal activity. In addition, Carlsson and colleagues showed that individuals who produced the most creative responses had more frontal lobe activation than those who adhered to the normal uses of a brick.

Do extremism and an unconditional adherence to religious dogma result from a failure of a portion of the frontal lobe to fully develop or, if fully developed, to activate? Studies suggest that faithful adherence to a single reasoning strategy on tests such as the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test means that parts of the frontal lobes are inactive, have failed to fully develop, or have even been damaged. Thus, unqualified disdain for divergent beliefs, for personal interpretation, and for creative theories like Darwin's theory of evolution, may indeed have, at least a partial, biological explanation: a reduced utilization of that section of the brain which has played such a vital role in humanity's creative advances—the frontal lobes. By unconditionally obeying religious tenets—or any dogma—some people may be relying on the phylogenetically older, more posterior portions of the brain that store knowledge and enable consistent or stable behaviors and, unknowingly, circumventing the portion which has been gifted to humans alone through evolution.

Where is the Genius?

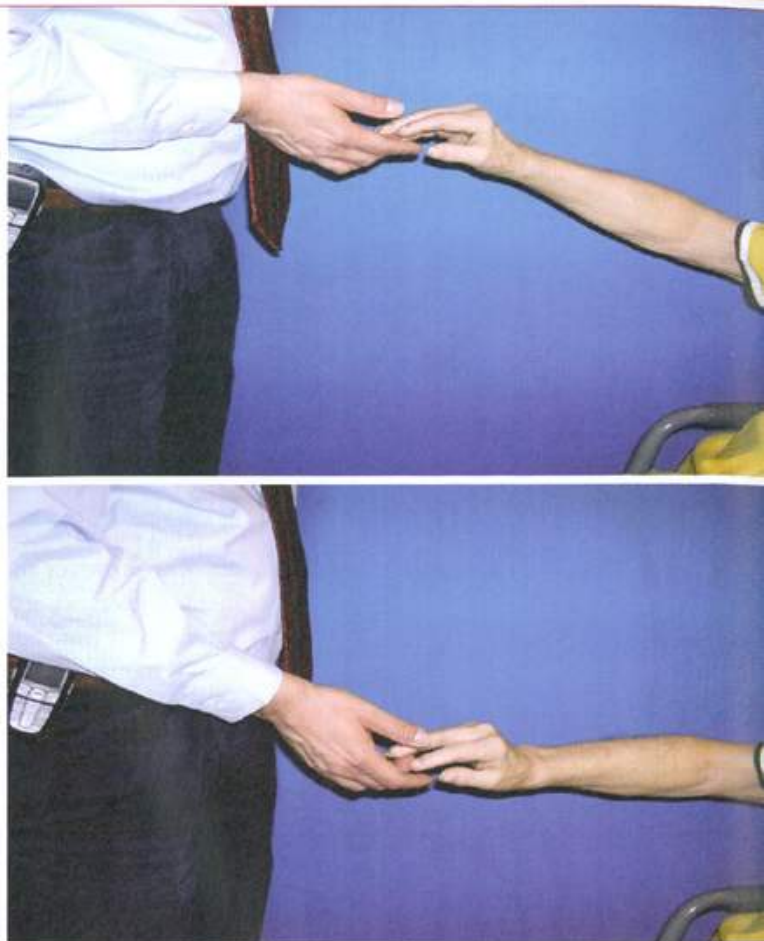
WE MAY FIND OURSELVES PUZZLING OVER A SEEMING INCONGRUITY HERE. People who unconditionally adhere to doctrine can have a high intelligence quotient (IQ), and can certainly be as "smart" as the next person. But if a vital portion of their brain is not being utilized, as we have suggested, how can this be?

A creative individual applying divergent reasoning to address a problem benefits from his or her acquired knowledge and skills. Many psychologists view the ability to acquire and use knowledge and skills for problem solving as a measure of IQ. (IQ tests do not typically assess divergent thinking—they measure learned knowledge and the ability to store information.) On the face of it, this sounds entirely logical. People with very high IQs have been labeled as geniuses, and the implication is that geniuses are creative. But that is not necessarily the case.

Multiple studies that have examined the relationship between IQ and creativity demonstrate that they are only moderately related. Certainly, creative endeavors require knowledge and skills, and so creative people have to be sufficiently intelligent to acquire this knowledge. But several studies have suggested that an IQ threshold might exist. In his book *Origins of Genius*, Dean Simonton reviews the evidence that, once an IQ of approximately 120 is reached, it longer predicts a person's creative abilities.

This relationship between IQ and something we could now call creative intelligence (CI), implies a point of view contrary to our long held belief about the importance of IQ in human advancement: It may not deserve all the credit; indeed, the flourishing of our species may also be the result of CI.

Such a revelation asks that we begin to reframe our formerly accepted opinions about intelligence and what being "smart" may really encompass. In his best selling book, *Emotional Intelligence*, author Daniel Goleman introduces something he refers to as "emotional intelligence" (EQ) and claims that it is perhaps more important for our personal success and happiness than IQ. CI is different than IQ and EQ. And perhaps every bit as important.



An individual with frontal lobe injury or dysfunction can display a very curious behavior: They may have trouble letting go of people and things and will reflexively touch and grasp even when inappropriate. Here, a patient's hand literally adheres and follows the hand of his physician no matter how the physician moves; the patient is unable to "let go." Such physically adherent or stuck behavior is an outcome of the person's inability to reason divergently. Could practicing fundamentalism unconditionally be a mental equivalent of this physical behavior?



The Future of Genius

WE WOULD NEVER ARGUE THAT ADHERING TO LEARNED principles is not of great value to humanity. Likewise, we cannot say that all answers to humanity's woes lie in simply being creative. They do not. Convergent reasoning can be an effective way to approach the problems that often confront us. Certainly, the wisdom to be found in consistent or unchanging behaviors, rituals, and other social norms can play a vital, stabilizing role in society. If something familiar is working for us, we should not necessarily abandon it. Nor would we ever say that to have religious beliefs is unimportant. The practice of religion and a belief in the divine can be a deeply significant and profound source of meaning in our lives.

What we are suggesting is that being stuck in a doctrinal belief system which is intolerant of one's own or another's personal interpretation, or one which dispels science and foment intolerance of others while setting its followers apart as elite and uniquely special, is a move away from our full potential and from the kind of reasoning that has brought humanity its marvelous advances: that it is good to question the status quo, to remain open to creative new ideas, and to apply wisdom to their use. Moreover, when someone is stuck in a belief, we are suggesting that they might try to explore their capability to question and consider their own personal interpretations—to practice our evolved capacity for divergent thinking.

This will not be easy for many adults who have unconditionally adhered to dogma their entire lives. However, there is mounting evidence that the brain and reasoning processes have a certain plasticity and can be altered throughout life. But no brain is as plastic as that of the child's.

Albert Einstein, one of the most creative individuals of the last century said, "It is amazing that our educational system doesn't destroy all curiosity." Might a child's capacity for CI be potentially threatened by virtue of the environment in which they are immersed?

The portions of the brain that are the slowest and latest to develop are often the most complex; it is the most complex systems that are most vulnerable to developmental abnormalities. In humans, this is the frontal lobes. Based on what we know about brain growth, it is possible that a child taught only to follow, and not to personally wonder about or question doctrine, will suffer from an abnormal development of the frontal lobes.

There is also evidence that stimulation induced neuronal development can occur in specific areas of the brain. Children who receive musical training at an early age have larger regions of the temporal lobe cortex, which processes sounds, when compared to those who do not receive this training. In contrast, sensory deprivation induces an opposite type of phenomenon. If a child was unable to see from one of his or her eyes because of a structural defect and then, as an adult, has this defect corrected, the vision in this eye will often remain useless. This is because the portions of the brain to which this eye projects did not, or could not, develop normally; because it did not, it remains incapable of properly processing incoming visual information.

With respect to convergent and divergent reasoning, should this matter? The divergent thinking ability of children who attended secular versus religious schools was studied by Dafna Hirschmann of Haifa, Israel. The result? Students who attended the secular schools had higher scores in divergent reasoning tests than those who attended religious schools.

Regrettably, most schools, in general, assess student knowledge and convergent reasoning (in other words, IQ), but they do not test the students' ability to perform divergent reasoning and think creatively. Unfortunately, Einstein's concern about our educational system may be appropriate.

The relative importance of schooling, parental nurturing, and hereditary factors on both IQ and CI remain unclear. It is possible that the under-utilization of the frontal lobes, or an increased susceptibility to such under-utilization, might be, in part, hereditary. Of course, there have been very creative people who were brought up in rigid ideological or fundamen-

talist environments. But these people seem to be the exception rather than the rule.

Children raised in environments which consistently reward convergent reasoning and strict adherence but punish divergent reasoning, could conceivably grow into adults who are prone to getting stuck in various beliefs or ideologies. Might our current preoccupation with strict religious fundamentalism be creating obstacles to resolving the complex dilemmas we face in the world today? If we continue to insist that children around the world unfailingly adhere to the tenets of religious fundamentalism which promote intolerance, are we doomed to repeat the past simply because we have nurtured a world of thinkers who will not diverge from what they are told?

In his recent, influential book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida says it is the emergence of a "creative class" that will be necessary to drive innovation and America's competitiveness. The winner of last year's Nobel Prize for economics, Edmund Phelps, stresses the importance of creativity and the value of an innovative economy. Are these really new notions? Given stability and wisdom from which they can proceed, has it not always been the creative who have then advanced humanity? This precious capacity for creativity is gifted to humans alone. Yet, when we find ourselves mired in dogma and beliefs of intolerance and elitism, we may very well be misusing that gift and failing our full potential. Questioning and wondering about what we presently know has been, and remains, vital to us all; enhancing global humanity's well being lies in properly using the genius of creativity. Surely, the next Copernican idea awaits us. ■

The Genius Beyond Unconditional Fundamentalism is based on a book about creative intelligence now being planned by the authors.

Kenneth M. Heilman, M.D. is the James E. Rooks, Jr. Distinguished Professor of Neurology and Program Director at the University of Florida. He is author, co-author, or editor of 11 books and more than 500 chapters and research articles that deal with brain-behavior relationship in health and disease.

Russell S. Donda has devoted more than a decade to interpreting and expanding the research of scientists in order to bring applied knowledge to the world. He has spearheaded the advancement of numerous, novel concepts and is named as an inventor on more than a dozen patents and applications.

Epiphany of an Economic Hitman

by John Perkins

I WROTE *CONFESSIONS OF AN ECONOMIC HIT MAN* AFTER 9/11. Staring into the pit at Ground Zero I realized how the majority of Americans didn't recognize the amount of anger and hatred aimed at us from around the world and why that hatred has some grounding in reality. I realized that I had an obligation to share with the world what I had done as an economic hit man that had contributed to this anger, resentment, and hatred.

All of us living in the United States have to take some responsibility because we comprise less than 5 percent of the planet's population and consume more than 25 percent of its resources while creating over 30 percent of its pollution. What many Americans do not know, and sometimes don't want to hear, is that many of our corporations, with the active assistance of our government, have exploited much of the planet so that we

can live these opulent, materialistic lives. I know, because I was part of this system. Standing there at that pit at ground zero, I had this moment of enlightenment—I knew that I absolutely had to share this information.

Before that, I had several times started to write *Confessions*. Right now it's on its sixty-fourth week on the best-sellers list. The most common response to the book was that people said, "They [other people] used to always think I was crazy and paranoid when I'd raise questions about America's role in the world, because everyone assumed that America might make mistakes, but that its intentions were always fundamentally honorable. But now that your book has been published, they see that I'm not crazy and paranoid (because someone else feels this way and can attest to these things too)—and I want to take action to change the world."

A few questions kept coming up. One was why aren't other economic "hit men" or "jackals" coming out? And two, what can we do to change this world? So I wrote *The Secret History of the American Empire* to answer those questions. It has stories of other "economic hit men" that have had these similar types of experiences. I show that my own story wasn't so unique.

The first book truly is a confession. It's very personal and it ends in the later 1980s. This second book goes up to 2007, and includes other people's stories and a lot of the things going on in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America right now.

I was an economic hit man. What we do is not, in essence, illegal, but it *should* be. We find third world countries with some resource that can be developed and then give a huge loan to that country. The money, however, never goes to that country, but to our own companies within that country—companies that benefit only a few very rich people.

In many of these countries, you build a power plant or something that devastates the land, and the lines go only into the big cities, not to the farmers, peasants, etc. These people also don't benefit from the ports and highways we build because they don't have boats and they don't have cars, and yet the whole country is left with a huge debt, and the money to pay the interest alone is being taken from education, healthcare, and other social services. In the end, the country can't pay its debt, so we "hit men" go back to the country and take our "pound of flesh," forcing them to sell their oil or some other resource to us for very cheap. It's interesting that people think that other countries that have sent troops to Iraq in support of us have done so out of principle, but they were essentially blackmailed into it because they owed us so much money. The average person in these countries is actually worse off because of these projects, not better. These projects do contribute to an increased Gross National Product (GNP) and total economic statistic of the country, but the well-being of the majority of people in these countries is not reflected in the GNP, because the GNP reflects the output achieved by the upper classes that own the business, industry, and commercial establishment.

That process of making loans should be illegal. If I were a banker it would be illegal if I enticed you into taking a loan that I knew you couldn't afford. But done on an international basis, it is not illegal. So economic hit men do not do illegal things. We are distinct from the "jackals" who do in fact do illegal things, like throwing over governments, and other activities that are extremely disruptive, yet incidentally, extremely effective. When Jaime Hurtado of Ecuador was assassinated because of economic hit men including me, and when Omar Torrijos of Panama was assassinated for the same reason in 1981, suddenly the peoples' spirits in these two countries plummeted, especially since their spirits were soaring with the election of these leaders. The jackals are very effective not only in that they topple these governments, but they break the spirits of these people.

Historians have long known that U.S. policy was to overthrow governments that challenged our political power or restricted or interfered with the ability of our international corporations from making big profits. They point to our role in Guatemala, Chile, Iran, etc. It's pretty well established that we were involved in trying to overthrow Hugo

Chavez in Venezuela in 2002; in fact, the administration has admitted that. We certainly know what we're doing in Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, and Afghanistan, so it's well established that the U.S. government gets pretty involved in the politics of other countries.

My personal involvement or the involvement of other individuals in the book are well documented, so the only real question one could have is: "Did John Perkins really do this, or was it someone else who did these things?" But if someone actually took the time to look over all of the documents—my passport for example—they would walk away without the shadow of a doubt that I was involved in doing these things. Let me add that it doesn't serve anyone's interest to be in denial. What we need to do is understand our mistakes and set them right. This will allow us the opportunity to move forward, start fresh, and create a better world. So, rather than denying the things we have done, we should focus on what we can do to set things right, and create a model that reflects the ideals of what I was brought up to believe America is all about.

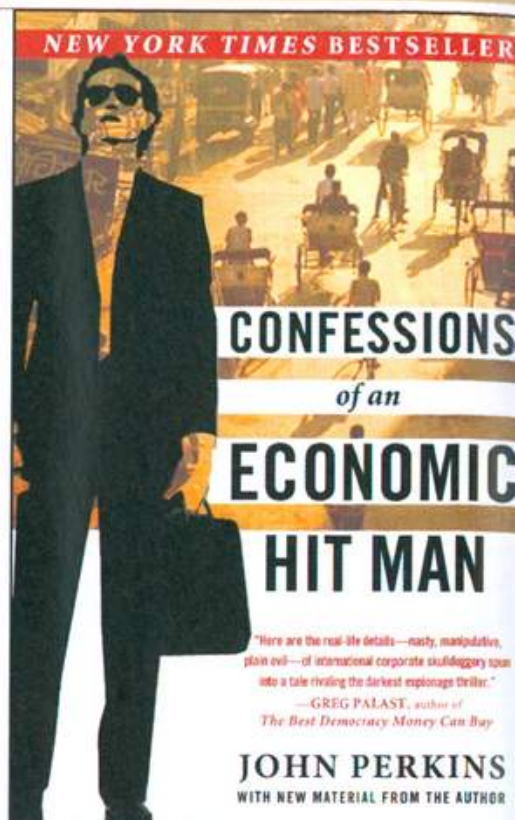
When I was an economic hit man these things weighed on my conscience. I struggled with them. In my heart, I came to understand that what I was doing was really bad. After being a hit man for over ten years, I was in the Caribbean on St. John's Island and while on a boat, I saw a sugarcane plantation that was grown over with bougainvilleas. As I sat there, I realized that the plantation was built on the bones of thousands of slaves, and that our entire hemisphere was built on the bones of millions of slaves, and then it struck me that I too was a slaver, that my job as an economic hit man was promoting a different form of slavery, and I just had an epiphany, and realized that I could no longer do this.

I'm aware that people like Tom Friedman are telling us that America's role in the world has been extremely positive and that we're not doing a favor to anyone by telling them that economic development isn't doing good, because economic development is the only path towards human realization and building a hope that might counter the despair that leads to a 9/11-type atrocity.

I would agree that economic development is very important, provided that it reaches the poor people. Otherwise the Friedman argument is a little bit like saying that slavery in the United States pre-Civil War was good because the slaves from Africa came to a civilized Christian country and they had food and housing on the plantations. But they were slaves! You could make the point, as people did in those days, that their conditions were better than those in Africa, but I think that's a very irrational argument. That's the same argument you could make about people in third world countries today, that they are better off now working in the sweatshops living off of two dollars a day. The point is that economic development since the 1970s has been very detrimental to the poor. They've been pushed out of the villages in which an ethos of collective responsibility guaranteed that people would do all they could to care for each other, even while being "dirt poor." The quality of their mutual support never showed up in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but it meant that far fewer people had to sell their children into prostitution or slavery to have "enough" to eat or a place that felt reasonable to live. In monetary terms, of course, the gap between rich and poor since the 1970s has more than doubled.

That is not to say that economic development is wrong—we need more economic development, but it needs to be done in a way that helps the people on the bottom rung. It is not true that raising the economies of these places affects all the people there positively. What is true is that mostly the rich profit, while everyone else gets poorer. So we need a new view on what economic development really is.

The extremes of poverty and inequality are connected to widespread support for terrorism and rebellion around the world. I have never met a terrorist who wanted to be a terrorist. They are terrorists because their land has been destroyed by oil plants or hydro-electric plants. They become terrorists because they don't know what else to do. Or they witnessed this happening to others whom they cared about, even if they themselves were not economically suffering. Of course, there are fanatical leaders that





A Communist newspaper kiosk is burned by pro-Shah demonstrators in Tehran, Iran, Aug. 19, 1953, on the second coup attempt against Iranian Premier Mohammad Mossadeq. The coup, engineered by the United States and Britain in support of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, re-established the Shah of Iran's throne and ousted Mossadeq in favor of Gen. Fazlollah Zahedi.

exploit this desperation in people. There will always be killers and sociopaths, but people like that don't have any power unless there is a large grassroots following that relates to what they are saying. For example, Osama Bin Laden is Muslim, and South America is primarily Catholic. Yet, you travel to South America and you see pictures of Osama Bin Laden, because people relate to him as a David standing up to a Goliath. These people are desperate, and unhappy with the situation today. So this gap between the rich and poor has created a tremendous amount of anger and hatred.

There is a tremendous amount that we can do. I am very optimistic that we can turn this all around, that we can create a sustainable, stable, and peaceful world. We must realize that the only way our grandchildren can inherit this is if every child born in every corner of the planet has the same opportunity to make this happen. We are a very small planet at this point.

Corporations today basically run the geopolitics, so we must change the corporations. They control the whole world in a very significant way, and yet they are incredibly vulnerable to us in that they rely on us to buy their goods and services and provided them with employees, and we have been extremely successful in changing corporations whenever we put our minds to it. Just recently major food chains did away with trans fat because we demanded it. We are really successful at turning corporations around

when we try, but now we must take this up a notch. Instead of just cleaning up rivers and protecting the ozone layer, we have to demand that they no longer orient their profits to benefit a few rich people, and that they make it their goal to contribute to a better world for us and our children.

I know this will happen because I know a lot of CEOs, and none of them *want* to see rainforests destroyed, or terrorism, or Florida covered in ocean, but they are all operating under the idea that their mandate is to make greater and greater profits for their shareholders. But that is not their mandate. They can still make their profits, but their mandate is to make a better world for all of us. In the final analysis, each of us must follow our passions and talents to create a more sustainable world. We take different paths, but we can all work towards the same end.

Why should corporations just continue to be able to go out a plunder? They should be responsible to bigger bodies than just their stockholders. I'm struck by the statistics that during WWII, big corporations contributed about 50 percent to our income tax, and in 2001 it was something over 20 percent. In recent years its been under 10 percent. Some of the most profitable and powerful corporations don't pay taxes at all, and some get a tax credit despite how profitable they are. Ultimately, the corporations have to be willing to pay their dues. ■

John Perkins spent three decades as an economic hit man, business executive, author, and lecturer. He lived and worked in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and North America. This article is constructed from a Tikkun interview with him in July 2007.

How Elders can Rebalance the World

by Barry Barkan

WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR YOURSELF AS YOU AGE? Do you look forward to the second half of life or dread it? How do you feel about your grandparents? Do you have a vision for how we can organize our lives for meaning, joy, and connection as we grow into our elderhood?

For many, the best we can hope for during the seeming eons between the time we enter the foothills of our aging and the time we die, seems to be: avoid illness, stop working for money, find some hobby or volunteer work to keep occupied, stay in our homes, hope we have grandchildren near enough to get to know them, and pray that Medicare, Social Security, savings, and pensions (if you have them) survive. The worst dream is that, even if we have savings and no longer have to earn, we will end up sick, frail, lonely, and warehoused in a nursing home, burning up our financial legacy as we languish disempowered and without hope. Either way, will we look on helplessly as global warming, destructive governance, and people without vision shred our safety nets and destroy our legacy to the grandchildren and beyond?

Don't despair. Some of us have been passionately struggling and effectively cultivating a vision that has already begun to transform the culture of nursing homes and that has profound implication for all of us as we age.

In the 1970s, not long after more than a few of us allowed rhetoric to trump wisdom and proclaimed, "Don't trust anyone over thirty," I had an insight on a vision quest that shaped my life's work. The insight was this: *The restoration of the role of elders to society will ultimately midwife the great cultural paradigm shift from selfish individualism and coarse competitiveness towards an organic, interdependent, purpose-driven new reality that will define our epoch.* That vision has energized me as I worked with elders and gained the experience to realize how we can make it happen.

Now we are ready to take our work of community organizing for culture change in nursing homes and launch a new initiative that creates the organizational structure for a health-creating society for all. It will provide the antidote to the disconnection, impotence, and lack of meaning that contribute to our social malaise. We need to learn to be effective, as we stand not just for ourselves, but also for the future generations to whom we have an ever-increasing debt. We call this initiative the Elders Guild. The Elders Guild is truly radical, innovative, and based on proven experience. It is a new paradigm for regenerating community. And that is not just the community of the elders, but the whole multi-generational continuum.

The basic building blocks of the Elders Guild—the values, methods, structures, processes, lore, stories, networks—have been cultivated over decades. Although in the end it is about transformation of the social and political reality, at the start and the heart of it are stories of cultural and personal change that happen wherever people engage the movement.



Debby and Barry Barkan, leaders in elder-centered community action for thirty years.

Stories of the Civil Rights Movement in Nursing Homes

MY BELOVED GRANDMA, WHO HAD BEEN THE Matriarch of our multi-family brownstone in Brooklyn, ended her days in cold storage in a medical-model nursing home, stinking of disinfectant. This was in the late 1960s. I was a civil rights reporter for the Richmond, Virginia Afro-American newspaper, and I had recently pretended to be a minister in order to sneak into a women's prison to do a story. When I visited Grandma, I saw that people in that nursing home had fewer civil rights than the worst criminal on death row. In fact, she had no civil rights whatsoever. Her world was confined to her bed. She could be tied up and drugged at the will of the staff without any due process. She lay in her bed, one meaningless day yielding to the next, this woman who used to enthrall me as a child with translated stories from the Yiddish Daily *Forverts*, who had been engaged with the world and her family. Now she was engaged with nothing. There was a family history of strife and recriminations there. But no one deserves the cruel fate of her final days.

So I started on a path that led to pioneering a new culture of nursing homes that transformed institutions into elder centered communities. I invited my friend, Bob Berke, to join me in creating the Live Oak Project at the old Jewish home in Oakland, California. This home was a kind, well supported, and loving environment where physical care was excellent. It was also a place where people were isolated from one another, lost in themselves, and hungering for meaning and connection to life in the present tense. Our mission was to develop a community that would empower and connect people by transforming their role from perpetual patient to involved elder. In the 1980s, my wife, Debora Cushman Barkan and I, with the help of friends, bought a long-term lease on a nursing home in the San Francisco Bay Area. We were able to build what we call a "regenerative community" with elders, staff, family members, volunteers, and virtually everyone who walked through the door. Years later, the Live Oak Living Center became an icon of the movement for culture change that has emerged over the last ten years.

The first day in the Jewish home we said, "We're going to come here every morning at the same time and have a meeting." The elders said, "Well, what are you going to do in the meeting?" We said, "Well, we'll sing and we'll tell stories and we'll get you talking about your lives. We will help you have a voice and a choice about what happens here and we'll build a movement to change the nature of aging in America."

Somebody laughed and we said, "No. Right here, right now. This is the place where the movement has to begin." We wanted to sing a song together to raise the energy. The easiest song I could think of to teach them was "Amen."

We asked the people, "Well, who are you? How do you see yourselves?" And someone said, "You see that piece of furniture over there? I'm like a piece of furniture." And someone else said, "Yes. They even move me without asking me." This was common practice at the time. Ageism, stereotype, and the medical model combined to dehumanize people.

All movements begin with consciousness raising, so we introduced our Definition of an Elder. There was a guy there named Sam Brill. Sam sat with a beautiful smile on his face all the time and said very little. And often what he said was so otherworldly that most of us couldn't get it. His wife was a very elegant Polish Jewish woman who volunteered to read the Definition of an Elder to the community for the first time. Afterwards, Sam stood up, and in the softest possible voice led everybody in singing Amen again, except this time instead of pronouncing it "Aymen" as I had he Judaified it and sang, "Ahmen." So as culture builders that very first day we had our first ritual: the Definition of an Elder being read, and the group singing "Ahmen" afterwards.

After the meeting there was a guy who came up to me who could hardly walk, one side of his body was paralyzed. He had toilet paper stuffed in his mouth to keep from choking to death on his own saliva. He could not speak. He looked at me with this disdainful grin and sort of twisted his finger around his ear a few times to indicate that he thought I was nuts.

So I asked who that guy was. It turned out he was the last Jewish member of the Berlin Legislature, Ken Fox. Here he was, a lifelong activist, without voice or community, among his peers. Few people knew who he was, what he had done, or, worse yet, what he was still capable of doing.

The next day he wrote us a note that he hunted and pecked on a quarter sheet of paper. His typewriter needed a new ribbon and as his letters got longer, we ended up buying him an electric typewriter. His first note said, "If you think you can do that with these people, you're crazier than they are."

So we read the note to the people and asked them what they thought about it. It generated a discussion. Here we were in the middle of where the elders hung out. Not in a professional setting, not in an office, but in the middle of where they hung out, inviting their presence. We were developing a technology, or maybe a "heartology" of community development in the course of these meetings.

The meetings went from twenty minutes to an hour and a half a day. They began calling themselves the Council of Elders.

When they complained, for example, about the elevator door being too heavy, the administrator, Ben Abramovitch, was called to come and hear their grievance. By this time staff members were reporting to the Council of Elders on a regular basis. Ben said, "I've been trying to get the board to do this for years. Every year it's in my budget. Every year it's the first item to go." Someone said, "Well, why don't you bring the president of the board here? We'll set her straight." And so the president of the board came to them. And she became a de facto member of the Council of Elders. She herself was an elder and she'd come and sit with the folks when she was around. At the next board meeting the money was allocated and the home had a new sliding elevator door. It was more than a renovation. The elders had *won* an elevator.

Ben Abramovitch, who had courageously invited us in to community-organize the home's elders, now had a powerful ally as the board became accountable to the Council of Elders.

Every day Mr. Fox came with a letter and we amplified his voice as he became the leader of the Council of Elders. One day he was fired up with enthusiasm. He brought a newspaper article that announced the 1980 White House conference on aging. It said that the Area Agency on Aging in every community in the country was being directed to have a mini conference on aging in their own community that would feed into state conferences and ultimately the national conference.

So, they decide to write a letter saying, "We're a group of people. We live at the Jewish home in Oakland. And some of us are infirm. Some of us are well. But we want to come to the local conference on aging." They get back this letter that says, we're sorry, insurance, this and that, we're not geared up to accommodate people from a nursing home at our meeting. We tell Mr. Fox and he's crestfallen. He feels, one more defeat. But he also has piss and vinegar. He types, "We've got to do something. We can't take this lying down."

So we read his latest letter to the group—about the Area Agency saying we couldn't come—and asked what we should do? Someone says, "Well I think we should go to the meeting, alert the press, and have a news conference." People agreed. Then someone said, "It's not right to set someone up and do that without giving them fair warning." So the group had a strategy. They were going to do it, if necessary, but they would give fair warning. So Mr. Fox drafted a letter that we polished because his writing took interpretation. We kept checking, "Is this what you mean?" The Elders sent the letter, and a week later the person in charge of the Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, a key guy



Ken Fox, no longer able to speak, with the typewriter that enabled him to become the political leader of the Council of Elders at the Home for Jewish Parents in Oakland, California.

in the county government, came and apologized to the group, and they went to the conference. It was a major victory as the potency of the elders was experienced beyond the home.

A National Network of Regenerative Elder Care Homes

SO IN THE BARREN LANDS OF THE NURSING HOME WE LEARNED THAT IT IS POSSIBLE to create a community that supports a dynamic role for even the frailest of elders and provides a transformative force for everyone to whom they are connected. Culture change has been shown to transform demoralized, dispirited staff into productive teams, and dispirited, isolated elders into active members of engaged communities.

When we started out virtually all of my friends said to me, "Barry, what are you doing? We have the critical issues of the day, and you are going to a nursing home every day? How do you justify using your talent, your capabilities, your time and energy, in a way that's not related to the crucial issues of the day?" The reality, though, of nursing homes is that they are a microcosm of everything that needs repair in society. The major workforce is primarily the working poor. Typically, they are African Americans, Hispanics, Laotian, East Indians, Pakistanis, and poor white people. The homes reflect America's priorities about healthcare. They reflect the inability of government to work effectively. The reimbursement system is driven by special interests, and regulation has been as much a part of the problem as of the solution. If you go up and down every single issue, from ageism to creating an environment that gets people well instead of making them sicker, you find them all in a nursing home.

Until the early Nineties, we felt like a voice in the wilderness. Then, an elder named Carter Catlett Williams reached out and found others who were doing similar work and brought four of us together at a meeting of the National Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform. In 1997 we formed the Pioneer Network with thirty-seven stakeholders. This August we are having our 10th anniversary meeting in Minneapolis, and there will be 1,000 people there. The Network includes elders, staff and their trade unions, physicians, management of for-profit and non-profit homes, federal and state government agencies and inspectors, architects, ombudsmen and everyone who is involved. This is a new conversation among people who, ten years ago, wouldn't speak to one another. Now we share, to teach and learn how to make deep systems change.

The Elders Guild

WE WILL SPEND MORE DAYS OF OUR LIVES AS ELDERS THAN WE HAVE SPENT AS children, as students, or as builders of family and career. We engage the journey of what Rabbi Zalman Schachter Shalomi, author of *From Age-ing to Sage-ing*, calls "eldering" in our late midlife when we are (often) at the peak of our vitality, and we may dwell there throughout cycles of regeneration for as many as fifty years. It's not out of the question that many of us will live to be 100. It is estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau that there will be almost 850,000 people over the age of 100 in the United States by 2050. Any one of us *Tikkun* readers could blow out the candles on our hundredth birthday cake.

Each of us needs to decide when to engage our aging with the intention to consciously prepare for the marathon of productive longevity. For each of us that moment is different, but as soon as we know that the second half of life is upon us, it is time to begin the process of reconceptualizing our reality. The process requires no less a level of dedication, effort, preparation, and continued learning than the work of establishing and growing a career and family.

Our biggest challenge is that we have very little inherited infrastructure or roadmap for the journey of eldery. There is no university system or on-the-job training for the integrated process of becoming elders. We are like a third world country in which there is virtually no preparatory infrastructure to enable a quarter of the population to engage the knowledge, skills, and networks required to become who we will need to become.

Even as we hurtle through this new and uncharted temporal and social terrain, we

will have to move quickly to develop a simple, accessible, and communal infrastructure for learning, growing, and serving one another to enable a booming generation of us to come of age together.

This is the vision of the Elders Guild, which we will organize into communities where we can be present and supportive to one another through good times and bad, through good and failing health, and times of loss and renewal. Our communities will be multigenerational, diverse enclaves established by people like us in neighborhoods where we live. Our ultimate goal for the Elders Guild is an organization that is local in nature and that shares the same design, mission, and culture with other local Elders Guild organizations around the world.

With support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, we began organizing our virtual community at the Pioneer Network conference this summer. Our first group on the ground is being developed in our own neighborhood in Berkeley, California.

Building mutual support communities is the first of three core components of the Elders Guild. The second is learning: developing elder wisdom, becoming wise elders, and applying our wisdom in our community. The third foundation of the Guild has to do with championing of the future—consciously standing for the generations of the grandchildren. What differentiates us from a traditional, social-political organization is our commitment to begin with ourselves and one another in learning the key principles involved in inventing our common future.

Our wisdom work involves the recognition and harvesting of the wisdom imbedded in our years and putting it to work in the service of those whom we treasure. We will bring activist practice to the pursuit of wisdom in a number of paths including living and dying, karma fixing, change making, healing the family, managing our resources and financial legacy, consciousness exploration, and fun and games as we seek to balance serious pursuit and joyful experience.

We will learn about the process of being a wise person, which has to do with cultivating humility and getting our egos out of the way, which has to do with not sharing what we know just because we know it, but sharing our wisdom when there are questions, and guiding the process through which questions arise. This is a real learning process that will yield real wisdom.

Our vision is that the wisdom of the elders will emerge to raise the level of collective enlightenment throughout society, cross all lines of ethnicity, religion, economics, and culture to form the common paths of wisdom and understanding in realms where today we can only see differences. The fruit of our learning will provide the connective tissue between the heritage of the past and the creation of a decent and meaningful legacy for the future as we make the present more purposeful.

Then there are the processes that have to do with the championing of the future. The reality is that the only way to champion the future is to work to transform the present. In these troubled times, as future generations and, indeed, our very planet are at risk, it is imperative that we place our wisdom, experience, and the full range of our resources at the service of healing our contemporary world and easing the burden on the generations of our grandchildren.

Everything in our vision for the Elders Guild is about learning, growing, and developing as we work together and cultivate our wisdom to shape ourselves into humble,

The Live Oak Definition of an Elder



An Elder is a person who is still growing, still a learner, still with potential, and whose life continues to have within it promise for and connection to the future. An Elder is still in pursuit of happiness, joy, and pleasure, and her or his birthright to these remains intact. Moreover, an Elder is a person who deserves respect and honor and whose work it is to synthesize wisdom from long life experience and formulate this into a legacy for future generations.



Barry Barkan with Ellen Smith, a leader of an unsuccessful civil rights struggle to save San Francisco's Post Street Convalescent Hospital in 1979.



Post Street Convalescent Hospital, San Francisco, 1979.

loving, powerful, and effective champions of the future. The path of becoming effective elder activists calls for us to nurture focused intention, wisdom, optimism, joie de vivre, and a paradoxical combination of urgency and ease, and apply these where our imaginations and the needs of society converge.

As we champion the future we will tap our individual and collective resources for projects, campaigns, and initiatives that satisfy our souls and have the potential to change the world. Imagine people with special skills, such as engineers, scientists, and tinkerers, bringing their creativity to bear to help with global warming with no agenda other than creating solutions where they live. Imagine others of us going into classrooms—as loving elders, trained in processes of nonviolent communication and change—easing tension

and providing an energy center that enables healing to resonate throughout. Imagine 100 million elders worldwide waging a campaign to disarm our neighborhoods, our nations, and the world.

This vision of Elder Activism is not ours alone. Its time has come and it is emerging all over the world. We felt deep connection to Nelson Mandela as he launched the council of Twelve Global Elders to address the world's most pressing problems, saying, "The Elders can become a fiercely independent and robust force for good, tackling conflicts and intractable issues, especially those that are not popular." It is our mission in the Elders Guild to collaborate locally to work in harmony with the global movement to champion the good.

What are our basic operating principles and the process for championing the future? One thing is that we get out of the aggressive, triumphalistic, divisive ways of the past, and, as elders, we learn how to involve anybody who wants to be part of the discussion.

How Does Culture Change Work?

THE MODELS WE HAVE HAD FOR REGENERATING SOCIETY HAVE LARGELY COME FROM the great struggles for political rights and public protections with which we are all familiar: independence, democracy, emancipation, universal suffrage, collective bargaining, safe food and medicine, social safety nets, and so much more. These often required great conflicts, with perpetual cycles of triumphant winners and wounded losers. Perhaps it had to be this way. But the paradigm is changing.

The coming model is culture change, which precedes social and political change and makes it unstoppable. Culture change starts with consciousness raising. We elders have seen in our time what happens when women, Blacks, Hispanics and other ethnic minorities, gays, and people with physical and mental challenges, develop a consciousness of pride and worth, a self-respect that will not put up with being put down. But then it goes deeper than that.

The paradigm shifts when we express a vision that enables all parties to benefit; when we nurture it with joy, respect, and responsibility, then the greater good emerges. The process goes by various names like nonviolent conflict or peaceful communications. In our work, we have called it regenerative community development. It involves getting all the stakeholders in an issue together, empowering everyone, recognizing the spiritual depth and value in each, and lovingly building bridges among one another at that level of recognition, where change becomes an irresistible force.

We have suffered many losses over the years and we have the scars to show for being out in front of a big new idea. But the trend has always been that if you build community that is empowering and joyful for all, an epicenter of change will be created. Often we have to hang in there and work through conflict, as in the civil rights movement. But by respecting the humanity of all whom we encounter, shift happens.

We are not naïve. There are powerful forces all around us that want to dominate the

status quo, corner the global market on wealth and resources, and achieve religious hegemony. Those of us who believe that the planet is a living organism and that all living things are interdependent will be continually crushed in head-on encounter with these forces. But culture change is an organic process through which healing community takes on a life of its own and spreads, transforming ourselves and all those we touch. It is an ever-evolving journey that dissolves the monolith at a far faster pace than water smoothing rock, as this collective living human being that we are reorganizes ourselves and accelerates our evolution.

At this point it is an act of faith on our part that we have enough time and enough potential to rescue the future we will leave for our children and grandchildren or, G-d forbid, for their remnants. But our practical on-the-ground experience has demonstrated again and again that this faith is not misplaced.

Culture change works because it is effective. In the Pioneer Network, homes are being subsequently transformed and stakeholders are flourishing. We saw many of the concepts we advocated when they were marginal, embodied in federal law, passed by a Democratic Congress and signed by President Reagan. Today federal and state agencies are advocating culture change and the person-directed care that is embodied within it as the best hope for making nursing homes better and more effective. In New York City, labor and management have banded together for the good of the elders and care outcomes have increased while workers have become empowered and organizations have become more productive.

We Have Nothing to Lose, But...

NOW WE ARE EMBARKING ON THE MISSION OF TRANSFORMING THE ENTIRE CULTURE of aging, with powerful ripple effects throughout the generational continuum. The young and middle-aged need our help, perhaps more than they can imagine. Ours is a world out of balance and we all are threatened by a kind of vision-deprivation disorder, as society is adrift from the wisdom, far-sightedness, and sense of responsibility for the future that is potentiated within the elders.

The Elders Guild—and whatever other organization we can create that provides community, nurtures wisdom, and commits to healing the future—can rebalance the world. I have learned from my work as a community organizer with thousands of old people that the mixed blessing of older years is the great social equalizer. It creates the universal ground that transcends economics, race, religion, ideology, and health status.

Old people have taught us that long years frequently smooth our jagged places, humble us, deepen our compassion, and enable us to respect common wisdom. Given a modicum of integrity, it is likely that, as we ripen, we will care more deeply about the important things: about life itself, about relationships, about the preciousness of the mother planet, about peace, about harmonizing with the sacred, about being loving, about forgiveness, and about taking responsibility for the world we will leave behind to the grandchildren.

Come join us in creating the Elders Guild so we can bring rebalance and harmony to the world. You don't have to be well, or vigorous, or possessed of an excellent memory. Just bring yourself, and be surprised at what happens.

To join our virtual community and learn how you can create an Elders Guild community where you live, go to www.liveoakinstitute.org. To learn more about the culture change movement go to www.pioneernetwork.net. We have nothing to gain but our future. ■

Barry Barkan has been a leader in elder-centered community action for thirty years. In 2004 the Ashoka Fellowship, which has identified and funded more than 3,000 world-class changemakers globally, elected Barry to the Fellowship because they recognized the power of his vision for the Elders Guild to help change the world. Barry thanks Dave Belden for oral history assistance for this article.

HESCHEL ON VIETNAM

(continued from page 16)

project, thinking that it would deflect the organization from its focus on the war itself. Melman, who saw himself as "a non-institutional religious Jew," was upset and asked Fernandez to persuade Heschel to authorize the project. For more than two hours, Heschel resisted Fernandez's arguments because he feared that to accuse the president of the United States and his highest officials of being war criminals might provoke public backlash.

The disagreement between Heschel and Melman persisted for the next five months. Heschel finally agreed to back the project after speaking with John Bennett. When the book was completed a year later, the only publisher who would take it was the Turnpike Press of Annandale, Virginia, run by Quakers. Although 38,000 copies were sold, and Heschel's acquaintance Harry Wachtel from Long Island (who was also close to Martin Luther King, Jr.) sent copies to all the members of Congress, there was no backlash. But despite extensive publicity, the book, *In the Name of America*, failed to incite the moral revolution the sponsors had hoped for.

In the meantime, CALCAV planned its first national mobilization, to be held in Washington, D.C., January 31–February 1, 1967. Using the 1963 March on Washington as its model, the mobilization included action workshops, visits to representatives and high government officials, and picketing in front of the White House. More than 2,000 clergy and laity from forty-five states participated, arriving by airplane, train, bus, and automobile. Most of them had sleeping gear, planning to spend the night on the floors of local churches.

The significance of CALCAV's Washington mobilization far surpassed the mammoth media event. At the center was a solemn interfaith worship service at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church that combined ethics, politics, and spiritual transformation. The "Service of Witness in Time of War" crowned the first day of lobbying. It was led by an array of leaders: Robert McAfee Brown; Donald R. Campion, S.J.; William Sloane Coffin;



William Sloane Coffin, Coretta Scott King, and Heschel at the National Mobilization of Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam, 6 February 1968.

Paul Moore, Jr., bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C.; Jacob J. Weinstein, president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis; and Abraham Joshua Heschel. The worship for peace created an atmosphere of harmony, despite striking theological differences and its overwhelmingly Protestant content.

Heschel electrified the audience with the speech from his *Fellowship* article, "The Moral Outrage in Vietnam." He began with a reading from Ezekiel 34:25–30 ("I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land... And they shall know that I the Lord their God am with them"), whose poignancy was heightened by his sing-song manner, plaintive, high-pitched voice, and Yiddish accent. Heschel contrasted Ezekiel's pastoral utopia protected by the loving care of God with the ravaging "wild beasts" of Vietnam: "Ours is an assembly of shock, contrition, and dismay. Who

would have believed that we life-loving Americans are capable of bringing death and destruction to so many innocent people? We are startled to discover how unmerciful, how beastly we ourselves can be. So we implore Thee, our Father in heaven, help us to banish the beast from our hearts, the beast of cruelty, the beast of callousness. ...In the sight of so many thousands of civilians and soldiers slain, injured, crippled, of bodies emaciated, of forests destroyed by fire, God confronts us with this question: Where art thou?"

The address climaxed with Heschel's story of "a child of seven" whose rabbi was teaching him the biblical account of the sacrifice of Isaac. He seemed to evoke his own childhood, switching to the first person: "My heart began to beat faster; it actually sobbed with pity for Isaac. Behold, Abraham now lifted the knife. And my heart froze within me with fright. Suddenly, the voice of the angel was heard: 'Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad, for now I know that thou fearest

God.” At the end the child asked the rabbi, “Supposing the angel had come a second too late?” The rabbi comforted me and calmed me by telling me that an angel cannot come too late.” Heschel concluded: “An angel cannot be late, but man, made of flesh and blood, may be.”

The next day, a CALCAV delegation met with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. The group included Heschel, John Bennett, William Sloane Coffin, Robert McAfee Brown, Richard John Neuhaus, Jacob Weinstein, and Michael Novak (the Catholic chaplain at Stanford University). As reported in *The New York Times*, they spent forty minutes with McNamara in his Pentagon office, attempting to persuade him to suspend the bombing of North Vietnam and begin peace negotiations. “Mr. McNamara’s reply to the clerics’ requests was not disclosed,” the newspaper vaguely concluded.

The conversation started awkwardly. McNamara shook everyone’s hand and began by thanking the clergy for their concern. He then remarked that he wished they had done more for civil rights. (A strange comment, since it was generally understood that the clergy had been deeply involved in civil rights and slow in responding to Vietnam.) Coffin then summarized the CALCAV position paper and handed McNamara a copy. At that moment, without visible cause, Heschel erupted with indignation. He was out of control, believed Coffin, as “he poured forth his anguish, his hands gesticulating pathetically.” The Secretary of Defense showed no emotion and listened carefully, “more with astonishment than understanding.” But, sympathizing with the rabbi’s anguish and righteous anger, McNamara was moved to extend the meeting another fifteen minutes.

Coffin and his colleagues were not impressed by McNamara’s arguments. He claimed to favor restraint in the bombing while hoping that the North Vietnamese would be more willing to negotiate. But he maintained the right of American forces to bomb North Vietnam without an official declaration of war. The clergy, for their part, considered McNamara a war criminal because of his actions. On

the human level, however, they found him to be “a nice guy,” a man of decency and integrity, “a true innocent.” The meeting ended unsatisfactorily for the CALCAV group, but it had provided another chance to influence government officials to favor peaceful solutions.

As the antiwar movement gained momentum, plans were forming for a broad-based mobilization set for April 15, 1967. But CALCAV and other moderate groups feared that negative publicity about extremists who intended to take part might compromise their hard-earned respectability among the middle class. So the leaders of CALCAV did not officially endorse the April mobilization. Instead they enlisted Martin Luther King, Jr., a sponsor of CALCAV from its inception, to mark a turning point in opposition to the war. Along with Heschel and other highly regarded figures, King would deliver a major address against the war at New York’s imposing Riverside Church on April 4th. The spiritual alliance of King and Heschel was renewed before an audience of more than three thousand.

CALCAV guaranteed that King’s historic address would reach the largest audience possible. The executive committee arranged for the text to be written by Andrew Young and Allard Lowenstein, the New York political activist, and edited by Richard Fernandez and the publicist Fred Sontag. Advance copies were distributed to newspapers and other media outlets. King had criticized the government’s Vietnam policy as early as 1965, but up to this time he had been reluctant to jeopardize public and government support for civil rights and President Johnson’s War on Poverty by taking too vocal a stand. Now he decided to end what he called his “shameful silence.”

When King rose to speak in Riverside Church, he was greeted by a standing ovation, as he began: “I come to this magnificent house of worship tonight because my conscience leaves me no other choice. I join you in this meeting because I am in deepest agreement with the aims and work of the organization which has brought us together: Clergy and Laymen

Concerned About Vietnam.” King answered his critics from the civil rights camp, which opposed his pronouncements on foreign policy. The Vietnam War had become “the enemy of the poor” when President Johnson’s poverty program was “broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war.” Black soldiers were being killed in disproportionate numbers. Violence in the urban ghettos, primarily black crime, was a symptom of a larger American ill; his government, he sweepingly asserted, had become “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today.”

Three talks followed, equally stirring, though more concise. The venerable Henry Steele Commager, professor of history at Amherst College, placed “this monstrous war in Vietnam” in perspective, pointing to the “defiant determination” of a “self-righteous” administration and its supporters who “proclaim to an incredulous world that we are fighting the battle of freedom and of peace.” John Bennett praised Commager’s knowledge of “the history of American self-deceptions” and cited a number of opponents to the war: the Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal, the National Council of Churches, and more than two hundred presidents of college student organizations.

For Heschel, the Vietnam War threatened our very humanity. He appealed to common sense: “This war is a supreme example of extreme absurdity . . . while those who participate in it are plagued by the awareness of being involved in a bitter Sisyphean battle.” Deploing the betrayal of America’s ideals, he offered compassion as the guide to action: “Has our conscience become a fossil? Is all mercy gone? If mercy, the mother of humility, is still alive as a demand, how can we say ‘yes’ to our bringing agony to that tormented country?”

CALCAV printed 10,000 copies of these speeches as a thirty-five-page pamphlet (for which payment was optional), adding questions and answers, a letter from Dr. Benjamin Spock linking the civil rights and peace movements, a preface by Reinhold Niebuhr, who had been too ill to attend the event, and *New York Times* in-

interviews with King, accompanied by a handsome, full-page photograph. In addition, CALCAV prepared a slim volume, *Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience*, which appeared in May. A guide for voters who wanted to pressure the government to negotiate a settlement to the war, it was an ecumenical effort, published jointly by Association Press of the Young Men's Christian Association, the Jewish publisher Behrman House, and the Catholic publisher Herder and Herder. It featured essays by Michael Novak, Robert McAfee Brown, and Heschel.

Heschel offered "The Moral Outrage of Vietnam," the piece he had earlier published in *Fellowship*. He framed the short essay as "an appeal to the individual conscience." Among his striking formulations was a denunciation of militarism as "whoredom, voluptuous and vicious, first disliked and then relished." The religious antiwar movement now had its official sourcebook. Within the year *Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience* sold more than 50,000 copies. ■

This piece is excerpted from Spiritual Radical: Abraham Joshua Heschel in America, 1940-1972, by Edward K. Kaplan, which will appear in fall 2007, Yale University Press.

Edward K. Kaplan is Kaiserman Professor in the Humanities, and was founding chair of the Program in Religious Studies at Brandeis University. He wrote Holiness in Words: A. J. Heschel's Poetics of Piety and co-authored with the late Samuel Dresner, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Prophetic Witness.

PRAYING WITH THE OTHER

(continued from page 18)

These avaryanim were doubly rejected: first, by the Spanish law because they were Jews, and second by Jewish society because they seemed to have abdicated their Jewishness. It is the community, after all, that creates avaryanim, not Jewish law. These forced ones remained avaryanim: those who had crossed an almost unforgivable line that the community at the time would not tolerate.

And crossing that line is also called "sin," or *aveirah*, again, from the same Hebrew root, *avar*. We translate *aveirah*

as sin or transgression, but it is actually a technical *halachic* term for one who has crossed that line in the sand drawn by Jewish law. I think the word "transgression" is sometimes used in an awkward effort to connote movement from one side of the law to the other, from one definition to the other. So, yes, avaryanim in this context are sinners.

Of course with the hindsight of history, we now have a soft spot for those that were once called Marranos. Today, we prefer to call them simply Conversos, the "converted ones," or to use the Hebrew term *anusim*, because we see them as coerced. They felt forced to make a difficult decision, trying to hold onto their lives. In fact, we tend to see those secret Jews now as courageous. Certainly, today, we would not marginalize them. Most of us heard, perhaps as kids in Hebrew school, stories of heroic avaryanim who secretly clung to their beliefs even as they carried the air of sin in their public lives, their hidden Torah scrolls, secret prayers, the mezuzah in the Madonna's foot, and, of course, the stories of those who were caught in their foolish stubbornness and burned on the cross for their trouble. Now we see them as martyrs. Little is said in these stories of their public breaking of Jewish Law. Perhaps these people had no choice but to make the choices that they did. Perhaps, in spite of their crossing the line of Jewish law, they often remained devoted Jews. Perhaps, under coercion, we can't really call it sin. As a people, we are perpetually inviting them back to us every Yom Kippur, stuck at that point of the split, while we still deem them, these people of our past, avaryanim. Others.

Look at the Hebrews who had come across the river. Some crossings are inevitable. They are driven by God. They are not a choice. It was God's plan that we crossed that river and became strangers in a strange land. God crossed that line, in a sense, so that all the events could happen in Egypt; so we could leave again, cross the Sea of Reeds, come to Mount Sinai, and become a people. God's people. First we had to cross those boundaries and live as Others, unwanted,

forever under suspicion. We had to turn that epithet around and embrace it as the key to our identity—to be able to say, "Yes. I *am* different, and it's a good thing. I'm a Jew." It's this experience of cultivating pride and identity within a hostile environment, of coming to understand that nature at birth, of a child as a Jew, or of a Jewish nation, is directed by God, not a choice. It's something to be treasured and celebrated, carrying no shame. It was as if we needed to consciously choose what, intrinsically, was not a choice.

It's interesting to me that these are understandings that the Jews had to come to in Egypt, with all the temptations there were to absorb the cultural attitude and sink into cynicism and self-hatred. It was *this* experience of emerging identity while still in Egypt that created the nation soon to be born.

So in a way, we are all avaryanim.

Which leads me to that most controversial of Torah readings, Leviticus 18:22, which will be read on Yom Kippur: "And with a man, you shall not lie as with a woman. It is an abomination." It does seem as if gay people are today's avaryanim, in the same way that the Marranos once were; they are forced (really by their own physical nature) to cross this line in Leviticus, and they wish to pray together with the congregation. At this point I wish I could ask every heterosexual person this question: Imagine that you were forbidden to ever take someone of the opposite sex into your arms. Imagine you were commanded by Jewish Law to marry someone of the same sex and to have intimate relations with that person at least every Friday night (the famous Shabbos mitzvah)? What would you do?

Asking that question, however, still may not communicate my point. Because if I were asking that question, you would have to understand how it feels to exist at an unchangeable level in opposition not only to Leviticus 18:22, but to a value of heterosexuality that permeates our entire society. And you would have to know how it feels to exist in opposition to that very large element of this society that deeply rejects homosexuality. And you'd have to confront the fact that you don't

know how to do anything but simply exist. Who does? Didn't God say to Moses, "I will be what I will be"? Isn't there a calm spiritual power in that simple assertion of "this is who I am," a statement of the fact of existence, something about that understanding that is godly?

And you'd have to know at a gut level, as I do, how equally impossible it is for a gay person to change, and to understand that helpless, sometimes hopeless feeling of estrangement, that is, how it feels to be an Other. You'd have to feel that status of Otherness in Jewish Law as an expression, a result of, attitudes in society, and not the other way around, no matter how much Leviticus and Jewish Law are held up as justification for marginalizing gay people. History has proven that Jewish Law is organic, flexible, and is molded to the will of prevailing rabbinic interpretation, and that rabbis respond to people.

For some gay people, that constant chafing with society leads to self-doubt, self-hatred, and cynicism. Some attempt to hide themselves from the world, or hide from themselves, and try to lead an impostor's life. Those are the people who absorb society's doubts and let them become their own.

But the challenge is to do as the Ivrim did—to turn around the Egyptian message of "They're not like us," into a badge of identity, an acknowledgement that sexuality is at the core of human creation. The challenge for all of us is to know our own natures and humbly and joyfully ascribe that nature as a great gift from God.

There was a time in my own life when I angrily asserted that I did not cross over the line against homosexuality in the Torah by being born, by living and breathing. *God* crossed that line when God made me, as if I was saying, *God* sinned against the Torah, not me. It's a radical thing to say, I know, but the fact is, here I am. I'm not going away. That's the great paradox, and the predicament for those that try to reconcile gay life with Jewish Law: gay people exist exactly as God made them. They simply... *are*.

As a lay person and a rebel, I want to suggest that perhaps by crossing that line, God is demonstrating that rules,

when rigidly applied, can be cruel. Flexibility is necessary in order to bend and shape our rules to better fit human nature. There are only very special times when rules were made to be broken, like the line in Leviticus that God appears to be crossing when making people who are hard-wired to seek comfort and love in the arms of another of the same sex.

And so, I want to suggest a rebel's interpretation of Leviticus 18:22: "And with a man, you shall not lie *as with a woman*. It is an abomination." I will use the example of a man here only because that is the language of the text.

If God has built it into the cells of a man so that he instinctively seeks solace, love, comfort, desire, and satisfaction in the arms of another man, let him do that with an understanding that this is how God created him. Let him do that with a strong identity and self-honesty built from that understanding, and built from the relationship with God that results. Perhaps living in Egypt will make his identity and his relationship with God stronger than ever.

So let him lay with that man *as a man*, not as a woman, but as the man he loves. Let him love his partner freely for the man that he is. If he absorbs society's prejudice into his soul, he might pretend to himself that he is someone else or his partner is someone else. Then he would be lying with another man "as with a woman," as if he or his partner was a woman, still trying desperately to deny who he is, and how God made him. That denial of God's Will in the mind and in the heart is an abomination. Let him lie with a man *as with a man*. "Indeed," says Rabbi Michael Lerner, when he addresses this passage in Leviticus in his book *Jewish Renewal*, "one ought not try to pretend that a man is really a woman ... because, after all, homosexuality is unique and must be honored for its uniqueness."

All of this really applies to everyone. They say there's something to be learned from every line in the Torah, and this line in Leviticus is useful for everyone, gay or straight. To anyone with a partner in life I say: Understand that your bond with

your partner comes from something intrinsic in your creation, and recognize it as a great gift from God. Love your partner exactly as he or she is, because if you live with the deep wish that he or she were someone else, if you see your partner as forever an Other, that is a perversion of love. And if you live with the deep wish, or pretense, that *you* should be someone else, that, too, is a terrible loss of the gift of God's Will. That's what I would call an abomination.

The community has always deeply influenced the course of Judaism. It is the community that singles out a group and deems it Other.

This applies to all of us in another way. Really, aren't we all avaryanim? We have all crossed lines, sometimes vitally important lines. Sometimes it was because of self will, or even neglect. But other times we felt we had no choice and could not do otherwise. Sometimes it was clearly God's will, and sometimes we can't fathom the law and can't live with it.

Today, I assert that God, too, is among us avaryanim.

So we begin Kol Nidrei being given permission to pray together with the avaryanim; together with all of those who we as a community have deemed Other, together with all who have stepped out of the realm of Jewish law, by mistake or weakness, by conviction, or by force, to pray together with God, and together with ourselves. Because we can take that permission to pray with avaryanim as a tongue-in-cheek reminder that we are allowed to be with ourselves, ready to pray, with our true and honest selves.

And we need self-honesty to pray, as we proceed to Yom Kippur. ■

Leah Lax is the author of the forthcoming book Now We Speak. Her upcoming memoir, When Time Becomes a Woman, describes her years among the Lubavitcher Hassidim and her experience leaving that community and coming out as a lesbian.

THE ISRAEL LOBBY

(continued from page 39)

Italy, Stalin in Russia, and Kissinger/Nixon/Cheney/Bush in the U.S.: the legacy that thinks that “the real world is governed only by military power, and might makes right.” This message is the opposite of the Judaism I support. While there is in each one of us a voice of fear that believes that fascist message, our task is to support the other message that we also all hear; a message of love and generosity, a message of hope and non-violence. Our message, what I call a “global Judaism” and “liberation spirituality” rejects contemporary visions of what is or is not “realistic” and, instead, embraces the vision of the Prophets, Jesus, and Gandhi for a world in which we not only love our neighbor but also love the stranger, the Other.

It pains me deeply to see the Israel Lobby so successful in turning many of the Jews who are supposedly religious into worshippers of power; people who believe that the will of God can be read by the outcome of military struggles like the 1967 Six-Day War. This is straightforward idolatry—the worship of power and the betrayal of the God of Israel.

3. The Latest: Foxman and the Israel Lobby vs. Walt and Mearsheimer

On March 23, 2006, Professors John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt published an article entitled “The Israel Lobby.” In it, they argued that unconditional U.S. support for Israel could not be justified on either strategic or moral grounds and that it was primarily due to the political effectiveness of Israel Lobby. They also argued that the Lobby had encouraged the United States to adopt policies that were neither in the American national interest nor in Israel’s long-term interest. In December 2006 they issued a response to critics of their original article in a long piece called “Setting the Record Straight” from which I will be referencing frequently with their permission. In September 2007 their book on the Israel Lobby will be published.

Foxman

The day before the Walt/Mearsheimer book is published in September, Palgrave/Macmillan will publish a response by Abraham H. Foxman, national director of the ADL, entitled *The Deadliest Lies: The Israel Lobby and the Myth of Jewish Control*. Foxman’s book is a high-level recapitulation of the major response that the Israel Lobby always gives to those who critique Israeli policy or the actions of the Lobby: it attempts to discredit the critics by suggesting that the real problem lies with them as anti-Semites, self-hating Jews, or, in the slightly more refined version that Foxman perpetrates, as (possibly unintentionally) giving support to the anti-Semites.

Foxman sets the stage by telling us that the receptivity to the idea that there is something deeply wrong with the Israel Lobby is in part a reflection of the anti-Semitism in American society. He then says that not all disposition toward criticizing Israel is attributable to actual hatred of Jews. Some arises from a more subtle bigotry, a double standard which leads some Americans to question the special relationship between Jews’ special concern for the state of Israel, while they do not similarly question the Italian-American’s love for the food of Italy, the Brazilian American’s pride in the triumphs on the soccer field, or the Chinese American’s interest in the economic and social development of contemporary China! Foxman’s argument here is irrelevant since the prominent critics of the Israel Lobby do not criticize American Jews for having a special connection or love for the State of Israel but, rather, criticize how that love gets translated into politics in ways that harm Israel, the United States, and the Jews. When nationalist Chinese sought to push the U.S. into conflict with the communist Chinese in the 1950s, people on the Left criticized these Chinese and pointed out that their struggle with Chiang Kai Shek was playing a bad role in American politics by preventing us from creating an alliance with the Chinese that might have moderated their extremists and jump started the process of democratization that we still hope will emerge in

China.

Foxman argues that the “closest parallel” to the Israel Lobby is the Cuban Lobby in its attempt to seek “freedom from Communist rule.” But few American Jews will find that a reassuring comparison. As the recent revelations of CIA attempts to enlist the Mafia to murder Fidel Castro show, this Cuban Lobby has been a distorting element in U.S. foreign policy. Many who criticize the Israel Lobby would certainly want to see the Cuban Lobby change its tactics and directions so that it no longer conflicted so heavily with American values and American interests. *Tikkun* has been very critical of the specific policies of Fidel Castro toward homosexuals and his undermining of civil liberties. Nevertheless we see that these policies might have liberalized considerably had the Cuban people not lived under constant threat of invasion and constant harassment from Cuban refugees, their destabilization-oriented CIA friends, and the economically crippling impact of the U.S. boycott. Of course, *Tikkun* and many other critics of the Israel Lobby also acknowledge the threats to Israel’s existence, and for that reason want to ensure that it always has the military capacity to withstand the attacks from hostile neighbors, thus we have been labeled as “sophisticated apologists for Zionism” by those on the anti-Israel Left, and simultaneously ignored by the Israel Lobby, which frequently identifies anyone with strong criticisms as necessarily “anti-Israel.”

Foxman takes the next step: the anti-Semites of the world, he assures us, are delighted with the Mearsheimer and Walt thesis “and see in it support for much of what they believe.”

Then, suddenly he retreats and says “I’m not calling Mearsheimer and Walt ‘anti-Semites... But I am saying that their article repeats and supports myths and belief that anti-Semites have peddled for centuries, thereby giving aid and comfort to some of the most despicable people in our society.” This is the same way McCarthyists smeared anti-Communist liberals in the 1950s and anti-Stalinist Vietnam War protesters in the 1960s as supporters of Communism. If we were to stoop to that level of argument we could

say "the Israel Lobby has made alliance with the Christian Right in support of Israel, and has thus given aid and comfort to the most reactionary..." etc.

Foxman goes on to ridicule two other claims that he attributes to Walt and Mearsheimer: that the Lobby has huge power in the Congress and that it has huge influence in the media. Foxman denies both of these, though he is unable to account for how it could be that a Congress which is divided on almost every other issue consistently turns out votes like 400-30 for resolutions shaped by AIPAC supporting the Israel Lobby's latest demand.

4. How the Israel Lobby Exercises Power

To take an example from these past few months of the Israel Lobby exercising its power, liberals in the House of Representatives in the spring of 2007 sought to include in the defense-funding budget an amendment that would require specific authorization from Congress before the Administration could use the defense budget monies for a military strike at Iran. The amendment failed. Most liberals in the U.S. today oppose preventive wars in general and a military strike against Iran in particular. So who supports such a move? The answer is: the right wing government of Israel and its champion in the U.S., the Israel Lobby.

We asked Congressman Jim Moran, Democrat of Virginia, why this had happened. See the box on pages 76 and 77.

Don't be surprised that Jim Moran was pushed from his office as one of the leaders of the Democrats in Congress by AIPAC and other elements of the Israel Lobby. Here is how it happened: Congressman Moran was asked at a constituents' meeting by a woman identified with the Jewish community why we had gotten into the war in Iraq. Moran responded provocatively "If the Jewish community had organized against it, we wouldn't be in this war." It's the kind of statement I would have made to any religious community, or to any labor movement audience, citing their own failures to act as a critical factor in why we had gotten involved. In the case of the Jewish community there is the added factor that lead-

ing people in the Israel Lobby actively supported and still support the war in Iraq and that some of the strong supporters of the Israel Lobby played central roles in the effort to push the Iraq war inside the Bush Administration.

In *Tikkun* we've also had a strong analysis by Stephen Zunes showing that the primary force pushing for the Iraq war was not the supporters of Israel, but the faction of the American ruling class that has supported Bush (what President Eisenhower referred to as the military/industrial complex, aligned with the oil industry). We at *Tikkun* neither wish to minimize the role of the Israel Lobby and some of its key intellectual and political contributions to creating the context for broad acceptance of the legitimacy of responding to the understandable anger at 9/11 by attacking the unrelated issues raised by the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, nor do we wish to disregard the reality that American foreign policy is first and foremost a response to the interests of America's economic elites and the powerful interests of Western multinationals.

But Moran did not assert or believe that Israel or the Israel Lobby was *the* decisive factor, nor did he suggest that. What he implied, and I believe to be true, is that had the Jewish community organized strongly against the war in Iraq it would have been far less likely that we would have entered the war in the first place, because that kind of mobilization in the Jewish world would have certainly stimulated a similar mobilization in the Christian majority in the U.S. as it has on other issues. The Israel Lobby had been seeking a way to challenge Moran because he is aligned with the middle path view that *Tikkun* has been advocating for many years. So they used this one remark out of context and battered Congressional Democrats until they purged Moran from the leadership of the (then minority) Democratic Caucus of the House.

How AIPAC has Democratic Congresspeople scared

Is Moran's case an isolated incident? Not at all. When *Tikkun* held its 2004 conference in Washington to ask Congress

to support our Resolution for Middle East Peace, we brought hundreds of people from around the U.S. to speak to their elected officials. Through the intervention of one Democratic Congressperson (not Moran) I was able to meet with about eight "Members" in a private meeting in which I was told that people would only sit there if their names were guaranteed confidentiality. They had all read the story in *The Washington Post* that day about the Tikkun Community/NSP and its efforts to present a "Progressive Middle Path" that would be both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine, based in large part on the Geneva Accord that had recently been signed by Yossi Beilin and Yassir Abed Rabbo. *Tikkun* had also raised money to pay for a full-page ad in *The New York Times*, signed by thousands of people, calling on the U.S. to support this path. Tikkun Community members had had meetings that day with hundreds of Congresspeople, and almost all of them had said the same thing: "We agree with your perspective, but we are not going to fight the Jewish community on this topic. As long as they feel the way they do, we are not going to make this our issue."

Sitting in that room I heard a clearer articulation of what our *Tikkun* people were hearing in these other meetings: A pronounced fear of AIPAC and what it could do to them. At the meeting I was at, every Member of Congress tried to explain why Nancy Pelosi would never let me address the Democratic Caucus of the House (at that time, the minority caucus): House Democrats are too fearful of what AIPAC might do in response. I told these Members of Congress that I didn't believe them; that I thought that House of Representative liberals were just pretending to be fearful of AIPAC in order to avoid a battle and stand up publicly for *Tikkun's* middle path position. But then they began to tell me specific stories from their own experience of the threats they had received from the Israel Lobby people about being labeled as "anti-Israel." They told me stories of it being impossible to convene a private meeting of Democrats who would want to challenge the Israel Lobby

(continued on page 78)

because when they had tried that they had found that every name of the attendees was in the hands of AIPAC lobbyists within an hour of the conclusion of that meeting and many of the attendees had been subject to immediate and intense pressure as though they had decided to abandon Israel (which they had not, nor is that what *Tikkun* calls for). And what they told me rang true: that AIPAC and the Israel Lobby had a large constituency of single-issue voters who would support a challenge to them in their next primaries, or possibly even in the general elections, should they not retain AIPAC's approval. A perfectly legitimate tactic by AIPAC, but used in this instance to support very bad policies.

5. Why the "Liberal" Media is Illiberal on Israel

I've had similar experiences with the Israel Lobby and the media. For the first few years of *Tikkun's* existence *Tikkun's* perspective was covered on many topics in American politics. But once we got on AIPAC's radar screen, this began to change. I finally got the op-ed editor of *The San Francisco Chronicle* to tell me the story. He had been approached by the Executive Editor, Dick German and told by German in no uncertain terms to stop publishing op-eds from American Jews critical of Israel, because Israel had "too many enemies." This is what he told me.

A similar thing happened to me at *The New York Times*. I was asked by *The Times* to do a review of a book on Israeli settlers. Without any shame, my editor insisted that I change what I had written so that it would accord with his politics. I was never again given a chance to write a review for *The Times*. Hundreds of other liberal Jews have had similar experiences trying to write for *The Times* op-ed or book review—the voices of those of us who are seriously and intensely critical of Israeli policy but still lovers of Israel and proudly committed to Judaism are rarely part of the acceptable discourse.

This reality is reflected as well in the news coverage. The vast majority of media reports on the Middle East that seek to include the response of American Jews rarely include any voices that are not part

of the Israel Lobby or cheerleaders for its perspective. Every single poll done of American Jewish attitudes toward Israel, and particularly of the attitudes of Jews under the age of sixty, indicates that *Tikkun's* perspective and that of the Israeli peace movement (e.g. that of the Israeli party Meretz or the peaceniks in Labor) has far more support than the blind knee-jerk support of every action of the Israeli government that characterizes the Israel Lobby. Yet our perspective (and by "our" I mean to include not only *Tikkun* and the Network of Spiritual Progressives, but also that of Jewish Voices for Peace, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, Rabbis for Human Rights, Meretz USA and the Israel Peace Forum) is almost never quoted. Instead, the media always goes to the Israel Lobby and its cheerleaders in the American Jewish Committee, the ADL, the American Jewish Congress, the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, and the like. True, these organizations have far better funding than do the voices of the peace movement, but they do not even vaguely represent the powerful divisions within the American Jewish community. Similarly, when seeking out voices of commentary on news stories in Israel, it is rarely the Israeli peace movement that is consulted or quoted.

No wonder, then, that most Americans have never once heard a coherent analysis (as distinct from quotes out of context) of the Israel/Palestine conflict from the standpoint of the Israeli peace movement or those of us who are their allies in the U.S. Americans have never seen a Palestinian version of a Hollywood movie like *Exodus*, one that would tell the story from the standpoint of Palestinians who found themselves forcibly removed from their homes and made into refugees by the Israel army in 1948. Nor have they heard the standpoint of Jews like Martin Buber who advocated for peaceful reconciliation rather than military domination. While Americans have been subjected to endless teachings by the media and their elected officials on how to think of these issues in ways that are validated by the Israel Lobby, they have no clue as to what we in the peace movement would say. This fact makes particularly absurd Abraham

Foxman's advice to Walt and Mearsheimer: "If Walt and Mearsheimer can propose a new set of Middle East policies that they think will bring peace to the region and protect U.S. interests more effectively than current policies, they should lay out their ideas and present cogent arguments on their behalf. If their arguments are convincing, they will surely attract supporters, both in the general population, in academic and journalistic circles, and ultimately among elected officials." The peace forces have been doing this for decades and our perspectives have never been given an airing in the media. Even when the media recognizes our existence, they never carry any information about the reasoning behind what we stand for.

The very person who was negotiating for Israel with the Palestinians at Taba in 2000, the former Justice Minister of the State of Israel, Yossi Beilin, reached an accord with a key representative of the Palestinian Authority. Yet the details of that Geneva Accord (which today most people in the peace movement believe to be the terms of any solution that could possibly work) has never been presented in the media of the U.S. (*Tikkun* finally had to print it ourselves as a book entitled *The Geneva Accord and other strategies for Middle East Peace* [North Atlantic Books, 2004] so that people in the U.S. could see the specifics). So to whom isn't the peace movement convincing? The Israel Lobby and its followers, including the U.S. media and the Congress? How would you expect most Americans to agree to a more balanced position when they've never heard it presented in a coherent way by an articulate advocate of a Middle Path that is both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine.

6. The Work of Mearsheimer and Walt

But why is the U.S. so tied to Israel? Here's Foxman: "The U.S. has a proud history of serving as the sponsors of democracy around the world" and hence is "drawn to supporting Israel in its quest to maintain democracy in a dangerous part of the world." This is not the place to show Foxman all the historical literature which challenges this interpretation of Ameri-

should consult Michael Massing's article in the May 20, 2006 issue of the *New York Review of Books*, which offers additional evidence of AIPAC's operations and reach."

And not infrequently the Lobby makes deals with the devil, for example its willingness to go along with a \$30 billion arms sales to Saudi Arabia in order to win a \$20 billion arms sale of (supposedly even more sophisticated) military hardware for Israel.

David Gergen is cited by Foxman and others because, reflecting on his years as a White House advisor, he now says that he "can't remember" any president mentioning an Israel Lobby and "never once saw a decision in the Oval Office to tilt US foreign policy in favor of Israel at the expense of America's interest." But Gergen was not an important shaper of Middle East policies, and that's why his memoir barely mentions Middle East issues of any sort. As Mearsheimer and Walt say, "We can easily believe that Presidents and their advisors do not sit around saying: 'Let's do something that we believe is not in the U.S. national interest in order to accommodate some special interest group.' In-

stead, interest groups achieve their ends by constraining what Presidents are willing to contemplate, forcing them to take steps they might otherwise avoid (but will then pretend to favor), making it harder for them to sustain initiatives that these groups oppose, and shaping perceptions so that key officials will willingly favor the policies that these interest groups are pushing."

I know from my own personal experience with the Clintons that AIPAC played a shaping role in their thinking (which, as Hillary personally told me in 1993, was totally aligned at that time with *Tikkun* and our perspective on Israel/Palestine issues). Hillary had nevertheless empowered as one of her close personal assistants a woman who had previously been a lobbyist for AIPAC and whose presence in the White House on a daily basis provided AIPAC with a powerful voice in Hillary's thinking. It's true that Hillary's opportunism was a major factor in her turning to the most right-wing elements in the Jewish world and playing to their worldview in order to become a "serious" candidate for the U.S. Senate. But Hillary has enough internal moral conscience to have

not been able to make that shift without having a plausible way of interpreting the world from the standpoint of "Israel is always right," and that was provided by the Israel Lobby and its hold over public discourse, the media, and the key figures in the Democratic Party.

O.K. But what about the Reagan years? Here we might note the testimony of former Secretary of State George Shultz: "In early December [1982] I got word that a supplement was moving through the lame-duck session of Congress to provide a \$250 million increase in the amount of U.S. military assistance to be granted to Israel: this in the face of Israel's invasion of Lebanon, its use of cluster bombs, and its complicity in the Sabra and Shatila massacres! We fought the supplement and fought it hard. President Reagan and I weighed in personally, making numerous calls to senators and congressmen. On December 9, I added a formal letter of opposition saying that the supplement appeared to endorse and reward Israel's policies. Foreign Minister Shamir called President Reagan's opposition 'an unfriendly act' and said that "it endangers the peace process."

Shultz continues: "The supplement sailed right by us and was approved by Congress as though President Reagan and I had not even been there. I was astonished and disheartened. This brought home to me vividly Israel's leverage in our Congress. I saw that I must work carefully with the Israelis if I was to have any handle on Congressional action that might affect Israel and if I was to maintain congressional support for my efforts to make progress in the Middle East."

"But so what?" one might argue. "Support for Israel's policies is good for the U.S."

"Not so," say Mearsheimer and Walt. Only sometimes is it good for the U.S. It was arguably true during the Cold War, but almost twenty years later this claim no longer seems so plausible. "U.S. support for Israel expansionism has driven America's popularity in the region to unprecedented lows and helped fuel the rise of militant terrorist groups like al Qaeda." Moreover, while the U.S. expresses considerable concern about Iran's possible

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development of nuclear weapons, "Israel's own refusal to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its sizeable nuclear arsenal both encourages states like Iran to want nukes of their own and makes the U.S. look hypocritical when it presses Tehran to abandon its nuclear ambitions." Of course it would be foolish to think that the challenges the U.S. faces in the Middle East would disappear if it were less closely tied to Israel, but, "U.S. policy would be more flexible and effective and our capacity protect U.S. interests would increase."

Moreover, according to Mearsheimer and Walt, there is "abundant evidence that since the time bin Laden was a young man, he was deeply committed to the Palestinian cause and that he was also angry at the United States for backing Israel to the hilt." They go on to quote an interview in March 1997 in which CNN reporter Peter Arnett asked him why he declared jihad against the U.S., and bin Laden replied, "We declared jihad against the US government, because the US government is unjust, criminal and tyrannical. It has committed acts that are extremely unjust, hideous and criminal, whether directly or through its support of the Israeli occupation of the Land of the Prophet's Night Journey [Palestine]. And we believe the U.S. is directly responsible for those who were killed in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq."

Payback for injustices to Palestinians has been a central and abiding theme of those who have been willing to sacrifice their lives in acts of terror against the U.S. or Israel.

And this anger at Israel has been an effective tool in recruiting for bin Laden and other terrorist groups. As I have argued before, people who are themselves upset about the effects of globalization on their own lives and their own communities may nevertheless not feel entitled to struggle for their own liberation from the impact of global capital, particularly if they are personally well off. But those feelings can be projected onto another group whose suffering is so obvious and so extreme that they evoke strong sympathies and allow others to act on the behalf of the worse off group. That's why it has always seemed particularly bogus to claim that well-off

Muslims in other parts of the Arab or Iranian world couldn't be genuine in their identification with Palestinians since these well-off people were not suffering so badly or were even prospering. In my experience as part of the anti-war movement, many *many* people risked (and some lost) their lives to challenge the U.S. segregationist policies in the South of the U.S. and then to challenge the U.S. genocide that killed three million Vietnamese. I was not the only one to go to prison as a result of my opposition to the war, and many of us who did were not doing so because we were being deprived of any money or privilege, but only because the ethical and spiritual pain of watching this suffering of others and our own commitment to justice and peace made doing anything less than taking significant personal risks seemed wrong.

Of course, in our peace movement, just as among those who today are fighting against the U.S. presence in Iraq and among any kind of terrorist groups, there are multiple levels of motivation, and just as there were personal pathologies that also played a role in our activism, so those pathologies may play a role elsewhere. The resort to violence is, in our view, almost always a pathological response, whether by Israeli or Palestinian extremists. And the willingness to resort to violence against each other by Sunni and Shia Muslims in Iraq demonstrates that there are some people within the Islamic world who are as indifferent to the fate of their own Muslim brothers and sisters and President Bush and Vice President Cheney seem to the fate of their own young people being sent to kill and die in a pointless war.

7. Conclusion: No, the Israel Lobby does not run the world, but we do need a counterbalancing voice

Does the attack on the Israel Lobby over-estimate its power to shape major decisions like the decision to go to war in Iraq? It depends on which critique you are talking about. I have been to gatherings of the largest anti-war coalition, the United for Peace and Justice, and heard people talk as though the Israel Lobby was single-handedly involved in getting the U.S. into

the war in Iraq or in otherwise defining America's global foreign policy. These claims are a slippery slope into the anti-Semitic charge that Jews run the U.S. or run the world. No one who makes these charges can ever explain how these powerful Jews managed to allow one out of every three Jews to be murdered in the twentieth century or to fail to get the U.S. or the English-run pre-1948 Palestine to open their gates to Jewish refugees, or how it was possible for the first President Bush to deny loan guarantees to Israel as a way to challenge its settlement policies in 1991. There is a willful ignorance that, in my view, reflects a deeper (and often unconscious) anti-Semitism in the Left (and especially among Jews on the Left) that allows anti-war activists to suddenly forget the entire analysis of America's ruling class that has been developed in countless left wing books and periodicals over the course of the past forty years, and to instead jump to an assumption that it is really Zionism which is running the show.

A far more nuanced picture is offered by Mearsheimer and Walt in regard to Iraq. They argue that the Israel Lobby, and especially the neo-conservatives who play a central shaping role in how that Israel Lobby articulates its larger worldview, "had been pushing for a war against Iraq from early 1998 on. But the neoconservatives were unable to convince the Clinton Administration to use military force to topple Saddam. They were also unable to sell the case for war to the Bush Administration in its first few months in office. After September 11, however, President Bush and Vice President Cheney fundamentally altered their thinking about Iraq and concluded that war made good strategic sense. The neoconservatives certainly helped push Bush and Cheney to that conclusion, as they had a well-developed set of arguments to justify the war—even though Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with September 11... The Lobby by itself could not push the U.S. to attack Iraq. It needed help, and September 11 provided the catalyst that helped convince Bush and Cheney. Thus, the Lobby's efforts were a necessary but not sufficient condition for war. Absent the Lobby, it would have been much less

likely, but absent September 11, the neo-conservatives might never have persuaded President Bush to order an invasion."

I believe that Mearsheimer and Walt are underestimating the impact of the more militaristic elements in the U.S. military-industrial complex, and particularly the concerns of Big Oil to stabilize their relationship with Middle Eastern oil sources by creating an ongoing U.S. military presence. But until we have a Congress with the backbone to not only subpoena all records related to 9/11 and to the path to war in Iraq but to back that up by credible threats of impeachment if the President and the Vice President continue to use executive privilege to block such investigations it will be impossible to know the full story. Those who give importance to the role of the Israel Lobby are, in my view, certainly correct, while those who give it excessive importance have no conception of the complex layers of decision making even in the Bush Administration. Yet what is certain to me is that one of the most important elements in shaping public policy is the shaping of public discourse, and in that, the Israel Lobby and in particular its neoconservative members played a major role in promoting the worldviews that would make an assault on Iraq seem plausible when it was actually insane.

The terms of this debate are much more complex than we can deal with in a single (even long) article in *Tikkun*. But we welcome that debate because the Israel Lobby is not good for the world, the U.S., or the Jews. I'm sure that the instinctive reaction of a large section of the American Jewish community affiliated with the Israel Lobby will be the predictable assault on Mearsheimer and Walt, and on *Tikkun* and any one else who speaks up in criticism of the Israel Lobby. This fall will be a moment when political courage will be needed by all those who consider themselves aligned in any way with the peace movement. Please note carefully how much organizations like the American branch of Peace Now, the Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, the Israel Peace Forum, and the Religious Action Center of the Reform Movement respond to this debate or merely keep silent and let those who are raising the issues be hung out to dry after

what will likely be intense and vicious attacks. Solidarity with those who raise critical analyses of the Israel Lobby has not yet been a characteristic of many groups that claim they seek peace. On the other hand, please also note how many of the more extreme left groups use this debate to demonize Israel rather than to advance the "Progressive Middle Path" that we've been advocating in *Tikkun*.

What is most needed is a new voice that can provide an alternative to the Israel Lobby, yet be committed to Israel's survival as a Jewish State within the pre-1967 borders as modified in the terms of the Geneva Accord. That would require all the various peace groups to work cooperatively, and for anyone who is familiar with the Left, that may be the most utopian vision of all.

Tikkun and its Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP) will renew our efforts to build an interfaith alternative to the Israel Lobby, and we invite all who agree with our Middle Path perspective (both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine) as defined on the back cover of this issue of *Tikkun* to join in that effort. On the back cover we explain why the only effective voice must be interfaith—both Jews and non-Jews who understand that the best interests of the U.S., Israel and the world lies with us all understanding that our well-being depends on the well-being of everyone else, including those we previously thought of as enemies. Instead, unless the influence of the Lobby is quickly and effectively countered, we may soon find ourselves in a war with Iran with consequences that will be bad for the U.S. and bad for the Jews for decades to come.

Our major task is to spread the Generosity Strategy (exemplified by the Global Marshall Plan) and *Tikkun's* plan for Middle East peace as the most effective way to achieve security. Unless we succeed in popularizing this new way of thinking, every attempt to build peace, whether in the Middle East or in the U.S., will always seem "unrealistic" to those who have learned to think about reality through the distorted lens that the Israel Lobby did not invent but helps popularize and enforce in contemporary politics. Please join us at www.spiritualprogressives.org. ■

GENETIC ENGINEERING

(continued from page 43)

use all of the mechanisms that are available to make it possible for people to be as intellectually developed as possible so that they could more deeply appreciate the universe in which they live?

SANDEL: Did you see *Gattaca*?

TIKKUN: No.

SANDEL: It's a science fiction movie. It's the story of a society about twenty-five years in the future, where the perfection of children through genetic technology becomes routine. They have an example of someone playing a magnificently complex piano concerto and as the camera zooms in on the keyboard, you see that the person has six fingers on each hand, genetically engineered to be capable of playing this incredibly complex piano concerto, written for someone genetically designed with six fingers.

TIKKUN: Really?

SANDEL: Yes, yes, because it couldn't be played with someone with only five fingers on one hand. Now, what about that. Does that bother you? Is there some hesitation...?

TIKKUN: Well, I think it's a different argument. The argument's about whether there's hubris involved in changing the way nature has set us or God has created us, and there I agree with that argument entirely.

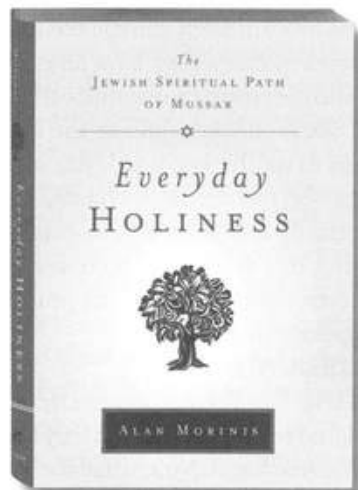
SANDEL: But that would give you pause...

TIKKUN: Yes...because of the hubris argument. But, the way that you dealt with it in the conversation was to say, "Well, the changes that we are going to allow are changes that are medically oriented towards healing or repairing (you didn't use these words, its implicit in medical practice) towards a "normal" vision of what human life is. Now, I think that question, of what a "normal human life" is, is historically determined, and isn't in the Bible or in human intuition in some obvious way. "Normal human life" continues to transform, so today medical science thinks its perfectly O.K. to preserve people past the age of 100, even if that means that all kinds of invasive techniques are used, because people *can*; and if it *can* be done, then they give people

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that choice. So, I'm not sure that medicine has a value-free, or a rational foundation for its judgments on what is restorative versus what is transformative.

Let me give you one other example. There are many people, who today take anti-depressants. The argument for anti-depressants is that in your "normal" state, and that may have been how you were since early childhood, until the time in which your psychiatrist gave you these pills, you obviously had some physical defect that made it impossible to make you happy, and when you take this, you are much happier. I am saying that *that* is normal medical practice today, but it assumes an altered state of their consciousness, because it is assuming that the "normal" way to be is "happy" as opposed to unhappy.

SANDEL: Yeah, happiness of that kind, happiness in the sense of not suffering from depression is, I think, a perfectly legitimate aim of psychiatry and psychotherapeutic drugs.

TIKKUN: But what I'm saying is that I think you need a more substantive vision of what is "normality," for your use of this distinction in medicine, reparative versus "performative" or enhancing.

SANDEL: I wouldn't disagree. I think that in order to draw the line between medical uses and enhancement uses, we have to have not just some statistical understanding of the normal, because that can shift over time, but a substantive conception of human flourishing, and I don't think we can define both without having a substantive, normative conception of what human flourishing consists of.

In other writings I've tried to give some account of those elements of human flourishing that have to do with participation in civic life and sharing in self government and political participation, but that's only one aspect of human flourishing, not the whole of human flourishing, and in discussing what counts as health as against enhancement, which is the subject of this book, I agree with you that providing a full account of what counts as human flourishing is unavoidable.

TIKKUN: I don't know if you really have answered the question of: What if there was a way of improving people's in-

telligence? I mean, you said six fingers and so forth...what if I said same body, but the enhancement is more like giving a pregnant women a pill, that has the consequence that the child develops a higher level of intelligence and a higher capacity to respond to beauty.

SANDEL: Here's why I'm reluctant to embrace that. I'm skeptical, first of all, of genetic enhancement even of IQ, which is a very narrow and inadequate measure of intelligence and the human capacity.

TIKKUN: Yes, I think it's totally misguided.

SANDEL: But even that, narrow as it is, is very unlikely any time in the foreseeable future. So, to imagine that a richer notion of intelligence and human capacities, including aesthetic capacities, which are even *more* complex than IQ, narrow as it is, to imagine that there would be a genetic "fix" or a genetic manipulation for therapy....

TIKKUN: That's dealing with the practical question, not the principled issue. Be clear in your arguments there, you're always distinguishing between them.

SANDEL: All right, fair enough. But here, my skepticism that there could even in principle be a kind of genetic manipulation that would enhance the capacity for a broader range of human excellences, aesthetic, moral—some people say, well suppose we could have some gene therapy that would enhance people's *moral* capacity—I think that in principle I am skeptical that there could be one, and *if* there could, then I'd be worried because everything that we understand about what it means to be a human being, what the human virtues consist in, what it means to be capable of aesthetic appreciation of wonder and awe, are so much bound up with elements of human character (deliberation and the capacity for self-reflection) that to imagine that those capacities could be deepened in a pill, would cause unimaginable damage to everything we understand about human moral character.

TIKKUN: If you give that "moral pill" then you raise the theological question about choice between good and bad. God made us free to make that choice.

SANDEL: A "pill" for morality would be wrong. But a pill for talent, creativity, or imagination, things that aren't the result of the human will, but the ability to imagine a moral circumstance...if that could be reduced to a pill it would transform our understanding of our moral lives and also our capacity for self-reflection and reinterpreting our own circumstance to transform that circumstance. That is also a capacity that goes beyond free will and it is very difficult and scary to imagine that a pill would replace our ability for self-reflection or moral imagination or for freedom. These are two aspects of the moral life that depend on deliberate and reflective human participation in the constitution of our humanity and that's why I am skeptical, even in principle, that there ever could be or should be a pill or genetic therapy that could replicate these capacities.

TIKKUN: I know people that have taken psychotropic or hallucinogenic drugs, and because of these things, they have an increased moral sensitivity. It has increased their capacity to be loving.

SANDEL: I have heard of the same thing, but I am skeptical: I would distinguish between alleviating depression and actually [gaining extraordinary qualities]. I would be worried if there were a pill that could make people loving who didn't already have it within them.

TIKKUN: Everyone has the ability to be loving, but there are so many forces in our lives, including our internalized vision of ourselves shaped through childhood and adult life experiences that block us from staying in touch with that capacity.

SANDEL: The pill would simply remove an obstacle to the expression of that capacity? In that scenario, it would be closer to medications for depression.

TIKKUN: But what if there was a manipulation of genes that could have the same consequence? What if there are certain gene structures that make it more difficult for some people to connect to one another?

SANDEL: I worry about it, and I'm open to evidence that would not be merely scientific, but the kind of evidence that is also derived from narratives, witness-

ing, and ways of determining the effect. But I wonder, do you think God intended us to exercise a Promethean power to transform the basis of our morality?

TIKKUN: I don't think that God intended that. I think She gave us that freedom to make that choice and imbued us with the spiritual grounds to say, "Don't make that one."

SANDEL: One of the intriguing features of the Jewish understanding of the relation of humans to the Creator is that on one hand, Judaism affords humans a role in creation—some Rabbis say that God left creation incomplete in order to leave room for humans to participate in creation. So on the one hand, its deeply empowering. And yet, at the same time, there is a tension between the creative role of humans, and the limits, which are bound up with the tremendous concern with idolatry as the ultimate sin. And I think idolatry looms largely in Judaism precisely because of the temptation to overreach, which flows from this creative role. So while human beings are partners with God, they are at the same time worried about idolatry and overreaching. There is a tension deeply embedded in Jewish understanding of humans' relation to nature, creation, and God, and this tension has to be kept at the center of these discussions about technology.

TIKKUN: What counts as overreaching? I agree with you, but there is also a need to counter the old Jewish fundamentalist argument about "don't disturb the universe, let God work it out: we shouldn't engage in fundamentally trying to socially engineer the universe, because God has a plan and it will all work out..."

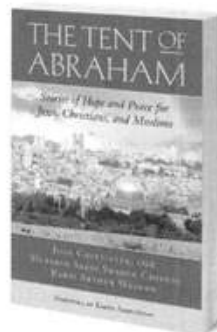
SANDEL: And that's missing the other half of the tension. You can take this all the

way back to the permission to heal the sick...there is a Midrash that tries to account for this, tries to reconcile the idea that the practice of medicine *is* idolatry. A doctor comes to a man, and the man says, "Who are you to violate God's will by intervening in my health?" and the Rabbi says, "I'm the doctor—tell me, what do you do for a living?" and the man says, "I'm a farmer." And the Rabbi says, "When you plant and plow and cultivate, you're forcing the earth to bring forth a crop that wouldn't ordinarily grow... is that a violation of God's will?"

TIKKUN: Some people think we should never exercise mastery of the world, because our hubris has gone too far. We have to learn to live with the world. But then people counter: part of our evolution is learning mastery. We need to find the equanimity between mastery and mystery...and then we heal.

SANDEL: Yes, and striking that balance is the challenge. And figuring out for any one of these practices what constitutes finding that balance requires grappling with moral questions, the nature of humans, and religious and spiritual questions. ■

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[BOOKS]

Our Visionary Brains

LANGUAGE, FEELING, AND THE BRAIN: THE EVOCATIVE VECTOR by Daniel Shanahan

Reviewed by Robert Inchausti

TIKKUN READERS are familiar with George Lakoff and Marc Johnson, who have revolutionized cognitive studies with their analyses of the metaphoric and bodily nature of thinking. In such books as *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1991) and *The Body in the Mind* (1987), they have argued that the objectivist “God’s eye view” of the world sought by fundamentalists and positivists alike is simply not possible and that the obsessive attempt to eliminate emotions, feelings, and action from pure reason has done more harm than good by decontextualizing, de-emotionalizing and, hence, dehumanizing thought. It is the poets, prophets, and novelists who offer us the more “realistic” view of the world—not analytical philosophers or scientific reductionists.

Traditional Linguistic theory—at least since Chomsky—sidelined the issue of emotions and concentrated on those aspects of language that were more strictly cognitive. However, during the last ten years, research in neuropsychology has begun to fill in the gaps left by the exclusion of emotions from cognitive research. The work of Oatley, Damasio, and LeDoux has demonstrated that it is possible to construct models of how emotions play into the workings of the psyche, and that these models are necessary for a balanced view of the mind.

These new studies confirm the idea

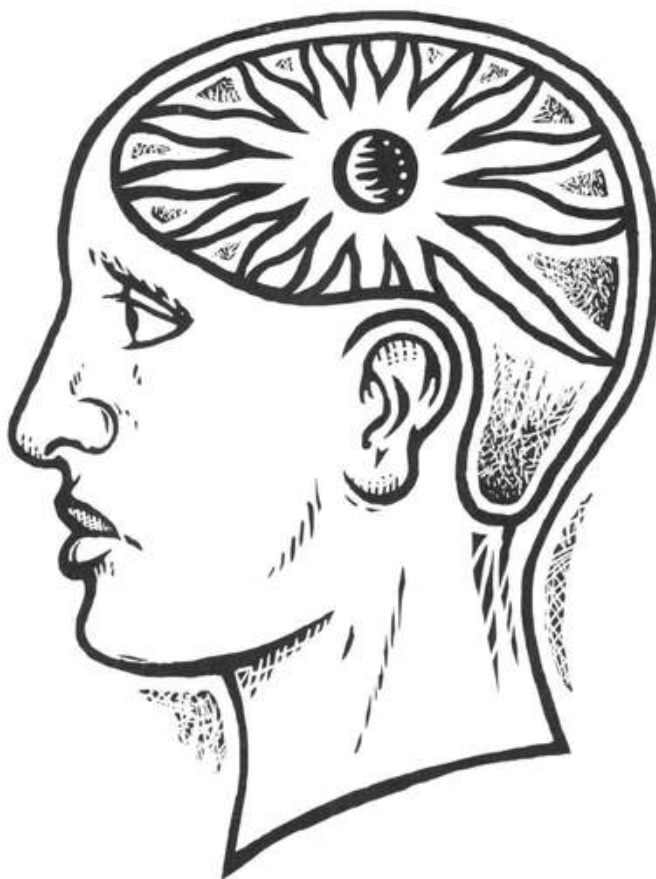
that we are feeling, sentient beings, and that all human abstraction has important emotional and experiential elements. Language, it turns out, is a double helix that binds the emotional and the rational, and so are we.

Up until now, language (like most functions of the mind until the late 1980s) was seen from a purely cognitive standpoint. If we accept that language is not only heavily influenced by emotion but powered by it at its source, we come up with as different a view as if we had always thought of water as being made

up only of hydrogen, or reality as only made up of yang. We’re looking at the same thing, but now we understand that the two things that make it up are working with one another—where previously we saw the two as always in opposition.

Thus, everything produced by language—culture, religion, novels, conversation—now has to be seen as a product of that duality, not reduced to some purely imaginary abstract significance.

This uncovering of a whole second dimension to language provides us with a more holistic way to understand



things. Neuropsychology may prove to be the camel's nose under the tent of positivist science and materialist reductionism. It won't be long before the entire affective domain has muscled its way inside epistemology, morality, metaphysics, sociology, and, perhaps, even logic and physics.

Language, Feeling, and the Brain by Daniel Shanahan applies this new research in emotion to construct a model for how the emotions contribute to the emergence of symbolic forms and how identifying that emotional influence could shed new light on all previous conceptions of language, culture, ideology, religion and literature. It turns out that emotion, awe, love, virtue, and courage are inescapable elements of everything, so we must take into account aesthetics, narrative, and even metaphor when dealing with hard science.

Building on Karl Pribram's integrated model of emotions and motivations, the book traces how emotion helped give birth to language. The essence of his argument is that language emerged as a response to emotions like fear and awe. When confronted by events, such as a lightning strike, that provoked emotional responses but were not within his control, primitive man evolved language as a meta-response to the unpredictable. These experiences became imagistic reference points that collected within the brain as "holophrases" (white-light-which-shoots-from-the-sky-with-a-loud-crash").

In the beginning there were no words, only emotional traces of powerful experiences like a lightning strike, a beautiful sunset, whales breaching, or a vast plain full of deer. These traces became the field upon which hominids drew when, as Susan Langer has argued, they started gesturing in dance. There are no words there to select; there are only emotional traces, probably accompanied by imagery, that surged through the hominid mind as the dance grew more intense. The dancers would draw on these images to give shape to the gestures, which got repeated over time, recognized by others, and available in what we could more accurately call a lexical

field—like a primitive form of sign language which ultimately gave rise to language.

But as fascinating as Shanahan's speculations on the origins of language may be, what grounds them in neuropsychology is really the meat of this book. He has individual chapters on the brain science view of meaning, narrative, myth, and metaphor. Each of these chapters works as an individual essay; however, they must be read sequentially for the full impact of the unfolding drama. What we have here is one of the best and most creative recastings of Freud's project for a biology of the inner life—one which calls for an entirely new approach to the human sciences.

If Shanahan is right, and our affective lives define our cognitive function, then postmodernism cultural relativism is over, scientific reductionism refuted, and we have finally arrived at the beginnings of a new, empirically grounded inquiry into the creation, use, and value of concepts, images, and signs. And though I'd like to think Shanahan's book might correct the current impasse in contemporary Critical Theory, the book is probably too serious and probing to engage the false, fevered energies animating current fashionable academic debates. The impact of his remarkable work will no doubt be slower and more long lasting, for it provides a kind of unified field theory of the affective domains: the beginnings of a map not just of meanings, but of evocations and revelations.

Language, Feeling, and the Brain spies out the light at the end of the post-modern tunnel where science and religion need no longer argue over grounding assumptions but find common cause in the shared bodily origins of their ideas. Concepts, it turns out, look less like the overlapping circles in a Venn Diagram or the P's and Q's of symbolic logic, and more like the shifting seas of neural nets amid a storm of electrical inputs and chemical flows—not to mention emotional, communal, and visionary experiences.

We have, it seems, a lot of work to do to flesh out the meaning of what science is discovering about our inner states and

the new questions this discoveries raise about the narrow, half-blind paradigms through which we currently try to understand our world. ■

Daniel Shanahan, the author of *Language Feelings, and the Brain*, is Professor of Communication at the Humanities Faculty of Charles University in Prague. He has served on the faculties of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales in Paris and the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California and is on the Editorial Board of Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Sciences. From 2000–2002 he was a visiting scholar at Ivan Havel's Center for Theoretical Studies in Prague, and his twenty-five-year relationship with Karl Pribram included a stint as visiting scholar at Pribram's Center for Brain Research and Information Sciences.

Robert Inchausti is the author of *Subversive Orthodoxy* (Brazos Press, 2006) and *The Ignorant Perfection of Ordinary People* (SUNY 1991).



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[HUMOR]

Beyond Empathy:

Sarah Silverman and the Limits of Comedy

The Sarah Silverman Show
Comedy Central, 2007

Commentary by Paul Lewis

FEW COMEDIANS test comic theory as forcefully as Sarah Silverman, who recently brought the outrageous shtick she has been honing for years to a Comedy Central sitcom that seems both conventional and odd. Conventional because it revolves around a fixed set of friends who make up a sitcom family. Odd because, while smiling and winking, Silverman's character expresses not just wrongheaded or irritating but contemptible ideas and impulses. Blinded by narcissism, unrestrained by decorum, and hopelessly unable to love or be loved, Silverman's character raises questions about the violation of social norms and the functions of shock comedy. In this year of laughing dangerously, one need not be Don Imus to wonder how she gets away with her sugarcoated version of empathy-starved humor.

Show Silverman a taboo about sex, excrement, or the body and she'll show you how it can be transgressed in a punch line. Examples from *Jesus is Magic*, her 2005 feature film, include:

"Strippers should be role models for little girls, if only for the fact that they wax their assholes."

"I was licking jelly off of my boyfriend's penis and all of a sudden I'm thinking, 'Oh My God, I'm turning into my mother!'"

By demonstrating that dirty jokes can provide moments of liberation from sexual repression, Freud went some way toward explaining the appeal of this material. But these jokes are not only naughty; each is also imaginative and clever. Figuring out how strippers could possibly serve as role models for little



girls is an unusual challenge; using a graphic account of oral sex to revisit the common anxiety grown children feel about falling into their parents' unappealing patterns of emotional response is astoundingly original. Taken together, these jokes deviate radically from widely shared assumptions and concerns about inter-generational influence.

Three other qualities, frequently combined, define the humor Silverman is bringing to her sitcom: a reworking of the Jewish American Princess (JAP) stereotype, an anti-PC instinct for mocking minority groups, and an anti-sentimental response to suffering and religion. Again, from *Jesus is Magic*:

"The best time to have a baby is when

you're a black teenager."

"When God gives you AIDS—and God does give you AIDS, by the way—make lemonAIDS."

"[My niece] called me up and she's like, 'Aunt Sarah, did you know that Hitler killed sixty million Jews.' And I corrected her and I said, 'You know, I think he's responsible for killing six million Jews.' And she said, 'Oh yeah! Six million! I knew that but seriously, I mean, what's the difference?' 'Uh, the difference is sixty million is unforgivable, young lady!'"

A hundred years ago Henri Bergson noted that humor frequently requires a "momentary anesthesia of the heart" that numbs the listener's pity for the comic butt. Elaborating this idea,

Bergson invited his readers to conduct an experiment that is remarkably close to the spirit of Silverman's comedy: "Try, for a moment, to become interested in everything that is being said or done ... feel with those who feel ... give your sympathy its widest expansion," Bergson suggested, and you will find yourself immersed in "gloom." But if you then "step aside [and] look upon life as a disinterested spectator, many a drama will turn to comedy." Horace Walpole had something like this in mind when he suggested that "the world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those who feel." Likewise, Mel Brooks commented, "Comedy is when you break your leg. Tragedy is when I stub my toe."

In pushing beyond broken legs all the way to teen pregnancy, terminal disease, and the Holocaust, Silverman takes comic disinterest or detachment to an extreme, inviting her audiences to suspend empathy for those who most clearly deserve it. In a world of global suffering—in which images of famine, war, and pestilence are broadcast 24/7—this invitation can provide relief or provoke outrage.

The Sarah Silverman Show, recently renewed for a second season, creates dramatic contexts for this comedy of detachment. Each show follows a day in the life of its star. Between opening and closing scenes that have Sarah talking to her dog Doug, something happens to get her going, competing, acting out or up. In episode two, "Officer Jay," Sarah is irritated when she learns that her sister's boyfriend is going to be given a humanitarian award for his work with blind children. Determined to outdo him, she takes in a homeless man. In episode five, "Muffin Man," she meets an attractive lesbian and decides that she, too, is gay.

The energy she brings to recreating herself to fit these temporary identities manifests itself in amusing moments that include self-aggrandizing interactions with "her" homeless man and her performance as a lesbian singer-songwriter in a café. In other episodes, she opens an AIDS awareness office, helps a girl who looks like a younger version of herself win a beauty contest, and has a

one-night stand with God. At any moment, but especially when expressing the most edgy ideas, she is likely to break out into a ballad or show tune that provides inappropriate, and therefore amusing, treacle. An example of this comes early in the first episode, when Silverman, sweetly and with great sincerity, sings the following lyric to a little boy on a tricycle:

I really like my life and I'll also tell you what/If I find a stick, I'll put it in your mama's butt/And pull it out and stick the doody in her eye/And pull it out and stick the doody in her eye.

Except for the infantile emphasis on poop, the show reminds one of sitcom precedents including the narcissism of a Jerry Seinfeld or Larry David, the bigotry of an Archie Bunker, the impulsiveness of a Homer Simpson, and the manic creativity of a Lucille Ball. At her best Silverman is edgy, startling, hilarious.

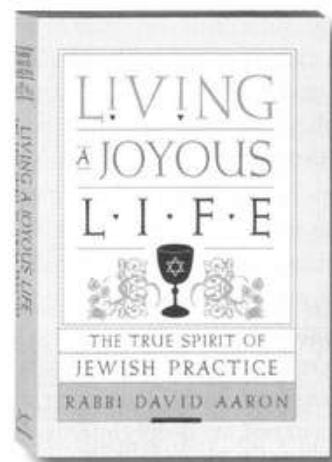
And yet, when asked in a recent *Maxim* interview whether she is trying "to offend as many people as possible," Silverman insisted that her character, and not she herself, "is the ignoramus." For the most part, this seems as valid a point to make about her as it is about Sacha Baron Cohen and Stephen Colbert, comedians who also work with extreme comic personas. But then there are moments when Silverman's contempt for empathy risks causing real pain. In *Jesus is Magic*, for example, she performs a song called "You're Gonna Die Soon" in front of a group of demented and seemingly entertained nursing home residents. Though they listen idiotically, appreciatively—with little apparent comprehension and no sign of protest—the same response was not shared by three elderly members of the audience who got up and walked out of the theater at this point in the screening I watched at a local art house. At moments like this, Silverman seems less in control of her material than Cohen or Colbert, more likely not just to startle but to wound. ■

Paul Lewis is the author of Cracking Up: American Humor in a Time of Conflict.

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[BOOKS]

A Nurturing Economy

GETTING A GRIP: CLARITY, CREATIVITY AND COURAGE
IN A WORLD GONE MAD, by Francis Moore Lappé
(due out in October 2007)

THE REAL WEALTH OF NATIONS: CREATING A CARING
ECONOMICS, by Riane Eisler
Reviews by David Belden

"Today socialists and leftists do not dream of a future qualitatively different from the present," wrote Russell Jacoby in 1999 in *The End of Utopia*. "To put it differently, radicalism no longer believes in itself.... Almost everywhere the left contracts, not simply politically but, perhaps more decisively, intellectually." Already that judgment sounds off. Radical hope is being reborn from unexpected sources, including ones the Left has often denied and rejected: the personal, the religious, and the spiritual. A new intellectual understanding of the primacy of caring relationships is emerging. With it comes a sense that all of us living beings, human or not, are deeply interdependent. We are beginning to understand that we can be oppressed by the lack of meaning in our lives, and, after a certain material level has been achieved, that may be the *most* alienating aspect of our lives. The creative vision we need to transform society and radically extend democracy will build from our deepest discoveries of meaning.

Is "Anti-Globalization" a Tired Replay?

It is true the traditional Left is old and tired, its vision dimmed.

One way to look at globalization is as a replay on a vast scale of what happened on a national scale in the first industrial countries. In the nineteenth century, European and U.S. capitalist entrepreneurs raced away from community accountability. Some of the things they did were great for the people, while others were terrible and caused huge suffering and destruction of nature. It took innumerable struggles, organizing efforts, conflicts, creative innovations, and leaps of empathy and

cooperation to create a culture and expectation of accountability, backed by a set of laws and institutions to make it real and enforceable. That culture and those institutions are called freedom, democracy, fair trade, social safety nets, civil rights, civil responsibilities, equal pay, pluralism, truth in labeling, collective bargaining, and all the other good things that were indeed achieved to a greater or lesser degree in today's leading industrial nations.

When globalization hit in our time, this process was far from complete. But many reforms *had happened*. When you read Howard Zinn's leftwing bible, *A People's History of the United States*, you can easily get the impression that the American ruling classes in 1976 were just as unaccountable as they had been in 1776; but it's not true. Massive and genuine victories had been achieved. We do not have unfettered capitalism. Unfettered capitalism is when there are no meat inspectors, no rigorous FDA drug testing, no restrictions on monopoly, no safety nets, no trade unions, no moratorium on nuclear power stations, no high standards.

One achievement many people are unaware of is that in the twentieth century, for the first time in history, major cities started to maintain their own populations without needing a constant inflow of migrants from the countryside. Previously they could not because their death rates were sky high from disease and poverty. That's every city from ancient Rome through Tenochtitlan to Victorian London. Healthy cities are a joint achievement of wealth-creating business, wise government that took citizen welfare seriously enough to tax and spend the new wealth on sewage, public health and schooling, people's struggles for better wages, conditions, and democracy, and professionals (scientific, engineering, medical, educational, political) and civil servants with consciences. Many were inspired by religion, many by Progress, many by socialism—many by all three simultaneously.

With globalization, capitalists have taken advantage of new technologies to leap ahead again and escape much of the accountability to which we the people had

painstakingly tamed them. Again, there are benefits and losses. But if the people are to decide which are which and to set the standards for healthy community life, then those incessant struggles, organizing efforts, and innovations are all to be done again on a global scale. It's enough to make a labor organizer weep.

But we did it once. We will do it again.

There is a key difference between then and now, however. Then we had a dream: socialism. Now we don't.

It's Hard to Replay the Old Achievement Without the Old Dream

What can we learn from the failures as well as the successes of people's movements, often called the Left (though the people are always far more varied and inclusive than "the Left")?

It seems that for major changes to happen people need a real sense that their suffering is shared with many others, and that there is hope of doing something about it. When pain is privatized so that we are all sold individual remedies, from drugs to shopping to purely personal spirituality, we sink into political passivity. When the big boys manage the economy so there are no Great Depressions then there may be no corresponding energy to create New Deals, and the Old Deals can be eroded piece by piece.

That is, until the big boys erode so many checks and balances that volatility sweeps through the system again. Those who seek to escape accountability are rarely wise and good, whether in the courts of Louis XIV or George W. Bush, or the CEO suites of hedge funds and multinationals. So less accountability in the end brings more risk, more crashes. Do we have to wait for more exceptionally bad managers and warmongers, like Bush and Cheney, before more people start to vote again? Do we need more Katrinas, or some truly shocking results of global heating, like tens of millions of refugees from African desertification or Bangladeshi floods invading rich countries, before we get a grip and act? Perhaps that would galvanize, if the hope of better was strong.

What will turn us from anxious indi-

viduals into engaged citizens, or perhaps even revolutionaries?

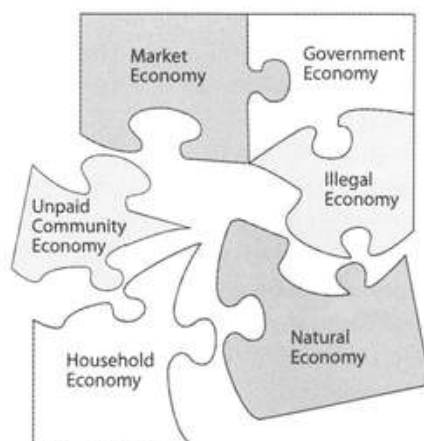
That word "revolution"—or the way it has been used and understood on the Left—is one reason the Left has been increasingly marginalized and ineffective. The word too often implies that things are so wrong with America or Europe that they cannot evolve into something better. It implies that the victories to date are of little consequence. You may think the Left has become social democratic rather than revolutionary. But how many times have you seen a left magazine celebrate on its cover what is good about America, as *Tikkun* did in its last issue? One *Tikkun* intern felt queasy just to see it, even though he agreed with it, for fear of what his fellow Leftists would say.

Why is that? Why are we so uncomfortable with the idea that in many ways America and capitalism are reformable, and in many ways *have been reformed*, and we, the people, did it? America's working classes have voted with their feet over the last century, choosing the goodies offered by this society—enjoying union wages when they could, moving up into the middle class when they could, securing Social Security and civil rights, watching TV, driving to the mall, the movies and church—rather than trying to replace the whole system with an untried alternative. They chose reform over revolution.

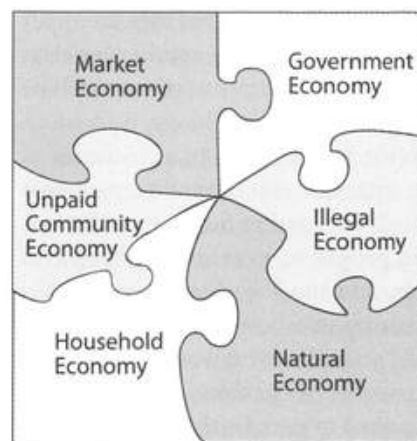
Have you ever heard of an environmental movement meeting that simply celebrated the reforms the movement has achieved? I can't remember one. Think of the improvements in air quality in industrial nations, the rivers cleaned up and hosting dozens of fish species again, the forests that have regrown, the corporations like General Electric that are already changing their tune.

The future looks less bleak if we understand how many struggles we have won before. The new vision has to be grounded in the many victories already made, and in the reformability of our world.

Why do celebrations of liberal/Left success happen so rarely, if they happen at all? I wonder sometimes if we are half in love with predictions of doom, or with our



The Old Economic Map



The New Economic Map

own helplessness. The hypercritical view of our society may give us the excuse we need to see ourselves as haloed and our enemies as devils. Or perhaps we have learned that the only way to galvanize people to act is through fear, threat, and demonizing. If that is true, it may be because we still lack a convincing hopeful vision.

So the task is to develop a new dream to replace the socialist vision, which started out inspirational and ended up unconvincing. It painted a beautiful picture once, but it turned into a grim image of suffocating state power and state planning, fueled more by the demonization of capitalists and markets than by believably hopeful futures.

But if the new, realistically hopeful vision is essentially one of slow, piecemeal reform in an endless struggle to keep up with the companies in their race away from accountability, can it possibly galvanize us the way the socialist dream once did? Is a moderate vision enough, especially for our brightest young people? No. It's too boring.

But then, if life *really* is endless struggle, no utopia in sight, socialism a lost dream, what is the great hope to give joy to our feet? Where is our replacement for Karl Marx, a prophet with a new analysis and a new vision that seems to be actually practical as well as visionary? It has to have the tension of both. Jacoby quotes Adam Michnik, one of the liberators of Poland from Soviet rule: "to be a realist means to demand the impossible."

In short, we need to get a grip and to envision a truly caring economy. Two books by wise women this year help us to do both. Come meet two of the midwives at the rebirth of radical hope.

Beyond "Them"

One of my favorite images from Francis Moore Lappé's *Getting a Grip*, concerned a lapel button. She writes:

Pointing fingers at those up there—the president, the CEO—isn't enough. Bemoaning our victimhood isn't enough.

Jack Shipley, a 66 year-old, part-time rancher near Grants Pass, Oregon, helped teach me this lesson. Jack is a leader in the Applegate Partnership, entrusted by the state with watershed protection planning for an eight-hundred-square-mile chunk of Southern Oregon.

"The environmentalists criticize us for talking to loggers," Jack told me a few years ago. "But how can we find solutions if we don't include all people who are part of the problem?" he asks. So members of Jack's group...began wearing a signature around town: one word with the familiar "no" slash through it. The word is "They."

Both Lappé and Riane Eisler in her book *The Real Wealth of Nations*, give plenty of examples of people making change in whatever system they inhabit

by bringing stakeholders together irrespective of their initial opinions or class status. The necessary ingredients include a passion to change things, a freedom from too much ideology, a readiness to both enter into conflict and to mediate it through the kind of facilitation that enables people to hear each other's real needs, and the learning of partnership and communication skills.

As someone who was very involved with worker co-ops thirty years ago, I was astonished to learn from Lappé that since then co-op membership around the world has more than doubled to over 800 million—more than the number of people who own shares in public companies. Co-ops provide more than 100 million jobs worldwide, one-fifth more than those provided by multinational corporations. I learned that Fair Trade has lifted more than a million coffee-producing families out of destitution. That made me doubly proud of the elders in my church who were selling it to us after services and glad that Starbucks, Costco, Target, and Cost-Plus have got in on the act. I learned how Brazil's fourth largest city made access to healthy food a human right, which reduced the infant death rate in the city by 56 percent in a decade. The many examples added up to a sense of great movement and possibility. This is also evoked brilliantly in Paul Hawken's new book *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming*.

But the best part of Lappé's book to me was when she suggested a whole new vocabulary for us to use. We are not anti-globalization (sounds backward, selfish, isolationist), we are pro-democracy, anti-corporate control, anti-economic concentration. We are not activists (sounds like rabble-rousers, extremists with their own agenda), we are engaged, active, empowered citizens. We are not simply for Democracy (sounds limited to voting and government), we are for "Living Democracy: a way of living in which the democratic values of fairness, inclusion, and mutual accountability infuse all dimensions of our public lives, including economic life." We are not supporting

nonprofits (defined in the negative) but social-benefit organizations, citizens' organizations. When we talk of taxes it sounds like a burden, a rip-off of "our" money, so let's talk more of membership dues for a strong, healthy society. We don't want regulations (connotes Big Brother, top down, intrusive government, inefficiency), we want high standards and public protections—protecting ownership diversity, competition, health, and the environment—and "values boundaries" within which the market serves the community. There are many more.

It's a fresh look constructed by an original mind, a woman who is grappling with real life problems worldwide and who is pragmatic and out-of-the-box in seeing where entry points for change can be made. She writes that in 1975 when she wrote her famous book, *Diet for a Small Planet*, she assumed that things would get better, or worse. In *Getting a Grip*, Lappe writes:

But it hasn't turned out that way. Things are moving fast in two directions at once: they are getting very much worse and they are getting very much better. The real challenge is saying sane in this both/and world: it is holding both realities.

Helping me is a new kind of humility taking root inside. I can now look at all the positive developments emerging and admit I would have given them almost zero probability of success when I was my children's age. That's humbling...

All this makes me think twice about any verdict on the future.

It is not possible to know what's possible.... Believing we can accurately predict outcomes, as cynics claim to, has become for me the utmost in hubris. And because this is true, we are free. We are free to act assuming that our action—no matter how "small" it appears to us—could be the tipping point setting off tectonic shifts of consciousness and creativity. If this book isn't inspirational and

helpful, then I don't know what is.

But it isn't an all-encompassing theory. It isn't a *Das Capital* to set an agenda for economic research and idealistic policy wonks for a hundred years. That may be just as well, for pragmatic compassion and cooperative innovation with no pre-set limits may be just what we need. But what if that kind of partnership in itself is the basis of the new theory? What if *all* current systems have a dominationist and a partnership version of themselves, so that either capitalist or communist states could evolve towards partnership by the creative actions of involved citizens, business managers, bureaucrats, anyone?

A Deeper Theory

This is the vision of Riane Eisler, the Austrian American systems theorist best known for her book *The Chalice and the Blade*, which first set out the Domination/Partnership dichotomy.

Though some of her "caring economics" ideas may sound strange to us now, I believe they will become our shared common sense.

The first idea is that modern economics actually describes less than half the economy. Unpaid work and the freebie inputs of nature do not receive their due. Not measured, they are therefore not understood and supported.

We do already get this, in part. Our planet is forcing us to recognize that it is not an endlessly patient garbage dump or provider. Even economists now discuss how best to internalize the external environmental costs of producing the things we all use and consume every day. But we have hardly begun to think about the cost of neglecting the other unpaid sectors of the economy: the household and voluntary community sectors. Economists are barely aware of how much society owes to (mostly) women's work in caring for children, wage earners, and those who can't earn. The Gross National Product (GNP) is increased by all manner of harmful activities, including vast sums in policing, prisons, healthcare, and pollution clean-ups that arise from not caring enough in the first place. Alternatives to the GNP that measure our well-being are still con-



Why do we pay plumbers five times as much to look after our pipes as we pay day-care workers to look after our children?

sidered fringe.

Eisler's profound point is that the cost of this neglect is not just that we short-change all those in need of caring (that is, all of us), but rather that the value of everything else in the economy gets skewed. The monetary value of goods and services is not simply a result of their physical scarcity but of how much we want them. The reason we pay plumbers five times as much per hour to look after our pipes as we pay child care workers to look after our children is not, as current economic theory tells us, simply because plumbers are harder to find. The deeper reason is that plumbing is understood to be an exacting trade, requiring serious certification, whereas it is thought that any number of women can do day care without any training at all. It is a result of a male-dominated value system, one that does not privilege caring. Underlying all economies and political systems, Eisler argues, are the quality of relationships between men and women, parents and children, and how much caring is valued. When gender and parent/child relationships shift towards the truly partnerist (her word), then the structures of society, whether they start out capitalist, communist, pre- or post-industrial, will all transform towards a partnership society.

In the 1970s, when feminism burgeoned, there was a lot of talk about revolutionary vs. bourgeois feminisms. The women that the revolutionaries labeled "bourgeois feminists" were those who ap-



peared to only want female equality in mainstream society—that is what young women today probably think feminism is and was. It has been remarkably successful. The *revolutionary* feminists came in different stripes. They ranged from the most radical lesbian separatists who, as far as I understood it, wanted female-only societies, to those women and men, gay and straight, who thought that a feminist revolution would liberate men as well and bring in some version of the elusive socialist utopia. To me then, the particular excitement of feminism as a revolutionary approach was that so many of the unreformed "enemies" were the radicals' own fathers, brothers, sons, spouses. This, unlike class-based or religious-based revolutions where you could more easily demonize your opponents, compelled the revolutionaries to wrestle with people they at least partly, and maybe wholeheartedly, loved. In retrospect, the main result of those familial ties (along with all the pressures of earning a living) seems to have been to reinforce bourgeois feminism and sap feminism's potential to act as the force that would change everything.

Riane Eisler has the tools and in part the tone of a bourgeois feminist: academic credentials, research facility, words of praise for caring capitalist companies, appreciation of how caring can pay money dividends, and policy wonk arguments about government programs. But she is really a stealth revolutionary feminist who wants to change everything.

This revolution is one that happens, as

Lappé would say, by increasing the power of everyone (seeing power, goodness, and resources as abundant goods) rather than by seizing the power from the ruling class (a theory of revolution that is based on a vision of power and resources as scarce, and life as a zero-sum game).

At times (at public meetings, in a personal interview and in her book) it seemed to me Eisler was asking for a kind of spiritual renewal. She doesn't like to use the word "spiritual" (any more than she uses the word "feminist") because not enough people can identify with it. Nonetheless she seemed to be calling for a renewal movement whereby individuals change and become more caring and as a result, society changes. At other times she said firmly that she was a systems person and it wasn't about individuals being good or bad but about how the system they are in affects them: so Ms. and Mr. Average, when put into a dominationist society become more callous, but put into a partnerist society become more caring. Both of these patterns of change surely happen in real life, but I am still not clear why she thinks Sweden, one of her favorite countries, became more partnerist than, say, Russia or England. This is one of many research topics for those who want to follow up on her work.

A Renewal of Culture Leads to a New Sense of Agency

In recent times "culture" seems to have been a word belonging to the political right, in the sense that poverty is blamed on the culture of the poor, and the success of the West is attributed to Judeo-Christian or Euro-American culture. Thomas Sowell's classic *Race and Culture* argued the conservative case for the primacy of culture over environment in stimulating fashion. David Landes in *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some Are So Poor*, argues that any sane economist in the year 1500 would have expected Brazil, so rich in natural resources, to become the economic behemoth of the New World, not the rocky Atlantic seaboard that became the thirteen colonies and then the United States. It was culture that made the differ-

ence, he argues.

To many on the Left the focus on culture amounts to blaming the victim: "it was your culture that did you in." Better to say it is about resources and who controls them. But both Eisler and Lappé write much about culture. For them culture is about how we listen to, respect, and treat each other. This is where we can all start. The fact that it is in our power to change our culture does not just lay us open to some blame for our situation: it also opens the possibility that we can be agents in social transformation. Barry Barkan, in his article on the Elders Guild in this issue, would agree.

Finally the personal and the political are coming together in a way that tackles economics, business, and world development. This brings family relationships, personal responsibility, listening, and spiritual, psychological, and mediation skills into the center of politics. It gives us agency.

Like Lappé, Eisler has hope for us all. She argues strongly for starting where we are. Don't wait for a revolution—be the revolution. She summarizes studies of both capitalist companies and governments that are more successful because of adopting caring policies. She reports on attempts to measure the costs of caring and not caring. She paints the big picture of what a truly caring economy would look like. And she presents many steps, small and large, that we can take to help us get there. Many conservatives and MBAs will find this exciting, along with many on the Left—and that's the kind of vision we need. Eisler wants the book to be used as a toolkit for change. You will be familiar with some of the actions she advocates, less familiar with others. But even the small steps we take can be so much more exciting if understood as part of this big shift towards partnership. It's like the old story about the two men breaking rocks: one says he's breaking rocks and the other says he is building a cathedral. Whom would you rather join?

For example, why abolish the corporation when its useful features can be preserved and mechanisms brought in to shift it to fulfill the social functions, which

alone justify its special status in law? Those purposes are not necessarily best achieved by government fiat, which can always be reversed, but by thoroughgoing inclusion of all stakeholders in the strategic and daily decision-making of the enterprise. That is what Lappé calls "living democracy" and Eisler calls partnership. It would gladden the heart of William Greider of *The Nation*, whose excellent book *The Soul of Capitalism: Opening Paths to a Moral Economy* reports on many ways to make companies more socially responsible.

But going beyond Greider's reformism, Eisler's approach helps us to see why the socialist vision has gone stale: it did not go deep enough into the quality of our personal relationships with each other, nor of the culture which forms and is formed by those relationships.

What is Lost by Not Embracing the "Spiritual?"

This new radicalism is built less on anger and blame and more on positive qualities. It's not that the bitterly angry, combative sections of the old Left lacked utopian dreams. The trouble with an angry focus on the evils of class or race enemies is that it tends to romanticize the victims, so the utopias we dream of seem easy to obtain. *Of course* the workers will run things better. *Of course*, the oppressed will be more humane and kind. We have all known the flaws in that at least since Orwell's *Animal Farm*, but we haven't paid attention to the remedy.

Perhaps there hasn't appeared to be a remedy. People are people: tribal, fractious, selfish. *Of course*, the Zionists/Proletariat/Colonized behaved badly once they got to power. "Feelings of Great Love" look good on Che Guevara posters, but on the ground the Left has been tribal, fractious, self-righteous.

But the remedy has been building slowly, often created by women, often by people with a deep spiritual commitment to nonviolence, to communication, to conflict resolution. The remedy is made up of the full panoply of skills of personal team-building relational work, and of the variety of practices (from individualized

yoga and meditation to shared or congregational rituals) that connect people to a vision of an interdependent world where there is no "them." The team-building skills include those of listening, confronting, mediating, and cooperating. The skills that foster an interdependent vision and an inner spiritual health include a wide range, many of them developed in our time by exiles from the Left, people who were burnt out by conflict and failure, who just needed to regenerate. We all regenerate in our own ways, but many of us need communities in which to do it, and hence the rediscovery by leftists of spiritual communities.

When Lappé writes of how she has been learning that her fears are not her enemies but can be her teachers, I think of my father, a deeply sincere Christian committed to making a better world, whose daily "quiet time" writings were often marked by reassurances from his God that he need not be controlled by fear.

Eisler eschews that kind of spiritual or religious vocabulary, because she is going for a wide audience in a secular time, and Lappé's approach seems to be similar. But how secular is our time? In *The Spirituality Revolution*, David Tacey wrote of the world's most secular countries, "There is more of a feeling now that the Spirit and the life of the Spirit is part of our common range of human experience. According to the Soul of Britain project sponsored by the BBC in 2001, 76 percent of Britons indicated an interest in spiritual matters, even though only 7 to 10 percent of them attend church regularly. Underneath what appears to be increasing secularism lies a deep thirst and hunger for the sacred."

In this religious century, when most of the world is "still" religious, and living democracy will be extended in most places by believers or by nobody, the next radical step is to claim the spiritual connection. The intellectual analysis will not be complete without it, nor will the hopeful feet on the ground. ■

David Belden, D.Phil., is the Managing Editor of Tikkun.

FROM SONGS OF TWO AUTUMNS

By Leah Goldberg

I.

Somewhere someone something there—
A dark dawn, granite grazing...
The river, the leaves in the rustle of their falling,
Song of the grove.
I'm passing—

I'm passing like this autumn
Setting its foot on the first ice:
Stark, opaque, brittle, and falling
And buried in this dark, raining dawn.

I pass like that star
Slowly slipping into light—no—light
Behind the horizon, oblivion,
Where it will meet another night.

2.

I'm passing like this pain
Leaving my body,
Joy of separation
As from this pain
Leaving my body.
I'm parting from myself
As from this autumn,
The dawn's dark swans
And the wings of its clouds.

I'm passing without sadness the borders of
change.

Tomorrow
The snow will silence on the beautiful path
My life,
My body that ached,
The autumn,
The flight of my dark swans.

3.

Here, autumn is the cusp of spring
And the pine, an eternal candle.
Don't look upon my vanishing,
For the pine is an eternal candle.

In the vineyard the leaves fell,
In the hills the squill bloomed.
Don't look upon my vanishing:
A black candle burns in the hills.

In the hills the stone has been chiseled.
The grass is soft as a flock of sheep.
Don't look upon my vanishing,
For the pine is an eternal candle.

—Leah Goldberg

Translated from the Hebrew by Annie Kantar

Dear Swami

"Where the Swami answers your questions, and you will question his answers."

BY SWAMI BEYONDANANDA

Dear Swami:

As an American of Jewish heritage who supports Israel's right to exist but not to dominate, I find I'm caught in the middle. On one hand anti-Semites who claim to be merely anti-Zionist assail me. On the other, those who believe that Israel must preemptively defend itself are calling me a self-hating Jew. Meanwhile, the more I read about AIPAC, the more I am concerned that American Jews are being enrolled in a very narrow military approach to a very complex problem. Swami, do you know much about AIPAC? And as a disciple of Harry Cohen Baba, the Garment Center Saint, what wisdom can you offer to a conflict where lack of wisdom seems to have prevailed?

*Ben Schwarmer,
Scarsdale, New York*

Dear Ben:

That's quite a question. Most of my answers aren't that long. So, let me begin in the middle and work my way to either end. I have to admit that it's only recently that I've even heard of AIPAC. The first time anyone ever asked me about it I said, "AIPAC? You must have the wrong Swami. I'm strictly Deepak, Tupac, and an occasional six-pack."

I've since learned that AIPAC stands for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and that the two countries have been carrying on this affair in public for more than fifty years. The organization began as a way for Americans to help defend the Jewish state at a time when the state of the Jews seemed defenseless. But now, even friends of Israel have begun to take offense at the defensive build up and wonder what is being hid-

den behind defense.

While I'm not one of those harsh critics who dismiss AIPAC as just a pack of apes, it does seem as if they've gotten stuck in big stick thinking—thinking that a bigger stick will make them more secure. Well, as the United States is finding in Iraq it doesn't matter how big your stick is, if you stick your stick where it doesn't belong, you can get stuck.

And speaking of mislearning lessons, take the Holocaust—please. Sadly, AIPAC and company seem to have low-jacked the higher meaning of the death of 6 million Jews—"never again"—to mean "never again for the Jews." What a different world we would have if the mission expanded to defending human rights to protect everyone, instead of having to defend inhuman wrongs to protect Israel.

I once asked my guru Harry Cohen Baba what he thought about the Jewish state, and he asked, "Which one? The Jewish state of loving connection, or the Jewish state of fearful separation?" The Jewish state of love, he explained, was *tikkun olam*, the healing of the world. The state of fear he called *tycoon alone*—mistaking being well-heeled for being well-healed.

Maybe this is the time for the Chosen People to individually and collectively choose something else—to become the Choosin' People who choose the *tikkun* path that promotes justice over the *tycoon* path that promotes "just us." Not that there is anything wrong with prosperity. The Lord did say, "Be fruitful and multiply." But it is very difficult to do that in a world of fruitless divisions.

And in this expansive view (which may end up being far less expensive), maybe anyone who chooses can be cho-



sen. Maybe this whole "Chosen People" thing is due to a misunderstanding. I'm sure you've heard about the monk who was translating the ancient scrolls and came upon a typo: "It says *celebrate*, not *celibate*!" Well, maybe the message got garbled. Maybe it's not just the Israelites who are chosen.

According to sixteenth-century Kabbalist Isaac Luria, when God created the world the light shattered into shards of Divine light—and each of us contains a spark. *Tikkun olam* means to bring the shards together to spark enlightenment. The chosen, then, are those who see that each and every one of us *is real light*, and become the real lights to guide our way.

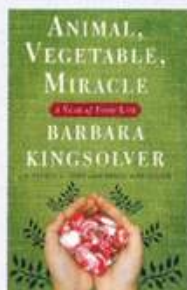
So it may be that we humans are the answer to our own prayers...and there is real light at the end of the tunnel. ■

Swami Beyondananda is the comic alter ego of Steve Bhaerman and can be found online at www.wakeuplaughing.com.

ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, MIRACLE

Barbara Kingsolver
HarperCollins Publishers, 2007

COMPLETE WITH RECIPES and advice, Barbara Kingsolver brings her superb skills as a novelist to tell the true tale of her family's year eating only food that is grown locally and sustainably. Reading this book will so expand your consciousness about food without knocking you out with political correctness that it should be required reading for every high school student!



OURSPLACE

Resisting the Corporate Control of Culture
Christine Harold

Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2007

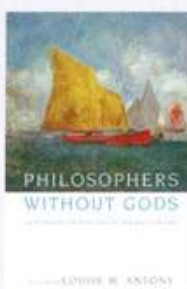
THE COMMERCIALIZATION of public life, civic culture, and even child-rearing has become a major focus for radical critique as freedom seems to narrow to life-style choices. Christine Harold critiques the strategies of resistance developed so far, whether they be those seeking state intervention or anarchist-style pranking and pirating appropriation of the tools of the manipulators of mass culture.



PHILOSOPHERS WITHOUT GODS

Louise M Antony
Oxford University Press, 2007

WE'VE OFTEN POINTED OUT that the Network of Spiritual Progressives and *Tikkun* are for not only religious people but for those who are spiritual but not religious as well. Louise M. Antony has put together a powerful group of essays by some of the smarter atheists of our time, explaining why they don't believe. Rather than the foolishness of Dawkins or Hitchens, these are compelling and sophisticated arguments that religious people ought to confront, even though the version of God they refute seems more appropriate to the comic-book version of religion than to sophisticated versions of liberation theology or progressive spirituality.



BLESSED UNREST

Paul Hawken
Viking, 2007

PAUL HAWKEN IS HOPEFUL that the thinking that informs the environmental movement will ultimately suffuse most institutions and will change a sufficient number of people so as to begin the reversal of centuries of frenzied self-destructive behavior. It's not too late for the world's largest institutions and corporations to join in saving the planet, but they must do so on "the planet's terms." In this book, Hawken recognizes the intrinsic connection between global social justice and ecological survival.

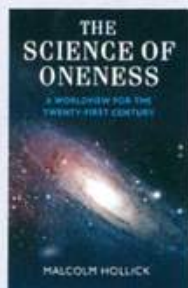


THE SCIENCE OF ONENESS:

A Worldview for the 21st Century

Malcolm Hollick
World Rights, 2006

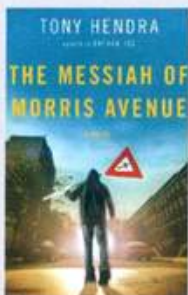
MALCOLM HOLICK SETS OUT to provide "a worldview for the twenty-first century," and his insightful science of oneness shows how to play out the notion that consciousness is inherent in all matter. While doing his best to incorporate scientific insights, this book will appeal most to those who believe that "mind and body form an integral whole which create and sustain each other." Missing is any understanding of how these insights might be brought into the task of healing and transforming our economic, political and social world.



THE MESSIAH OF MORRIS AVENUE

Tony Hendra
Henry Holt, 2006

FOR ALL ITS HUMOROUS TWISTS AND turns, Tony Hendra's novel is a deep and engaging recasting of the Second Coming of Jesus of Nazareth in the imagined context of an America totally ruled by the religious right. The great Jewish prophet returns in the form of a soft-spoken, media-shy young Latino man whose restatement of the heart of Jesus' message is as compelling and revolutionary today as it was when he first spoke truth to power in a Rome-dominated ancient Judea. It's living theology in the form of entertaining fiction that reminds us of why all prophetic voices get treated so poorly as much in contemporary America and in the religious communities as in the empires and Temples of antiquity.



You don't have to be Jewish to Help us Create An Interfaith Alternative to The Israel Lobby



Three Reasons Why it Should be Interfaith and Not only Jewish:

1. The Israel Lobby plays a major role in shaping American foreign policy, particularly in regard to Israel/Palestine, Iraq, and Iran. These decisions shape the lives of all Americans and many others around the world. So we should all be involved in countering their militaristic influence.
2. Christians are right to feel guilt about having abandoned Jews in the past, but that's not a good reason to avoid critiquing destructive aspects of Israeli policy. The Israel Lobby's policies are bad for the world, for the U.S., and also for Jews and Israel itself. This is not a Jewish issue; this is an issue for all Americans, and we need your help.
3. The pressure of Jewish Political Correctness is so overwhelming that most Jews are afraid to stand up to it. So progressive Jews need the help of enlightened non-Jews to help create an alternative voice.

Tikkun Magazine invites any individual or group that supports our basic pro-Israel/pro-Palestine "progressive middle path" to join us. We support:

- Two states—Israel and Palestine—living in peace with each other and cooperating in mutual protection against violence from extremists on both sides of the border who seek to undermine this agreement
- Pre-1967 borders with slight adjustments mutually agreeable to each side
- International commitment to reparations for Palestinians who lost income and/or homes and/or land from 1947-1967
- An end to demeaning of the other side in textbooks, schools, religious institutions, and media
- Massive economic support for putting Palestine on a solid economic foundation
- A joint Truth and Reconciliation Process for both Israel and Palestine
- A process of non-violence, open-heartedness toward the Other, rejection of policies of narrow self-interest to be replaced by a spirit of generosity and a recognition that each side's survival and well-being depends on the well being of the other, and the well-being of all other people around the world and on the well-being of the planet—the Strategy of Generosity as the path to security, rather than the Strategy of Domination.

This is the foundation from which an alternative to the Israel Lobby can be built. If we can detach the people of the U.S. from the leaders and media who try to tell us that the only "realistic" path is to dominate the other before they dominate us, and instead embrace the philosophy of the Network of Spiritual Progressives and its commitment to a Strategy of Generosity as the best path to achieve security for the U.S., Israel, and the world, we can play a major role in shifting American foreign policy in the Middle East. That is why we see the Global Marshall Plan and the Strategy of Generosity as an intrinsic part of building an alternative to the thinking of the Israel Lobby. We are planning a national mobilization in April, 2008, and we will be at the political parties' national conventions to put forward our worldview and to train people in how to articulate it for shaping public discourse. Will you help us?

Help us make it happen. Join Tikkun/Network of Spiritual Progressives. Come to regional planning and trainings on how to advocate for this approach to foreign policy to challenge the neocon and Israel Lobby approach that currently dominates both political parties and the media.

Trainings tentatively scheduled: in S.F. (9/30), Boston (10/15), and other North American cities in November, December and January. Dates and locations will be posted on our website in mid September. National Mobilization and Training in DC: Sometime between April 3 and April 13, 2008. Contact Nichola@tikkun.org if you are ready to play a leadership role or to raise significant funding for this venture.

Detailed info at www.tikkun.org and www.spiritualprogressives.org