

Tikkun

POLITICS+SPIRITUALITY+CULTURE

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

**BILL MCKIBBEN:
AN ENVIRONMENTAL
STRATEGY**

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Science & Spirit



\$5.95 U.S. \$7.95 Canada



Tutu & Moran vs. Christian Zionism & The Israel Lobby
Christmas & Chanukah: the Liberatory Versions
Jena: A Missed Opportunity | Anti-Bush Humor?
Plus: Avrum Burg, Glen Stassen, Tony Campolo



"When people decide they want to be free, there is nothing that will stop them."
-Desmond Tutu

WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE BURMESE people and the military regime that has been ruling them may be, *Tikkun* wants to express our profound admiration and solidarity for the courage that the Burmese people have already shown. While the media have presented the beginning of this struggle as a spontaneous uprising and have been quick to declare a 'victory' for the current dictators because the streets are quiet, they have missed the point. Having studied the successes of other movements, the monks and students have embraced the strategies of nonviolent struggle. They realize that short term victories are less important than the long term ability of the struggle to awaken people's longing for a world based on nonviolence and caring for each other. It is not over. The world's conscience has been touched by the images and stories of saffron-clad monks facing armed troops. Burma and the world will never be quite the same. In the long run, nonviolence succeeds even when it fails, while violence fails even when it succeeds.

For updates on the continuing resistance in Burma, and ways to help, see:

www.freeburma.org

www.mettacenter.org

www.uscampaignforburma.org and

www.dvb.no (Democratic Voice of Burma)

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religion & VIOLENCE

untangling the roots of conflict

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Readers Respond

DEMOCRATS & BUSH

I LIKE YOUR FANTASY ("What could Democrats Do?" *Tikkun* Sept./Oct., 2007) that Pelosi refuses to bring any authorization bill for more military spending 'til Bush starts the process of withdrawing troops and promises to complete it by early 2008, and if the Dems break apart, that she emerges as leader of a new party sincerely committed to peace and justice. You think that party would, like the Republican Party in 1860, become the majority.

I doubt that that is what would happen. More likely: the Republicans would, with their control of media, turn this into a moment for reviving their party and winning in 2008, and then we'd have at least four more years of war, torture, ignoring poverty, ignoring environmental problems, and further erosion of human rights.

Is that possible outcome really worth it so that Pelosi can grandstand against the war?

CHARLES NEWMAN
Atlanta, GA

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

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

Editor Responds:

OUR GOAL IN suggesting a strategy for Pelosi is to end the war, not to help her party. But if your goal is to have the Democrats win in 2008, our point remains relevant. But blocking funding would not be sufficient. The Dems would have to simultaneously take two other steps: 1. Start impeachment proceedings against Cheney and Bush, and 2. Impeach any other member of the cabinet whose department did not fully cooperate in providing all information requested by Congress to investigate the numerous areas of wrongdoing, including the systematic lying to the country about torture, the goals of the war and the reasons for getting into it in the first place, and much else. If the Dems were to follow these two steps, the Administration would, in fact, capitulate on withdrawal from Iraq. And instead of the Congress being perceived as a huge disappointment and failure, the Dems who held to their principles would be seen as courageous leaders, so that their party would in fact reap electoral victory.

That this path seems fanciful is only a testimony to how far the Congress has moved from the actual desires of the American people, and it is *that*, not what you call "grandstanding against the war," that is the greatest electoral threat to

the Democrats' chances in 2008.

ISRAEL LOBBY

ALTHOUGH I FAVOR aid to Israel for a variety of reasons, I've always considered myself an anti-Zionist because I believe in three things:

1. Equal rights for every citizen, regardless of race, creed, or ethnic origin.
2. The separation of religion and state—i.e., I think all religions should survive via voluntary donations, not by government subsidies or preferences.
3. Jewish safety.

It seems to me that none of these exist in the only democracy in the Middle East, and all three are present in the American model of democracy. This is why I'm hoping that in the twenty-first century, Jewish Americans will gradually abandon Jewish nationalism and come to regard the United States as "home" and Israel as "exile." This would represent a return to the ideas of Reform's Judaism's Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 rather than a "return" to the Jewish state of 1948. I take it you don't share my hopes. Why not? Please don't say they aren't realistic. Suppose they were realistic. Then would you be in agreement with me? If not, why not?

MARK KOERNER

Editor Responds:

I THINK SURVIVAL OF

the human race in the twenty-first century requires that all states transcend their own forms of nationalism and that we reconstitute the world according to ecological districts to deal with the major problem facing the human race: the environmental crisis which gets worse as each country focuses on its traditional egoistic needs and nationalist fervors. In the Jewish world I'm helping to create a Global Judaism that will overcome those parts of our tradition that are obstacles to this transcendence of nationalism. I hope that Israel will be one of the states that takes a leading role in this process, but given the history of the Jewish people and the way we have been treated by the world when we didn't have a national state (which is why no one wants to go back to 1885's Pittsburgh Platform), I don't think it reasonable or fair to ask Israel to take the first steps in this direction. Instead, it should be among the first 20 percent of states in the world that overcome their nationalism, and hence in the vanguard, after the same has been done by the U.S., Russia, China, Japan, UK, France, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, India, Pakistan, and 10 others.

FAIR TO PALESTINE?

I WAS SKEPTICAL THAT a Jewish publication would be able to assess and make

judgments concerning a path to peace in the Mid-East with an unjaundiced eye. But after reading Michael Lerner's "The Israel Lobby" [*Tikkun* September/October 2007] I realized my presumption was wrong. The history of the Jews' persecution and the displacement of Palestinians to make a home for Jewish people is a complicated and nuanced issue.

A two state Pre-1967 border solution is the only equitable choice. I'm encouraged by *Tikkun's* effort to this end, and the magazine's intentions to form a counter-voice to the Israel Lobby. As presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich says, it's time for strength through peace.

JUSTIN FINNEY
Austin, TX

YOU ARE ANTI-SEMITIC

YOUR DESCRIPTION OF Cindy Sheehan as the "mother of a child killed in Iraq war" is an obscene propagandistic distortion that would make Josef Goebbels proud. Cindy Sheehan is the mother of an American soldier killed in Iraq shortly after reenlisting because he believed in winning the war in Iraq and the battle against Islamofascism.

You treat her as a hero. Her son is the hero, not her! Recently she has made anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli statements. She was photographed hugging Jesse Jackson, an anti-Semite. And you invite her to speak on Yom Kippur?!

You are obviously anti-Semitic yourself. You are delusional and pathetic and suicidal; you would embrace

Heinrich Himmler as his men murder your mother.

You offer nothing to the Jewish community or to this country. Go away!

DAVID LODI

Editor Responds:

I'M SURE THAT YOUR anger comes from a strong love for the Jewish people, so I want to bless you that in this coming year you are able to recognize that others who have very different strategies about what is in the best interest of the Jewish people than you are also part of the people, and that no one way is certain to the only right way to protect our people.

David Lodi Replies:

YOUR CONCILIATORY tone, that differing opinions and strategies are equally valid and have a place in the

discussion, indicates that you are indifferent to the current danger the Jewish People face. All opinions are *not* equal and valuable—would you ask and value the opinions of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Heinrich Himmler regarding the Jewish People?

My anger is directed at those who would destroy us: *from without*, as Iran and all Islamofascists would, and *from within*, the negotiators, the appeasers such as Ehud Olmert, the 1960s throwbacks who have become anti-Semites, the Jewish politicians and media moguls and rabbis like you who are hesitant to name Islam as the threat to Western civilization for the past 1400 years, and who believe "love" is the answer.

Tikkun

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Ridicule is always counterproductive.

Cover Image:
David Bygott

Today, loving our enemy gives them the will to kill us. I do not accept that. Why do you?

It is not a matter of right or wrong. *Survival* for the Jewish People, survival is what we are talking about. Please, do not bless me, and do not lead your congregation to destruction.

PALESTINE & BOSTON?

YOU SAY THINGS LIKE: "the Palestinian people's refusal to accept the 1947 UN resolution was an important component in creating the current realities facing the Palestinians."

No human population on earth is going to agree to have more than half its land taken away to atone for someone else's sins. That is simply ridiculous. The resolution "gave" 55 percent of Palestine to the Jews, who did not rightfully own anywhere near that percentage.

"Palestine" was as much a country at that time as India or Egypt. The Palestinian people, Jews, Christians, Muslims, and others, had a right to their land and to decide their own immigration policy. Whatever their motivation, Europeans and Americans did not have the authority to give Palestine away to the Zionists.

That is like telling me that because someone in Europe was victimized, they deserve half my house and land. If I don't agree, I can live in the street and accept responsibility for my fate. Notice no one ever says that American Indians

were responsible for their genocide because they didn't give their land to white settlers. No one blames African Americans for their own enslavement. Only Palestinians must "take responsibility" for their own victimization.

CHERYL HUTCHINSON

Editor Responds:

JUST AS I BELIEVE THAT the U.S. must open its gates and eliminate its immigration laws, so I hold the same for every country in the world including Israel and including Palestine before Israel. We had a similar issue with Boston Irish people who said that they had built Boston for the past hundred years and should not be forced now to give housing and schools that they had built to African Americans. When people talked about the suffering of African Americans, the Boston Irish made the same argument you do: "We Irish built this city for us, and we have no responsibility for the suffering of African Americans because in fact our ancestors fought on the side of the Union and helped free the slaves. But why should we have to live with those people if we don't want to?" I sided with African Americans on that one, and I side with Jews in their desire to return to their ancient homeland in 1920-1947. The decision to prevent Jews from coming was not based on absence of land—the Palestinians were open to immigration to Christians and Muslims, only refusing it to Jews.

SPIRITUAL RADICAL

Abraham Joshua Heschel in America, 1940-1972

Edward K. Kaplan

As excerpted in *Tikkun*.

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Current THINKING

Stop the Holiday Buying Frenzy

LET'S ACKNOWLEDGE THAT this is impossible for most people in regard to their children at this moment in American culture. The indoctrination just seems too overwhelming to be able to explain to kids under the age of 14 or 15 that not buying them a gift for Christmas or Chanukah is not a reflection of lack of love, but rather a commitment to love the planet and preserve it from destruction.

But what about adults? Your friends, people at work, adult members of your family? They are old enough and sophisticated enough to understand if you explain that the planet earth is dying in part because of unnecessary production of goods that are really not needed and which deplete our natural resources. Moreover, the shopping frenzy causes a great deal of pain because so many people feel that they haven't given "the right" gift, or that they can't afford the gifts that would make others feel special, or they feel badly that they didn't get the gifts that would make them feel really loved and understood.

Gift giving is wonderful, and we don't want to negate

its value, but this year, why not give a gift of time, rather than a "thing"? For example, send people a gift of three hours to help them with some household chores of their choice or specify some talent that you might have: house painting or small repairs, mowing the lawn, shoveling the snow, taking their children to a movie, sports event, cultural activity, religious service, or something else geared for children, or helping their children with homework. Or you could invite a friend to dinner, concert, religious service, political gathering, or discussion group that opens that friend to an aspect of your life that you haven't fully shared previously. Or you can make a "thing" that doesn't involve conspicuous consumption, for example: a poem, short story, something knitted, a song, a piece of pottery, a painting, or an evening in which you introduce your friends to *Tikkun* or the Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP) or to some other aspect of your life or your childhood. Or offer an evening of just listening to the music that is special to you.

If the commercialism can be overcome, it may then be

possible to return to the central spiritual message that this season has offered to all peoples throughout recorded history: a time to affirm the possibility of a return of the light and the nourishment of the earth from the sun that is done when the days have become short and the winter prevails. That message of hope was given specific form by Jews in celebrating the victory of the Maccabees over Hellenistic imperialism, and by the Christians in seeing in the birth of Jesus the coming of a new age of love and kindness and salvation for all people. Whatever the form, the affirmation of hope must be recovered and made central. For a world adrift in trivia and meaninglessness, a first step would be the symbolic rejection of the slavery imposed by advertising, the media, and the culture of the marketplace. One way to do so is by voluntarily withdrawing from the consumption frenzy of this period.

Hint about how to do this most effectively: Copy this page and send it to everyone on your potential gift list in early December, with the following note: "I'm going to try this year what the NSP rec-

ommends. I'd like to urge you to do the same. If you did you'd be giving the planet a gift that it badly needs. I feel sure that Jesus or Judah Maccabee would be most happy knowing that this was how you were honoring their memory! And I personally would love getting this kind of a gift and knowing that your holiday gift is not inflaming the holiday consumption frenzy." If you send this same kind of note to others, they'll know that it's not that you are trying to be a cheapskate, but that you want to show your caring for them in a different way this year.

Would you try it?

P.S. If you absolutely have to buy something for a friend or family member, please see our "spiritually rich holiday gifts" on the back cover or at www.spiritualprogressives.org. Our suggestions include a gift membership in the NSP, the 2007 *Tikkun Reader: 20th Anniversary* book with some of the best articles you (or your gift recipient) will ever read, and a gift registration to the *Tikkun/NSP* Spiritual Activism Conference which will take place in Spring 2008 in Washington, D.C.

P.P.S. Please ask your priest, minister, pastor, preacher, rabbi, or spiritual leader to make these suggestions to your religious or spiritual community, and your union or professional association to send out these suggestions in their December mailing to members: it's a gift idea that should be shared widely and will only work when it is.

Would You Go for a 10ct Increase in Gas Tax?

THUS READ THE FRONT-PAGE headline in the October 5, 2007 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

In this one little article we get the quintessence of why so many people who benefit from government spending in some ways nevertheless remain highly critical of big government and opposed to higher taxes. For the past 80 years liberals have been citing real social, economic, and environmental problems, then participating in compromised legislation that has managed to raise taxes without solving any of the problems that the liberals had demonstrated were real. "Politics is the art of compromise," the liberals said in self-defense. "Better half a pie than none." Yet in the long run, none might have worked better.

The half way measures have managed to create a hard core of opposition to new taxes and spending programs that are vitally needed, because so many people have watched the liberals squander their monies without fixing the problems at all. And the result has been a sustained backlash against government at precisely the

moment when it is most desperately needed to regulate investment and production on behalf of saving the global environment. What we need today are not new compromised and "realistic" programs.

What we need is visionary transformation of the global economy, and to settle for nothing less. But when the liberals keep adding new spending programs that are not part of a comprehensive and workable alternative to the current realities, what they actually produce is a deep skepticism about government itself that is likely to persist and bite them in their backs when they take over the presidency in 2008, as most polls predict they will.

Sometimes the good is the enemy of the best, and in the case of environmental safety, it may only be the best that will make any difference whatsoever. So next time you are about to scoff at some conservative who opposes new taxes, before assuming that s/he selfishly wants to hold all her/his money rather than care for others with it, think of this headline and imagine that some of those conservatives may be people who have just given up on the notion that liberals will ever change anything substantively, and they might be right.

That, of course, is precisely the moment to introduce those conservatives to the New Bottom Line and the NSP's Spiritual Covenant with America.

The Tikkun Forum

WE HAVE STARTED A FORUM on telephone. Every few weeks we get a *Tikkun* author to talk

to our readers about some issue that they've explored.

All you do is call the toll free number at the specified time and you get to hear, and then interact with, the author.

We started in September 2007, with Harvard University professor of government Michael Sandel, discussing the ethical implications of his Sept/Oct 2007 article in *Tikkun* on the new technologies that may soon allow parents to design babies to specification. In October we had professor Mohammed Abu-Nimer of American University discussing the current situation in the Middle East and the possibility of forthcoming military strikes against Iran.

If you are a subscriber to *Tikkun* and/or a member of the NSP/Tikkun Community, you are invited to participate in these calls (for free). All you have to do is to sign up to be on the *Tikkun* email/newsletter by contacting Pete@tikkun.org. The emails we send often contain a variety of different topics including the announcements for the next *Tikkun* Forum, plus the information for the next conference call. When you email him, please give us your home phone and city of residence.

Dems Fooling No One

UNABLE TO MUSTER THE courage to end the war the one way they can, namely by the Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi refusing to put on the floor of the House any appropriation bill for the war in Iraq except for appropriations to bring home the troops, the Democratic Party leadership is now trying to fool its own constituents a dif-

ferent way: passing appropriations a few months at a time. This way everyone seems to get what they want: the Republicans get their war funded, the Democrats get to say that they "supported the troops" but can still say they "protested the war." The only losers: the troops who will continue to be killed and the people of Iraq who will continue to face tens of thousands of deaths and millions of refugees. Unfortunately, for these Democratic spineless ones, polls indicate a low level of trust in them, precisely because they are fooling no one.

Warn Them About War Crimes

WAR CRIMES ARE NOT ONLY about torturing prisoners or massacring civilians. It is also a war crime to make an aggressive war against a civilian population or to conspire to do so, as the U.S. has done and persists in doing in Iraq and is planning to do in Iran. Please keep a record of everyone you encounter in the media or in your own life that has participated in these crimes. At some point, possibly 20 or 30 years from now, there needs to be either a criminal prosecution, or, our preference, a Truth and Reconciliation procedure in which all Americans learn unequivocally about the horrors being committed every day with our tax dollars, and the lies or intentional ignoring of the truth, that so many journalists and electronic media people help perpetuate. ■

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Science & Spirituality Working Together

BY GEORGE VRADENBURG

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCIENCE AND RELIGION is often framed in oppositional terms: science vs. religion, the known vs. the unknowable, material vs. spiritual. The relationship is viewed much like its intellectual cousin, church vs. state—two separate universes, two different intellectual spaces, two parallel worlds separated by a “wall.”

This is an artificial and dangerous notion. Artificial, because science and spirituality exist as an integrated way of looking at how and why the universe works the way it does; dangerous, because science unmitigated by a spiritual world view may disregard (what our Founding Fathers characterized as) the “self-evident” values essential to human freedom and dignity, and because spirituality unmitigated by a respect for science is a recipe for fundamentalism and theocracy.

Both the physical and social sciences hunger to understand *how* the universe and humanity work; spirituality addresses our search to understand *why* the universe works as it does. Strikingly, the human mind can utilize the language of mathematics to describe the relationship between matter and energy; the human mind can connect to and explain the workings of a universe whose scale dwarfs our physical existence. This is truly awe-inspiring. Indeed, our ability to understand the workings of planets and atoms we can neither see, touch, nor feel suggests an intimate connection between humankind’s existence and the fundamental forces of nature. Even a complete understanding of “how” the universe works will still not explain whether there is a trajectory, a vector, or a “purpose” to the workings of the universe and the role of humankind and, if so, what that purpose might be. As a famous astrophysicist once put it, it is only when we have a complete understanding of the workings of the universe that we will be able to explore the “mind of God.”

No doubt one can seek answers to these questions through philosophic inquiry as well as through religious study. Aristotle addressed this issue through logic: once mankind has satisfied his needs for daily survival, man seems by nature to be driven to seek happiness, implying, in his view, that man’s most noble profession is to structure society so that each individual is able to maximize his pursuit of happiness (the profession of little “p” politics).

Religion ascribes the source of purposefulness—this animating life force of the universe—to a supreme being, a force, a G-d.

And, in the belief systems of most, this G-d provides guidance regarding the “right” and “wrong” behavior through texts (in Judeo-Christian religious tradition) or through direct experience (in some Eastern religious traditions).

Whether through philosophical, spiritual, or religious inquiry, humankind has sought to discover and then to adopt the structures (political, social, or economic) and the behaviors (beliefs, rituals, and interactions) that most align human existence with the perceived purposes of the life force that animates the universe. It is this “higher authority” to which we appeal when we speak of “inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Utilizing the discoveries of science, we can gain a deeper understanding of the workings of the universe and thereby infer its possible underlying meaning and purpose.

This search is a distinguishing and shared characteristic of the human spirit, what separates us from other life forms. It is the respect for this divine and sacred spark in each of us that is, perhaps, humanity’s highest calling.

If so, a search for the economic, social, and political systems that most respect and foster this “divine and sacred” within us is most important. The inquiry, at its highest level, should emanate from a search for the best alignment between the workings of the universe as discovered through scientific inquiry and the purpose of the universe and of humankind’s role in it as discerned through spiritual inquiry.

To this writer, the answer lies in systems that are based on individual rights and liberty as opposed to those based on collectivism and “top down” State authority. Where political or social systems demand conformity of behavior, belief, or “correctness,” the capacity for the individual pursuit of happiness is stunted. Where legal or social barriers diminish the opportunity of any human being to achieve his or her personal destiny, there is a suppression of the divine spark in each individual.

Whatever one’s answer, it is important to question, and it is important to recognize that it is both science and spirituality, working together in a shifting but harmonious balance, that will guide us on the journey toward answers. ■

George Vradenburg is publisher of Tikkun, and often disagrees with our editorial opinions.

Are we Exaggerating the Power of the Israel Lobby?

BY MICHAEL LERNER

Iran, the Christian Zionists, and the American People

I HAD THE HONOR TO BE A GUEST ON A VERY EXCITING PBS television show, *Bill Moyer's Journal*, which aired October 5th. Please take time to listen to it on www.spiritualprogressives.org. I was invited to comment on a TV segment that his staff had put together about the Christian Zionist movement. What was particularly striking was how explicit and adamant the Christian Zionists were that Israel must refuse to make any deals that would lead to a transfer of land for peace. They were equally clear that the U.S. and Israel need a "preemptive" war with Iran. The Christian Zionists may be the largest element in the Israel Lobby, though they are not Jewish (and in fact, some of them believe that a Middle East nuclear conflagration might be the necessary step to bringing about Jesus' second coming). According to some informed observers, they represent 20 million Americans (far less than the 50 million they claim, but four times as many as there are Jews in the U.S.).

The Christian Zionists, thus, are an integral and powerful part of the Israel Lobby's campaign to stop pressuring Israel to swap land for peace and to popularize the notion that war with Iran is desirable and inevitable. This kind of rhetoric is now flowing through the Washington, D.C. news and news analysis/entertainment hub, giving the same clear signals given before the "preemptive" strike on Iraq four years ago.

While Democratic Party leaders in Congress lack the backbone to act, and the leading Democratic Party presidential candidates foresee American troops in Iraq for years to come, the American people are saying, "Get out now." And despite all the rhetoric about funding cuts "hurting the troops," a majority of Americans support those funding cuts and have seen through the conservative PR campaign that continues to intimidate Nancy Pelosi, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, and other Congressional leaders.

A Washington Post-ABC News poll revealed just how far their purported Democratic Party leaders are behind the feeling of the American public (see box on page 11).

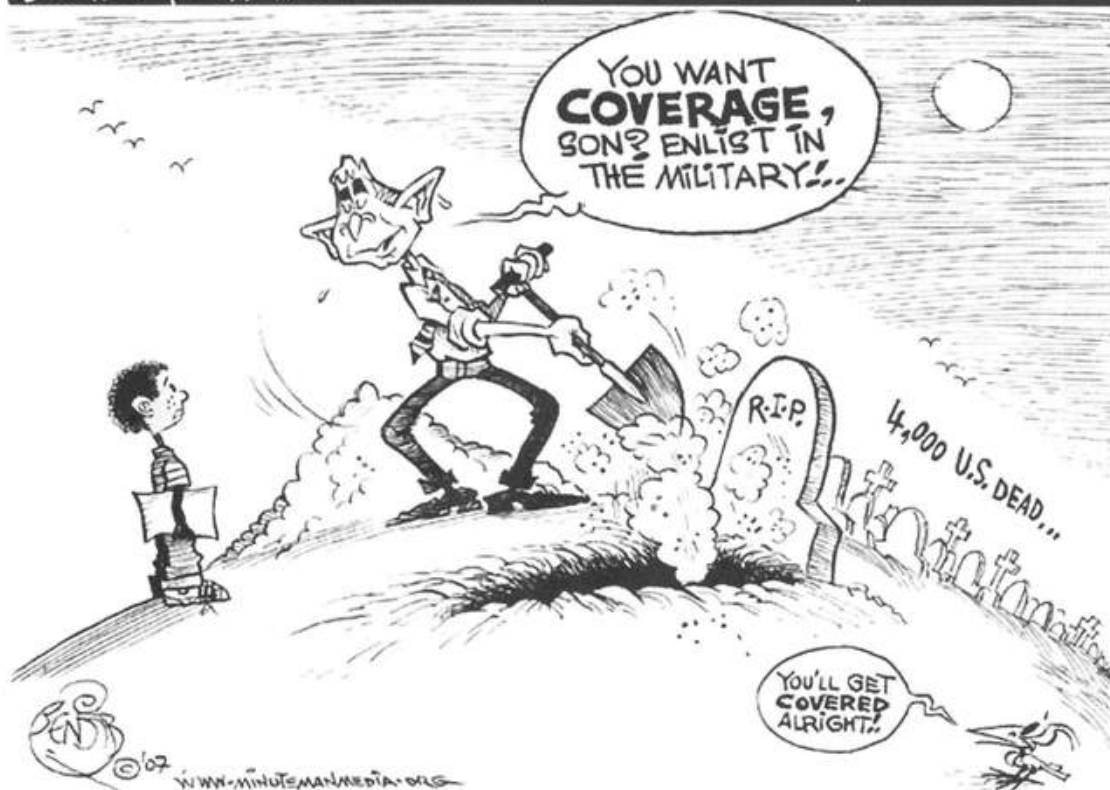
Unfortunately, the same clarity does not exist in regard to the possible airstrikes and war with Iran. And the Christian Zionists are an effective part of the Israel Lobby, arguing that a strike against Iran is in the best interests of both Israel and the U.S.

In Tikkun's research, we've discovered that there are really three distinct elements energizing the Christian Zionists:

- 1) A strong commitment to conservative and ultra-nationalist American politics (so strong, I believe, that if the U.S. were to decide to break with Israel, this part of the Christian Zionist leadership would go along with that and drop its defense of Israeli policies).
- 2) Dispensationalist religious commitments that lead many of the Christian Zionists to yearn for a cataclysmic "end of history" eschatological war in the Middle East that will precipitate the second coming of Jesus and the Rapture in which all true Christians will go to heaven and all Jews who have not yet converted to Christianity will burn in hell for eternity.
- 3) A widespread understanding among many Christians that atonement and repentance is needed for 1700 years of murder, rape, and oppression of Jews that was frequently generated by the Church (though, of course, the Evangelicals do not recognize that church as their church). In this category are many Christian Zionists who genuinely feel terrible about what has happened to the Jews and genuinely want to help the Jewish people. Their philo-Semitism is real and sincere.

While all Christian Zionists do not hold the dispensationalist worldview, it is very widespread, even among Evangelicals who don't identify as Christian Zionists. But while they preach this in their churches, when they come to Washington D.C. to advocate for militaristic policies, they often are quiet about their views on the hoped-for conversion of the Jews or the damnation that will follow not just for Jews but for everyone who has not yet accepted Jesus as Christ.

Many Christian Zionists hold all three positions, and have never been forced to confront how unloved Jews would feel if they knew that the support they are getting from Christian Zionists was really aimed at their ultimate conversion or burning in hell. But most Jews don't worry that the second coming of Jesus is at hand, and so they can accept the help of Christian Zionists on Israel issues without concern about ultimate motivations. My personal encounters with them leads me to believe that many of these Christian Zionists might be less enthusiastic about the leadership if they were forced to confront how unloving, how un-Jesus-like, and how offensive to Jews are the first two parts of their worldview. Their conservative leaders invite the most



conservative of the Israel Lobby folks to the Christian Zionist confabs, and so the only Jews they ever really encounter are those who are appreciative of the blind loyalty to right-wing Israeli policies that the Jewish neocons have been trying to foster throughout the American population.

The task of spiritual progressives is to help dislodge people whose primary motives are in category three from those whose primary motive is an attraction to category one or two. Many of the Christian Zionists in category three have never really heard the views and perspective of the many Israelis and American Jews who believe that the best way to support Israel's survival and Jewish well-being is to end the Occupation of the West Bank and to build peace and reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinians. But for those in category three who also have some openness to category one and two, the response may be something like that given by people interviewed on the Moyers show: "We'd love to see peace, but we don't believe that that is achievable until Jesus comes back, so in the meantime we'll just support the current leadership of the U.S. and Israel and support any militarist policy that they endorse."

This might remind us of the urgency of our task of popularizing a more loving religious/spiritual vision. Moyers asked: "Where are the voices of spiritual progressives? Why do we only hear the voices of conservative Christians and Israel Lobby Jews?" Our challenge as spiritual progressives is to change this—and that will take hard work on our parts. But, as I insisted to Moyers, history isn't over and we still have time to weigh in.

The only plausible way to weigh in is with a different kind of voice than that which Evangelicals have been hearing from the secular liberals and progressives. What they need to hear is precisely what we are trying to establish with the Network of Spiritu-

al Progressives (NSP)—a voice that acknowledges the reality of the spiritual crisis in American society, does not attempt to reduce that crisis to a series of economic and political deprivations (though those are certainly an important part of the crisis, but not all of it), and provides Evangelicals and other spiritually hungry Americans with a worldview that takes seriously the loving, generous, and peace-and-justice seeking elements in biblical and other religious and spiritual traditions.

Why hasn't this worked so far? Partly because the religio-phobia in the Left has marginalized our voices. Partly, because some of our

most famous progressive spiritual leaders are too "realistic," too willing to cuddle up to the powerful and tell them what they want to hear, too willing to retain liberal/progressive respectability by reframing their own religious/spiritual intuitions in the reductive one-dimensional language of the liberal/progressive policy wonks and their supporters in the media. Once they play that game, they have very little that is fresh to offer to Evangelicals and others in all the various religious and spiritual communities who are more interested in meaning than in money or immediate power. But when the NSP has spoken about the spiritual crisis, and has spoken about the need for a world based on love, generosity, awe and wonder, and recognition of the sacred dimension of human life and of the planet, we often get a terrific response, at least outside the secular left and the cynical media. Similarly, when we apply this message to the need for open-hearted reconciliation between Jews and Muslims, people immediately "get" why this is at least as important as the details of a peace proposal, and must be fostered if any proposal (like ours—see my book *Healing Israel/Palestine*, North Atlantic Books, 2003) is to actually work in practice. But count on the Israel Lobby to dismiss all these suggestions as "New Age psycho-babble" and to insist that the only way to make Israel secure is through military domination of Palestinians and a superior military power to all Muslim states in Asia and Africa..

Archbishop Tutu

ON OCTOBER 4, 2007 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORTED THAT St. Thomas University in Minneapolis had decided to not invite Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a Nobel Prize winner for his role in challenging apartheid in South Africa, to speak on their campus. According to Doug Hennes, vice president for university and

Washington Post-ABC News poll released October 2, 2007

When will the leaders catch up with the people?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

33% Approve
15% Strongly
18% Somewhat
64% Disapprove
14% Somewhat
49% Strongly

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bush is handling the situation in Iraq?

30% Approve
17% Strongly
14% Somewhat
68% Disapprove
12% Somewhat
57% Strongly

Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Republicans in Congress are doing their job?

29% Approve
67% Disapprove

Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Democrats in Congress are doing their job?

38% Approve
57% Disapprove

Which political party do you trust to do a better job handling the situation in Iraq?

49% Democrats (*up seven points since last poll*)
34% Republicans (*up three points since last poll*)
3% Both
11% Neither

All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think the war with Iraq was worth fighting, or not? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

38% Worth fighting
59% Not worth fighting

Do you think (the United States should keep its military forces in Iraq until civil order is restored there, even if that means continued U.S. military casualties); OR, do you think (the United States should withdraw its military forces from Iraq in order to avoid further U.S. military casualties, even if that means civil order is not restored there)?

43% Keep forces
54% Withdraw forces

As you may know Bush has sent approximately 2,800 additional U.S. military forces to try to restore civil order in parts of Iraq. Do you think this increase in U.S. forces has made the situation in Iraq better, worse, or hasn't made much difference?

27% Better
15% Worse
56% Hasn't made much difference

There's been a proposal to remove these additional U.S. forces from Iraq by next summer, returning to the earlier level of about 130,000 U.S. troops. Do you think the number of U.S. forces in Iraq should be reduced more (quickly) than this, more (slowly), or is this about the right pace of troop reductions?

43% More quickly
12% More slowly
38% Right pace

Do you think Democrats in Congress have gone too far or not far enough in opposing the war in Iraq?

35% Too far
55% Not far enough

The Bush administration has requested nearly 190 billion dollars to fund the wars and related U.S. activities in Iraq and Afghanistan over the next year. This is about 40 billion dollars more than first estimated. Do you think Congress should approve all of this funding request, or reduce it? IF REDUCE: Should this funding request be reduced somewhat, or reduced sharply?

27% Approve
67% Reduce
23% Reduce Somewhat
43% Reduce Sharply

Thinking ahead to the next presidential election, do you think a (Democratic) or a (Republican) president would do a better job resolving the situation in Iraq?

51% Democratic
31% Republican

Washington Post-ABC News poll released October 2, 2007;
available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/polls/postpoll_100107.html.

government relations, "He [Tutu] has been critical of Israel and Israeli policy regarding the Palestinians, so we talked with people in the Jewish community and they said they believed it would be hurtful to the Jewish community, because of things he's said."

Hennes said the University does not believe Tutu is anti-Semitic. But Hennes cited a 2002 speech in which he said Tutu criticized "the Jewish lobby." Hennes also said Jewish groups feel Tutu has compared the Israeli policy toward Palestinians to how Adolf Hitler treated Jews. Chris Toffolo was relieved of her position as Chair of the University's Justice and Peace Studies Program after she protested this decision and provided proof that Tutu never compared Israel to Hitler.

As editor of *Tikkun*, I have been hearing stories like this

throughout the 22-year existence of the magazine. I've been excluded numerous times from universities, synagogues, and sometimes even Christian churches that feel the pressure from the Jewish establishment. What makes this incident different is only that most Americans have enormous respect for Tutu (though they also have enormous respect for Jimmy Carter and that didn't stop the Israel Lobby from effectively labeling Carter an anti-Semite) and that a courageous woman, who already had tenure and hence could preserve her income even when removed from her position heading justice and peace studies, was able to speak out of her moral outrage. Most people subject to these same pressures, including, of course, most rabbis and Jewish community leaders and media in the U.S., will rarely dare to speak out for fear that they will endanger or even lose their employment.

Walt & Mearsheimer, Congressman Moran

THE WEEK BEFORE, WASHINGTON WAS REELING from another such manifestation of power by the Israel Lobby. The Israel Lobby (see our Sept/Oct 2007 issue) not only managed to get most editorialists and book reviewers to vigorously deny the Mearsheimer/Walt thesis (that, in regard to Middle East issues, AIPAC and related groups exercise disproportionate power), but simultaneously got leaders of both major political parties to publicly denounce Congressman Jim Moran for daring to criticize AIPAC in the pages of this magazine. When I pointed out to various reporters who were writing stories about the attack on Moran that there are dozens of powerful lobbies that get criticized all the time, but only an attack on AIPAC is a news story and only an attack on AIPAC unites Republicans and Democrats in derision against the critic, they simply refused to mention this in their stories, thereby once again confirming the Israel Lobby's amazing media power.

Here's what happened: House Republican Chief Deputy Whip Eric Cantor, responding on September 18 to Moran's *Tikkun* interview, likened Moran to Adolph Hitler. "Unfortunately, Jim Moran has made it a habit now to lash out to the American Jewish community. I think his remarks are reprehensible, I think his remarks are anachronistic, and harken back to the day of Adolph Hitler, of the others, *Mein Kampf*, of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, other sources that have become reference to now, I'm sorry to say, a resurgent anti-Semitic sentiment world wide." And House Democratic Majority Leader Steny Hoyer issued a statement which seemed to add to the witch hunt by

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stating that Moran had claimed that “the Jewish community controls the press, the media, the Congress, and other institutions” and that therefore Moran “certainly oughtta retract remarks, and indicate he believes that he was inaccurate on the facts.”

Congressman Moran said no such thing.

Similar charges were made in a letter signed by 14 Jewish Members of the Democratic Caucus, and in numerous editorials and articles, most of which gave little opportunity for the perspective of the peace forces to be aired.

Tikkun readers: you yourselves have read precisely what Moran said. Compare that with what is being claimed that he said in the numerous assaults on him in the media and in the Congress. That these distortions get represented as facts is a powerful vindication of the theory that the Israel Lobby has amazing and disproportionate power in the media and in the ways of thinking of our government.

Of course, none of this is shocking for those of us who have met with our elected Congressional leaders to present *Tikkun's* “progressive middle path” to Middle East peace, an approach that is both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine and that supports the settlement roughly along the lines of the Geneva Accord (return to pre-1967 borders with minor border changes to allow Israel to keep the Jewish quarter and the Western Wall in Jerusalem and adjacent settlements close to the '67 borders in exchange for an equal amount of Israeli land being ceded to the new Palestinian state, reparations for Palestinian refugees, ending the teaching of hate against the other in the media and schools and religious institutions of both communities, and a Truth and Reconciliation process). What we've heard back is “We agree with you completely, only we don't dare say that publicly for fear that we will be targeted by AIPAC-related PACs when we seek reelection.”

Their fears will be dramatically reinforced if Jim Moran loses his bid for reelection in 2008, an obvious possibility as the Israel Lobby gears up to demonize Moran in the eyes of constituents. It is precisely that he said nothing unreasonable or false that makes this case so important for the Israel Lobby, because if they can succeed in showing once again that anyone who says the Israel Lobby has disproportionate power will lose their elected position, they can once again silence all major critics. And, of course, in the process they prove the truth of the very point the critics are being punished for having stated aloud.

As I argued in the last issue of *Tikkun*, this is not in Israel's best interests, nor in the interests of the Jewish people. Jewish political correctness enforced in this way will backfire on the Jewish people just as other forms of “political correctness” have backfired on those who have advocated for them.

M.J. Rosenberg, Director of the Israel Policy Forum's Washington Policy Center, makes a related point in an article entitled “Lobbying Yes...but is it Pro-Israel?” published in Israel's premier newspaper, *Ha'aretz*. Rosenberg reviews some of the major foci of AIPAC's lobbying in the U.S. and shows that many of the policies AIPAC supports have been very detrimental to the well-being of Israel. Perhaps you remember when *Tikkun* and the Network of Spiritual Progressives had to buy full page ads in the *New York*

Times and the *Los Angeles Times* to make a point the media was totally obscuring in the summer of 2006: that Israel's war in Lebanon was not only immoral but also self-destructive. Today there is almost no one in Israel or even in the more-right-wing-than-thou-Jewish-establishment who denies that the war was a mistake, but at the time it was impossible to get the media (much less any Congressperson) to quote the voices of spiritual progressives who were making this point. M.J. Rosenberg brings numerous other examples as well.

For those of us who love Israel and wish to see it remain secure and strong, and who know that the path to such strength and security is a just settlement of the Palestinian struggle and a strategy of generosity toward other Arab and Muslim states, one reason to be passionately critical of the Israel Lobby is that it does so much damage to Israel (and, along the way, to the best interests of the Jewish people and the U.S.) by legitimating the Strategy of Domination at precisely the moment when the world needs the Strategy of Generosity.

Steve Zunes's Article in this Issue of *Tikkun*

AND IT IS THIS LAST POINT THAT MAKES ME UNABLE TO ENDORSE fully Steve Zunes' approach (please read his article, page 47). Zunes argues that it is not the Israel Lobby but the powerful American economic and political elites who shape American policy and are doing so in regard to Iraq and Iran. As I made clear in my article last issue, I agree with Zunes' insistence that the Iraq War was not brought to us single-handedly by the Israel Lobby, much less by the Jewish people (those two are not the same: many American Jews feel that the Israel Lobby does not accurately reflect their own views about politics and foreign policy). And I made the same critique of Mearsheimer and Walt that he makes here: that the power of the American economic and political elite is by far the most significant factor in shaping American foreign policy, not the power of AIPAC or the Israel Lobby. That elite follows similarly misguided policies of economic and political domination all around the world, and would seek to do so even if there had never been any Jews in the U.S. in the past 231 years, and even if there had never been a state of Israel. Those on the Left who like to blame Israel for the Iraq war and for every other evil U.S. corporations, media and military perpetrate around the world are deeply mistaken, and these mistakes often aid and abet anti-Semitism.

However, Zunes doesn't seem to recognize the significant role the Israel Lobby does play in helping to develop the ideologies and mass support for the Strategy of Domination and for many other elements in contemporary thought that have become the “common sense” of media pundits, political activists, and many ordinary citizens—ideas which provide the indispensable foundation for making these wars (Vietnam, Iraq, Iran, the whole fantasy of a “war against terror”) seem plausible. It is this central intellectual “background condition” which is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the militarists in both parties to create a public ready to believe that the only “realistic” way to deal with antagonists around the world is to dominate them before they

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dominate us, and hence to take preemptive strikes in Iraq, Iran, and maybe in Syria, Pakistan, Bolivia, Cuba or Venezuela.

As I detail in *The Left Hand of God*, the Domination Strategy for homeland security has deep roots in the patriarchal assumptions that have governed human societies for most of the past several thousand years. But militarist/patriarchal/domination theories of the world were under severe attack in the 1960s and early 1970s as counter-cultural visions began to rattle the walls and pillars of Western societies. It took a powerful rebound from the religious right combined with an intellectually sophisticated

assault on progressive ideas to hold back and undermine the hopeful "left hand of God" world-views that were becoming almost hegemonic in the women's movement, the gay movement, the anti-war movement, the environmental movement, and the counter-culture.

That intellectual assault was provided primarily by Jewish neocons like Norman Podhoretz, William Safire, Irving (and later William) Kristol, Martin Peretz, Cynthia Ozick, Ruth Wisse, Leon Wieseltier, Richard Perle, John Bolton, Leo Straus, Henry Kissinger, and Elliot Abrams. Many neocons freely admit that their worldview was shaped around the need to defend Israel from assault by critics on the Left and from the growing credibility that "left hand of God" perspectives were gaining in the 1960s and early 1970s, undermining America's desire to rely on militarism and, hence, in the eyes of the neocons, undermining the likelihood that the U.S. would continue to provide the military protection that Israel needed to protect itself from the hostile Arab world. It never occurred to these neocons, whose worldview became dominant in the leadership of AIPAC in the next several decades, that Israel might take a totally different approach to its security, acknowledging the suffering of the Palestinian people and taking steps to alleviate it (e.g. a massive building campaign in Gaza and the West Bank to replace the slums and repair the inhumane conditions in which Palestinians were forced to live when Israel refused to let them return to their homes inside the pre-1967 borders. Israel could have built high quality housing, sanitation, health care, and economic infrastructure. It could have taught Arabic as a required language in Israeli schools and Hebrew in Palestinian schools so

that communication would be easier. And it could have begun a systematic repatriation of refugee families at a level of, say, 20,000 families a year), and it could have encouraged the economic development and high levels of employment in the West Bank and Gaza. This would have done more to undermine the popularity of extremists than the systematic arrests without charges, torture, targeted assassinations, and construction of Israeli settlement on Palestinian land.

The mass appeal of the Strategy of Domination has been dramatically reinforced by the ability of the Israel Lobby and its

ERRATA: We apologize that: 1) Captions to John Goodwin's photos of Heschel included two errors. The man named as RC Bishop Shannon was in fact Episcopalian Rev. Roger Alling (July/Aug p. 15). A photo dated 2/6/68 was actually taken 2/5/69 (Sept/Oct p. 70). 2) Paula Caplan's article "Vets Aren't Crazy—War Is" included proofing errors that have been corrected online at www.tikkun.org. The worst of them: "numbness, which alternated between rage and despair" should have read "numbness, which alternated with rage and despair" (Sept/Oct p. 44).

allies in the universities, media, and Congress to shut out of debate the Strategy of Generosity. The Lobby's success in pushing out of the national debate any serious consideration of an alternative paradigm based on caring and generosity is then cited as proof that anyone who is committed to rethinking the paradigm must her/himself be "out of touch" and so deeply "unrealistic" that they need not be given serious political attention. Presidential candidates like Kucinich and Gravel are not refuted in argument—they are simply ignored by the "realistic" media.

Still, we in the NSP and *Tikkun* believe that this dynamic can be broken and a new paradigm can become a popular alternative. The paradigm of generosity and caring for others has deep roots not only in our religious and spiritual traditions (or more precisely, in those parts of the tradition that I call "the left hand of God"), but also in our own experience of human relationships. Yet, each of us—yes, dear reader, you and me also—has our own doubts, so fully have we also been influenced by the "realists" and their doubts that human beings can ever sustain a logic of love and caring and generosity.

It would be crude and mistaken to blame the Israel Lobby alone for the prevalence of the Domination Strategy. But it is also misleading to underplay its importance in helping to shape the worldview that gives popular support to militaristic approaches to resolving foreign conflicts. They have a significant and disproportionate role in shaping the public discourse and in discrediting views like those expressed by Congressman Moran when he supported *Tikkun's* strategy of generosity and the centrality of talking to one's opponents rather than developing plans for our country to bomb and kill them.

These issues are being played out again in the increasingly likely (though not inevitable) coming attacks against Iran. When Moran and others sought to have the House Armed Services Committee pass an amendment requiring the president to receive explicit Congressional approval before taking any military action against Iran, it was the Israel Lobby Members of Congress who passed the word that AIPAC opposed that amendment (doing so in a manner clandestine enough to allow AIPAC deniability, something it cannot have in regard to the Iraq war, support for which was explicit in the statements of their national leadership).

And it is Senator Lieberman, a powerful voice for the Israel Lobby in Congress, who is leading the charge for military attacks on Iran and for still defending the wisdom of the Iraq war.

The alternative to the Israel Lobby

ALL THE MORE REASON, THEN, TO LAMENT THE INABILITY OF groups like Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, Americans for Peace Now, Rabbis for Human Rights, the Israel Policy Forum, the Religious Action Center of the Union of Reform Judaism, and the Churches for Middle East Peace, to work together to create a powerful challenge to the Israel Lobby and to AIPAC.

And that has led *Tikkun* to once again take the role being the primary interfaith alternative to the Israel Lobby. This al-

ternative has to be interfaith and not only Jewish because:

1. The Israel Lobby play a major role in shaping American foreign policy that in turn impact on the lives of all Americans, and so all Americans have a stake in the outcome.
2. Christians are right to feel guilt about having abandoned the Jewish people in the past, but that's not a good reason to avoid critiquing destructive aspects of Israeli policy. The Israeli Lobby's policies are bad for the world, for the U.S., and also for Jews and Israel itself. This is an issue for all Americans.
3. The Christian Zionists play a major role in giving the Israel Lobby visibility and political power. So Christians who understand that Israel's interests would be far better served by a voice supporting a strategy of generosity rather than militarism need to join with people of other faiths to support this peace-oriented strategy.
4. The pressure of Jewish "political correctness" is so overwhelming that most Jews are afraid to stand up to it, as are many Christians. Even the peace-oriented organizations like Brit Tzedek v'Shalom rarely join in public critique of the Israel Lobby and have been notably silent in defending Congressman Moran. If we have to wait for the Jewish community to launch an effective counterforce to the Israel Lobby, we will be waiting for many decades. Jewish progressives need and deserve the support of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, and the many atheists, agnostics and secular people who recognize the great danger posed to the Jewish people, to Israel, to the U.S. and to world peace should the policies and worldview of the Israel Lobby continue to predominate in shaping the discourse of American politics.

But continue it will, until a powerful counter-voice can command the attention and loyalties of a significant section of the American public. I was one of many who were disappointed when the philanthropist George Soros decided against putting significant money into the creation of such an alternative voice, even though the voice that was being considered would have only been for Jews and hence excluded the activities of our interfaith NSP. And I see the direct consequences of the absence of that alternative in the way that the major candidates for president in the Democratic primaries continue to compete for who can most slavishly subordinate themselves to the AIPAC line on Middle East issues.

For these reasons, the NSP will function as that interfaith alternative, despite the fact that we have no significant financial backing for this enterprise and hence can only expect limited impact. But there needs to be such a voice, and for the time being, we are it. Are you with us?

If so, please join us at our Spiritual Activism Conference in Washington, D.C. in the spring of 2008 (details will be on our websites: www.spiritualprogressives.org and www.tikkun.org). Urge your friends to join the NSP and bring them with you to the conference! ■

The New Holy War Between Good and Evil

by David R. Loy

I am the twelve-year-old girl, refugee on a small boat, who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea pirate. And I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable of seeing and loving.

—Thich Nhat Hanh, "Call Me By My True Names"

THREE DAYS AFTER THE 9/11 ATTACKS, PRESIDENT BUSH DECLARED that the United States had been called to a new worldwide mission "to rid the world of evil," and two days later he re-affirmed that the U.S. government is determined to "rid the world of evil-doers."

If anything is evil, the 9/11 attacks were evil. Nevertheless, such rhetoric is dangerous, because ridding the world of evil is also what Hitler and Stalin were trying to do.

What was the problem with Jews that required a "final solution"? The earth could be made pure for the Aryan race only by exterminating the Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, etc.—all the vermin who contaminated it. Stalin needed to eliminate many Russian peasants in order to establish a society of collective farms. Both of them were trying to perfect the world by getting rid of its evil elements.

In other words, one of the main causes of evil has been human attempts to eradicate evil. In more Buddhist terms, much of the world's suffering has been a result of our way of thinking about good and evil.

On the same day that Bush made his first pronouncement about ridding the world of evil, the *Washington Post* quoted Joshua Teitelbaum, a scholar who has studied the al-Qaeda movement: "Osama bin Laden looks at the world in very stark, black-and-white terms. For him, the U.S. represents the forces of evil that are bringing corruption and domination into the Islamic world."

What is the difference between bin Laden's view and Bush's? They are opposites, of course—in fact, *mirror* opposites. Let's exchange a few names in that Teitelbaum quote: "George W. Bush looks at the world in very stark, black-and-white terms. For him, al-Qaeda represents the forces of evil that are threatening the Western world." What bin Laden sees as good—an Islamic *jihad* against an impious imperialism—Bush sees as evil. What Bush sees as good—America the defender of freedom and democracy—bin Laden sees as evil. That makes them two different versions of the same 'holy war' between 'good and evil.'

For both of them there is no neutrality: you're either with us or against us. If the world really is a battleground of good and evil forces, the evil that is in the world must be fought and defeated by any means necessary. Once something has been identified as evil, there's no more need to explain it; it is time to focus on destroying it.

Buddhism sees the world differently. Evil, like everything else, has no essence or substance of its own, being a product of impermanent conditions. Instead, Buddhism emphasizes the *three roots of evil*, also known as the three poisons: greed, ill will, and delusion. Karma means that actions motivated by these poisons not only hurt others but rebound upon us ("blowback").

An important aspect of our delusion is the way we get stuck in antithetical ways of thinking: not only between good and evil, but success and failure, rich and poor, and even the basic Buddhist duality between ignorance and enlightenment. Often we distinguish between such opposites because we want one rather than the other, yet psychologically as well as logically we cannot have one without the other because the meaning of each depends upon the other. For example, if it is important for me to live a pure life (however purity is understood), then my life will be preoccupied with (avoiding) impurity. If becoming wealthy is the most important thing, then I am equally concerned about the prospect of poverty. We cannot take one lens without the other, and such spectacles often distort our experience of the world.

What does this mean for the duality of good versus evil? The interdependence of good and evil implies that we can't know what is good until we know what is evil, and we don't feel we are good unless we are fighting against that evil. We can feel secure in *our own* goodness only by attacking and destroying some evil *outside* us. St. George needed that dragon in order to be St. George. His heroic identity required it. The same is true for George W. Bush, whose presidency was going nowhere until 9/11.

That helps us understand why war can be so attractive. Wars cut through the petty problems of daily life and unite us good guys here against the bad guys over there. There is fear in that, of course, but it is also exhilarating. The meaning of life becomes clearer. We love this struggle between good (us) and evil (them), because there is something quite satisfying about it. Think of the plot of every James Bond film, not to mention thousands of other movies. The bad guys are caricatures: being ruthless and without remorse, they must be stopped by any means necessary. Because the villains like to hurt people, it's okay to hurt them. Because they like to kill people, it's okay to kill them. But what is this kind of story really teaching us? That if you want to hurt someone, it's important to demonize him or her first: to fit him or her into your good-versus-evil script. Even school bullies usually begin by looking for some petty offense (often a perceived insult) that they can use to justify their own violence. That is why the first casualty of all wars is truth: the media must "sell" some demonizing story to the public.

The end of the Cold War created a big problem for the United States, and not only for the military. What would we do without an "evil empire" to distract attention from our own institutionalized greed, ill will, and delusion? Those whose goodness depended on the U.S.S.R.'s badness felt adrift. A new enemy was needed, yet Grenada and Panama



Thich Nhat Hanh, center, arrives for a Great Chanting Ceremony at Vinh Nghiem Pagoda in Ho Chi Minh City, southern Vietnam, 2007. Hanh, who was forced to live in exile for nearly four decades, has returned to his homeland for the second time in two years. Hanh has been drawing large crowds with his calls for national reconciliation.

*In this world hatred is
never appeased by hatred;
hatred [vera] is always
appeased by non-hatred
[avera]. This is an
ancient law.*

—The Dhammapada

didn't really fill the shoes. The holy war on worldwide terrorism is much more promising, especially since it seems that we'll never be able to know if or when we've won.

Why do we tend to get stuck in such dualistic ways of thinking? Perhaps the most distinctive teaching of Buddhism is the connection it emphasizes between our *dukkha* (suffering, in the broadest sense) and our delusive sense of self. For Buddhism, the ego-self *is* *dukkha* because it's a psychological construct and therefore inherently ungrounded and insecure—hence the *dis*-ease or sense of lack that haunts the ego-self. This makes us susceptible to things that (we think) can provide the secure identity we crave, including belief systems that unify us into a *group self*. But a group self gains its own identity by distinguishing itself from an *other*, and it's all the better if that other is a threat, or inferior to one's own group, or (best of all!) both. That's why we love scapegoats, onto which we can project our own basic lack: "The problem with my life is *him* ... the problem with our society is *them*."

Such teachings do not mean that there is no evil in the world. If our eyes are open we see plenty of horrible things happening. For Buddhism, however, the fundamental issue is not good-fighting-against-evil, but awakening from ignorance to realize our essential interconnectedness. In place of a deluded sense of self *inside* that seems to be separate from the world *outside*, we realize that we are nondual with the world, *not other* than it. We manifest that interconnectedness by living compassionately.

That every one of us faces this same basic challenge has some uncomfortable implications. Compassion for those who are suffering is not quite the same as the pursuit of social justice, which takes up the cause of the oppressed against the oppressor. As Thich Nhat Hanh has put it, "...I do not think God wants us to take sides, even with the poor" (*Living Buddha, Living Christ*). In *Being Peace* he offers his understanding of peace-making: "If we align ourselves with one side or the other, we will lose our chance to work for peace.... Reconciliation is to understand both sides, to go to one side and describe the suffering being endured by the other side, and then to go to the other side and describe the suffering being endured by the first side. Doing only that will be a great help for peace."

Although that may be an effective approach, a Buddhist perspective does not necessarily imply that we should respond to oppressor and oppressed in the same way. It means that we do not identify with one while rejecting the other. Like it or not, we are nondual with both.

Buddhist peace-making, to be effective, must flow out of our interconnectedness, even with people whose actions we must oppose. To label them evil is to take sides against them, which cuts off connectedness—and thereby the possibility of understanding and feeling compassion for them too. Once you do that, there's little chance for either peace or justice. Self-righteousness is self-defeating.

This means that our efforts to overcome the sufferings due to injustice must be grounded in a sense of connectedness with and compassion for not only the oppressed but also their ignorant oppressors; not just for the poor but also for the deluded rich who don't care about those who go to sleep hungry; not just for the victims of violence but also for the self-destructive perpetrators of violence.

To identify only with the oppressed is not a Buddhist solution because it actually reproduces the same basic problem: the delusion that discriminates *them* (the bad) from *us* (the good). ■

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With thanks to Paul Knitter

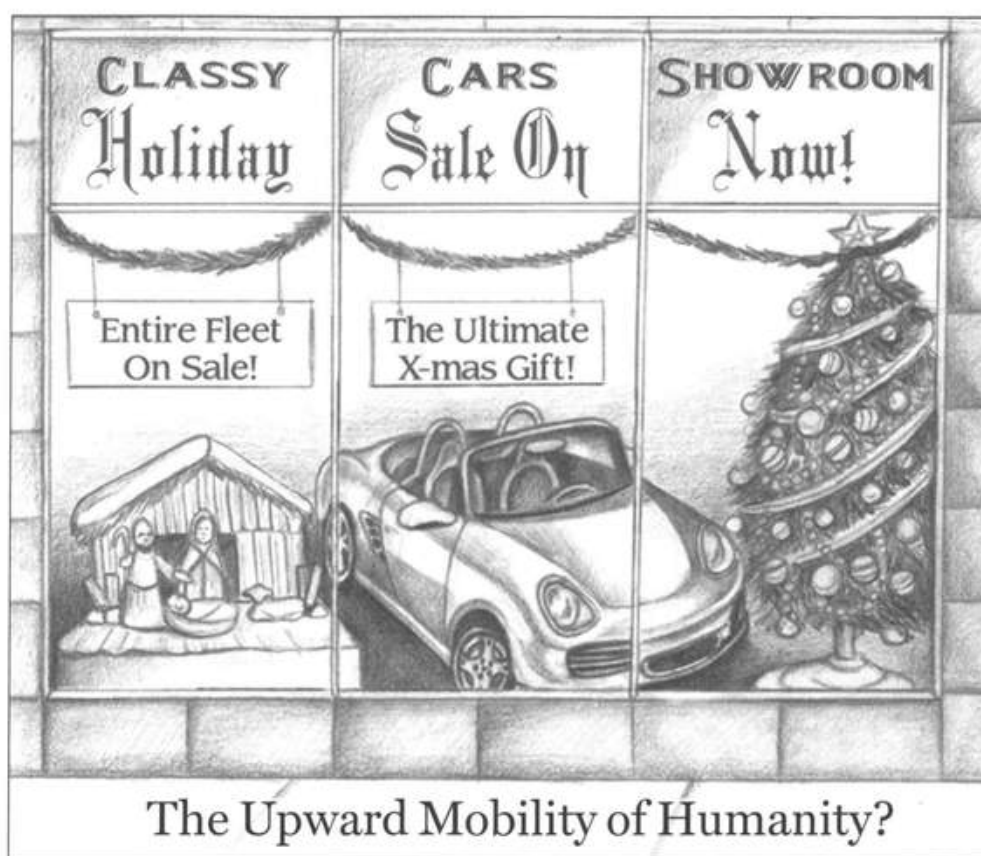
The Downward Mobility of God to a stable at Christmas

by Lynice Pinkard

BEFORE TALKING ABOUT CHRISTMAS and the deep spiritual meanings that it evokes, it's important to set out some context. I believe we are in a nose-dive toward death as a culture, because of the forces of the imperial system, the world domination system, militarism, and our compulsion to consume and acquire. The consumptive anti-human forces that are being unleashed on this planet provides for me the backdrop for the Christmas holiday.

In the Christian scriptures, the prophesying and heralding of the birth of Jesus reflected a general sense that salvation—deep rescue—was coming through this baby. The Jewish people, then, were thinking of Israel and that deep healing and renewal were coming for their nation. As Christians, there's a way that we could extend the notion of deep rescue, healing, and renewal to our world. Jesus comes with the Holy Spirit that baptizes us with the spirit of life, the life giving power of God that heals and repairs what's broken and damaged by the deathly behavior of created beings. At Christmas, in my congregation, I want to raise up this possibility for healing and restoration, for a salvific power of renewal in the midst of death.

One of the primary characteristics we see in empire, and in colonization processes, is that they work from the top down and the outside in. But the Holy Spirit works from the bottom up and the inside out. One of the scriptural principles that we talk about in our



The Upward Mobility of Humanity?

It's easy to forget
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compelled by the
empire to register
for taxes.

congregation is the principle of light; that it's a little light here, a little light there amidst the darkness, and the principle is that God's light has the possibility of penetrating the darkness and transforming it to light. This light is the witness of God's life in the world, and it is how the world will be transformed—through a collaborative process with God, of God's friends embodying light in the world and bringing it to the world.

Amidst the commercialization and the utter opulence of how some people celebrate Christmas, it's easy to forget that Jesus was born in a crowded stable, full of poor people who had been forced to come to Bethlehem for the census. They were poor people, compelled by the empire to register for taxes. This wasn't the traditional German hymn of "Silent Night", with its evocation of cozy comfort and warmth around the fire; instead God's spirit and life were busting through, in Jesus, into the midst of disenfranchisement and poverty and deep oppression, and that speaks to what one might call the downward mobility of God.

Remembering this scene might provide a way to overcome the emotional and spiritual distance that our commercialized symbolism has created. Our congregation doesn't put up a tree, or a crèche—we leave that to the supermarket across the street—but it would be interesting to try and replicate the festival of booths, of people putting up tents. On one side of the street you'd have a storefront with the green and red lights and your traditional Christmas tree, and on the opposite side you'd have tents made out of straw or bales of hay, showing solidarity with homeless and poor people, and creating the kind of busy crowded scene that occurred with all of the people flooding into Bethlehem.

This solidarity is something that we must all embrace, including our children. Most kids' involvement with Christmas emphasizes receiving presents; if they give presents, it is still just a part of receiving, part of the more general process of acquiring and getting, of more and more and more. We should emphasize what it means to really give, and help our children make connections between acquiring and consumption and the suffering of the other people in the world. At the root of this solidarity is the fact that Jesus himself, historically, was not Christian but Jewish. If we, as Christians, seriously commit to follow Jesus—in all of his life-giving, love-connecting generosity—we must bring to our children's consciousness the fact that we are bound to Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, pagans, to everyone, everywhere and to all creation. This, rather than consumption, is what we must reinforce.

As we ask ourselves, with a view toward ethics, what ought we to do in order to eradicate (or at least stem the tide of) the imperialist system of domination, we must remember that we can't just attack deathliness on its own terms; we must meet death with life. If we want to proclaim the salvific power of Christ's love, and to manifest that glory of God in the world, we have to show what God looks like on this planet. We have to collaborate with God by working for the flourishing of life everywhere, for all people and for creation. If Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus, it also celebrates the birth of the Spirit of life, coming up though all of creation to arrest the death process. For Christians, the birth of the Spirit of life in *our* hearts means *we* must bring more love, more amnesty and grace, more mercy and compassion, more radical hospitality and welcome, more peace and healing and a greater determination to produce a just and free society. In essence, Christmas allows us to witness the power of God's life coming out under its own force in and through us. ■

Rev. Lynice Pinkard is a pastor at the First Congregational Church in Oakland, California, and a therapist whose work is dedicated to decolonizing the human spirit and resisting the forces and structures of domination that destroy us and our planet.

The Real Miracle

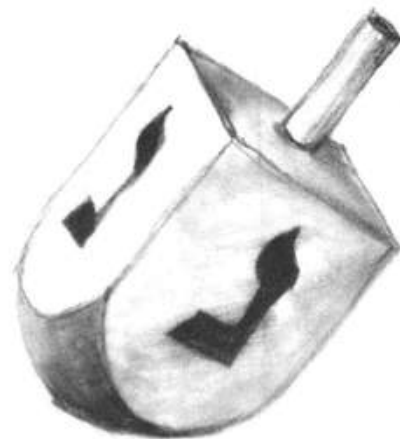
by Adina Allen

CHANUKAH, *CHAG HAURIM* (THE FESTIVAL of Lights) is a celebration of the success of a small group of rebels against a dominant and oppressive power. Beyond the lighting of the menorah and spinning of the dreidel, this holiday has many important lessons for the Jewish people today.

The historical context of the holiday is the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid King Antiochus IV. In his attempt to unify the world under a common Hellenistic culture, Antiochus IV sacked the Holy Temple of Jerusalem and attempted to force the Jews to conform to the religion of the Seleucid Empire. Fighting for freedom of religion, Mattathias, and shortly thereafter his son, Judah Maccabee, united a band of Jews and revolted against the powerful Seleucids.

Forming this band of Jews was a feat in and of itself. During this time in Jewish history there was a deep divide between those *Chasidim*, or pious Jews, who were strict adherents to the laws of the Torah, and the assimilating Jews, who had forgone parts of their Jewish practice and identity in order to embrace the philosophy and customs of the Hellenistic culture surrounding them. On the one hand, many *Chasidim* were reluctant to fight due to their belief that as long as they remained devout Jews they were under divine protection, and that it was sacrilegious to revolt against the king, whom they believed God had put in place to punish them. On the other hand, there were those assimilating Jews who were growing rich and powerful with Hellenization, and who saw many of the traditions of Judaism as outdated and limiting, separating them from the rest of the culture. Without the Maccabees, the rebellion would not have been successful, but without the religious knowledge and devotion of the *Chasidim*, there would not have been a tradition to pass on.

In 167 BCE, with the formation of a band of both assimilating and pious Jews, despite the criticism from people on both sides of the split, Mattathias and then Judah Maccabee began a guerilla war. Once the resistance movement began, there were yet more splits between the values of political resistance and of obeying the Torah. The militant *Chasidim* who joined the revolt refused to violate the Torah by fighting on the Sabbath, making them extremely vulnerable to attack. Revering the Torah but interpreting its commandments in a new light, Mattathias and his group decided that the ultimate value of the Torah was to live (not die) by its laws, and so they resolve to fight on the Sabbath and therefore to save the resistance movement. As Irving Greenberg describes in *The Jewish Way*, without the fundamentalist *Chasidim* there would have been no Maccabean revolt; without moderate Hellenization and reinterpretation, the revolt would



In the traditional Chanukah game of spinning the dreidel, the four sides of the dreidel depict the Hebrew letters, from right: nun, gimmel, hey, and shin. They stand for the saying, "Nes Gadol Haya Sham," meaning "a great miracle happened there."

The Maccabees
retook the Temple by
force. Instead of
waiting for divine
intervention, they
became partners
with God to make
the miracle happen.

not have succeeded.

The dilemma came up again, even after the revolt gained a partial victory. By 165 the Maccabees had been granted the right to observe *kashrut* and to follow the laws of the Torah. However, they were not in control of the city or the Temple. The Chasidim backed away from the resistance movement. Having been granted the right to practice their religion, they returned to their belief that God would intervene on their behalf and would reclaim the Temple. After initially waiting for God's miracle, Judah and his band reclaimed the Temple by force on 25 Kislev.

While the apolitical Chasidim were content with their partial victory and believed that final reclamation of the Holy Temple would happen through God's miraculous intervention, Judah was operating out of a covenantal model in which humans could not wait for God to take action but had to be partners with God in bringing about the miracles they wanted to manifest. Here, God is seen through the actions of the Jewish people themselves.

There are important lessons from the Chanukah story for the Jewish people today. As in ancient times, there are many distinct sects and branches of Judaism today, from strict adherents to the laws of the Torah to those who identify as culturally Jewish and are minimally connected to the religion. We can learn from Chanukah that no one group has all the answers or holds the key to salvation for the Jewish people, and, therefore, no group should be written off, however the expression of their Judaism may appear to others.

Secondly, while the coalition of the pious and assimilating created the foundation for the Maccabee's victory, their success would have been impossible without Mattathias' actions of reinterpreting the laws of the Torah. Had all of the resisters refused to fight on the Sabbath, their movement would have been crushed and they would have remained under Antiochus's control, unable to live as Jews. Today, while it is essential to be learned in the laws of Torah as they are written, it is also vital to understand the historical circumstances under which these laws were compiled and how they have been applied since. In order to ensure the continued survival of the Jewish people, we must remain in constant dialogue with our past as we work to reinterpret and reapply our Torah for the present day. In this way we are able to keep the words of the Torah alive from generation to generation.

Finally, while the Rabbis who later interpreted the Chanukah story emphasized the divine miracle of the finding of holy oil in the Temple, which had been defiled by the Seleucids, the true miracle of Chanukah is that there was no "miracle" at all. From the story we see that God is no longer intervening as a separate force, but, rather, we see the power of God through the actions of human beings. The Maccabee's commitment to God motivated them to stand up to the widely accepted Hellenistic culture and to reclaim their Judaism from the hands of their oppressors. We are no longer in the age of having to interpret God's miraculous interventions in human affairs, but rather to claim our responsibility to stand up to oppression and to act out of our faith. This, therefore, allows for the covenantal bond between God and the Jewish people to grow in strength and depth, as we are able to act in partnership. By overcoming our own sense of despair, by being willing to struggle against the empire of cruelty and oppression whenever and wherever it manifests, we affirm our covenantal bond with God, thereby becoming the people of Israel in this generation. ■

All historical facts are taken from *The Jewish Way* by Irving Greenberg (Jason Aronson Inc, 1998).

Adina Allen is Assistant Editor of Tikkun.

Scapegoat Alert

by Glen Stassen

PETER ZVAGULIS, A BRILLIANT LATVIAN MEDIA SPECIALIST AND CHRISTIAN ethicist, has developed a system of Early Warning Markers for measuring the intensity of hate speech that can lead to violence and genocide. He helps us name hate speech when it happens, and works to prevent its effectiveness. He studied Nazi propaganda in the Third Reich in Germany, pre-genocide propaganda in Rwanda, and hate propaganda in the former Yugoslavia. In all three cases the methods of propaganda manipulation "resembled each other in their main characteristics and components.... The Tutsi ethnic group became for the Hutu extremists what the Jews were for the Nazis: scapegoats to blame for everything and an easy cover for the increasingly authoritarian concentration of power in the hands of the leadership.... Even an African version of *The Protocols of Zion* was created."

Zvagulis's goal is to apply his diagnostic tool in his native Latvia, to prevent hostility between ethnic Latvians and ethnic Russians there. His results have direct application to the United States; desperate politicians trying to polarize our electorate as we approach next November's elections could threaten us with hate speech and code words against Muslims.

In all three cases, "The density of the new content loaded into the collective unconscious was achieved by consistent and repeated use of a set of core codewords, symbols, associated images, and popular themes." These were "based on an instinctive emotional response to seemingly threatening social conditions."

The propaganda turned frustrations such as a sense of disempowerment and loss of social identity—especially because of the high unemployment rate among young men and economic deprivation—into blame and hate toward a target group. It stimulated hateful thinking by arousing "two very powerful emotions: fear and anger." These emotions are more powerful than logical, cognitive demonstration of the untruth of the propaganda; to counter them we have to get at the causes of fear and anger.

Similarly, the highly respected neuroscientist Drew Westen has just published a powerfully insightful book that all spiritual progressives should read: *The Political Brain*. From fascinating neurological research, Westen knows, more than almost anyone, how our brains work. He says what Zvagulis says: our emotions shape what we perceive more powerfully than rationalistic, value-neutral, detached, positivistic thinking. If I were running for president, I would rush to hire Westen as my strategist and speechwriter.

I write as an evangelical Christian. (There are varieties of evangelicals. I plea, dear reader, that you not stereotype us all under one label. I am planning a column soon on some self-corrections, some kinds of repentance that we evangelicals need.) One strength some evangelicals have is that we have not succumbed to the "Enlightenment myth" that our faith should be only rationalistic and should avoid all emotion. We believe people are sinners, and we need conversion. We believe there is a healthy place for passion and emotion in our faith. If repentance for wrong and gratitude to God aren't worth a little feeling, what is? Since emotion shapes perception more powerfully than purely rational cognition does, to combat hate speech we need strong emotional loyalties to the best in our faith traditions. If I, as an evangelical, can contribute just

a bit to spiritual progressives, I offer a plea to not think we are so hyper-rational that we must look down our noses at calls for passionate conversion from sinful hate to faithful compassion, and even a radical loyalty to love your enemy and pray for them (Matthew 5:43-48). I'm passionate about that.

Zvagulis uses René Girard's mimetic theory with its Scapegoat Mechanism, and James W. McClendon's thesis that people's perceptions are shaped by their "community of reference." If the propaganda arouses enough hate, it "corrupts the power structures. The normal political rules no longer apply; political shortcuts appear instead of the regular political processes.... With the society in crisis, the identity of individuals as members of that society becomes less and less secure. They start looking for opportunities that provide them with a new identity." They join a group that promises a new identity and a group defense against the perceived enemy.

Because the strongest moral defenses are rooted in community membership and community virtue, faith communities "have a strong potential for sustaining and promoting a hate-speech-resisting environment." Sociologists tell us that evangelical churches and more conservative Jewish synagogues often have a stronger sense of group membership and identity than churches and synagogues whose faith has been thinned and diluted by Enlightenment rationalism. Therefore, these faith communities can give the sense of community membership that is a bulwark against ideologies of hate—if these communities are clear that loving your neighbor and being faithful to biblical teachings of compassion and justice are essential to our identity. We all have a huge stake in not denigrating and stereotyping evangelicals and faithful Jews—or Muslims—but in encouraging us all to be faithful to our scriptural teachings of justice and compassion.

And something analogous is true of our sense of American identity. For strong historical reasons, many spiritual progressives have been reluctant to speak in nationalistic terms. I have experienced this in my own Anabaptist tradition and my family's memory of pre-fascist German nationalism that we emigrated from. Many of us have our own ethnic memories of dangerous persecution based in nationalistic ideologies. But we also have strong family memories of seeking and finding freedom from religious persecution in the United States. Our families fled from nationalistic, authoritarian, and militaristic societies to find human rights, the right to religious liberty, and acceptance of our yearning to breathe free in the United States. (Not all minorities found this. We remember especially the original "immigrants," Native Americans, and the forced immigrants, African Americans. These minorities still struggle for a society of human rights, liberty, and justice for all, hoping to see a step or two in that direction one day. We all know we yearn for a society with human rights rather than militarism and propagandized polarization. So we rightly distinguish gratitude for a political system that pledges "liberty and justice for all" from militaristic and racist nationalism. We have a patriotism of human rights that is a bulwark against jingoistic nationalism.

What Zvagulis finds is that membership in a community with a commitment to human rights for all is a strong defense against propaganda-manipulated hate and polarization. Similarly, David Gushee's *Righteous Gentiles of the Holocaust* found that non-Jews who rescued Jews from the Holocaust usually had some healthy patriotic loyalty to a vision of society with human rights for all.

In 1969, when Louisville had become the first city in the South to pass an open-housing law against racist exclusionary real estate practices, I was leaving for a research position at Harvard. We were purposefully about to rent our home to the Dean of Students at Kentucky State University and his African American family. One of my white neighbors came to talk me out of it. I knew he saw himself as a patriotic American because I often saw him flying his American flag. I said, "Jim, this is the United States of America; we stand for liberty and justice for all. This is 1969, we have decided against that kind of racial prejudice." Jim was quiet. He had no response. He ceased his objections. And no other neighbor made any objections. Being American is



not all bad, particularly if we define our patriotic membership not in terms of making wars, but in human rights for all. Group membership can be a strong defense against exclusionary hate.

American Muslim immigrants tell me they have found jobs, relative freedom, and human rights in the United States. And with our country's religious liberty, their community members are Muslims because they identify, not because they are coerced. It is a better kind of Islam. So they think there's a reason why mosques in the United States would reject an imam who preached hate, and why the FBI cannot find any al Qaeda cells in this country. Our strongest defense against terrorism is not making wars against Muslim countries; it is our tradition of human rights.

Hate and fear are based in a sense of powerlessness, victimization, and relative economic deprivation. A just peacemaking strategy is to gather together as communities, affirm we have strength in cooperation, and work together for one another's empowerment and participation in our human-rights society. Abraham Lincoln said it: United we stand; divided we fall. ■

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

Note: Peter Zvagulis' article is "Allowing Space for Peacemaking: Measuring the Intensity and Impact of Hate-Speech," in Ethical Thinking at the Crossroads of European Reasoning, ed. Parush Parushev et al (Prague: International Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007), 173-189.

The American dream is for all of us. Immigration Reform march in Chicago, 2006. Reasoned argument alone is rarely enough to counter scapegoating. We need to foster an inclusive sense of community, and speak up for a patriotic vision of our country that stands for human rights for all people.

How Jewish was Jesus?

by Tony Campolo

THERE IS A CONSENSUS AMONG BIBLICAL SCHOLARS that Jesus and the New Testament can only be understood in the context of the ancient Jewish socio-cultural system. However, Christian theologies over the centuries have largely developed in synthesis with Greek philosophy. This synthesis has led to many distortions of the teachings of Jesus and the practices of the Church.

One of the most important consequences of adopting Greek categories of thought has been the influence Greek thinking has had on the ways Christians have developed their understanding of human nature. The Greeks thought of human beings as consisting of two distinct parts: body and soul. For instance, the neo-Platonists of the Hellenistic culture taught that prior to birth each of us was a pure essence, existing in a transcendent spirit world. Then, according to those ancient philosophers, something tragic happened. We were born! Each of us at birth was thrust into human flesh. Each and every one of us took on a physical body. The tragedy of this incarnation was that, to the ancient Greeks, "the flesh" was the source of all evil. The parts of us that were physical were considered the enemy of our spiritual essences, which, they sadly said, were temporarily imprisoned in our bodies. In simple language, that which was spiritual was good and that which was "of the flesh" was evil.

Sexual Implications

THE CONSEQUENCES OF GREEK THINKING WERE FAR REACHING. Especially following the teachings of St. Augustine in the fourth century, this spirit/body dichotomy led Christians to view sex in very negative ways. Sex, being a physical act, was, by its very nature, considered to be something evil. It wasn't long before Christians came to think that the "original" sin of Adam and Eve, which brought decay and death into the world, was somehow related to the sexual act. Sexual intercourse came to be viewed as a necessary evil solely for the purpose of procreation, and certainly not as something to be enjoyed.

While in seminary, we theology students whispered a common joke among ourselves that we were brought up to believe that sex was a dirty filthy thing—and that you should save it for the person that you married!

If we Christians had stayed with Hebraic anthropology, we would have developed a far healthier attitude towards sex. The ancient Jews differed from the Greeks who taught the mind/body dichotomy, and offered instead a holistic view of human nature. The ancient Jews certainly believed that there was a spiritual dimension to human nature in that they believed that something of God was "breathed" into every person from the first day of creation on—giving to each human being an infinitely precious sacredness (see Genesis 2:7). For Jews, God so permeated our bodies that the two could not be separated. The bodies of every human being were always to be viewed as saturated with the presence of God.

Hebraic anthropology freed sexuality from the denigration so common in Christian

theologies, and established the sexual act as something that could create intimacy between persons rather than just as an unholy biological function promoted primarily for reproductive purposes. A careful reading of the New Testament will show that Jesus was Hebraic in his thinking and, therefore, it can be assumed that he would have viewed sexuality in this very positive way. A lot of feelings of guilt could have been avoided, and much help could have been provided for those struggling with sexual adjustments in marriage, if Christians were into the mind of the Jewish Jesus instead of the Greek St. Augustine.

The salvation Jesus offered us was not simply something to free the spirit from "the lusts of the flesh," but a salvation that was for the *whole* person. He came to make people whole (see Acts 9:34; Mark 5:34). Jesus, as a true Jew, accepted the creation story and therefore believed that all that his heavenly Father had created was good, and that goodness certainly included the body with all of its functions. Christians today would have much healthier sex lives and a more life-affirming philosophy if they shared Christ Jesus' mindset.

Concerning the Resurrection

PRIOR TO THE SYNTHESIS OF GREEK NEO-PLATONISM with Christian theologies, the writers of the New Testament clearly taught that in the life after death, those whose lives had been yielded to the lordship of Jesus would have resurrected bodies. Their new bodies, they believed, would be transformed and different from their natural bodies, but, nevertheless, still be physical bodies. Not only did they believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus, they also believed that all who have surrendered their lives to Jesus will have resurrected bodies.

This doctrine is a far cry from what you are likely to hear at most Christian funerals where preachers say, "The body is in the grave, but the spirit has gone up to Heaven." The early Christians, like Jesus, affirmed that doctrine of the physical resurrection of the whole person, rather than the Greek doctrine of spiritual immortality (see I Corinthians 15:20, 35-44). As a Christian, I have no idea how God will reconstruct our bodies after they have turned to dust, but from what we are learning about the possibilities of reconstructing bodies from DNA, such a thing does not seem unthinkable.

Whether or not you accept what the early Christians thought about the afterlife, I want you to know that I believe it.

Christian Existentialism

A VERY IMPORTANT BENEFIT THAT COULD COME FROM REJECTING THE NEO-PLATONIST anthropology and embracing the Hebraic view of human nature embraced by Jesus is that it could lead to Christians embracing a positive religious form of existentialism. If there is no "essential self" that existed prior to birth, then we Christians are freed from that pop psychology, so neo-Platonist in its implications, which tells us that each of us is called to find himself or herself.

The oracle of Delphi told Socrates to find himself because there was a presupposition that there was such a thing as a pre-existing essential self, waiting to be discovered through introspection. Hebraic anthropology would never lead to such a conclusion. Furthermore, I think it would save a lot of people a lot of trouble. When I consider the time wasted by innumerable young people who go off to "find themselves"—usually in Boulder, Colorado—I feel like weeping. If they realized that there is no pre-existing essential self waiting to be discovered through introspection, they would be released to see that it remains for each person to create his or her life's essential meaning. That can be done only one way, according to scripture: through commitments. We are what we commit ourselves to, and the uncommitted have no essential meaning to their lives. The Hebrew prophets called people to



In the entire history of Christian art, how many depictions of the sexual act show it to be holy?

"Stay Me With Apples"
1925, wood engraving by
Eric Gill (British, 1882-
1940).



"Rimprovero di Adamo ed Eva" by Domenichino, 1633.

will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, Says the Lord.

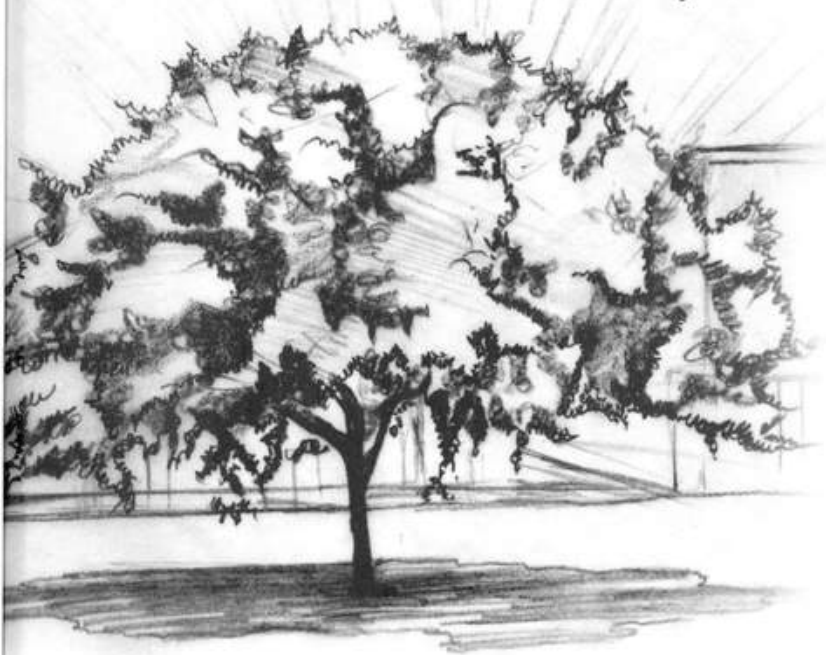
—Isaiah 65:17-25

Jesus, being Jewish, embraced Isaiah's vision of a new world. So did the early Christians. Such a commitment can be shared with our Jewish brothers and sisters, and together we can make the commitment to struggle to actualize that vision in the here and now. ■

Anthony Campolo, Ph.D., professor emeritus at Eastern University, is the founder of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education, an organization that develops schools and social programs in various third world countries and in cities across North America. He is the author of thirty-four books, including his most recent two, Letters to a Young Evangelical and The God of Intimacy and Action.

Jena: A Missed Opportunity for Healing

by Sheldon H. Laskin



*Southern trees bear strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.*

Strange Fruit
Abel Meeropol (1937)*

On November 1, 1892, John Hastings, a black man accused of murder in Catahoula Parish, Louisiana was lynched, along with his son and daughter. Other officially documented lynchings in Catahoula Parish include the following:

- June 25, 1903, Lamb Whitley, black, accused of murderous assault.
- July 16, 1908, Miller and Sam Gaines and Albert Godlin, black. The Gaines were accused of arson and Mr. Godlin of inciting arson.

Some or all of these seven lynchings may have occurred in what is currently La Salle Parish because in 1910, western Catahoula Parish broke off and became the newly formed La Salle Parish, the parish seat of which is Jena.

Thanks to the blogosphere, black radio, and Amy Goodman—and no thanks to the mainstream media—the basic facts of the Jena 6 case are now generally well-known. After black students sat under a tree at Jena High School typically used by white students, three nooses were hung from the tree. When the school board reversed the principal's decision to expel the white students who hung the nooses, a series of escalating interracial fights culminated in six black students being arrested and charged with the attempted murder of a white student who was healthy enough to attend a social function the same night of the incident. No comparable charges have been filed against any white students, notwithstanding a prior

*The tree from
which the nooses
were hung (left),
and all that's left
of it now (below).*



* Writing under the pseudonym Lewis Allan, Abel Meeropol (1903-1986) wrote the poem "Strange Fruit," which was recorded by Billie Holiday. Meeropol and his wife Anne adopted Michael and Robert Rosenberg following the execution of their parents, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, in 1953.

JOURNEY TO BHUTAN, LAND OF GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS, WITH RENOWNED SPIRITUAL TEACHERS



In a remote corner of the Himalayas, the last living Vajrayana Buddhist kingdom is preparing to embrace a new constitution and a new king. It is seeking a seat at the table of sovereign, modern nations and is bravely setting out to do this in a manner that protects its ancient traditions, unique Buddhist heritage and culture, and lush, unspoiled environment.

Together with our two tour scholars, Rabbi Irwin Kula and Laura Simms, we will journey through this last Shangri-La, and explore the history and importance of tradition for a country, its culture, its people and, most importantly, generations to come.

Along with exploring Buddhist rituals, we will partake in a traditional Passover Seder led by Rabbi Kula. We will experience the transformative power of the Seder to move us from suffering in all its forms to the freedom and joy that are our ever-present inheritance as human beings.

RABBI IRWIN KULA is a nationally recognized educator and lecturer who serves as a consultant to both corporate and family foundations, as well as religious and philanthropic institutions and non-profit agencies, on compassionate leadership development and institutional change. Rabbi Kula is the president of CLAL—The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, a leadership training institute, think tank and resource center.

LAURA SIMMS is a senior teacher of Shambhala Buddhism and Shambhala Arts, as well as a professional storyteller, writer and activist working worldwide for peace and human rights. A fellow at The Arthur Mauro Peace and Justice Center in Manitoba, she also co-teaches the Next Generation Environmental Program for the Murie Center for the Environment in Wyoming. Laura is also the founder and director of the Gaideh Project, an international initiative using storytelling, creativity, meditation and reconciliation for individuals and communities.

TRIP DATES: APRIL 30 – MAY 14, 2008

TRIP COST: \$5,980, WHICH INCLUDES AIRFARE FROM LOS ANGELES



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assault on a black student who attempted to attend an all-white party and an assault at gunpoint on three blacks. In the latter case, one of the blacks has been charged with assaulting the whites and stealing the gun, even though the blacks promptly reported the incident to the police, claiming self-defense.

The Jena case, with its potent evocation of the South's long history of terrorism by lynching combined with a racist prosecutor bent on over-charging blacks while ignoring white-on-black violence, has struck a deep chord in the black community, leading to the largest series of nationwide civil rights marches and protests since the 1960s. But what has been ignored in the controversy is that the school board officials, from the beginning, missed a unique opportunity to use this sad case as a vehicle to educate the white high school students of Jena to the legacy of lynching and discrimination against blacks for which the South—and the nation as a whole—is responsible. Had the Jena school officials reacted with compassion and sensitivity to the discovery of the nooses, perhaps the case could have been a springboard to the repentance and atonement necessary to move forward from that legacy and achieve a meaningful reconciliation between the races.

Perhaps the Jena school officials, instead of expelling or suspending the guilty white students, could have assigned them a research project on the history and effects of lynching in Louisiana. Part of that assignment could have included interviewing relatives of Lee and David Blackman, brothers of an alleged murderer, last of the thirty-three documented lynching victims in the six parishes that border La Salle Parish, who were killed in Rapides Parish, southwest of La Salle Parish, on June 2, 1928. Finally, the students could have been required to report on their findings at an interracial community meeting, at which further dialogue on the issue could perhaps have taken place.

The purpose of the student assignment would not have been to make local whites wallow in guilt. Indeed, of the approximately 400 documented lynchings that took place in Louisiana between 1878 and 1946 none appear to have taken place in present-day La Salle Parish, with the possible exception of the seven Catahoula Parish lynchings described in this article, the last of which occurred two years before La Salle Parish was established. Had the school officials assigned Professor Michael Pfeifer's *Rough Justice: Lynchings and American Society, 1874-1947* to the white students as part of the assignment, they would have learned that lynchings rarely occurred in the Louisiana north central upcountry, including La Salle Parish. Lynchings were not used in the white majority upcountry to control a black labor force, as was the case in the cotton-rich Red River Delta and Ouachita River Valley, where blacks were in the majority. Rather, when lynchings occurred in the upcountry, they largely resulted from clashes between poor whites and poor blacks in a marginal cotton economy. This research could have given the students an appreciation of the class and economic bases of lynching, perhaps helping them to understand that lynching was as much a means of misdirecting poor white dissatisfaction with their economic lot as it was a means of controlling blacks.

In addition, the students could legitimately have explored what positive local factors may have contributed to the absence of lynching; perhaps the local churches or respected parish elders may have fostered an ethos that lynching was not acceptable. For all the record shows, an abhorrence of lynching might have been a reason that La Salle Parish broke off from Catahoula Parish. Should this have proven to be the case, the Jena case could have been a vehicle for fostering local pride, rather than the shame Jena residents must now be feeling.

Rather than requiring local whites to wallow in guilt, the purpose of the assignment would have been threefold.

First, at the most basic level, the assignment would have been to teach the students the local history of racism and race based violence. In Santayana's memorable phrase, "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." But these teenage students could hardly be expected to remember a past they did not live. The Jena school officials' abdication of their role as educators is inexcusable. Instead, the choices made by those officials inflamed the situation and further polarized the community along racial lines.

The principal of Jena High School initially expelled the white students who hung the nooses. This harshly punitive reaction naturally resulted in white resentment and defensiveness, which is demonstrated by the almost universal reaction of the white citizens of Jena, in the face of the racial symbolism of nooses hanging from Southern trees, that they are not racists and that this is not a case of racism. But then the school (*continued on page 73*)

NSP Update

Notes from the Network of Spiritual Progressives

by Nichola Torbett

THE NSP HAS SET OUT TO TRANSFORM ALL OUR INSTITUTIONS, POLICIES, and social practices so that they encourage rather than undermine our ability to treat every human being as an embodiment of the sacred (as having “inherent worth and dignity,” in secular terms) and our ability to respond to the universe with awe, wonder, and radical amazement.

We figure that will take us until at least next Tuesday.

But seriously, where does one start on a task that large?

According to a group of local NSP leaders, including Kim Carlyle, Pat Allen, Joanna Garritano, and Shannon Thomas, the way to effect that sort of massive change is to work on three levels simultaneously: the political, the cultural, and the personal. This framework provides a clear way for me to explain some of what we’re up to as a movement.

Political Transformation: An Ethical Way to End the Occupation of Iraq

ONE OF OUR PRIMARY FOCUSES THIS YEAR IS ON RAISING CONSCIOUSNESS in such a way that we end the occupation of Iraq and prevent war in Iran, Pakistan, and elsewhere. We offer a unique strategy for doing that, one that is desperately needed in the antiwar and peace movements.

On a recent strategy call with antiwar leaders, Representatives Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) and Jim Moran (D-VA) made it clear that Congress is unlikely to defund the occupation at this point; they simply don’t have the votes to defeat the appropriations bills.

In order to get those votes, the American people need to step outside their private spheres and let Congress know that we will not condone needless suffering in our names.

The first task in getting people to take that step is to make it clear that an American presence in the region is fueling suffering for the Iraqi people as well as our soldiers. Bolstered by the Petraeus report, many Americans still believe we are doing more good than harm in Iraq. What we need to make clear is that our unilateral presence in the region not only fuels violence against anyone who appears to be aligned with us as an occupying force, but also prohibits the creation of a multilateral, international intervention that might actually be able to bring about a resolution to the conflict. That’s painful news. Americans don’t want to believe that their country could be in the wrong. Accepting the reality of what has been done in our names in Iraq requires humility, maturity, and repentance. When one realizes one has done something wrong, the mature response is to apologize and do everything one can to make the situation right.

On an individual level, that repentance means applying unrelenting pressure to Congress to demonstrate repentance on our behalf. National repentance involves relinquishing rights to ongoing military bases in Iraq and exclusive (continued on page 58)

rights to oil and contracts. It also means paying reparations and helping to fund reconstruction. These are the prerequisites for involvement of an international, multilateral peace force in Iraq.

Americans resist giving up exclusive rights in Iraq and funding reparations and rebuilding because they are operating out of a paradigm of scarcity, fear, and a need to control. That's why the NSP believes that the antiwar and peace movements need to articulate a whole new framework for national security. Congresspeople, activists, and all compassionate Americans must work together to change the deep assumption that the way to make America safe, and ensure that we have enough, is to dominate and control the rest of the world.

A major emphasis of the antiwar movement in the coming months must be an alternative framework for security, one in which the United States acts in solidarity with other nations and turns our attention from the unbridled pursuit of narrowly conceived national self-interest to acting on our concern for the well-being of all people in the world. The Network of Spiritual Progressives is calling for a Strategy of Generosity in Homeland Security to counter our current Strategy of Domination.

Here's what you can do to help. (See the "Get Involved" section of our website, www.spiritualprogressives.org, for details and materials.)

- ☐ Give a presentation to the peace and antiwar groups in your area and urge them to start talking in these terms.
- ☐ Working with these groups or on your own, organize a teach-in, town hall meeting, or other forum around these ideas. We can supply materials and talking points.
- ☐ Have a house party using our videos on the Strategy of Generosity and the Global Marshall Plan.
- ☐ Get your city council to endorse the Strategy of Generosity and the Global Marshall Plan.
- ☐ Become a delegate to the national convention of the political party of your choice, and join us there in bringing this message to those in attendance. In our next issue, we'll include more details on how to use the electoral process to advance these ideas.

Cultural Transformation: Replacing a Culture of Materialism and Greed with a Culture of Love and Generosity

THE PARADIGM OF SCARCITY, FEAR, AND NARROWLY DEFINED SELF-INTEREST IS reinforced by many aspects of our culture.

For example, we learn that in order to succeed in the world of work, you must focus on maximizing profit and making yourself look as good as possible. To the degree that you relate to others, you do so in the hopes of finding ways for those people to help you advance your interests—by becoming a customer or vendor, by connecting you to someone who will contribute financially, by putting in a good word for you, and so on.

The media intensifies this, presenting us with sitcoms and movies in which the "given" is that everyone only cares about themselves, and with news reporting and commentaries that take for granted that our highest goals should be unlimited economic growth for the country and personal prosperity for individuals.

Details and resources for the following cultural transformation projects can be found in the Get Involved section of our website.

- ☐ Start a New Bottom Line group in your workplace or among local professionals in your field. In this group, envision what your workplace or profession would look like if the bottom line were enhancing everyone's ability to be loving, kind, compassionate, generous, ecologically sensitive, and filled with awe and wonder at the universe. Don't censor yourselves in the early meetings. Dream big, and then determine one or



"Descartes Dream" by David Hewson, gold water gilding/oil on wood, courtesy of JHS Gallery, Taos, New Mexico

Science and Spirit

*One reality, two kinds of knowledge.
How can they work together to save the world?*

By David Belden

IF SCIENCE SAVES US FROM RELIGION GONE BAD, WHO OR WHAT WILL SAVE US FROM science gone bad?

Scientists used to have a very powerful argument when challenged by religious people. They pointed to the huge advance in the material wellbeing of people that has been accomplished since the scientific paradigm took over a few hundred years ago. That argument, however, has been put in doubt in the past several decades by environmentalists who have shown that the production of material goods, chemicals and electronics made possible by science has simultaneously been poisoning our air, land and water. Our complex and relatively fragile economic systems may not be able to weather the massive climate changes now in the works. Our civilization is in peril. Moreover, social scientists tell us that depression is rising in rich countries and that extra wealth does not make us happier. Spiritual people have been saying for a good fifty years that we already have "enough" and don't need to continue scientific progress geared heavily to practical application and research paid for and guided by the profit needs of major corporations.

You may think that good science is all we need to save ourselves from the misuse of science. It is scientists who are now telling us of the damage our scientific, technological society is wreaking on global climate, on numerous species, and on our health. Perhaps these same scientists will come up with scientific solutions?



Science + Spirit vs. the Religion of Scientism

SOME OF OUR LEADING SPIRITUAL PROGRESSIVES HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS THAT SCIENTISTS can save us. They distinguish between “science” and “scientism.” Science is value neutral. Scientism ascribes value to some kinds of knowledge and activity, and withholds legitimacy from other kinds: it is the functional equivalent of a religion, telling us what is and is not sacred. Science can help us. Scientism has failed us. Science pursues a value-neutral inquiry into the physical and chemical aspects of the world that can be studied under controlled circumstances and publicly observed experiments that yield hypotheses that can be verified (or at least falsified) through subsequent observation. By contrast, in the words of Michael Lerner, Editor of this magazine, “Scientism is the worldview held by a majority of people in the western world that claims that all that ‘is’ and all that ‘can be known’ is verifiable or falsifiable through the scientific method, and that which cannot be so measured is simply opinion, belief, or fantasy. It cannot be known and sensibly talked about and hence should be relegated to the private sphere.” It is the contention of many spiritual progressives that this scientism has taken over and dominates the world.

Many practicing scientists reject scientism. Most make very modest claims about the world, almost always confined to the data that they have carefully observed or studied. But, quoting Lerner again, “in the rise of capitalist societies, the desire to discredit the feudal system and its ideological foundations in various corrupted forms of religion and spirituality gave rise to a new dominant religious worldview: the religion of scientism. And scientism has so deeply sunk into the consciousness of most people in the society who have ever undergone the ‘mind treatment’ that is dumped onto children by the public school systems and massively reinforced by the media, that by the time they are adults they swear loyalty to the dominant religion of scientism in their personal lives, their lives in the workplace or profession, and in their public statements about what they believe and profess.”

The claim that there is a “dominant religion” in Western societies, and that it is not Christianity but scientism, seems counter-intuitive to most people in the West. After all, they say, there has been an upsurge of fundamentalism around the world—this is the major religious reality of the twenty-first century. But if you’ve been reading this magazine over the past twenty-two years, you get a very different picture, as writers like Peter Gabel, Antonia Juhasz, Joan Chittister, Svi Shapiro, Cornel West, Zygmunt Bauman, Jerry Mander, David Abrams, David Korten, Henry Giroux, Marjorie Kelly, Roger Friedland, Barbara Ehrenreich, Amnon Raz, Jeremy Rifkin, Riane Eisler, and many others have together painted a picture of a globalized capitalist culture whose values are quite different from the values of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and most other religious and spiritual traditions (except to the extent that those religions themselves have sought to, as Michael Lerner puts it, “cuddle up to ruling elites” and reshape their religion to fit with the dominant values of the capitalist order). This capitalist order uses scientism as its underpinning, justifying itself as the primary way to maximize the material goods that can be “objectively verified” through science. When people object that there may be other values that trump the production of material goods, like equality, social justice, peace, love, generosity, kindness, non-violence, humility, and celebration of the awe and grandeur of the universe, the capitalist order can pull out its commitment to scientism and respond: “Those are commendable values, and you are fully entitled to embrace them in your private life, but since they cannot be measured or verified through science, they have no place in shaping our public life in the economy or in your profession, and in fact, if you insist on ‘imposing’ your values on our public life together in our economy, government, or communal social life, we will soon label you a ‘fanatic’ or a ‘communist’ or a ‘fundamentalist’ and make sure that you don’t get too much influence in our media, corporations, government, or civic institutions.”

So whereas science itself, for example, can tell us that the species are disappearing, it cannot tell us whether that’s good or bad. There are rational arguments either way, and indeed it is scientists who tell us that 99 percent of all the species that ever lived are already extinct, which for some people might open the ethical door for letting a few thousand more follow them. Maybe it’s ethically acceptable to lose large swaths of low-lying land, even major cities, to rising oceans. Maybe treating people as “headcount” and “resources” in “scientifically managed” corporations is worth doing because of the economic growth it enables. There may be some who will have to bear the burden of these changes, the elites of power may tell us, but in the end there will be some “we” that may be better off materially, and that, the religion of scientism will confirm, is the only value that can be verified in terms of how many material

goods are being produced and what the total income of a society is.

How do we decide? Science and rationality can tell us much about the possible consequences of our decisions but it can't make the ethical decisions for us. The decisions are made by political and market processes; they are made by powerful elites and the individual choices each of us make as we buy things, use things, concede power to the elites, or organize ourselves to take power and so on. We are all guided, often unconsciously, by our own ethics, or lack thereof, in these decisions.

How do we move from Mastery over Nature to Interdependence with it?

THE GENERAL VIEW AMONG EDUCATED LIBERALS IS THAT SCIENCE PROVIDES KNOWLEDGE, but our ethical opinions are necessarily just opinions. Our ethics may derive from spiritual insights and religious traditions, but we moderns "know" that despite all the claims of religions to having Truth, these claims are really just opinions. We know this because we believe there is no way to arrive at spiritual truths that all people can agree on the way people can agree on scientific truths. So there is no alternative to battling these opinions out in the political and commercial arenas. That seems so obviously true to us that it would be nonsense to argue otherwise.

But spiritual progressives say that there is another kind of knowledge that we can come to: the knowledge of what is truly sacred. This is as potentially universal as scientific knowledge, but it is acquired through a different methodology. How shocking or ridiculous this idea is to educated people today is a measure of the triumph of scientism.

As scientism became has become increasingly powerful as the dominant religion, every sphere of thought and action has been affected. Every traditional discipline in academic life has felt defensive in the face of the power of science to contribute to mastery and control over the world, and the religion of scientism, which scoffs at any other approach to the world that does not give obeisance to science. As a result, over the course of the past 120 years intellectual and cultural life has increasingly become a mirror of the dominant capitalist values verifiable through scientism. Fields like philosophy, literature, and the arts, once seen as an alternative take on reality, have found themselves increasingly dominated by those who can somehow show that their field has the structure and feel of a more intellectually coherent (that is to say, scientific) enterprise. And sociology, political science, psychology all try to mimic the scientism that underlies and gives credence to the alleged science of economics.

The problem for spiritual progressives is that they have watched for the past century as Marxism, progressivism, liberalism, environmentalism, feminism, and almost every other significant contribution to social transformation have attempted to present themselves to the world as intellectually respectable by showing how scientific their ideas or programs are or can be. In so doing, the social movements, the vast array of non-profit organizations and NGOs, the political parties advocating an alternative to the globalization of capital, and the struggles for human rights and social justice persistently attempt to present themselves in a language that fits the dominant religion of scientism, with its bias toward quantitative analysis and "objective" verification or falsification. This tends to marginalize what Lerner calls "the spiritual values of love, generosity, awe and wonder at the grandeur of the universe, recognition of the other as sacred and as a mystery, and aesthetic and spiritual wisdom" that are at the core of what spiritual progressives understand to be the path to achieve social justice, peace and ecological sanity on our planet. The triumph of scientism in the liberal and progressive world, and in the larger society, makes it extremely difficult to build the one kind of movement that could actually be effective in challenging what spiritual progressives call "the globalization of selfishness," namely, a movement explicitly committed to "the globalization of love, generosity, caring for others, kindness, humility, awe and wonder, celebration, and thanksgiving."

Moreover, spiritual progressives argue that achieving these values will require a different methodology in politics, one that not only affirms love and caring as a goal but also employs them as the means. To do so means to recognize that there really are values worth fighting for, even when doing so involves fighting against the interests of the established order. Most of us



"Paccha Mama Healing The Earth" by David Hewson, gold/platinum water gilding/oil on wood.

In Peru and Bolivia Pachamama or Mamapacha is Mother Earth. Pacha in the Aymara language means time or universe, so it could be translated "Mother Universe."

Participants at Spirit and Science Roundtable Discussions:

Nancy Ellen Abrams	Lawyer, philosopher of science, author, poet, musician.
Fritjof Capra	Physicist, author: <i>The Tao of Physics</i> and many other works.
Ty Cashman	Renewable energy innovator, Zen Buddhist.
Matthew Fox	Priest, theologian, author, leading exponent of Creation Spirituality, founder of Wisdom University, Oakland, CA.
Peter Gabel	Law professor, President Emeritus of New College of California, therapist, author. Associate Editor of <i>Tikkun</i> .
Andrew Kimbrell	Public interest attorney, activist and author. Founder / Director of the Center for Food Safety and the International Center for Technology Assessment.
George Lakoff	Professor of Linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, author of many scientific and political works, including <i>Don't Think of an Elephant</i> .
Michael Lerner	Editor of <i>Tikkun</i> .
Joel Primack	Astrophysicist, professor of physics at the University of California, Santa Cruz, one of the world's leading cosmologists.

understand this in talking about, for example, the "property rights of slave owners" and why it was ethically correct to override their interests and "rob them" of their property because it was wrong in the first place to own human beings. The wrongness of slavery is now an almost universally accepted (though not universally practiced) item of ethical and spiritual knowledge. But it was not obvious to everyone at the time, nor was it obvious to those struggling for the right of workers to organize themselves in unions that they had the right to demand collective bargaining with their employers.

Similarly, today, spiritual progressives assert that the only way to save the environment is to abandon the "ownership" model in relationship to nature; stop thinking of it as material that we can possess and over which we have unlimited rights to exercise mastery, and instead become aware of ourselves as interdependent with all life and with the earth and the rest of the universe. To get that recognition, spiritual progressives argue, we must experience ourselves as so deeply connected to nature that the extinction of species feels to us to violate our humanity, and the possible destruction of the planet for future generations

feels to us like a ripping apart of our fundamental being. Experiencing the world this way requires a massive leap of consciousness beyond the ways of experiencing that have been ingrained in us by the religion of scientism and its partners in the world of material domination and the ethos of accumulation for the purpose of maximizing individual satisfactions. Learning how to see other human beings and nature as deserving of caring and respect is not something that has been fostered by scientism, and it has been systematically undermined by the ethos of capitalism to which scientism is closely allied.

But if this is so, then what can the Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP) say to the many scientists who have themselves come to understand that the world needs a fundamental transformation, and that the Spiritual Covenant with America developed by the NSP provides a framework for that transformation far more compelling than anything they seen emerge from the secular left?

Affirm Science, Reject Scientism

ON THE ONE HAND, THE ANSWER SEEMS EASY: AFFIRM SCIENCE, REJECT SCIENTISM. That is the position of the NSP.

But when Michael Lerner and Peter Gabel, two of the primary theorists of the NSP, invited spiritual theorists to meet with a group of progressive scientists, they found that disentangling even the most progressive scientists from scientism was not as straightforward and easy a task as they had hoped it could be.

Michael Lerner says of these Roundtables (for participants see the box above and stay tuned to www.tikkun.org for a transcript of the third Roundtable):

We are an organization that includes both secular spiritual people like Peter Gabel and religious people like me. We are aware of the big attack on religion and spirituality today from secularists who think that that is the best way to protect the society from the assault of the Religious Right. We think that's a big mistake.

The best way, we believe, is to provide a form of spiritual experience and religion that is not connected to what I call Right Hand of God consciousness [the sense that we live in a dangerous world and must do everything in our power to dominate it militarily, politically and culturally, or else we will find ourselves dominated by others]. This consciousness can be found just as profoundly in secular groups as well—from the

Our Place in the Universe by Joel Primack and Nancy Abrams

By the "spiritual" we mean the relationship between a conscious mind and the cosmos. It's not the study of the cosmos—that's science. It's the way we relate to it. Things from about the size of a gnat to the size of the sun are part of human experience, and we have intuition about how they work. But things larger than about 10^{12} cm or smaller than about 10^{-2} cm can only be known through science and only experienced, if at all, spiritually. This includes most of the universe.

We illustrate the total range of sizes in the universe in terms of "The Cosmic Uroboros." The tip of the tail represents the smallest size permitted by quantum mechanics and relativity, called the Planck length (10^{-33} cm). The head represents the largest size we can get any direct knowledge about, the horizon of the visible universe (10^{28} cm). The serpent swallows its tail because different physical laws control events on different size scales, but the laws controlling the largest sizes may also control the smallest. The objects pictured along the serpent are representative of their size scales.

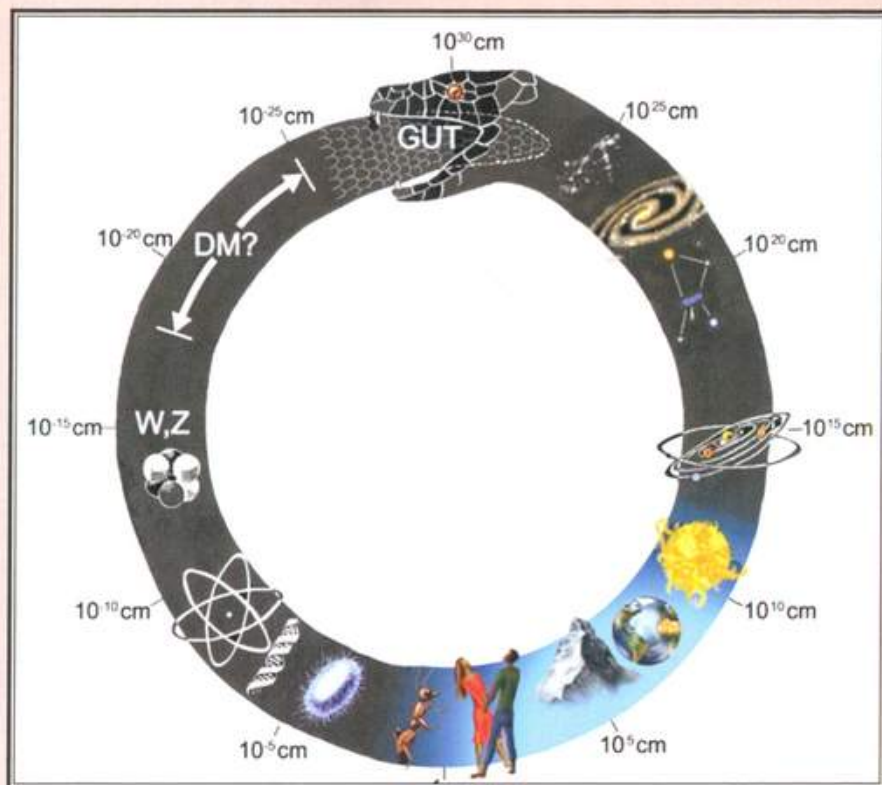
In their book The View From the Center of the Universe (from which the quotes in this box are taken) Primack and Abrams summarize recent cosmological research, which leads them to claim:

We humans are at the center of the principles that underlie the modern universe, and our generation is the first to know it. We're made of the rarest material in the universe—stardust; our Galaxy is the center of the visible universe; we're living at the midpoint of time in four different senses; and our bodies are at the center of all possible sizes.

Not everyone agrees. Some excellent scientists and other scientifically literate people today look at recent discoveries and reach quite a different conclusion—that in the expanding universe “human” is a small, even pathetic identity. We will refer to the attitude they collectively express as the “existential” view of scientific cosmology.

We both started in the existential camp ourselves...[But] When we started teaching the Cosmic Uroboros, we realized that it might matter that humans are at the center of all possible size. We realized further that stardust could be seen as central, not peripheral. In fact, the entire existential façade of despair and stoicism flips inside-out if we simply view the universe from the inside, where we indisputably are. Once we made this mental shift and opened our eyes to the view from the center of the universe, we not only kept discovering more ways that we are central: we found that doing so evoked the opposite emotions from the existential stance—not despair but hope, not resignation but excitement. They may be equally arbitrary emotions, but they lead to non-arbitrary actions....

This kind of integration of science and meaning is considered by many scientists to be a danger to science, but a science that doesn't consider its own meaning can be a danger to everyone else...Big changes are happening on our planet, and shepherding ourselves through them successfully is going to require tremendous creativity. An essential ingredient may be a cosmic perspective, and such a perspective is just becoming available. Not a moment too soon.



Science / Spirit Roundtable

Can progressive religious and scientific people committed to creating a compassionate and functional world bypass the science/religion wars and find a mutual platform?

Agreed: We need science's help to combat global warming and species loss. Spiritual religion is against scientism not science

Agreed: You will only save what you love. Scientists must lead in ethical and political efforts to save the globe

Spirituality

Humility, compassion. All humans and all life are interdependent and sacred.

Fundamentalist Religion

Rigid adherence to reified counter-factual beliefs. Demonize non-believers

Fundamentalist Science or 'Scientism'

Militant Atheism. Truth only through measurable evidence

Mature science

Humility. Science cannot proscribe ethics. Scientific knowledge has its limits.

Legitimate criticism of 'Science':

The sacred aura of 'Science' has destroyed rival claims to sacredness. Result: runaway technology (e.g. weapons, chemicals, genetic engineering) leads to atomic war, pollution, cruelty to animals, extinctions, global warming.

Legitimate criticism of 'Religion':

Crusades, wars, pogroms, inquisitions, racism, sexism, witch burnings, "pie in the sky", Strict Father God, Christian Platonism / dualism, opposition to science, inability of many holders of 'revealed truth' to revise ideas

An attempt to capture the Science vs. Religion Wars and the Science + Spirituality Alliance.

(continued from page 36) Marxists and Freudians of late nineteenth century to the contemporary militarists in both the Republican and Democratic Parties, and sometimes even in the anti-war movement and among other social change movements. I contrast this 'fear' or 'domination world view' with a Left Hand of God consciousness that sees far greater possibilities to build safety and security through mutual cooperation, love, and caring for others, or what I now call the Generosity Strategy, with its Global Marshall Plan as one specific (details at www.spiritualprogressives.org).

We are trying to unite secular and religious in a powerful alternative to the Right and the Religious Right. We want to build a movement that is welcoming to progressive scientists, but we don't want to do that at the expense of legitimating a spirit-denying scientism. So we convened this discussion to see what ways we could find for a common discourse. We are not finished—this is a step on the way and an invitation to other scientists and other religious leaders to join the conversation.

Talking in Different Universes of Thought

WHEN, AS THE NEW MANAGING EDITOR OF THIS MAGAZINE, I DECIDED TO WRITE AN article based on these Roundtables, I ran into a problem. I didn't want to assume that there were two sides in the room, because these were scientists who were very sympathetic to spiritual concerns, and Michael Lerner describes himself as "a passionate advocate of science." But the more I listened to the tapes and worked with the transcripts, the more it appeared to me that there were indeed two sides or at least two universes of thought that were not really intersecting. In particular I felt that the scientists did not fully understand what Gabel and Lerner meant by spiritual knowledge, or knowledge gained by an intuitive, empathic "interiority." But did I myself? I began to think I had made assumptions about them that were wrong, just as the scientists might be doing. And perhaps I had to rethink the very notion of knowledge, which itself had been shaped, according to the spiritual progressives, by scientific assumptions that needed to be questioned.

Joel Primack, the well-known cosmologist at the University of California Santa Cruz, early on gave his opinion that:

What you are calling scientism is the philosophy that was put forward by a group known as the Vienna Circle in the 1930s, which was widely called logical positivism, and of which I believe there are essentially no proponents in modern philosophy; it's thoroughly discredited. So philosophically it doesn't have any adherents. There are a number of scientists now who are arguing a case not for evolution, but against religion, and they have a number of books out, Dawkins in particular. And Dennett, and Harris, though they're not scientists. So I'm questioning whether you really want to talk about scientism or whether you want to talk about atheism or militant atheism in the hands of scientists.

Lerner and Gabel were clear that it was scientism that concerned them, that they supported the scientific enterprise, but when critiquing scientism they meant something much broader than logical positivism. Their concern was that scientists in general look at life and the universe from the "outside," which means they always fail ultimately to understand them. Moreover, they argued that contemporary scientists often reject scientism, but the larger culture has shaped a popular scientism that impacts the major opinion shapers, institution builders, legislators, media, and even those seeking social change. In doing so, they argued, the dominant scientism was actually successful (and had been for at least a few hundred years) in repressing (sometimes into unconsciousness) the joyous feelings of spiritual connection and integration with others and with the spiritual dimension of all reality that had been the common inheritance of the human race for most of its history, albeit a connection that had been so misused by ruling elites in the ancient and feudal world when it was appropriated into status-quo-serving religions that it had lost much of its authority to shape daily life. In part, then, the task of spiritual progressives is to help clear away these levels of distortion, caused by scientism and the capitalist culture as well as by the oppressive role that religions have played in misusing spiritual consciousness as a club to validate unjust social orders.

Yet there were times in the discussion when it appeared that Peter Gabel was asking science itself to incorporate into its approach a deeper understanding of "spirit" and its role in shaping the world. In his essay "Creationism and the Spirit of Nature" (from his book *The Bank Teller and Other Essays on the Politics of Meaning*) that the third Roundtable participants read before their discussion, Gabel writes of the sensuous way that a plant bends towards the sun, and the sense we can have of its life force, its desire to live and grow with which we, as living beings, can empathize. This is the most important thing about the plant. But the scientist's way of looking, writes Gabel, turns the plant into an object, a thing.

First of all, the scientist begins his or her inquiry by taking the position of a detached observer who treats the plant as an object. From this position of detachment, the scientist cannot "sense" anything about the meaning of the plant's movements because to "sense" something this way requires the opposite of detachment—it requires engagement with the plant's life through a kind of empathy or intuition.

...The "nature" of the plant, its capacity to sprout from a buried seed and the produce the green life of "chlorophyll" and to lean toward the sun and, for that matter, its capacity to wilt and die—all of these things are inaccessible to science, and science can never hope to explain them.

Scientists' Objections to Intuitive Spiritual Knowledge

IT WAS THIS LANGUAGE OF "INSIDE/OUTSIDE" THAT LED TO MOST ALL OF THE SCIENTISTS' objections at the Roundtables.

They spent a good deal of time making the point that Platonic and Cartesian dualism is dead: there is no ideal realm, no God or supernatural force *outside* of the material universe. But Lerner and Gabel *agreed*: for them there is a spiritual essence to the whole universe as it is and to every living thing in it. Matthew Fox, the priest best known for his work on Creation Spirituality, told the Roundtable about those medieval Christians who were not Platonists. They did not believe in original sin but did believe in that Fox called "original blessing." They saw the universe as in process of continuous creation, and every creature as participating in creation, all of which Fox finds compatible with modern scientific views.

This issue of a God outside of Creation is clearly a huge one in our society's wider debate between religion and science but it was not an issue here.



The story of creation is not as simple as it used to be. Michelangelo's beautiful painting shows God awakening Adam with the touch of His finger. Now Darwin, and his diverse followers such as the fiercely atheistic Richard Dawkins (above, embraced by God!), the Jewish agnostic Stephen Jay Gould and the spiritual Jane Goodall, have revealed to us the secret of our primate ancestry. But what touched our ancestors with that desire for connection and meaning, that in us is manifested both as religious awe and scientific curiosity? Image by David Bygott with homage to Michelangelo.

to access your brain's full power.

But fascinating though these insights into the lives of scientists were, they clearly missed Gabel's point. He responded:

The spiritual critique that I hold, and that I think is the essence of a spiritual critique, is that you can't understand reality by looking at it from...when I say "detached" I don't mean "indifferent." I don't mean a lack of caring or passion or fascination. I mean that it's an intellectual and moral stance that one takes towards the world in which one is outside looking at it.

This was what was truly contentious: the idea that we can access the inner meaning of the universe or of a living being like a plant through *intuitive* knowledge, gained by empathically going "inside" in a way science can not. In his essay Gabel wrote of a green plant reaching towards the sunlight, and of:

...the sensual unity that one senses in the plant, the sense of pleasure that seems so manifest in the bend of the upper stem and the stretch of the highest leaves and that seems to contrast so strikingly with the droop of plants denied access to the same sunlight. To the scientist, this may sound "merely subjective" and like a species-centered projection, but this sense that I have (and that I claim we have) that the meaning of the plant's living movement exceeds the photosynthesis explanation is a very strong one.

He was right—to the scientists it did sound merely subjective. George Lakoff said:

You submit a dichotomy of insides and outsides and that is false. What we know is that all of our knowledge is based on interaction, not on an outside stance or an internal stance, and that says that the argument that science is coming from the outside is just false. It's not true.... Your notion of desire is something that comes out of your interaction with the world, and other people's interactions with the world, but it may not be in that world independent of human beings or other beings. That is where that difference is going to come down.

The news from the front lines of cognitive science is that we now know, neurologically, that reason and emotion are not separate. Lakoff explained that we actually reason, in neurological terms, through empathy. The mirror neurons in our brains fire when we perform actions, and also when we see someone else perform the same actions. There are close connections between those neurons and the emotional regions where we feel empathy for others and so are able to guess what others will do. Rationality is built right onto those areas. Basic reasoning about other people, and basic universal metaphors about the world (such as the association of warmth with love and coldness with lack of love, or of "up" with more and "down" with less) are actually wired into our brains by our early experiences. So rationality is not a universal capacity, as thought in the Enlightenment, but a variable capacity depending most likely on how well our capacities for empathy were nourished in our earliest years. Reason is built upon empathy!

This provides a powerful argument for family-friendly public policies of a kind that the "family values" crowd do not espouse, such as plenty of paid parental leave to give parents time to nurture their babies and toddlers, universal, high-quality daycare for all working parents, and so on. But it did not assuage Peter Gabel's concern that scientific knowledge was still being privileged over spiritual knowledge. In fact, the entire argument, from Lakoff's point of view, was an argument against the validity of intuitive knowledge uncorrected by science. Lakoff said:

If you look at what Damasio says in *Descartes' Error*, you cannot be rational without being emotional.... The idea that desire is in the world is your interaction with the world and your projection on it and you *have* to understand the world as having desire. There's no other biological possibility. And that doesn't mean that desire exists independent of beings

outside of you but it says that you must always understand it and every other being will understand it that way.

The only antidote to projecting our ideas onto the world, Lakoff explained, is the practice of science, which accumulates convergent evidence from many different fields of enquiry.

This business of imposing human meanings onto non-human things is perhaps the biggest taboo in science. Resistance to the age-old human tendency to do it has been at the heart of science's success. Think Galileo vs. the Church and all the other traumatic conflicts from which science has emerged victorious. The latest was in Dover, Pennsylvania where the teaching of creationism in science class was ruled out of order. At every point in modern history there have been religious people, often in positions of influence but including a vast number of ordinary people, who have said that the explanation for some great mystery in the natural world—from disasters and diseases to the astonishing complexity of the human eye—must be supernatural intervention: typically by a God who is outside the whole machine and intervenes to design, reward or punish, or for inexplicable goals of His own. At every point scientists who bravely refused to accept divine intervention found natural explanations instead. That is the history of science.

But in scientism, this necessary mistrust of theories of divine intervention in nature has led to mistrust of the very idea of spiritual knowledge.

Neither Lerner nor Gabel believe that there is a divine "intervention" in nature, but rather that nature is already and always permeated by and part of a larger spiritual reality, and that science has tools which can only pick up part of that reality. "That's fine, and often useful for the purpose of controlling nature," Lerner contended, "and in no way do we want to do away with science and its tools. But things go astray when scientists think they have the only possible understanding, knowledge, or plausible account of what is happening in the world, because the world is far more than what can be caught by the scientists' tools and methodology."

Unintended Consequences of Scientism

A LARGE PART OF THESE ROUNDTABLES CONSISTED OF HIGHLY INTELLIGENT AND spiritually sensitive scientists explaining to Gabel and Lerner the ways in which they were mistaken about the reality of an intuitive spiritual view. Gabel felt that this was their scientism coming out, and that their view bore some responsibility for the rise of religious fundamentalism in our time:

At a certain point, surrounded by this denial of an aspect of reality that is held in deep felt conviction by the ordinary person who has a strong sense of beauty, of meaning, of purpose, of unfolding, of feeling that the very essence of my life is to be connected to that impulse, if you can't even talk about it in the room because you are treated like some sort of idiot, unrealistic, or not "connecting with the complexity of the convergent interdependent knowledges that are in my book!" then at some point they are just going to pick up the bible and say, "The hell with this. 6,000 years ago God created the earth and all its creatures. And that's it." And there are a lot of people who are going to agree with me because of the religious traditions that say that is true. In fact, more people than you can amass in your liberal universities.

Gabel, of course, was not contending that the world had been created 6,000 years ago. But he was insisting that the world is more complex and multi-dimensional than scientists have tools to understand. The spiritual, aesthetic, ethical, and intuitive grasp of reality promotes a far more multi-leveled account of reality, and there should be no reason why these dimensions of human experience should be ignored or given less value because they are not even in principle the subject of scientific knowledge. Gabel was also making a more subtle point—if one of the reasons scientism gives for insisting on the superiority of scien-



Can we know all we need to know about the plant through scientific analysis (on the left)? Or does its sensuous reaching for the sun alert us to intuit the deeper meaning in all life, what poet Dylan Thomas called "the force that through the green fuse drives the flower"? When we relate to a plant or to nature, both scientific and intuitive knowledge must guide us—but of the two, only the intuitive or spiritual knowledge provides us ethical imperatives.

Let's Act Together on Global Warming

by Bill McKibben

FOR YEARS TOO MANY PEOPLE IGNORED global warming—it wasn't "proven," it was a "hypothesis," it was "doom-saying." It was too small, too distant, to worry about.

But that's not the problem anymore, not since Katrina. Now it's just the opposite—the problem's too big. We all read headlines every few days about the inexorable melt of Arctic ice, about record drought, about big new storms. I'm writing these words the day after the second Category 5 hurricane of the season has made an Atlantic landfall—the first time that's ever happened. And you're going to fix it by *changing your lightbulb*?

Despair is better than disinterest, but it's paralyzing. Let's say we actually wanted to do something meaningful about global warming—about the biggest single threat that the entire earth has ever faced. We'd need, first, to understand a few things:

1) It's coming at us fast. Our foremost climatologist, NASA's James Hansen, said in the autumn of 2005 that his computer model, so far the world's most reliable, indicated that we had ten years to reverse the flow of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere or else we'd guarantee "a totally different planet," one where the stability of the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets could no longer be guaranteed. We're already facing, without immediate and dramatic change, huge temperature increases—the consensus estimate is about five degrees Fahrenheit this century, which would make the planet far warmer than any time during the age of primates, and do more harm to poor people, other species, and the fabric of life than anything short of an all-out nuclear exchange.

2) That means we need to transform our energy systems—renewable power, not coal, gas, and oil. That's a tall order (fossil fuels were a kind of magic—cheap, easy to find, easy to transport, loaded with BTUs) but it's only the beginning. The math makes clear that we also need to change the ways we live: stop sprawling, start taking trains; stop shipping our food 1,500 miles, start eating close to home.

3) We need to do this at the toughest possible moment—when the rest of the world, particularly the Chinese and the Indians, are finally starting to use fossil fuel in appreciable quantities. Not American quantities—we'll be the per capita champs for all time. But the rate of their growth, which is pulling people out of poverty, makes the math hard.

It's not impossible to square this circle. The biggest international panel of economists



You're going to fix global warming by changing your light bulbs? Try changing your politicians instead. Screw in a new Congressperson.

Join Us In *Step It Up* Rallies November 3rd

Step It Up is a model of the kind of movement we need. Last spring seven of us—six newly minted Middlebury College grads and me—set up a website called Stepitup07.org that urged people to organize demonstrations in their communities. We had no money and no lists of names, but in ten weeks we organized 1,400 demonstrations and put our demand—for 80 percent cuts in U.S. carbon emissions by 2050—squarely on the political agenda. By the time we were done, all the leading Democratic presidential candidates had signed on.

This fall we're trying something similar. On November 3, we're holding rallies at spots across America that commemorate great leaders of the past: Mt. Washington, but also the homestead of a revered Navajo elder; John Kennedy's summer White House, but also the Pennsylvania birthplace of Rachel Carson; the site of the Lincoln Douglas debates, but also the blasted mountaintops of West Virginia and Kentucky. And we're doing our best to make sure that every candidate for federal office has an invitation to come and talk to at least one of these gatherings. We don't need solemn agreement that this is a serious problem: we need commitments to lead.

LOG ON TO STEPITUP07.ORG

to find out about actions near you. If we're going to have a movement it's got to start sometime, and one Saturday in November is as good a time as any!



and engineers to look at the data concluded last spring that we had just enough time and just enough technology, and that the cost wouldn't break us: they suggested that the window was still open wide enough for us to squeeze through. But we've waited until the last possible second. Here's the consensus among those of us who have been working on this problem for two decades about what needs to happen, a consensus developed over the last year through a coalition called One Sky:

First, the U.S. has to take the lead. We're the biggest source of the problem—it will be forty years before China's contribution to global warming matches what we've done in the course of our development. And for the last two decades we've blocked progress, even as the Europeans and the Japanese have tried to get the world mobilized. In the first few months of the next presidency, we need a piece of comprehensive legislation that commits us to cutting carbon emissions 80 percent by 2050, that guarantees we'll stop building new coal-fired power plants, and that sets up a Green Jobs Corps to start actually making these changes. Tough, mandatory targets drive change.

Second, *once we do that*, we've got to get back in the international game. For many years now the U.S. and China (and now India) have used each other as convenient excuses for not taking action. If there's any hope at all, it will come from those three nations leading the negotiations for a grand global bargain—one that takes some of the wealth the West has built up in two oil-fueled centuries and uses it to subsidize the technologies the poor world needs to develop in a more durable fashion. It's actually fairly simple—everyone holds a knife to everyone else's throat right now, and we need to figure out how to drop them. And then we have to pick up wrenches, and get to work.

If you were placing bets, you'd be ill-advised to wager a whole lot that we'll get these two tasks accomplished. The vested interests are enormously strong (Exxon made more profit last year than any company in the history of profits). The inertia is even stronger (we like to fly in jets). That's why our only hope is a movement, first in this country and then around the world. This movement must possess at least as much moral urgency and willingness to sacrifice as the Civil Rights movement a generation ago. It's a movement that's unimaginable without leadership from people of faith.

It's starting. Last spring we organized 1,400 demonstrations in all fifty states on a single April day. We have the tools—the internet above all—that might let it spread virally. But it's going to take a kind of commitment we haven't yet

approached. So screw in a new light bulb. And then screw in a new Congressperson. Drive a hybrid, sure, but drive change. Do it hard enough and you've earned the right to hope. ■

Bill McKibben is the author of The End of Nature; The Comforting Whirlwind: God, Job, and the Scale of Creation; and the forthcoming Bill McKibben Reader.

Focus the Universities on Global Heating

Fighting for Love in the Century of Extinction,
by Eban Goodstein

by Scott P. Lewis

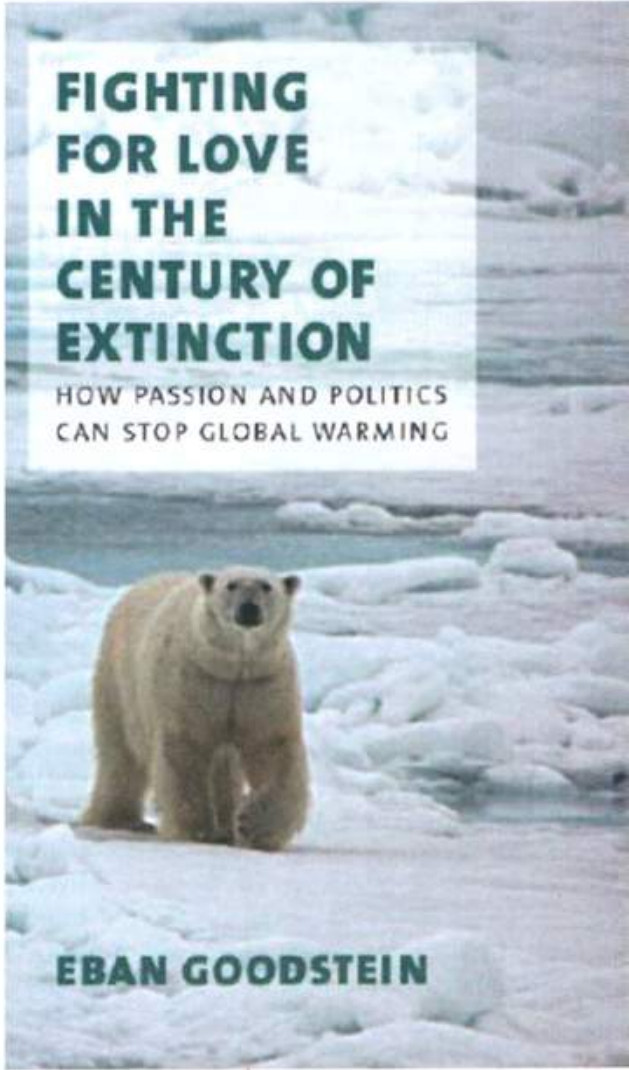
AS THE EVIDENCE OF GLOBAL WARMING'S ANTHROPOGENIC ROOTS becomes overwhelming, large numbers of Americans have suddenly become aware of its potentially disastrous consequences. The recent release of the Leonardo DeCaprio produced film *The 11th Hour* and the scientifically based report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have intensified the fear of biocide that began for many who saw Al Gore's film, *An Inconvenient Truth*.

In a new book titled *Fighting for Love in the Century of Extinction*, Eban Goodstein systematically details how "global heating" threatens to destroy huge numbers of species, tear at the web of our ecosystems, and reshape human habitation of the planet. However, while Goodstein outlines the devastation that might be wrought as we approach a tipping point caused by the release of greenhouse gases, he also holds out hope for us to slow down the process so that we can save uncounted species from a sixth great mass extinction.

This is a surprising and passionate text for an academician. Goodstein has published widely on economics and the environment. For example, in his book *The Trade-Off Myth*, Goodstein explores the mistaken perceptions that many of us have about the impacts of environmental regulation on jobs.

Goodstein's new book cites economic incentives for preserving species diversity. For example, the author reviews the recent discovery that geckos have adaptations at the molecular level allowing them to climb walls, and notes that this finding may lead to commercial applications such as the development of synthetic materials to aid in microsurgery. Animals like chimps and gorillas provide models for understanding disease development, aging, and our own social behavior. The richly diverse tapestry of flora and fauna provides countless natural services like water and air purification and crop pollination.

The heart of the book, however, lies in a series of vignettes detailing sublime moments Goodstein spent in nature: on a kayak trip in Alaska slowly paddling past families of sleeping harbor seals close enough to touch; on a mountain trek while listening to the plaintive cry of a rabbit-like Pica; a childhood memory of the Tennessee hills bursting with the blooms of dogwoods. By bringing these details into focus and allowing us to reflect on nature's beauty and the tragic possibility that these scenes may disappear in a



FIGHTING FOR LOVE IN THE CENTURY OF EXTINCTION

HOW PASSION AND POLITICS
CAN STOP GLOBAL WARMING

EBAN GOODSTEIN

generation, Goodstein sets the stage for a profoundly moral argument for our obligation to stop global heating.

Goodstein believes that taking a moral stand and engaging peoples' passions are essential for attracting a critical mass of the American public to the fight to reduce greenhouse gases. This is an approach that is often ignored by environmentalists and educators who may lack the spiritual language to evoke our sense of awe and wonder. Instead, they seem to give us warnings about global warming as if delivering sound bites designed to help us remember a brand name. In contrast, Goodstein describes the manifestation of deep love that spiritual people feel for nature, and how nature mediates the spiritual experience for all. He believes that such love will lead us to a fervent defense of the planet and a means to put a stop to global heating, and is the only way to convince large numbers of people to join the fray.

Because of the short time frame in which we must halt the trend of increasing greenhouse gases—some scientists say that we have as little as ten years before global heating cascades out of control—Goodstein endorses specific political approaches to begin addressing the problem. While he understands that becoming involved in politics can be a dirty business, he also sees it as a necessity for making the significant changes needed to preserve the planet's diversity. He argues for avoiding the incremental gains to be eked out by lobbying the existing power structure and instead asks us to work toward developing a new strong and diverse coalition based on a clean-energy agenda. He believes we should transform our energy sector to clean al-

ternatives by using a multi-part strategy that includes freezing greenhouse gas emission levels, raising funds for investing in clean technologies, and protecting forests as carbon sinks. Goodstein believes that dealing with current politicians may not get the job done in time, and that we must elect leaders of open mind and good faith who can put these policies into practice.

At the end of the book, Goodstein discusses his current work as a leader in the Focus the Nation group that is organizing a national teach-in on solutions for global warming on January 31, 2008. In creating an organization primarily centered in the university setting, Goodstein seeks to engage one of our most difficult, yet promising institutions for promoting a new way of thinking about our relationships to the environment. On the one hand, universities have been implicated as promoting the very thinking that leads to environmental degradation. As Chet Bowers has described, our post-secondary institutions are chiefly in the business of turning out students who will fit well in a consumptive, competitive society. In effect, colleges are factories for producing the standard bearers of the old bottom line.

On the other hand, the university also holds enormous promise for promoting social change, especially when issues of great moral gravity are brought to the forefront. Universities have been leaders in challenging the nation's direction on civil rights, Vietnam, nuclear weapons, and Iraq. Goodstein's work reflects the faith that universities can once again take a leading role in the great moral battle of a generation—halting the imminent biocide by reshaping our energy needs to stabilize the climate so that the great diversity of life on our planet can continue to amaze us. ■

Scott P. Lewis, Ph.D., is an adjunct professor at Florida Atlantic University, teaching classes in environmental education. His research interests include science education, culture and cognition, and sustainability education.

Hold a Teach In January 31

Eban Goodstein, professor of Economics at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, is a founder of the Focus the Nation group (www.focusthenation.org) that is promoting a teach-in on January 31, 2008 on university and high school campuses across the country. Its goal is to have more than 1,000 institutions engaged in dialogue about clean energy solutions on that date. Presenters will have an opportunity to outline answers from the perspective of their discipline. In addition, students at these campuses will meet with elected officials from local, state, and national levels to discuss ways to solve the problem of global heating.

The Israel Lobby: A Progressive Response to Mearsheimer and Walt

by Stephen Zunes

THE OVERBEARING POWER AND McCarthyite tactics wielded by the American Jewish establishment against critics of Israeli government policies—particularly against prominent Jewish progressives like Michael Lerner—has made critical discourse about U.S. support for the Israeli government extremely difficult. As a result, it is all too easy to buy into the arguments put forward by John Mearsheimer and Steve Walt in their newly-released book *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007) that the ‘Israel Lobby’ is primarily responsible for the tragic course taken in U.S. Middle East policy. The Tikkun Community has recently sponsored a series of public events with the authors, and Rabbi Lerner wrote a lengthy piece in the September/October issue of this magazine largely defending their perspective.

As a political scientist and international relations scholar specializing in the United States’ role in the Middle East, I must disagree. I am in no way denying that the Israel Lobby can be quite influential, particularly on Capitol Hill and in its role in limiting the broader public debate. However, it would be naïve to assume that U.S. policy in the Middle East would be significantly different without AIPAC and like-minded pro-Zionist organizations.

As leading scholars in my field, I have been familiar with the work of these two distinguished professors for many years. Professor Mearsheimer and I both received our doctorates from Cornell University’s Department of Government (which, incidentally, did not offer a single course dealing with the Middle East). While I do not believe they are motivated by a conscious anti-Semitism or any innate hostility toward Israel, their perspective has nevertheless been compromised by another kind of ideological bias.

Mearsheimer and Walt are prominent figures in the ‘realist’ school of international relations, which discounts international law, human rights, and other legal and moral concerns in foreign policy, downplays diplomacy not backed by military force, belittles the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations, and dismisses the growing role of international non-governmental organizations and popular movements.

With some notable exceptions, Mearsheimer and Walt have been largely supportive of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War and subsequently. For example, during the



An Iranian boy on a relative's shoulders looks at a poster during an anti-war demonstration in Tehran, Iran, March, 2003.

Zunes argues that anti-Americanism in the Middle East is a response primarily to U.S. support for dictatorships in the area and more recently to the Iraq War, none of which have been policies primarily promoted or even initially desired by the Israel Lobby.

1980s, Mearsheimer—a graduate of West Point—opposed both the proposed nuclear weapons freeze and the proposed no-first-use nuclear policy. A critic of nonproliferation efforts, Mearsheimer has defended India's atomic weapons arsenal and has even called for the spread of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states such as Germany and Ukraine. He was also an outspoken supporter of the 1991 U.S.-led Gulf War.

Both authors blindly accept a number of naïve and demonstrably false assumptions regarding America's role in the world. For example, they assert that the foreign policy of the United States—the world's number one arms supplier for dictatorial regimes—“...is designed to promote democracy abroad” and U.S. efforts in the Middle East “to spread democracy throughout the region ha[ve] inflamed Arab and Islamic opinion.” The reality, of course, is just the opposite: it has been U.S. support for the majority of the dictatorships in that part of the world which has primarily contributed to anti-American sentiment.

It is always welcome and significant when traditional conservatives, hawks, realists, and others in the foreign policy establishment speak out against specific negative manifestations of U.S. foreign policy, such as when Mearsheimer and Walt joined a number of other prominent center-right figures in academia in opposing the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. They have also correctly recognized how unconditional U.S. support for many of the more controversial policies of the Israeli government is contrary to the long-term strategic interests of the United States.

However, such realist opposition grows not out of concern over any of the important moral or legal issues but out of a rational calculation that a particular war could lead to greater instability and thereby run counter to America's national security interests.

In other words, both of them have a vested interest in absolving from responsibility the foreign policy establishment that they have served so loyally all these years. Israel and its supporters are essentially being used as convenient scapegoats for America's disastrous policies in the Middle East. And though they avoid falling into simplistic, anti-Semitic, conspiratorial notions regarding Jewish power and influence for the failures of U.S. Middle East policy, it is nevertheless disturbing that the primary culprits they cite are largely Jewish individuals and organizations.

In many respects, their argument is nothing new. This exaggerated view of the Israel Lobby has been made for years by the small group of former State Department officials and former Republican Congressmen one finds in such publications as the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* and organizations like the Center for the National Interest who share Mearsheimer and Walt's failure to acknowledge the nature of America's hegemonic designs in the Middle East and beyond. As political scientist Asad AbuKhalil, the self-described ‘angry Arab’ currently serving as a visiting professor at UC Berkeley, puts it, such analysis “absolves the Bush administration, any administration, from any responsibility because they become portrayed as helpless victims of an all-powerful lobby.” Similarly, Columbia University Professor Joseph Massad—who regularly endures attacks by the Israel Lobby for his defense of Palestinian rights—contends that the attraction of Mearsheimer and Walt's argument is that “it exonerates the United States government from all the responsibility and guilt that it deserves for its policies in the Arab world.”

Mearsheimer and Walt, along with their defenders, fail to make the distinction between the undeniable fact that ‘the Lobby’ has limited debate (particularly within the Jewish community) regarding U.S. policy toward Israel and the question as to whether it is the major reason for U.S. policy being the way it is. As Professor Massad puts it, the Israel Lobby is responsible for “the details and intensity but not the direction, content, or impact of such policies.” Indeed, as I pointed out in my article “Is the Israel Lobby Really That Powerful?” [*Tikkun*, July/August 2006], U.S. policy toward both Israel/Palestine and the region as a whole is quite consistent with U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America, Southern Africa, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere. The consequences are more serious

(for example, no Vietnamese or Nicaraguans ever flew airplanes into buildings), but they are not fundamentally different.

Any serious review of U.S. foreign policy in virtually any corner of the globe demonstrates how the United States props up dictatorships, imposes blatant double-standards regarding human rights and international law, supports foreign military occupations (witness East Timor and Western Sahara), undermines the authority of the United Nations, pushes for military solutions to political problems, transfers massive quantities of armaments, imposes draconian austerity programs on debt-ridden countries through international financial institutions, and periodically imposes sanctions, bombs, stages coups, and invades countries that don't accept U.S. hegemony. If U.S. policy toward the Middle East was fundamentally different than it is toward the rest of the world, Mearsheimer and Walt would have every right to look for some other sinister force leading the United States astray from its otherwise benign foreign policy agenda. Unfortunately, however, U.S. policy toward the Middle East is remarkably similar to U.S. foreign policy elsewhere in the world.

It is certainly true that the United States is, in the words of Mearsheimer and Walt, "out of step" with the vast majority of the international community on the question of Israel and Palestine. Yet the United States is also out of step with the vast majority of the international community regarding the treaty banning land mines, the International Criminal Court, the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, and the embargo against Cuba. Similarly, two decades ago the United States was also out of step with the vast majority of the international community in regard to the mining of Nicaraguan harbors and support for the Contra terrorists, as well as opposition to sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa and allying with Pretoria in supporting the UNITA rebels in Angola.

Mearsheimer and Walt correctly observe how Washington's support for Israel despite its human rights abuses against the Palestinians "makes it look hypocritical when it presses other states to respect human rights," but there is no mention of the equally hypocritical U.S. support for Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Oman, Morocco, and other repressive Arab regimes. Similarly, they are accurate in observing how "U.S. efforts to limit nuclear proliferation appear equally hypocritical given its willingness to accept Israel's nuclear arsenal." But is this any more hypocritical than signing a nuclear cooperation agreement with India or selling sophisticated nuclear-capable fighter bombers to the Pakistani government in spite of those countries' nuclear arsenals?

As a result, the idea that U.S. policy would somehow be "more temperate," (again to use the words of Walt and Mearsheimer) were the Lobby not so powerful falsely assumes that U.S. policy toward other Third World regions in which the United States had strong strategic, geo-political and economic interests has historically been more temperate than it has been in the Middle East. This is particularly important to keep in mind given that their argument about the Lobby's influence goes beyond that of Israel and Palestine to include the rest of the Middle East as well, including the Persian Gulf region, in which the United States has had hegemonic designs since before modern Israel came into being.



The United States is out of step with the rest of the world with regard not just to Israel, but equally with (clockwise from top right) its failure to support the treaty banning land mines, its support for the Contra terrorists in Nicaragua in the 1980s, and the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, among other major issues.

As I observed in my *Tikkun* article on this subject last year, while Congress is undeniably greatly influenced by the Lobby, Congress usually doesn't make foreign policy, traditionally the prerogative of the executive branch.

There is little question that it is the pressure put forward by AIPAC which is primarily responsible for Congress passing a number of resolutions by overwhelming bipartisan majorities every session, declaring its support for particular Israeli policies, including defending and covering up for blatant Israeli violations of international humanitarian law. However, virtually all of these are non-binding resolutions. When AIPAC has tried to get Congress to force the president's hand through binding legislation—such as the periodic attempts mandating that the United States move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem—they almost always fail.

In any case, it is incorrect to assume that most members of Congress stridently defend the policies of the Israeli government because their careers would be at stake if they did otherwise. Indeed, the majority of the most outspoken congressional champions of the Israeli government are from some of the safest districts in the country and need no support from pro-Israel political action committees (PACs) or Jewish donors in order to be re-elected. In last year's article, I examined a number of cases in which members of Congress allegedly had been defeated as a result of their standing up to AIPAC and made the case that their position on Israel was actually just one, and not the most significant, factor in their defeat.

In 2006, 'pro-Israel' PACs and individuals are estimated to have contributed more than \$9 million to party coffers and congressional campaigns. While that is a significant amount, it ranks significantly below that of PACs and individuals supporting the interests of lawyers (\$58 million), retirees (\$36 million), real estate interests (\$33 million), health professionals (\$32 million), securities and investment interests (\$29 million), the insurance industry (\$21 million), commercial banks (\$16 million), the pharmaceutical industry (\$14 million), the defense industry (\$13 million), electrical utilities (\$12 million), the oil and gas industry (\$11 million), and the computer industry (\$10 million), among others. If campaign contributions had such a direct impact on policy as Walt and Mearsheimer claim, Congress should therefore have a strong and consistent pro-labor agenda since contributions given in support of unions representing public sector workers, the building trades, and transportation workers each were significantly higher than the total contributions given in support for the Israeli government. Furthermore, with rare exceptions, PACs allied with the Israel Lobby do not contribute more than 10 percent of the total amount raised by a given campaign.

The vast majority of the (admittedly few) House members who refuse to follow AIPAC's line are easily reelected. For example, every Democratic member of Congress who refused to support the July 2006 House resolution supporting Israel's attacks on Lebanon, a resolution subjected to vigorous lobbying by AIPAC, was reelected by a larger margin than they were two years earlier.

It is important to recognize the broad array of interests that find it advantageous to exaggerate the Lobby's power. There are members of Congress and their aides who want to deflect criticism from progressive constituents opposed to their support for the Occupation and other Israeli policies; there are foreign service officers who want to do the same in talks with foreign leaders by making the U.S. government appear to be a hostage to special interests beyond the administration's control; there are the constituent components of the Lobby itself, which finds it useful for fundraising purposes and as a means of intimidating members of Congress; there are Jews who find the idea of having such power and influence a liberating reflection of overcoming centuries of oppression; and, of course, there are bigots who find the exaggeration of Jewish power and influence a



Michael Lerner, John Mearsheimer, and Stephen Walt speak in Berkeley, CA, 2007.

highly-effective means of spreading their anti-Semitic ideology.

As a result, while it is important to acknowledge where the Israel Lobby does indeed have clout, it is also important to be wary of the multiplicity of reasons why so many people would, consciously or unconsciously, tend to overstate its influence.

In an article published four weeks prior to the start of the U.S. invasion of Iraq ("Iraq, Israel and the Jews," [*Tikkun*, March/April 2003], I predicted that sooner or later, the American public would realize that a U.S. invasion of Iraq had been a disaster, and "in order to divert attention from those who were responsible" there might be some in the foreign policy establishment who would revert to the time-honored tradition of blaming the Jews.

Indeed, perhaps the most misleading argument put forward by Walt and Mearsheimer is their claim that the 2003 invasion of Iraq "was motivated in good part by a desire to make Israel more secure." This is ludicrous on several grounds. First of all, Israel is far less secure as a result of the rise of Islamist extremism, terrorist groups, and Iranian influence in post-invasion Iraq than it was during the final years of Saddam Hussein's rule, when Iraq was no longer a strategic threat to Israel or actively involved in anti-Israeli terrorism. Indeed, it had been more than a decade since Iraq had posed any significant threat to Israel and both Israel's chief of intelligence and the Israeli Defense Forces chief of staff made public statements in October 2002 emphasizing how Israel's military strength had grown over the previous decade as Iraq's had grown weaker.

During the final years of Saddam Hussein's rule, Iraq was no more of a threat to Israel than it was to the United States. All Iraqi missiles capable of reaching Israel had been accounted for and destroyed by UNSCOM, the International Atomic Energy Agency had determined that Iraq no longer had a nuclear program, and virtually all the country's chemical weapons had similarly been accounted for and destroyed. The Israelis, who actively monitored United Nations disarmament efforts in Iraq and had the best military intelligence capabilities in the region, presumably knew all this. Indeed, Israel's chief of military intelligence during the lead-up to the war, Major General Aharon Farkash, also recognized that Iraq did not have any missiles capable of striking Israel and reiterated observations by other top Israeli security officials that Iraq was incapable of producing nuclear weapons at any time in the foreseeable future.

Though observers were less confident regarding the absence of biological weapons, the Israelis recognized that there was no realistic threat from that source either. Respected Israeli military analyst Meir Stieglitz, writing in the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Ahronot*, stated categorically that, "There is no such thing as a long-range Iraqi missile with an effective biological warhead. No one has found an Iraqi biological warhead. The chances of Iraq having succeeded in developing operative warheads without tests are zero." Similarly, it was recognized that Iraq could not realistically attack Israel with biological weapons by other means, either. For example, it would have been hard to imagine that an Iraqi aircraft carrying biological weapons, presumably some kind of subsonic drone, could have somehow made the 600 mile trip to Israel without being detected and shot down. Israel—as well as Iraq's immediate neighbors—had sophisticated anti-aircraft capability.

Furthermore, if the United States was really concerned with Israel's safety from Iraqi attack, why did the U.S. government provide Iraq with key elements of its WMD capability during the 1980s, "including the seed stock for its anthrax and many of the components for its chemical weapons program" back when Iraq clearly did have the capability of striking Israel? How could the "pro-Israel Lobby"—which was no more influential in 2003 than it was fifteen years earlier—have the power to push the United States to invade Iraq when Saddam was no longer a threat to Israel, when the Lobby was unable to stop U.S. technology transfers to Iraq when it really could have potentially harmed Israel?



Stephen Zunes

More fundamentally, it appears that Israeli officials warned the Bush administration that invading Iraq could destabilize the region, in large part due to concern that it would strengthen Iran, which the Israelis considered the primary threat. For example, in a visit to Washington D.C. in February 2002, both Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his Defense Minister Fouad Ben-Eliezer emphasized their concern that "Iran is more dangerous than Iraq." Sharon specifically warned Bush against occupying Iraq or invading Iraq without an exit strategy since the likely result would be an insurgency, which the Israeli prime minister feared, could radicalize the region and spill over Iraq's borders. Israeli ambassador Danny Ayalon was even instructed by Sharon to tell visiting Israelis not to encourage a U.S. invasion of Iraq for fear that its likely failure would be blamed on Israel.

Interestingly, Mearsheimer and Walt acknowledge that the Israelis were initially skeptical about the administration's obsession with 'regime change' in Iraq. Indeed, a careful reading of their book reveals that Israel was not the principal backer of the long-planned invasion and Israeli officials came on board only after the decision had been made, apparently with the promise that Iran would become the next target. In other words, the Israeli government and the Israel Lobby were willing to use their clout to help their friends in the White House garner public and congressional support for a decision that had already been made independently, but they were not responsible for the decision to go to war itself.

As a result, Mearsheimer and Walt's charge that "the war was due in large part to the Lobby's influence" does not square with the facts. Furthermore, despite the belated backing for the invasion by the Israeli government, Iraq was not the major priority for AIPAC and allied lobbying groups in the months leading up to the congressional vote authorizing the invasion in October 2002. Indeed, some of Israel's biggest supporters on Capitol Hill were among the most outspoken voices against the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Nor does the authors' emphasis, often repeated elsewhere, that it was the affinity for Israel by the influential neo-conservatives that played a major role in the decision to invade that oil-rich nation. Those behind the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) and other neo-conservatives opposed Iraq because they feared it would challenge U.S. hegemony in the region, which was always their priority. The strong support by PNAC members and other neo-cons for Israel only goes as far as they see American and Israeli interests converging. They have not been major supporters of Israel, for example, when the right wing has not been in power. And even under the rightist Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, most Israeli government officials—with a few notable exceptions—saw Israel's political and strategic interests at odds with the American neo-conservative's designs on Iraq.

These same neo-conservatives, while in the Reagan administration during the 1980s, were advocates of a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua and Cuba as well as a nuclear first strike—as part of a so-called "limited nuclear war"—against the Soviet Union. In short, they are hawks across the board, not just in regard to the Middle East. "Support for Israel" has always been seen as part of a broader strategic design to advance perceived U.S. interests in the region.

While a disproportionate number of Jews could be found among the top policy makers in Washington who pushed for a U.S. invasion of Iraq, it is also true that a disproportionate number of Jews could be found among liberal Democrats in Congress and leftist intellectuals in universities who opposed the invasion of Iraq. Furthermore, it is absurd to imply that those who were most responsible for the decision to invade Iraq—Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Vice President Dick Cheney, and President George W. Bush—would place the perceived interests of Israel ahead of that of the United States. And they were perfectly capable of making such a stupid and tragic miscalculation on their own.

Blaming supporters of Israel for the Iraq debacle also ignores the many more important factors which led the Bush administration to invade *(continued on page 71)*

A Zionist Changes His Mind

A Conversation With Avrum Burg

TIKKUN: IN THE PAST FOUR months you've caused a sensation in Israel by saying that the religious dimension of Israel is on a collision course with the democratic dimension, and that you cannot accept the genetic definition of who is a Jew—that Israel must go beyond the current Orthodox-dictated law of return. That severely criticizes existing conceptions of Zionism. Could you tell us a little bit about the transformation that's taken place in your consciousness from the time you were the leader of the most significant Zionist organization in the world, the Sochnut, The Jewish Agency, and then Chair of Knesset, to the present moment in which you've expressed some doubts about the Zionist vision.

BURG: I prefer the term evolution. It has been a kind of a process: a link, which leads to a link, which eventually creates a chain. The circumstances of people's lives are very dynamic. What happens today is nothing similar to what will happen tomorrow, and ten years ago has nothing to do with ten years ahead. The only place where people are so fixed about non-transformation is in public life. In your personal life you can change five wives during a lifetime. In your work life you can change twenty jobs. In your consumer life, you can change from one product to another in no time. It's only in politics where there is an expectation that you stay the same from when you're two years old to when you're 100 years old.

When I first started in political life, kind of sailing out into the public arena, I had two sails and one wind. One sail was the issue of peace, mainly the immorality of the Occupation, the malignant expressions of the no peace situation, and the other was a permanent core drive for a wall of separation between Knesset and Bet Ha Knesset (politics and synagogue). These were the two sails of mine and the one wind was Isaiah Leibowitz [Ed. note: the leading religious dove who spoke at the Tikkun conference in Israel, 1991]. And I had a feeling that this was the tail wind. This was what enabled me to fly high and to fly fast and be very accurate about my messages. So that was twenty five, thirty years ago.



The hopeful energy in Israel has shifted from the early Israeli kibbutznik/soldier who was seen as providing a new vision of what being a Jew could mean in the modern world to the image of the modern orthodox West Bank settler and ultra-orthodox scholars—and they are increasingly perceived as the holders of Jewish authenticity.



Left wing Israeli legislators, left to right, Avshalom Vilan, Moshe Raz and Naomi Chazan, shout at right wing National Religious Party member Yigal Bibi during a special session of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, held to debate the current crisis with the Palestinians, in Jerusalem, April, 2002.

Now when I looked at the situation three, four, five years ago I said to myself, "Avram, if you're honest with yourself there is no wind anymore and your cores have failed." Israel today is a state with no prophecy. There is no peace vision, no justice vision; there is no Jewish vision for the Land of Israel. There is just a very ordinary focus on survival for the sake of survival, continuation for the sake of continuity. The higher call of Jewish history simply expired. And it's impossible, spiritually and psychologically, for me to be in public life without a higher calling.

When I retired from politics, one of my motivations was to rediscover the call. I wrote a book called *God is*

Back, about the religious dimension of the twentieth century. My feeling was that God was the number one survivor of the twentieth century—the most secular, manmade century ever. The twentieth century is filled, almost saturated, with the presence of God, fanaticism, zealotry, you name it. I wanted to understand it, and I wrote a book about Israel as a microcosm of the world and the world as a macrocosm of Israel.

Well, I finished my book and did something that is very strange for writers—I read it. When I finished reading my first book I realized that I described only one spiritual pillar of the Israel/Judeo existence: church and state. But there is another dimension, another pillar, which was elevated to the level of semi-religion: it is the omnipresence of the Holocaust in Israeli life. So that's the focus of my second book.

I started writing about the omnipresence of the Holocaust in our lives and realized that it actually dominates every ounce and every dimension of our existence—from politics to culture to media to personal preoccupation to diplomacy. The more I explored this, the more I realized that if we do not transform (to use your word) from a trauma-molded society to a trust-oriented civilization, we're doomed.

Israel today is trapped between two castrated forces until the day of peace, and this day will come one way or another. The Right in Israel has nothing to offer the Israelis and the Jews but the Messiah and the sword. The Left in Israel does not offer to the Israelis anything of substance and content in spirituality and values. And I did not feel comfortable with either. What I tried to do was to develop, at least for myself, my own discipline.

TIKKUN: In 1991 when we came to set up a Tikkun Peace Conference in Israel with Shalom Achshav (Peace Now) and others, we made this explicit point as a center of what we were saying, that there needed to be a vision that was not simply Israel as the "new Taiwan" of the Middle East, because that was not a spiritual vision that would sustain anyone but technocrats in Haifa.

BURG: I couldn't agree with you more. What happened to "Mr. Israeli?" You know, Mr. Israeli who was the founder of the State, he was a Kibbutznik, and a military serviceman, and an Israeli stereotype, he flew as a hero to Entebbe, and came back and did not visit Syria, you know the stereotype I'm talking about. The relation between us and the past was abandoned by Mr. Israeli, who wanted a negation of the Diaspora and an affirmation that he was creating "the new Israel." But without that continuity with the past, there was no deeper meaning to Israeli life than mere survival. Mr. Israeli abandoned his relation to the past and the tradition into the hands of the Ultra-Orthodox, and left the responsibility for connecting to the place (Heb: *Hamakom*) to the messianic fundamentalists—the settlers. So the hopeful energy shifted to the Ultra-Orthodox, on the one

hand, and the modern Orthodox settlers, and they became perceived as the holders of Jewish authenticity in regard to our religious, national, or peoplehood identity, the guardians of the Holy Grail. The fact that they are, in a way, a kind of retarded expression of Judaism is irrelevant. The fact that these forms of "orthodoxy" are as new as the Reform Movement and as new as the Zionist movement became irrelevant. In the eyes of many, the Ultra-Orthodox or the Orthodox settlers are the most authentic element in the relationship between Jews and their past.

The second element is that the relations of the connections between us and the place (the Land of Israel) were abandoned by Mr. Israeli—the secular founder of the state—into the hands of the settlers. The agenda of the settlers is a Messianic, eschatological, fundamentalist ideology, and that of the Ultra-Orthodox is just as fundamentalist. So now, Mr. Israeli, who came back to Israel 120 years ago as a modern element, out of an almost-stagnated Judaism, abandoned his or her identity to the ends of the Israeli Army. Not to moderate, to dualistic, or to humanistic elements did they surrender the flame of Jewish identity, but to the most reactionary elements of the Jewish people. So now, my connection to the past is the ultra-Orthodox, it is not a humanistic one; my connection to the place is the settlers, the Messianic elements. Ben Gurion sanctioned the negation of the Diaspora but I believe Israelis need to develop a totally different attitude toward the Diaspora. If we want to continue here we have to extend our Judaism, not inside through becoming like the settlers and the Ultra-orthodox, but by creating a new alliance and dialogue with Diaspora Jewry. My punch line is that in our lifetime, Babylon and Jerusalem are no longer geographical places; they are two states of mind. If you are a confined, ghettoized Jew, you are stigmatized. If you are universal, humanistic, part of the universal message of Judaism, you are Babylonian, so Jerusalem can be in Muncie and Babylon can be in Tel Aviv.

TIKKUN: *Tikkun* has been talking about the development of a global Judaism, a Judaism that overcomes not just the division between Israel and Diaspora, but Jews and all other peoples. We claim that in the twenty-first century, in order to save the planet from destruction, all of the peoples in the world need to overcome any part of their cultural, religious, or national heritage which keeps them from identifying with the common project of the human race to save the planet from ecological destruction and from endless wars and killings. My question is, in your worldview, what's the change that is needed in Jewish consciousness to make it possible for the Jewish people to be part of the world instead of against the world or feeling eternally committed to a nation dwelling by itself.

BURG: The first question is: can we accept fully and absolutely that the definition of who is a Jew is a genetic one only? When Jews say that a Jew is one who is born to a Jewish mother, that is a genetic definition. Is that enough? Is that acceptable? Of course not. For me Judaism is less and less a genetic definition, it's an acceptance of a value system.

Let's say I'm walking down to the river and see two people sinking and I can save only one of them, like the classic Talmudic moral dilemma. One of them is Rabbi Kahana and the other is the Dalai Lama. Who do I save? Unequivocally I would save the Dalai Lama, because although Rabbi Kahana is my genetic, fellow Jew, he is my spiritual rival and my moral enemy. The Dalai Lama shares the same value system that I do. So, consciousness-wise, he is my fellow Jew.

There were hardly any times in the life of Western civilization, when it struggled for its identity and its future, that the Jews did not take a very active, significant, and positive role in shaping its direction. We Jews gave Western civilization Jesus Christ and his *Mishnaic* morality. You cannot understand the transformation of Europe from Medieval darkness to Enlightenment without the radical enlightening input of the Marranos who moved from Spain to Amsterdam and opened up Europe. You cannot understand modern Europe without Spinoza, without Mendelssohn. You cannot understand the twentieth century without Freud and Marx.

But now, facing the twenty-first century, are so many problems, and for the first time in so many years, the Jews are not positive contributing players.



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—Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

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So I want Jews to expand our definition of the self, and this expansion would include people who have the same moral destiny and the same value system that I do. A value system about the Other, about equality, about justice, about the environment, about the world.

TIKKUN: So how do you imagine one could foster that in Israel or in the global Diaspora?

BURG: The problem currently facing the Jewish people here is that we do not have a Jewish vision for the world today. Maybe we never had this, but we did have an external enemy. In our lifetime we don't have a language of shared values.

The overwhelming majority of the Jewish people are living, for the first time in our history, within the democratic realm. That's a new phenomenon. And even with Ahmadinejad and Hamas and all of that, the physical stress on the life of Jews is much less than it was sixty years ago or 600 years ago. In a situation like this, there's only one question we can ask ourselves. It's not about Occupation, and you know how much that troubles me; it's not about the growing gap between haves and have-nots, which also troubles me. It's a very simple existential question. Can the Jewish people survive without an external enemy? If the answer is no, then we must raise two other questions. The first one is: is this the reason why we did not put forth the maximum effort to get free of external enemies? And the other is: if someday, help us God, there will not be an external enemy, how then shall we survive? What we have to develop today from internal, objective, self-definition will help us to continue as a Jewish people without the external definition. The Occupation, as much as it troubles us, is not really the issue.

TIKKUN: Well, if Israel had something to contribute to the moral or spiritual consciousness of the world it might be a much different situation.

BURG: I agree with you. Maimonides taught this: there is nothing between our very days and those of the Messiah but the oppression of nations. Nations will not oppress nations, people will not oppress people, people will not oppress people—individuals and whole peoples. That's the code of Jewish people from thirteenth century of Maimonides up until today. I do not know any other people who have this code. Yes, we violate this code, yes we do not usually listen to it, and yes, there are many of us who really need a spiritual cure for our attitudes towards life. But eventually, I believe, this will be the backbone of Judaism: no oppression.

TIKKUN: I totally agree with Maimonides, and in the historical period when that happens, I'm not sure we will need Judaism. In other words, Judaism is a religion that is for the pre-*Moshiach* (Heb: Messiah), but once all class oppression has been eliminated, new forms of spirituality and connection to God may be more appropriate. But for many of us who are currently attempting to develop a Global Judaism that transcends the ethnic chauvinism, small mindedness, and fear-based insensitivity that has, in the post-Holocaust period, taken over many of the major institutions of Jewish life, we may need to put our primary energy into building alliances with what you call the "Jews of other nations." *Tikkun* agrees with you—we have more in common with the spiritual progressives in Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and "spiritual but not religious" atheists and agnostics than with many Jews who have let fear of the Other shape their worldview. That is the basis of our organization, the Network of Spiritual Progressives, and that is the direction for the twenty-first century. And I see you, Avrum, as one of the inspiring voices that can best represent the spiritually progressive voices in the Jewish world—and hence you are our deep ally. ■

Avrum Burg served as speaker of the Knesset from 1999 to 2003 and formerly headed the Jewish Agency for Israel (Sochnut). Now retired from politics, he is the author of God is Back and Defeating Hitler.

two small actions you can take as a group to move toward that vision.

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□ Host consciousness-raising conversations about how the old bottom line affects our relationships, our mental and emotional health, and our ability to find meaning and purpose in our lives.

Personal Transformation: Making It Real In Your Own Life

MUCH IN OUR INSTITUTIONS, POLICIES, AND SOCIAL PRACTICES INHIBITS OUR DESIRE to act on our best impulses, and the NSP provides a format for working together to change those forces.

At the same time, we recognize that we'll be more effective, less likely to burn out, and more deeply engaged if we commit personally to "being the change we want to see in the world," as Gandhi put it.

You can probably remember times when you've encountered someone who truly does see other people as embodiments of the sacred, or who does really feel awe and wonder at the grandeur of the universe. Deeply felt love and amazement is contagious.

What can you do to cultivate these attributes in your own life?

□ Develop a spiritual practice that quiets your mind and allows you to connect with something beyond your small self, whether that is God, the unity of all being, your higher Self, or something else. Engage in this practice daily.

□ Cultivate mindfulness. With great compassion, watch your own desire to over-consume, to push to the front of the line, to put your needs ahead of the needs of others. What is behind these impulses?

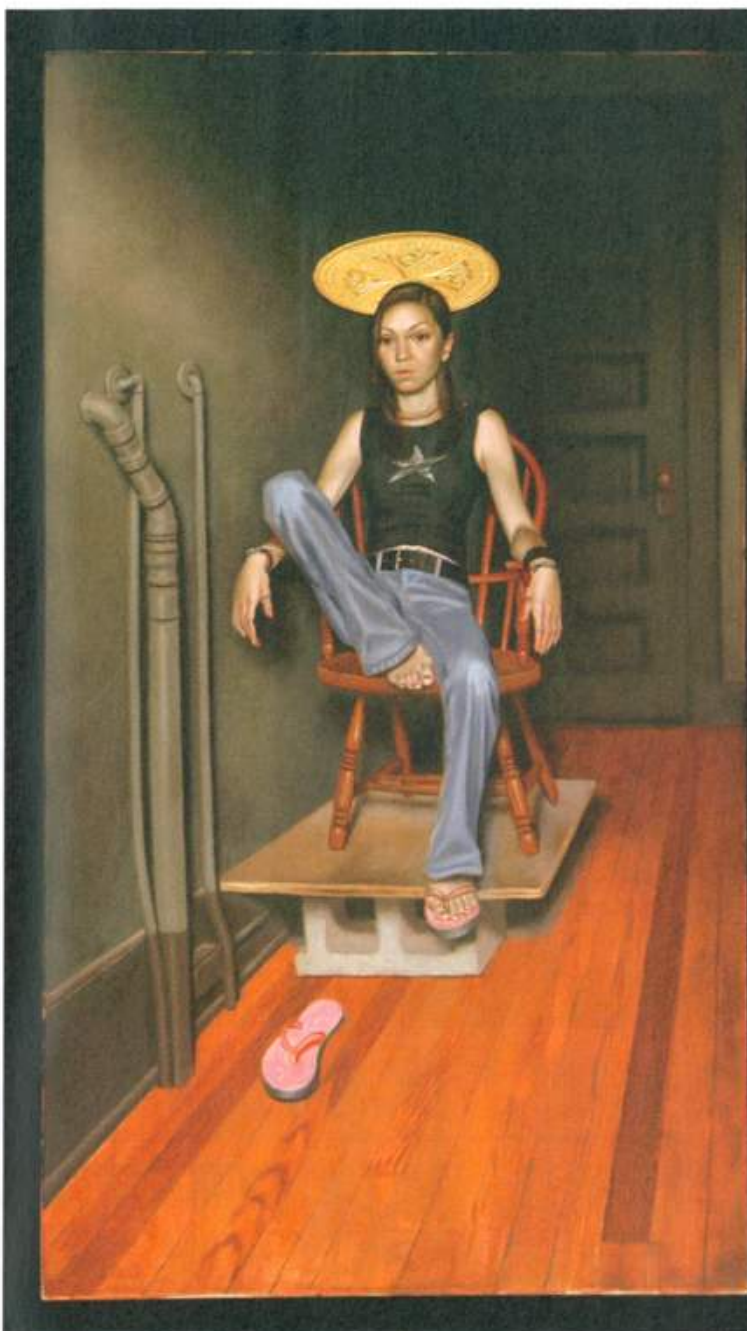
□ Cultivate awareness of interconnection. Notice how your actions affect the actions and reactions of all those around you.

□ Learn and practice good communication skills such as Nonviolent Communication and Compassionate Listening.

□ Start a Spirit Matters group (see our website) in which you join with others in supporting each other's spiritual practice and efforts to live your values.

As you experiment with any of these levels of transformation, please be in touch with us. We want to hear how it is going and share your experiences with others in the network. We welcome new and creative ideas! Thank you for all you are doing to heal and transform our world! ■

Nichola Torbett, Director of National Programs for the NSP, moved cross-country to work for this organization because it is the only one that squarely addresses her lifelong obsession with the intersection of love, politics, and meaning.



"You can probably remember times when you've encountered someone who truly does see other people as embodiments of the sacred."

"Devotional" by David Hewson, gold water gilt/oil on wood panel.

TAKE THIS PRESIDENT...

SOMEBODY, PLEASE!

by Paul Lewis

IN A MIDSUMMER COLUMN ON THE STATE OF THINKING IN WASHINGTON about the ongoing occupation of Iraq, David Brooks irritated many of his *New York Times* readers by comparing despondent and despairing senators with an "assertive and good-humored" President Bush. "Many will doubt this," Brooks noted, "but Bush is a smart and compelling presence in person."

In addition to disagreeing with Brooks' description of the President's intellectual capacity, readers may have been startled to encounter a serious treatment of a subject (Bush's intelligence) that has become a staple of humor across the political spectrum. For Brooks, the question would seem to be why so many failures have plagued this confident and clever leader. Many others, looking back at a president who has pursued ill-conceived objectives with catastrophically poor strategies, wonder how such a buffoon was ever taken seriously.

The pivot point for Bush mockery, as for his administration in general, was 9/11. In *Cracking Up: American Humor in a Time of Conflict*, I follow the President's treatment as the butt of jokes through the 2000 and 2004 elections. In the run-up to the first of these, Bush was mocked for his sketchy military record and for being the inarticulate governor of a weak-governor state. Ridiculer-in-Chief at the time Molly Ivins richly elaborated this line of ridicule in *Shrub: The Short But Happy Life of George W. Bush*, her pre-election political biography. Between his swearing in and 9/11, satirists and wags added the dubious (s)election victory handed to him by a one-vote majority of Supreme Court (in)justices to their shtick. But in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Bush's popularity and job approval ratings soared in inverse relation to the dramatic falloff in Bush jokes and the parallel rise of humor aimed squarely at Osama bin Laden and the Taliban.

During the run-up to the 2004 election, anti-Bush satire rebounded, a trend that has intensified in tandem with the increasingly difficult-to-ignore cascade of his actual failures. Indeed, it's fair to say that Bush's 9/11 Teflon was washed off by the waters of Katrina and the blood of Iraq, leaving a less popular and, therefore, easier-to-ridicule target.

Easier, undoubtedly, but should mocking even detested conservatives as people be a strategy of the Left? The question has two parts: first, is personal ridicule effective as satire; second, is it ethically defensible? Early in the President's first term, Mark Crispin Miller noted that Bush stupidity jokes (like similar putdowns of Andrew Jackson) have the unintended consequence of making their target seem like a regular guy, rather than an over-educated policy wonk. But the implication is not, as Miller argues, that such jokes are necessarily counter-productive, but that they must be unequivocal to succeed. A similar sub-genre of Bush-bashing humor, cowboy cartoons, illustrates this point. Unless they are

drawn with undiluted intensity, these cartoons can end up bolstering Bush's image by associating him with a positive American icon. Too often, Bush has been depicted almost cutely beneath a huge cowboy hat, well dressed even if he is "all hat and no cattle"! For an example of a more fully fanged approach, consider Marc Forrest's "Mad Cowboy Disease," an image devoid of any positive qualities whatsoever.

Though little known, Forrest's work (available at theworriedshrimp.com) brings to Bush the man the unadulterated contempt that the most powerful cartoonist in American history, Thomas Nast, brought to attacking the Tammany Hall gang led by William Marcy (Boss) Tweed. In cartoon after cartoon, Nast portrayed his targets as predatory animals or greedy libertines. The connection Nast established between corrupt policies and corrupt lifestyles undoubtedly helped bring Tweed and Co. down.

Though less responsible for the post-Katrina turn against Bush than Nast was in toppling Tweed, satirists like Jon Stewart, Bill Maher, Keith Olbermann, Michael Moore, and Stephen Colbert have played their part in shifting the self-proclaimed "decider" back into harshly comic, diminishing frames. If nothing else, the irate response on the Right to Colbert's gutsy performance at the 2006 White House Correspondent's Dinner indicates that personal insult can be a feared and potent form of rhetoric. But, effective or not, is it fair?

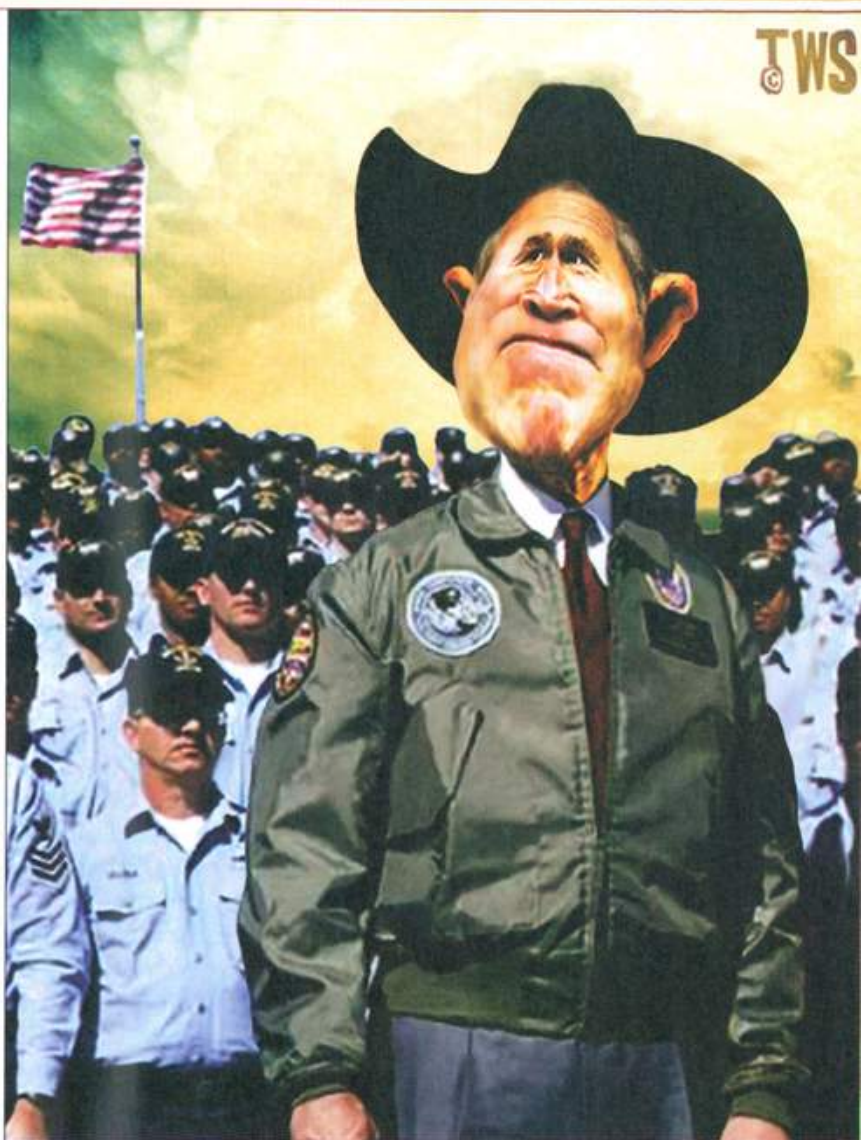
When personal flaws have no impact on policy, mocking them is mean-spirited. That such wit is the stock-in-trade of far-right ridicule mongers like Rush Limbaugh and Ann Coulter should give us pause. And yet it is often impossible to separate personal from political imperfections. Take the many Bushisms circulated online and collected in books. As these recent examples suggest, the President's inability to navigate an unscripted sentence is an ongoing source of mirth:

"These are big achievements for this country, and the people of Bulgaria ought to be proud of the achievements that they have achieved." (Sofia, Bulgaria, June 11, 2007)

"Amnesty means that you've got to pay a price for having been here illegally, and this bill does that." (Re. the immigration reform bill, Washington, D.C., June 26, 2007)

Though these sentences are far from the President's most ridiculous verbal performances, note that they fall at the two ends of his practice: the first circles in irritating redundancy; the second makes the very point he is trying to refute. One could say that this kind of linguistic struggle ought to be removed from the satirist's toolkit—except that this is the President who has insisted on subjecting grade school kids to one-size-fits-all, curriculum-flattening, standardized language exams. So I guess it's okay to leave at least one president behind!

Or take Bush's tenacious unwillingness to reconsider obviously ruinous policies in almost any area—from fighting the wrong war to giving tax breaks to the wrong people. Both the inability to attend to opposing views and the refusal to recognize empirical evidence that contradicts one's assumptions are signs of mental weakness. Since these kinds of stupidity have underpinned policies as ineffective as abstinence-only sex education and



MAD COWBOY DISEASE

THE ANGST OF SAVING FACE AFTER GOING OFF HALF-COCKED...

"For an example of a more fully fanged approach, consider Marc Forrest's 'Mad Cowboy Disease,' an image devoid of any positive qualities whatsoever."

global warming denial, mocking both the policies and the habits of mind that have supported them is fair enough.

Enjoying Bush stupidity humor does not necessarily require a particular view of his relation to other “deciders.” It may well be that intelligent but malevolent players—Dick Cheney, other neocons, corporate and far-right Christian lobbyists—have used this intellectually challenged man. Though one can, and perhaps should, make this point seriously, it’s worth noting that it has served as the basis of an entire subset of Bush humor that depicts him as weak, distracted, and childish.

Many on the Left (including this magazine, which has declined to publish caricature cartoons) concede that, while an ad hominem attack can help to bring down a political opponent, it may also make everyone more cynical about politics, while arousing anger and deepening intransigence among supporters of the one attacked. Salman Rushdie’s view, published in “Defend the Right to be Offended” in *openDemocracy*, that one should “never personalize” political arguments is often cited: that you should “never [be] rude to the person, but...can be savagely rude about what the person thinks.” The problem with this approach is that it assumes an overly sharp distinction between the personal and the political. As *Nast* demonstrated, when ridicule highlights character flaws (including greed, hypocrisy, and stupidity) that influence policy, it can be not only effective but logical (that is, on point) as well.

It’s the “never” in “never personalize” that seems too rigid, almost inhuman. Shylock asks rhetorically, “If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?” In a perfect world, humor would be divorced from hostility. In this world—in which the weak contend with the strong, in which the performance of seriousness, dignity, resolve, and intelligence is used to create a sense of authority and invulnerability (think of Bush during a State of the Union speech)—comic deflation aimed at the intertwined ideas and bearing (affect, personality) of the powerful can be a legitimate and non-violent form of resistance. Of course, progressive satire and mockery can misfire; just as scattershot jokes aimed at all politicians and, therefore, at none, can promote cynicism rather than concern. But serious arguments can also have unintended effects. In either mode, tact is essential.

The treatment of Bill Clinton’s sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky provides an interesting contrast. The butt of a zillion jokes, Clinton was satirized, lampooned, and generally hosed down for his randy behavior and unconvincing cover up. If at the time Clinton had been trying to weaken sexual harassment laws that protect women in the workplace, then the Lewinsky jokes would have seemed far more interesting as satire than they did, though of course they have been funny enough to keep late-night audiences laughing for years. The fact that Clinton remained a strong supporter of woman’s rights shifts his transgression far, far over onto the personal side of the personal/political spectrum, a point often made in his impeachment trial in the Senate.

Our current President is another creature altogether. Whether he’s defending his decision to invade Iraq or his determination to extend the occupation indefinitely, he’s inclined to begin sentences with the phrase “I happen to believe...” as though his confidence in an idea lends it credibility, as if he should still be taken seriously. By way of antidote, we could do worse than the bumper sticker that reads, “Somewhere in Texas a village is missing its idiot.” Bush stupidity jokes remind us that we know this idiot. He’s the guy who happens to believe that very rich people need much more money, that Cheney, Brownie, Rummy, and Gonzo are the “heckuva job” quartet, that “people have access to health care in America,” and that... well, this sentence could go on, and on, and on, couldn’t it? Most recently, Bush has taken with moronic enthusiasm to the idea that we’re fighting them over there “so we won’t have to face them here at home.” Since there’s just one terrorist out there, it’s easy to assent to the President’s point, right? Denounce, protest, impeach him if you will, but take this guy seriously? You’ve got to be kidding. ■

Paul Lewis, a professor of English at Boston College, writes about humor for Tikkun.

Response to Paul Lewis

A Conversation With Michael Nagler

PAUL LEWIS ASKS WHETHER MOCKERY, EVEN OF DETESTED conservatives, should ever be a strategy of the Left. He defines the question as having two parts: first, is satire effective, and second, is it ethically defensible? Now I'll go on to explain why personal ridicule is not effective, and often counterproductive; but the underlying issue is that I don't think there are two parts to the question. There is a great tradition of belief, including Gandhi and on back to philosophers like Immanuel Kant, which holds that in the end there is no difference between what is ethically defensible and what is effective to create good results—at least in the long run.

This truth reflects the philosophy of principled non-violence, which is based on the idea that the relationship between you and your opponent is just as important as the issue you're disputing. So we always go for persuasion over coercion; that is, we always try to persuade our opponents to come around to our position rather than forcing them or using some outside inducement. If you force them, they will only be looking for a chance to get back into what you forced them out of—and at you!

In non-violence we sometimes have gray areas. For example, my students questioned me on the ouster of Chilean dictator, General Pinochet. Having seized power after a U.S./U.K.-supported coup launched on September 11, 1973, in 1984 Pinochet held a plebiscite seeking an unconstitutional third term in office. He was not persuaded to leave office; he was just voted out of power, and there is no question in anybody's mind that he was not persuaded of the rightness of the position. Was forcing him out the wrong thing to do? I say no, because there are situations of emergency in which you have to be content with not quite reaching your ideals. What you get is a good that is better than what you had, but not yet perfect. If they had waited until Pinochet was persuaded to give up power, tens of thousands more would have died.

So yes, there are gray areas, but that doesn't mean that ultimately there's a real choice you have to make between what's ethical and what's effective. Given the constraints of the situation, you may have to go with something that's not as effective as it could be, but much better than nothing. So I do not accept Lewis's argument that something could be politically effective but not ethically defensible.

Instead, the real distinction for evaluating political action is whether it is directed against the opponent themselves, or their behavior. One of the keys of principled non-violence is that you are never against a person or persons. That is to say you are never against their ultimate wellbeing. Whatever you're against is secondary to them as a person. The things you may oppose—behaviors, attitudes or even ideas—though they are intimate to us, they are not our ultimate wellbeing. Further—and here's where the practicality comes in—there is an inverse proportion here: the more I am aware of my opponent as a person and the more I am dedicated to his or her wellbeing, the more effectively I can counteract his or her agenda, opinions, or politics.

Gandhi is probably the best example of this. He truly believed in his heart that he was helping the British by prising them loose from the Empire and the death grip they held over



"Despite peaceful demonstrators hav[ing] been beaten to break up the crowd, the demonstrators are still together reciting 'metta sutta' (A discourse on loving-kindness, about disseminating love to those who are aggressive)." A Burmese eye-witness quoted by The Times of London.

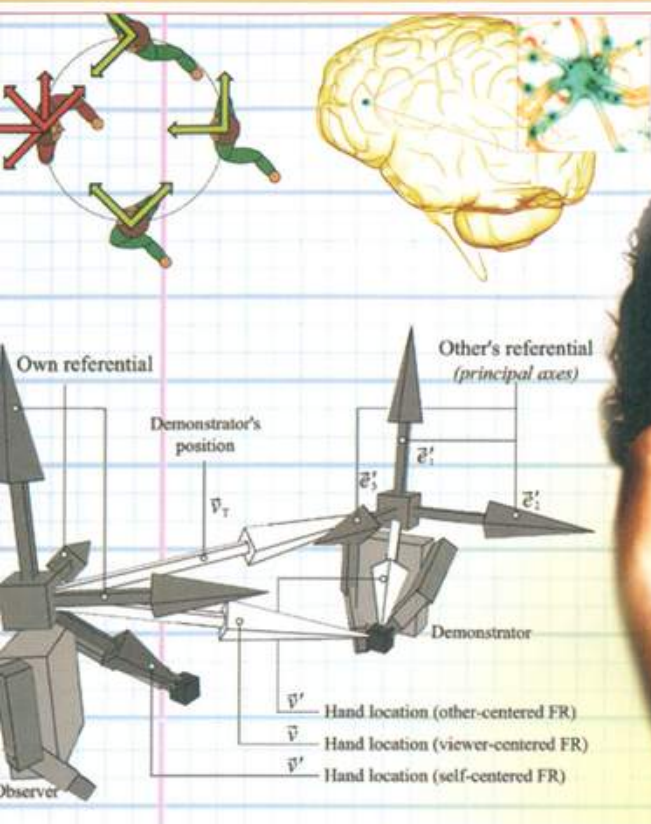
India. Indeed, even some of his 'opponents' recognized this; it was the historian Arnold Toynbee who said that Gandhi made it impossible for the British to go on ruling India, but he made it possible to leave without rancor and without humiliation. That's precisely the distinction between the person and the person's agenda. With that distinction in mind, the question is reframed, and you're able to see the wellbeing of your opponent as separate from the obnoxious behaviors that they're exhibiting. You can be against the latter to the death, without compromising your desire for the wellbeing of the person.

So, the problem is not political humor, but humor directed against a person. Such *ad hominem* attacks fit in with the principles of "conservatives," who accept win-at-all-costs thinking and do not place ultimate value on persons (as opposed to institutions, nations, and, of course, corporations) but they are completely discordant with the principles of the Left, and particularly of spiritual progressives. An example would be the Moveon.org group, which had done so much good until recently. They then took out a full page ad in the *New York Times*, using almost \$65,000 of peace-makers' money, only to run a play on General Petraeus's name, calling him "General Betray Us". It got trashed, deservedly (I would have to say); yet having learned nothing from it, they still have another ad, selling a 'flip' cell phone, with the message being to "flip off the Right". Such attacks are counter-productive, not only with the public at large, but because they create divisions within the Left itself, which is really a sometimes awkward mix of traditional leftists and new progressives.

Once again it goes back to Gandhi and his statement that when we humiliate another, we humiliate ourselves. It's simply inconceivable how a human being could enhance themselves by humiliating or degrading another person. Lewis is correct in saying that people are overly impressed with their leaders, but I say that rather than deflating those leaders, the answer is to empower the people. If people felt that they had independent judgment and a capacity to protect themselves, they wouldn't need a father figure to lead and protect them; this liberates them from their dependency on the leadership much more effectively than telling them that their leaders are no good. That *ad hominem* approach drives people into a defensive posture; they'll attack you in the name of patriotism, trying to defend their own commitment to their leaders. If you always look for the positive and constructive way, again, you can solve the problem more effectively by encouraging and empowering people to think for themselves. I've stopped contributing to Moveon.org because I just don't think they get it.

There's definitely a role for political comedy, and even satire, but that distinction between the person and their behavior has to be observed. It's something you have to judge on a case-by-case basis, and you'd have to know enough about your own motivations to make the right choice. Even flaws of character that do enter into politics, like the egotism of the President and his regime, can be rejected without rejecting the person. In practice what we do is we never ever humiliate another person, and never accept humiliation ourselves. So this distinction can be subtle, but it's very real and we have to be aware of it and frame it correctly. It's a distinction every parent should be aware of. If your child misbehaves, there are two attitudes that you can take; either say to the child, "there you go again", thus helping to imprint a negative self-image in the child's mind, or you can say "I'm surprised — this isn't worthy of you", thus helping the child to outgrow the behavior. It may seem a little insulting, but I think we are in a somewhat 'parental' position vis-à-vis the war-making right. There are some things of substantial importance that we understand, and they do not; our role towards them should be an educative one, and therefore we should never resort to personal invective. ■

Michael Nagler founded the Peace and Conflict Program at UC, Berkeley, and the Metta Center for Nonviolence Education. He is the author of The Search for a Nonviolent Future, and Our Spiritual Crisis, and has recently been awarded a major international prize for promoting Gandhian values. His website is www.mettacenter.org.



The baby's ability to reason well as an adult depends on its nurturance now, for reason is built neurologically on the structures that enable empathy. But empathy, compassion and connectedness with all humans and with nature—spiritual understandings that go beyond the purely rational—must guide both our lives and our science.

tific knowledge to all other forms of human discourse is that it is universal knowledge to which everyone can affirm, then there is even wider and more universal agreement on various forms of the ethical and spiritual wisdom that permeates most if not all ethical and spiritual traditions.

Here Lerner raises another interesting possibility: some scientific types (not scientists, but scientistics) may simply lack the almost universal capacity to intuit ethical and aesthetic dimensions of reality or to be attuned to the spiritual. There is a story of the "Valley of the Blind" into which an unfortunate pilot parachutes to escape his failing airplane. He learns their language and begins to talk about seeing things, but the blind not only can't understand what he is talking about, but are quite angry that he insists that there is this other level of perception. Finally, the community of the blind become convinced that the aberrant discourse of this man is a form of craziness, and that it comes from these two weird protuberances on his face on either side of his nose—what we call eyes—and so, as an act of mercy to try to help him overcome his creeping insanity, they decide to pluck them out. At times, Gabel and Lerner talk about the experience of the scientistics as comparable—not only can they not experience spiritual reality, but they have enough social power that they have convinced most people to keep their mouths closed about their own spiritual experiences, so much so that many people imagine that it is only their own personal experience, and possibly even an aberration, so they suppress their spiritual wisdom, or else try to neatly confine it into weekend religious communities that are accepted and tame in the society as long as they don't seek to bring their spiritual knowledge into the public sphere and into the rest of the week. Here, in Western capitalist societies, the spiritually blind are always giving off the message that those who have spiritual experiences are in danger of being treated as crazy unless they keep their mouths shut and follow the dominant scientific religion.

Towards a Sustaining Worldview

GABEL APPRECIATED WHAT HE SAW AS "A GREAT, LOVING SPIRIT OF ENQUIRY IN THE conversation" at the Roundtables. But there was no doubt that worldviews were clashing. I felt that I was peering in at the beginnings of a major revision of the Enlightenment.

Of course these Roundtables are not what it was like for Voltaire when he began challenging the religious views of his contemporaries, because it put his life in danger and he had to flee France. But what if a century or two from now, people look back at the origins of their worldview and see Roundtables like these as significant? Would people like Gabel and Lerner then be seen as Voltaires of the new paradigm? *(continued on page 65)*

SCIENCE AND SPIRIT

(continued from page 42)

Would their history books recount that first there were the millennia of religious worldviews, then the Enlightenment, and then, starting in the twenty-first century, a synthesis that incorporated the best of both but was a radical revision of both that was essential to creating a sustainable and enjoyable civilization? This synthesis would be one that abandoned the untenable and combative aspects of religion and the dangerous and demeaning aspects of science.

Just as religious wars have led people in disgust to create a secular world, so global warming, massive species loss, and a horribly unequal world may now lead people in disgust to create a world where our interdependence with each other and all life is privileged over our mastery of nature and of each other. That is the promise inherent in the NSP's "new bottom line."

This is not a wholesale rejection of either religion or science. Intolerance and religious war is not inherent in all religion, nor is destruction of nature inherent in science. But the way many people have practiced and understood religion has led to intolerance, authoritarianism, and even war. And the way most people have practiced and used science is leading to massive destruction of nature, and to unsatisfying human relationships.

We need a worldview that corrects the dysfunctional aspects of both the religious and scientific worldviews.

Is there something in common with both the failed religious worldviews and the failing scientific worldview? Gabel and Lerner say that yes, there is: the Achilles heel in both is seen in their exclusive claims to knowledge. We need a different and more mature approach to knowledge.

This contradicted the understanding of the scientists at the Roundtables of the word "knowledge." They have already, in their lifetimes, lived through a huge change in the scientific worldview: the shift from the Newtonian mechanical universe, the great clockwork mechanism wound up at the start of time and running inexorably ever since, to a quantum, fluid, inherently unpredictable, self-organizing universe. This has been mind-boggling enough. They were concerned to explain this shift to Lerner and Gabel. But the lat-

ter felt that, thoroughly welcome though that shift is, it still doesn't touch address the shift to the worldview they think is needed.

Why is it so hard for our society to deal with our urgent problems of world poverty, global warming, and alienation? What if it would actually take a radically different worldview to solve the problems created by the current worldview?

The View from the Center of the Universe

ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS ON THE CRITICAL importance of worldviews for solving our problems has been written by two of the scientists at these Roundtables. Joel Primack, astrophysicist and cosmologist, and Nancy Ellen Abrams, lawyer, musician and philosopher of science, have written in *The View from the Center of the Universe* that the way we see the universe, and the creation stories we hold about it, determine what we can actually see in it, which greatly influences how we act. Naturally, if you think God is soon going to bring this world to an end you won't see something like global warming as a problem. But they also argue that if you are stuck in a Newtonian view of the universe as a vast clockwork mechanism and have bought the implication that humans are of vanishing significance in it, you may also not be concerned as to whether our civilization survives or not, or at least you may not feel passionate urgency to save it, let alone the many species it is eradicating. Their insight is that current cosmology can actually be seen as putting humans and the Earth's whole biosphere back at the center of the universe—along with any other planets supporting complex life that may exist.

Primack and Abrams argue that this perspective can inspire us to solve our problems in a global way inclusive of all life on the planet. Given our human tendency to see an "us" and a "them," it is only this kind of cosmic perspective that can lead us to see all life on earth as "us." They admit this interpretation goes beyond the purely scientific, but write, "This kind of integration of science and meaning is considered by many scientists to be a danger to science, but a science that doesn't consider its own meaning can be a danger to everyone else."

They understand that we need inspiration. They embrace using those poetic

and even religious metaphors that are consistent with the science, because they understand that humans are moved by metaphor. In fact, current cognitive science tells us that all the ideas we construct about the world, including the scientific ones, are expressed through metaphor. The right metaphors can help us feel and celebrate our connections to each other and all life and the whole cosmos.

But for Primack and Abrams, as for Lakoff, the value of a metaphor does depend on its consistency with the scientific research. They write: "Our constraint, however, as well as our inspiration, must always be scientific knowledge. That's what guarantees that if we do experience a connection, it's to the real universe and not to some disembodied fantasy rattling around in our minds."

Here is the point of difference about what *knowledge* is.

In the Roundtable discussions, the scientists were deeply concerned that those speaking from a spiritual perspective were indeed trying to establish their "disembodied fantasies" as truth. The spiritual leaders could never get to the point where what they considered completely obvious universal truths were understood as such by the scientists. They were talking in quite different universes of thought.

Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics* provides a bridge between physics and mysticism that has appealed to many readers. At the Roundtables he talked about the new biology that sees cognition (though not consciousness) in all life, and evolution "as part of life's self-organization." This is a very different idea from living beings understood as 'things' on which a mechanistic natural selection does its work. Biologists see now that life has agency in its own evolution. In similar vein Primack pointed out that sexual selection is critical to evolution, and the role of love and desire in sexual selection is starting to inform our understanding especially of early human evolution. Capra again, "People today who study consciousness from a scientific point of view talk about the necessity of including first person experience in the data. Cognitive scientists are doing that."

However, even these moves by the scientists towards understanding the agency of desire and cognition in living beings were still advances within the

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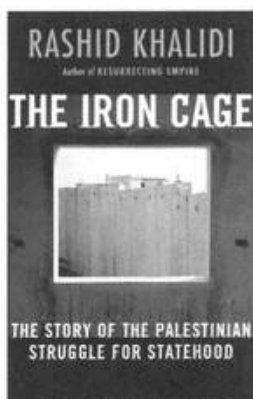
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mode of scientific knowledge. When empathic acts and expressions of spiritual insight become data for scientific discourse, that is fine, but it is still a world of thought away from spiritual knowledge.

What particularly frustrated Peter Gabel, he told me later, was that for him, the central problem is about the pain and suffering in the world and why some forms of scientific discourse makes it extremely difficult for people to develop a language that can help them develop the mutual love and trust needed to build an effective social change movement. Ordinary people, and especially those who have been intimidated by our education system into doubting their own ideas, have to have confidence in their ability to follow their hearts and recognize each other's longings, each other's deepest selves. They had to be able to choose out of systems of domination and alienation we live in. The scientific worldview was a significant part of what was preventing that! I had been off in intellectual appreciation land, trying to grasp what Cartesian dualism, random mutations, mirror neurons and systems theory had to do with spiritual metaphors. Gabel's outburst brought me back to the pain of the world.

Is There a Universal Spiritual Knowledge?

AT THE THIRD ROUNDTABLE, MICHAEL Lerner laid out the way he sees the universe. It is not the Platonic view, that says this material world is but a poor copy of some ideal world; it is not the related dualistic religious view that sees God acting from outside the universe. Instead:

I would like to articulate a unified vision rather than a dualistic vision.... From the beginning the universe has been an integrated physical and spiritual consciousness reality. Not from the emergence of brains but from the very, very beginning of everything. That unified reality didn't suddenly appear at a configuration of complexity but was always there.... There was never a time when the universe wasn't equally as conscious as it was physical. These two categories are simply human impositions, the best categories that we have—physical/consciousness (spiritual). They are a way of perceiving or chopping

up an integrated totality that has always been there from the start and has evolved in more and more complex ways that have involved in its complexity more and more manifestations of consciousness connection, love, empathy, generosity, etc.

In response Nancy Abrams said, "The idea that consciousness and the spirit has been there since the beginning is in my opinion an opinion. I don't share it." Later she said:

I don't agree with a lot of people at this table about what religion or the spirit is. For me the spirit is how I personally relate to the cosmos. It has nothing to do with the reality of what's out there. I don't know what's out there. I don't really think there's something spiritual out there without me feeling it or somebody feeling it. I think if all intelligent life were gone there would be no spirit. That's how I feel. But it's my opinion and everybody's entitled to their opinion on this issue. Some people love to think of the spirit as something real and objective and that's fine, let them think that, as long as they feel connected to it I'm happy. I just want people to not kill each other [over it].

Peter Gabel said:

...the belief that scientific methods are "hard" and therefore yield knowledge while intuitive methods are "soft" and therefore yield only opinions both expresses and reinforces an underlying feeling that there can be no objective basis for political or ethical judgments, that "no one has the right to speak for anyone else," and so forth. The denial, implicit in the scientific method, that one can achieve direct intuitive knowledge of the "within of things," and the ethical relativism that springs from it may help to explain the creationists' insistence that the Bible must be read as literally true in every respect.

The central question of what constitutes knowledge is: how do we get to a *true description of anything and everything*? The claim for a universal spiritual knowledge is that there is a sacredness and inner meaning to the universe and every living being that is discovered outside of the scientific discourse, but within the discourses of poetry, spirituality, intu-

ition and heart connection. This is not a static knowledge, revealed once or twice, but one that all people can come to when they engage with each other. It is not a single, monolithic knowledge. There is not one single way to intuit the meaning of a flower or a forest or a galaxy or what your and my deepest needs are. It takes training and practice. It may take meditation for me, peyote for you, the mystical practices of different religions, prayer in the chapel, or life in the woods. It takes practice in nonviolent communication, to learn how to talk across the barriers of culture and pain, to share our intuitive spiritual insights with others and get corrections to the ways our insights are skewed by our partial experience. This kind of communication takes a great deal of learning and practice to do well, though it can also be experienced in an instant of real reaching out of one heart to another. But how many universities teach it, prioritize it?

You might object that it is not knowledge in the way that scientific knowledge is. But was the Newtonian "knowledge" that the universe was a vast clockwork mechanism actually knowledge? Yes it was, in that it was the best anyone knew at the time. No it was not, in that it was provisional and was later proved inadequate. But the same would be true of spiritual knowledge: it is always under review because it is the experiences and disciplines of empathic connection that inform and create it.

So, in terms of their status as "knowledge," the two kinds of knowledge are actually not that different. There is just as much convergent evidence involved in spiritual knowledge as in scientific, because it depends on engaging with all kinds of people in many different ways.

The fact that neuroscientists can report what is going on at a neurological level when you or I sense that life on earth is sacred is pretty interesting. But it is not a full description. As Andrew Kimbrell, the eco-lawyer, said at the Roundtable:

Take the first E flat major chord of the Eroica symphony of Beethoven. Now think of all the science you could find in that. Think of all the muscle movements you could analyze of all the 108 symphony players, of the conductor, all the synapses, mirrored or non-mirrored, I don't understand all that brain stuff. I'm sure it's all going on.

And then all the audience. The aural nerves and everything that's going on. But you could spend 100 years with twenty scientists spending their entire lives analyzing what's going on scientifically in the first chord of Beethoven's Eroica symphony and you would understand nothing important about that symphony. And I would say that might be a metaphor for what we're trying to do with nature. So I think that there is a danger here and to not take a position on the hegemony and the dictatorship of efficiency principles, market principles, and certain views of technological and scientific progress that are winning the day, would be a mistake for spiritual progressives. If we don't take a position on that when that is the fundamental cold evil that is destroying the things we love the most, then I don't know what we're doing as a coalition.

The musicians' knowledge of Beethoven is knowledge: it can be shared, revised as more musicians' understandings are brought in, and as the experiences of audiences are shared. It will never stop developing.

You can equally share and develop spiritual knowledge about nature, the universe, and other people. Though it is different from scientific knowledge, there is no inherent reason why the scientists at the Roundtable couldn't have agreed with that. After all, they are living it themselves. As Abrams and Primack said, "a science that doesn't consider its own meaning can be a danger to everyone." The meaning needs to be consistent with the science but is not dictated by the science. At some point we lead with our hearts and make a leap towards the meaning that seems right, usually in conjunction with others whose hearts we trust. And should our spiritual intuition be consistent with the science if the science is wrong? Was it wrong for spiritual people to "know" that the universe was more than a great Newtonian mechanism when scientists "knew" that it was that mechanism? Who had the better knowledge?

Spiritual and scientific knowledge are both provisional, both based on convergent evidence, both as true as can be in their own sphere. It is just that spiritual knowledge is more important for certain purposes because it is not value neutral.

— The Turning of the Wheel —

When men* realize how close to self-destruction they have come, they will shudder to think of the consequences of their actions. Seldom has there been a time when men faced such danger. Even in the worst adversity they have fought and tested themselves against fate. In recent times, however, men have so lost a sense of their direction that they have seemed oblivious to the danger facing them. That this danger and trial are largely of their own making is no doubt responsible for their equanimity and apparent indifference. When men know this, they will be astonished to learn how close to annihilation have their actions brought them. They have indeed dined with death, putting an inconceivable strain on those who are pledged to help them. Men, of course, know little or nothing of this escape, and continue blithely on their path. That this path leads only to a desert wasteland they have yet to understand, so steeped are they in materialistic ambition.

The light dawns

Great are the possibilities which await men's creative efforts, however, and great will be their achievements when the light dawns and the blinkers drop from their eyes.

This realization will come when men turn inwards again, and find within their hearts the brotherhood and unity which all instinctively crave. Then will come the blossoming of new hope and inspiration, leading men to renew their upward

climb, and to the creation of a better world.

Simplicity and honest effort will replace the present corruption which stains every aspect of men's lives today. Men will seek to emulate Maitreya and his group of Masters, and so purify their structures and standards.

With Maitreya and his group to guide them, men will grow to love the simplicity of the new structures, and in them find a deep satisfaction and coherence. They will feel at ease in a world shorn of competition and the tension which it brings. Working together in cooperation they will find a profound happiness and fulfilment in all that they do.

Maitreya will stint nothing of his help and advice, nor shall we, your elder brothers, in our efforts to inspire the building of the new civilization. The wonders which will grace this coming edifice will delight and astonish all men. Each will have a part to play in its construction and all will give of their best in its achievement. Thus will it be.



"Great are the possibilities which await men's creative efforts and great will be their achievements when the light dawns."

This article, published in *Share International* magazine, was written by a Master of Wisdom. The Masters, headed by Maitreya, the World Teacher, are highly advanced teachers and advisors of humanity who are planning to work openly in the world very soon.

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*man is a general term meaning humankind

The Holy Trinity of Science

By Andrew Kimbrell in a combination of quotes from the Science and Spirit Roundtables

We haven't talked about the unconscious here: the idea that scientists are free of unconscious ideas. Notice that the eschatology of Christianity has been completely adopted by secular science. We are in progress to heaven on earth. If we just do enough science we will cure all diseases, cure the blind. Now we have genetic engineering. They say, "Andy what's the matter with you, look at the world we're going to create with all of this! Progress!" So they've taken a "heaven-on-earth" eschatology with science becoming Yahweh, incarnating in the miracle Son of technology, influenced by the daily Spirit of consumerism in the market.

In other words, Christ said: you know, I'm a little worried to leave you guys without me. I'm a little worried that you ain't going to participate in me fully. So I'm going to have the Holy Spirit come down every day—to bring you—to participate in me fully. How do we buy into technology? By buying, by consuming. That's how we buy a new TV set. How we buy a new car, which I am actually. My car broke down. By doing that, I get the spirit. And I feel the excitement. I'm not immune from this.

Unconsciously, I would argue, we have created a mirror religion to Christianity, the same eschatology: science is the Omniscient, incarnates in the Son that creates the daily miracles of flight. Christ walked on water, but we have jet skis, much better. And then the Holy Spirit, what gets us to buy into the Son, is advertising, that's the Pentecostal moment. So they've unconsciously created a mirror Christianity, same metaphors, but now ensconced in the physical world. And when they fight each other they are both fighting on the basis of transcendental principles, but it's unconscious. The only danger is I'm not sure scientists realize they are embodying an unconscious religion. So from the depth psychological point of view we need a lot more work.

But, Jung says that in every trinity there's a shadow fourth: in Christianity it's the devil, and was the feminine before the Mary—and the shadow fourth here [in the Science Trinity] is nature: She, who brings us the limits. Those limits are ontologically evil and the whole process of heaven on earth and immortality is to defeat those limits. Literally, unconsciously, we've created the entire dogma of the Christian Church in a concretized version and if you're a heretic to that, that's the problem. The fundamentalists and the scientists hate each other so much because they are actually, theologically fighting over the same ground. Literally, the same ground.

TY CASHMAN: Herman Kahn and Julian Simon came out and said, "technology breaks us out of limits to growth." Limits to growth is the evil.

KIMBRELL: Technology is salvation!

CASHMAN: Because every resource is substitutable, substitutable, substitutable...

KIMBRELL: Ty, belief! Believe! Believe! Believe! There're no limits!

Those purposes are how to live our lives, what choices to make, what to consider sacred.

In my denomination, the Unitarian Universalists, we have seven guiding principles. The two that I think underlay the others are:

1) The inherent worth and dignity of every person.

7) Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

I wholeheartedly espouse those principles. Where do they come from? Not simply from a rational argument: rational arguments can be made for and against them and there is no proof. Some people appear to have no worth and dignity and I find good reasons every day for trashing the web of life for my personal gain (e.g., I don't bother to approve or even know where much of my food comes from). Those principles come from a collective process of spiritual intuition and exchange engaged in by a whole denomination drawing on centuries of uninterrupted spiritual practice and development. They are among the most important things I know in my life and I hold them in common with many other people. I have spent years in a community that cohered around them, and around the daily practices of learning to live them together. They are provisional, in the sense that the process of drawing in more people, more experience, more honest sharing of spiritual intuition, in response to historical developments, may lead the denomination to change the wording or add another principle. How these principles are enacted in daily life is also subject to trial and error, group learning, prayer, meditation, heart-to-heart exchanges, small group process, exchanges with outsiders, and so on. Thus we build our spiritual knowledge. The more we engage cross-culturally at a heart and spirit-centered level of honesty with other people all over the world, the more universal this knowledge becomes. But it is striking how universal an experiential spiritual approach, as opposed to a creedal approach, already is understood to be across cultures. It's just that in our culture it doesn't yet have the status of the knowledge upon which governments should be acting, by which corporations should be licensed, or for which our tax money and our discretionary spending should be spent.

The Religion of Science

ANDREW KIMBRELL SPOKE VIGOROUSLY and colorfully at the Roundtables. He argued that Galileo should indeed have been imprisoned, along with Isaac Newton and all their ilk, not because they said the earth went round the sun, but because:

A murder took place about 400 years ago. It was not a murder created by Judaism or the Catholic Church or even Islam. It was a murder created by a certain group of secular thinkers during the Protestant Reformation. They created the world we live in now, in my view. Like it or not, that's the way it is. The dogma is of efficiency, competition, objectification, and the privileging of data over experience.

When Nancy Abrams objected that accurate data is desperately needed, he agreed but stressed he was talking about what it is that we value: the measurable data or the qualitative aspects of life. In another part of the conversation he told us what we need to do:

Go out and experience animals, go to the river and look at the stream. You're only going to protect what you fall in love with. You're not

going to have people protect nature because they've read about data on nature or resource allocation or even that we have 20 percent less fish or 50 percent less fish. They will go out to the river and say, "I love this river" and they'll defend that river. So we don't defend data, we defend actual experience. Not that data's not true...it's just so unimportant.

I thought that long ago I had left the religious worldview of my upbringing for a scientific worldview, but I had to wonder when I heard Kimbrell argue that our culture has created a substitute for the Christian Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit out of science itself. (See box on page 69).

Summary

HAVE I MADE TOO MUCH OF THE FACT that Lakoff said that "You submit a dichotomy of insides and outsides and that is false," or that Nancy Abrams, who is fully and creatively committed to a spiritual approach to the cosmos, said that spirit "has nothing to do with the reality of what's out there" and is therefore opinion rather than knowledge? Is this obsession with

the status of spiritual intuitive empathic understanding as *knowledge* misplaced?

Or is there a deep difference here that gets right to the core of the radical shift in worldview that we need, and that is possible for us to make?

The worldview shift is that spiritual knowledge gives a *truer picture of the whole* than science can give, because it includes the sense data from science but goes beyond it to intuit value and meaning, and it has a *higher* claim than scientific knowledge as a guide for action in the world. But is there anything in that formulation that the scientists at the Roundtables would really object to? Perhaps the objections really were misunderstandings, triggered by the use of words like "detached," "inside/outside" and "spiritual" which raised the traumas of past and present religious assaults on science.

Just Imagine

ONE CAN IMAGINE A HUMAN CIVILIZATION that prioritizes taking care of each other, all of us, all humans and all living creatures and plants. We have the science and technology to do it now. Our physical needs could be met without destroying ecosystems and driving species to extinction, and our psychological and spiritual needs could be met if we prioritized them. The resurgence of the old religious worldview in the shape of new militant fundamentalisms is merely a passing phase, an understandable reaction to the failures of science. The failures educated liberals may be most aware of concern species loss and global warming. But the failures other people are most aware of concern their loss of sacred value in the world, their being treated as numbers, as expendable by the gods of corporate and economic efficiency. In fact the West itself, including educated and well-off liberals, is prone to loneliness, depression, and the loss of meaning. One can imagine a world that wonders why spiritual knowledge was ever considered less valid than scientific knowledge, why it was ever considered an individualistic thing, rather a communal and authoritative form of knowledge like science. We need both kinds of knowledge, but right now, we need to privilege the spiritual. ■

David Belden, D. Phil, is Managing Editor of Tikkun.

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THE ISRAEL LOBBY

(continued from page 52)

Iraq, not the least of which is oil.

In my article in *Tikkun* last year, I detailed the role of the military-industrial complex and other interests that are even more influential than the Israel Lobby. For example, though Mearsheimer and Walt observe that U.S. foreign aid to Israel comes out to "about \$500 a year for every Israeli," they ignore the fact that virtually all of the military assistance goes directly to American arms merchants and the economic aid is barely more than what Israel pays annually for interest on loans from U.S. banks for previous weapons purchases. In other words, ordinary Israelis never see that money. Furthermore, for every dollar of U.S. military aid, Israeli taxpayers are forced to pay \$2 to \$3 to cover personnel, training, and spare parts.

Mearsheimer and Walt downplay this largesse for American arms manufacturers by noting that Israel is allowed to spend up to one-quarter of its aid money domestically. However, even that 75 percent is far more than any other country receives. Furthermore, the aid to Israel makes it possible for the United States to sell arms to Arab countries concerned about countering Israeli arms procurement. Even "domestic" Israeli arms production involves the purchase of American parts and includes lucrative partnerships with American firms. When the authors talk about how the United States provides Israel, at taxpayer expense, with "such top-drawer weaponry as Blackhawk helicopters and F-16 jets," they seem to forget the lobbying efforts by Sikorsky or Lockheed Martin, the powerful corporations which manufacture those aircraft, or the more than \$1 million in congressional appropriations and armed services commitments.

It is also important to note that the governments of Egypt and Colombia do not have strong allied domestic lobbies, yet they are the second and third largest recipients of U.S. military aid. Clearly, as I have pointed out in previous articles in this magazine, while Mearsheimer and Walt are correct in noting how U.S. support for Israeli government policies actually hurts U.S. interests in the long-run, the U.S. government still believes there are plenty of good strategic and

economic reasons for supporting a militarized Israel. As Uri Avnery puts it, just as "Israel uses the U.S. to dominate Palestine," it is also true that "the U.S. uses Israel to dominate the Middle East."

Yet the pressure on U.S. policy makers to blindly support Israeli policies is motivated by more than narrow strategic and economic interests. There are ideological factors as well, which (while the Israel Lobby has certainly played a role in cultivating them) were already firmly entrenched in the American psyche.

One is the sentimental attachment many Americans—particularly liberals of the post-World War II generations—have for Israel. There is a great appreciation for Israel's internal democracy, progressive social institutions (such as the kibbutzim), the relatively high level of social equality, and Israel's important role as a sanctuary for an oppressed minority group that spent centuries in the Diaspora. Through a mixture of guilt regarding Western anti-Semitism, personal friendships with Jewish Americans who identify strongly with Israel, and fear of inadvertently encouraging anti-Semitism by criticizing Israel, there is enormous reluctance to acknowledge the seriousness of Israeli violations of human rights and international law. Many American liberals of this generation have an idealist view of Israel that is both as sincere and inaccurate as the idealized view of Stalin's Russia embraced by an earlier generation of American leftists. To many Americans who are middle aged and older, Israel is seen as it was portrayed in the idealized and romanticized 1960 movie *Exodus*, starring a young Paul Newman.

Contributing to this view is the widespread racism in American society against Arabs and Muslims, often encouraged in the media. This is compounded by the identification many Americans have with Zionism in the Middle East as a reflection of their own historical experience in North America as immigrants and pioneers. In both cases, European migrants (many of whom were escaping religious persecution) built a new nation based upon noble, idealistic values, while simultaneously suppressing and expelling the indigenous population seen as violent and "primitive."

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Mearsheimer and Walt, as well as Rabbi Lerner in the last issue of this magazine, correctly note the bias in the mainstream media, particularly among leading columnists and other pundits, in defense of Israeli government policies and U.S. support for such policies. It is unclear, however, whether this media bias is qualitatively worse than media bias in its coverage of other conflict regions or international policy issues in which the U.S. government is heavily invested. During the 1980s, for example, it was extremely rare to read or hear anything positive in the mainstream media about the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Articles documenting that leftist regime's real and alleged human rights abuses were more prominent than accounts of the far greater human rights abuses by rightist regimes in Guatemala and El Salvador. Today, negative press coverage regarding Cuba and Venezuela outweighs any negative stories regarding pro-U.S. governments with poor human rights records like Colombia and Mexico. Similarly, rarely is there serious critical analysis of the neo-liberal model of globalization or the Pentagon's bloated

budget, nor are there many positive news stories or opinion pieces regarding groups challenging corporate greed and militarization.

This is not to say that those who challenge U.S. policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict haven't been subjected to enormous pressure from organized right wing forces. I have often been on the receiving end of such attacks. As a result of my opposition to U.S. support for the Israeli government's policies of occupation, colonization, and repression, I have been deliberately misquoted, subjected to slander and libel, and been falsely accused of being "anti-Semitic" and "supporting terrorism;" my children have been harassed and my university's administration has been bombarded with calls for my dismissal. I have also had media appearances and speaking engagements cancelled, even by groups generally supportive of the right to dissent. (For example, in 2003, just two weeks prior to its annual meeting at which I had been scheduled to speak on U.S. foreign policy and international law, the State Bar Asso-

ciation of Arizona rescinded its invitation after the president and board received a flurry of emails claiming that I was "anti-Israel." A few years earlier, the Oregon Peace Institute cancelled an invitation for me to speak at a forum in Portland following similar pressure from the campaign of the first district's Democratic nominee for Congress. And a recent peace studies conference at Hofstra University insisted at the last minute on adding a right wing supporter of the Israeli government to their plenary program in order to counter my scheduled "anti-Israel" presentation, wherein I raised concerns about Washington's failure to take into account international law in brokering the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.)

It is important to remember, however, that those who challenge U.S. policy anywhere are going to be subjected to intimidation. Recent attacks against U.S. professors specializing in the Middle East and criticism of the Middle East Studies Association are very disturbing, but they are only marginally worse than the similar attacks against professors specializing in Latin America and the Latin American Studies Association during the 1980s. Right wing criticism during the 1960s targeting Southeast Asian scholars was also widespread. In other words, intellectuals with empirical knowledge of any world region who dare challenge the lies and distortions of a given administration relevant to their area of research are going to be subjected to intimidation.

This is not to belittle the exceptional nature of the challenges faced by critics of U.S. support for the Israeli government. Given that Israel is the world's only Jewish state and that some criticism of Israel really is rooted in anti-Semitism, organized attacks against those opposing Israeli policies tend to carry more resonance since they involve alleged manifestations of prejudice against a minority group. If a Jewish state were not the focus, many liberals would dismiss such attacks as passé McCarthyism and would not take them seriously. As a result, assaults on critics of Israeli policies have been more successful in limiting open debate, but this gagging censorship effect stems more from igno-

rance and liberal guilt than from any all-powerful Israel lobby.

It has long been in Washington's interest to maintain a militarily powerful and belligerent Israel dependent on the United States. Real peace could undermine such a relationship. The United States has therefore pursued a policy that attempts to bring greater stability to the region, while falling short of real peace. Washington wants a Middle East where Israel can serve a proxy role in projecting U.S. military and economic interests. This symbiosis requires suppressing challenges to American-Israeli hegemony within the region.

This also requires suppressing challenges to this policy within the United States and there is no question that the Israel Lobby plays an important role in this regard. However, this is primarily an issue of the Israel Lobby working at the behest of U.S. foreign policymakers, not U.S. foreign policymakers working at the behest of the Israel Lobby.

Unfortunately, Washington's agenda provokes a reaction that all but precludes any kind of stable order that would enhance the long-term national security interests of the United States or Israel, much less peace or justice. U.S. policy has resulted in dividing Israelis from Arabs, although both are Semitic peoples who worship the same God, love the same land, and share a history of subjugation and oppression. The so-called peace process is not about peace but about imposing a Pax Americana. To blame the current morass in the Middle East on the Israel Lobby only exacerbates animosities and plays into the hands of the divide-and-rule tactics of those in Congress and the administration whose primary objective is ultimately not to help Israel but to advance the American Empire. ■

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JENA

(continued from page 31)

board, in addressing the severity of the expulsions, only made the situation worse by reducing the punishment to a three-day suspension, seemingly treating the case as nothing more than a boyish prank. By ignoring the violently racist symbolism evoked by the nooses, the Jena school officials triggered a corresponding resentment in the black community. Their decision not to confront the symbolism directly, in a sensitive, compassionate manner designed to foster reconciliation and healing, left the mutual resentment of the two communities only one outlet—violence. At the very least, treating this incident as an educational opportunity could have served to defuse tensions and avoid, or reduce, the ensuing race-based violence.

But it could have done so much more. Repentance is not possible without self-awareness of how our actions may hurt others. And self-awareness is impossible without knowledge. Providing these students an opportunity to learn the history of their forebears, however painful that history is, would have been the first step towards self-awareness.

Repentance is also not possible until we can see through the eyes of those we have hurt. And that is why I would have required the students to seek out relatives of the victims and listen to their stories. Perhaps one story would have moved one white student to see the world differently. As the Talmud teaches, "to save one life is to save the world."

Finally, atonement is not possible without facing one's victims. Had the students been required to report their findings to an interracial audience, there would have been at least the possibility of a cathartic encounter with the Other. Maybe, just maybe, this could have fostered the beginnings of racial reconciliation in Jena.

The Jena school officials, at least for now, chose the wrong path. But they could still choose another path. They could call on the prosecutor to drop all charges, if both the black and the white students enter into a dialogue along the lines suggested here. They could introduce Professor Pfeifer's book into the high school curriculum. They could admit that their initial reactions were misguided.

And they could plant a tree on the site of the old one. By cutting the tree down, the school officials hoped that the source of the

controversy would be removed. But the tree was not the source of the controversy any more than were the nooses; the controversy was rooted in the souls of the students, as inheritors of generations of bias, ignorance, fear and hatred. One cannot defeat bias, ignorance, fear and hatred by removing inanimate symbols. The only way to do so is to heal the wounded soul.

Planting a tree is a universal symbol of hope for the future. By planting a new tree, to be tended and enjoyed by generations of students white and black, the school officials could demonstrate their hope for a more peaceful, loving world than the one these students have inherited. ■

All information on Louisiana lynchings in this article is taken from *Louisiana Lynchings, 1878-1946*, prepared by Michael J. Pfeifer, Associate Professor of History, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York and available at: <http://academic.evergreen.edu/p/pfeifer/ml/Louisiana.html>.

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Culture

BOOKS | FILM | MUSIC

[BOOKS]

Chagall—Tightrope Artist

MARC CHAGALL by Jonathan Wilson

Schocken Books

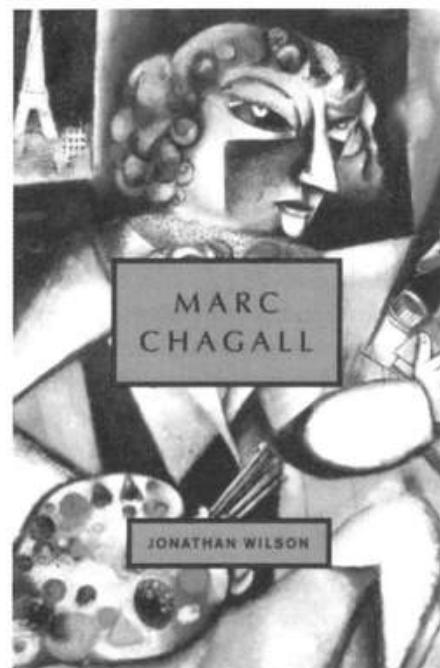
Review by Ron Slate

CHAGALL ARRIVED IN Paris from Vitebsk in 1911 and set up his studio in La Ruche, the now famous art colony, alongside fellow Jewish painters Modigliani and Soutine. But he always got along better with his poet friends, such as Apollinaire and Blaise Cendrars, than with other painters. "In 1911, and through Chagall alone, metaphor made its triumphal entry into modern painting," wrote the Surrealist poet Andre Breton. Chagall embraced Cubism and chased after Picasso like everyone else. But the poets immediately sensed that Chagall, bounding out of the backwaters of Russia (with its folk-art traditions) and the Jewish Pale of Settlement (with its Hasidic legends and parables) was taking the next step in painting. Making pictures of landscapes, nudes and still lifes, the Cubists were exploding form and extolling the force of sheer color, but their works were usually based on traditional transactions between the eye and the object or scene. Chagall's pictures, however, not only delivered dream-like or visionary imagery, but seemed to emerge from the inside out, the images dropping miraculously into place. The poets relished how Chagall's work more directly signified the irrational nature of the psyche.

Jonathan Wilson's brief, perceptive, and affable biography of Chagall may not add a significant dimension to our appreciation of Chagall, but its spirited concision and thematic inclusiveness make it a

perfect introduction to the life and works of the enigmatic artist. An accomplished novelist, Wilson is thus the latest literary figure to be intrigued with Chagall, and his enjoyment is apparent in the sometimes casual tone he takes with the reader. Chagall, he implies, is someone who approached problems and created solutions we can all understand and find pertinent. Framing our understanding is Wilson's preoccupation with Chagall's Jewishness and the role it played in his art.

One of the many virtues of *Marc Chagall* is its willingness to leave certain questions open, though the ambiguities in Chagall and his work make closure of many issues irrelevant and impossible. In his 1931 autobiography, *My Life*, Chagall wrote, "Were I not a Jew (with the content that I put in the word), I would not be an artist at all." (One wonders what he meant by "content.") The art historian Jacob Baal-Teshuva echoes what most critics maintain, namely "Chagall's art would be unthinkable without his Jewishness." Wilson's approach is to describe episodes and works that underscore the complexity of Chagall's Jewishness. "It seems that Chagall exhibited a dual consciousness," writes Wilson. "All his links to the past pressed daily upon his attachment to and enthusiasm for the liberating present." If belonging, and not believing or behaving, is the key determinant of one's Jewishness, then the speculation by Jews through the years about Chagall, especially in light of his crucifixion imagery, has been, "Is he one of us?" Wilson keenly



comprehends that Chagall was an artist, first and foremost, and that "nothing mattered so much to Chagall as the battles that he staged between what went on in the world and what happened on his canvases." Perhaps Chagall's Jewishness is prominent in most considerations of him simply because of his stunning precedence. Although Wilson downplays the obvious historical brevity of Jewish artistic accomplishment since the Enlightenment, no Jew had managed to discover his individual expression in pictures with such spent force and impact until Chagall.

Thus, Wilson makes us speculate about the exact nature of the provocative pressure Chagall puts on us. The fidelity of

Chagall's imagery to a symbolic code suggests the responsibility of maintaining continuity. But in a free society, the reverence for those symbols must encounter the liberty to revise. Wilson's book is important precisely because the mainstream of contemporary Jewish culture in America, in thrall with the sentimentality of Chagall's rooftop fiddlers, is still not entirely comfortable with those liberties and revisions. Both eager to please and protective of his identity, Chagall is partially responsible for how we strive to misunderstand him.

A story-teller by trade, Wilson spins a taut and spare tale of Chagall. His terse descriptions of the paintings and other works, inserted shrewdly throughout the life narrative, illuminate the solutions Chagall devised to balance form and content. His summations and assessments, dropped in effortlessly along the way, have authority and thoughtfulness. Noting that Chagall specialized in "representations of real or powerfully imagined love and serenity," Wilson comments, "He walked the tightrope that separates sentimentality from deeper, more authentic feeling better than anyone, except perhaps the great Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai."

In the work of a great artist, all things occur at once: the lore of the past, the confusion of the present, and the dream of a third way. Wilson's Chagall, vacillating between earnestness and clownishness, behaved throughout his life in ways that could protect the vulnerable and mysterious core of his creativity. Although the paths into Chagall ultimately circle back on each other, Jonathan Wilson's book, perhaps with a volume of Chagall's works alongside to ponder, takes us as far as we can go in a most economical and deft fashion. ■

THE EYE DOCTOR'S VISION

MILTON ROGOVIN: THE MAKING OF A SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHER

by Melanie Anne Herzog

University of Washington Press

Review by Paul Von Blum

Milton Rogovin's: *The Making of a Social Documentary* is a combination of Rogovin's photographs and Melanie Hertzberg's text. It is a major contribution to the growing literature of American socially conscious art and exposes readers to a remarkable and durable contemporary photographer.

Born in 1909 in New York, Rogovin has produced stunning work for more than fifty years. His efforts link him to the greatest twentieth century American social photographers: Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine, Dorothea Lange, Margaret Bourke-White, Gordon Parks, Walker Evans, W. Eugene Smith, among others. Trained as an optometrist, he moved to Buffalo in 1938. Politically active, he was persecuted during the 1950s anti-communist hysteria, severely impacting his optometry practice. Turning to documentary photography, he directed his social commitments to workers, people of

color, and marginalized men, women, and children in America and elsewhere. He has portrayed his subjects as strong, dignified, and resilient in the face of oppression and deprivation.

Rogovin embodies the historic Jewish ideals of justice, equality, and compassion. Widely exhibited to huge national and international audiences, he has solidified his contributions to American art history. Throughout his life, he has stood defiantly with the poor and oppressed against privilege and power.

This volume is a collaboration of artist and scholar, providing an appealing selection of Rogovin's photographs. It also presents a cogent critical assessment of his artistic stature. Professor Herzog locates Milton Rogovin centrally within the tradition of American socially conscious photography.

Herzog encountered an unusual challenge in analyzing the photographer's contributions in their political, historical, and art historical contexts. When she began, she was presented with Rogovin's substantial autobiographical text. Begun in 1997, it covered his early life, his optometric training and work, his political activism, and his increasing devotion to documentary photography. Herzog had to write her own account while remaining faithful to his text. She accomplished her task superbly; the combined efforts of artist and scholar represent a splendid collaboration. The product is a fusion of artistic talent, personal memoir, and



Family of miners, Zimbabwe, 1989.

Ron Slate's book of poems *The Incentive of the Maggot* was nominated for the 2006 National Book Critics Circle prize. He is a founder of a new healthcare social networking site and has launched a literary review site at ronslate.com.



Native Americans and Lower West Side, 1973.

scholarly analysis.

Herzog argues persuasively that Rogovin is a contemporary heir of Lewis Hine, whose haunting photographs documented the challenging lives of early twentieth century immigrants, child laborers, and urban slum dwellers. Like Hine, Rogovin sees his work as an impetus for social change. His images are inextricably related to deeper political struggles where artistic effort is inseparable from social activism.

This perspective has been the guiding principle for socially conscious artists in the United States for more than a century. Virtually every political and social movement has had dramatic visual components. The early twentieth century movement to abolish child labor, for example, relied heavily on Lewis Hine's striking portraits of young children abused in wretched industrial settings. Ben Shahn's posters and Willam Gropper's cartoons were staples of the labor struggles in the 1930s and 1940s. The postwar Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam war movements were replete with artistic products supporting racial dignity, social justice, and peace. At present, murals, prints, posters, cartoons, and documentary photographs—many by internationally renowned visual artists—contribute to ending such issues as the Iraq war, the

genocide in Darfur, the continuing degradation of the natural environment, and continuing the contemporary struggles of women and racial and ethnic minorities for full equality in America.

Art by itself cannot alter basic political realities; it inspires social activists and reinforces their emotional commitment to their causes. These are inseparable elements of effective social and political action, a reality that Milton Rogovin has understood and practiced throughout his career. Most social activists enthusiastically welcome these powerful artistic components of their movements. At the same time, some others share the same unfortunate disdain for the arts as the dominant society. They view, consciously or not, the arts as a frivolous luxury, pleasant but ultimately marginal to the organizing and mass actions characterizing social movements. Like their counterparts in commerce, government, and education, they fail to understand the centrality of human creativity in all societies throughout history. In recent years, especially following the agitation of the Sixties, this philistine view has subsided, but scarcely disappeared.

Committed to this vision of art as integral to social action, the author details the other artistic influences informing Milton Rogovin's work for over fifty years. Riis,

Bourke-White, Lange, and Evans produced thousands of socially conscious photographs, encouraging Rogovin to continue that tradition. Rogovin also encountered the socially committed prints of Francisco Goya, Honore Daumier, and Kathe Kollwitz. Herzog highlights his autobiographical account of these early influences, revealing his powerful linkage to the tradition of politically engaged art.

A crucial feature is Herzog's arrangement of the photographs and her specific analyses of their origin, quality, and impact. She documents his focus, with increasing effectiveness, on lighting, composition, camera angles, and other technical features. She details how his sensitive relationships with his subjects generated his engaging portrayals. Above all, she reinforces Rogovin's view that his photographs should be viewed collectively rather than as single images. This is crucial in understanding Rogovin's exemplary contribution to American photography. His works are narratives enabling audiences to empathize with entire groups of oppressed people *and* with individual subjects.

The photographs themselves are compelling. They include many examples of Rogovin's photographs of Buffalo's marginalized residents, which reflect the foundation of his entire career: "I try to understand the underlying causes of the idleness, the drugs, the prostitution, the graffiti, etc. [My] selection...is a political choice...to show that we are dealing with human beings."

Other themes reinforce that judgment. His Appalachian images confront the squalid conditions of life in that region. Like Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange in the 1930s and 1940s, Rogovin brings a public face to people who have remained invisible throughout American history. This documentation underscores the huge gap between American ideals and American realities.

Among the most remarkable photographs are images from foreign lands. His Mexican and Chilean works add a vivid international dimension to his career. His portrayals of miners and their families from France, Scotland, Spain, Cuba,

China, Mexico, Zimbabwe, and Czechoslovakia are among the finest examples of worker photography.

Approaching the centenary of his birth, Milton Rogovin understands that images alone are merely one facet of the broader movements for social change. Like all great humanist artists, he wants his works to mobilize others to become social justice activists. His words eloquently express the credo of radical artists over the centuries: "It wasn't the photographer—his or her photographs—but all hundred and one different blows added together to make a change."

One of the most endearing images is of Rogovin himself, sitting in a wheelchair at an anti-war demonstration in 2005, holding a sign reading "Dissent Is Democratic." This sustained political commitment, like his exceptional body of photographs, reflects the continuing legacy of an artistic giant. Both his large body of work and Herzog's book itself con-

tribute to the resurgence of socially conscious art and scholarship in the early twenty-first century. Slowly but inexorably, the cold war American hostility to both the production of radical political art and sympathetic critical scholarship has dissipated. The era of abstract expressionism, as well as other art forms eschewing social commentary, coincided with formalist art historical writing that ignored or even disparaged the older tradition of visual social criticism.

The evidence suggests that the American tradition of socially conscious art, represented in Milton Rogovin's documentary photographs, and critically disseminated by scholars like Melanie Herzog, Bram Dijkstra, Lucy Lippard, Albert Boime, and many others, will thrive in the early decades of the new century. The events and political struggles of the moment are likely to generate an impressive body of critical visual art in the style of Milton Rogovin and his radical artistic

predecessors and contemporaries.

The retrograde policies of the George W. Bush presidency, the Iraq war debacle, the growing threat of global warming, the need to effect peace and justice for both Israelis and Palestinians, the tragic gaps of wealth and power throughout the world, and other glaring social and political problems all encourage artistic involvement from progressive men and women. They are even now contributing to the social movements of which they are vital parts. Their efforts over the next decades will extend this exemplary artistic tradition, providing rich and vibrant substance to the old eye doctor's vision. ■

Paul Von Blum is Senior Lecturer in African American Studies, Communication Studies, and Art History at UCLA. He is the author of five books, including Resistance, Dignity, and Pride: African American Art in Los Angeles. His current research concerns the history of American Jewish political art.

WE ARE ALL CHOSEN

RACE AND RELIGION AMONG THE CHOSEN PEOPLES OF CROWN HEIGHTS

by Henry Goldschmidt,
Rutgers University Press
Review by Nathaniel Deutsch

A DECADE AND A HALF AGO, Crown Heights erupted in a violent conflagration (right) that brought to the surface long simmering tensions between African American and Lubavitcher residents of the neighborhood. The conflict in Crown Heights helped launch the career of a political novice by the name of Rudy Giuliani and inaugurated a long period of Republican mayoral control in a famously Democratic city. Since then, the Brooklyn neighborhood has been in the news for other, less violent reasons. Its brownstone lined streets have not only produced the most important Jewish messianic figure since Shabbetai Zevi in the form of the





seventh and, depending on whom you listen to, deceased, Lubavitcher Rebbe, but also the chart topping Hasidic Reggae singer Matisyahu, who studied at the Hadar Ha-Torah Yeshiva just down the block from "770," the red-brick Lubavitcher headquarters on Eastern Parkway. At a time when a majority of American Jews live in suburbs segregated by both class and race, Crown Heights represents a rare urban space where Jews, including many who are working class, live side by side with African Americans of a variety of backgrounds. In short, Crown Heights is one of the most interesting and Jewishly significant neighborhoods in the country.

For those who can't just hop on the 3 Train and take it to the Kingston Avenue stop—and even for those who can—Henry Goldschmidt's new book *Race and Religion Among the Chosen Peoples of Crown Heights* (Rutgers University Press, 2006) is an indispensable guide to the neighborhood, its history, and its peoples. Goldschmidt, a professor of religion at Wesleyan University, has produced a definitive account of the complex racial and religious dynamics of Crown Heights. Trained as an anthropologist, Goldschmidt lived in the neighborhood for several years beginning in 1996—and it shows. One of the great strengths of Goldschmidt's ethnographic approach is his willingness to analyze his own position vis-à-vis the black and Jewish residents of the neighborhood, something he does to great effect in the book's "Prologue," a nuanced account of a potentially explosive encounter in a local laundromat that in-

spires comparison to Spike Lee's now classic film *Do the Right Thing*.

Much to his credit, Goldschmidt rejects the idea that the residents of Crown Heights can simply be divided into dichotomous categories like "Black" and "White" or "Jew" and "Gentile." Instead, through interviews and a combination of historical and anthropological analysis, Goldschmidt reveals that many of the African Americans in Crown Heights view their own experience through the lens of biblical Israel and, in some cases, actually identify themselves as Jews, Hebrews, or Israelites. As one Rastafarian puts it: "We are the real Jews. We are the Israelites...It's in the Bible mon." On the other side, Lubavitchers' primary identification is not with whiteness but with Jewishness, an identity that they see in genealogical and spiritual terms (i.e., they believe that all Jews possess a different soul) more than as a faith. In light of these competing modes of self-identification, Goldschmidt perceptively concludes that Crown Heights is home to multiple "chosen peoples."

How the residents of the neighborhood view themselves is only part of the picture, however. Equally significant is how they view each other, or, as Goldschmidt puts it: "it's not always easy to live next door to a chosen people." According to Goldschmidt, Afro-Caribbean and African American residents of Crown Heights tend to view the differences between blacks and Jews in terms of race, whereas Lubavitchers typically see the fundamental difference between them and their neighbors as "a

matter of 'religion'—as a difference, in essence, between 'Jews' and 'Gentiles.'" Despite the apparent gulf between these positions, Goldschmidt tries to reveal "the inextricable ties between these discourses of difference." In one of his most illuminating points, he also concludes that: "It's ultimately Lubavitchers—more than their neighbors—who have upset the hegemonic patterns of identity formation in multicultural America[...]by living by a spiritual vision of Jewishness, in a neighborhood—and nation—where collective identities are generally defined in terms of race."

No account of Crown Heights over the past few decades would be complete without an exploration of the events of August, 1991, when a car in the Lubavitcher Rebbe's motorcade accidentally killed an African American boy named Gavin Cato, igniting a firestorm of violence that reached its "nadir" with the murder of Yankel Rosenbaum, a Jewish scholar from Australia. Drawing on a wide variety of sources, Goldschmidt has produced the best portrait to date of what New York State's official report dispassionately referred to as the "disturbances." Goldschmidt's subtle and highly readable account achieves a Rashoman like quality as he notes that most black residents recall these events as "riots" and some "with more radical politics," as a "rebellion," whereas Lubavitchers view the same events as "the first pogrom here on American soil," as well as convincing evidence that the age-old conflict between the "hands of Esau," and the "voice of Jacob," is alive and well on the streets of contemporary Brooklyn.

In the end, Goldschmidt rejects this Manichean view of the world, in favor of one that seeks to balance what we all have in common with a sanguine respect for difference, or as he puts it: "we are *all* chosen peoples. We are all somewhat stiff-necked, in one way or another." ■

Nathaniel Deutsch is a professor of religion at Swarthmore College. His books include Black Zion: African American Religious Encounters with Judaism, and The Maiden of Ludmir: A Jewish Holy Woman and Her World.

Dear Swami

"Where the Swami answers your questions, and you will question his answers."

BY SWAMI BEYONDANANDA

Dear Swami:

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers," but frankly we don't seem any closer to the blessings of peace than we were 2000 years ago. Will we ever overcome this deadly habit? Or are we doomed to the damnation those fundamentalists talk about?

Amanda Lynn Plucker
Clearfield, Tennessee

Dear Amanda:

Yes, the relationship between warfare and damnation is unassailable. For what is warfare but one damn nation fighting another damn nation, the world and the planet be damned! With soldiering being the second oldest profession, the battlefield is one of the most persistent fields going. So maybe the best approach is not to try to do away with war itself, but to change the rules of engagement. As a devout FUNdamentalist—accent on fun—I have proposed three new rules of warfare:

1. Fight All Wars With Cream Pies.

Imagine a new campaign against Iraqi insurgents—Operation Dessert Storm. And then imagine sending in our pie-seeking K-9 squad to lick the pies off the faces of our opponents. That way, our soldiers can return home safely, proudly proclaiming, "We sure licked 'em good!" Meanwhile, "getting licked" won't have its usual sting.

2. Use Only Life Enhancing Chemical Weapons. Instead of the toxic, death-dealing weaponry we use today, how about life-dealing weapons that leave people happier and healthier? It's a scientific fact: The Insurgin' General's Report tells us happier and healthier people make lousy insurgents. So if we must use chemical warfare, how about weapons-grade nitrous oxide? I don't

know about you, but I would get great pleasure watching our enemies explode with laughter.

3. Switch to Virtually Harmless Virtual Warfare. With the breakthroughs in simulated warfare, don't you think we'd be doing the whole world a favor by confining all warfare to virtual reality? That way we can have as much war as we want at a tiny fraction of the cost. Imagine if Pixar were the government's largest defense contractor instead of Lockheed.

Adopt these rules, and warriors would be able to fight their wars in peace without leaving the rest of the world in pieces.

Dear Swami:

While I was meditating the other day, I think I might have come up with a solution for the Middle East crisis. Since the war over the Holy Land is a turf war, and since spiritual enlightenment is an internal state, why don't we simply give up the turf and create peace on our own grounds? What if the United States created an alternative Jewish State right here in America? There are a number of western states that don't seem to be doing much nowadays. Not only would it enhance America's income at a time of economic distress, but it would absolutely confound those folks waiting for the Temple to be rebuilt just so the Jews can be destroyed in the Rapture. Seems like a win all around to me. What do you think, Swami?

Stan Doffisch
Beverly Hills, California

Dear Stan:

Well, I have mixed feelings about your idea. On one hand, it's totally ridiculous. On the other, it makes a whole lot more



sense than what we are doing today. I must admit, the more I thought about it, the more I thought about it. As to which western state we choose, that's obvious—Utah, which we will of course rename "Jew-tah." For one thing, it comes with a Great Salt Lake even saltier than the Dead Sea. For another, I don't think the Mormons would mind sharing at all, especially when the Jews point out, "God spoke to us first." Yes, without having to defend against anything except an occasional cheerful missionary, the Jewish people would finally be able to establish a state of *tikkun olam*—a veritable Jewtopia! (My guru Harry Cohen Baba called himself a Jewtopian: "We believe in the perfectibility of humankind...but still reserve the right to complain.") Of course, to be totally fair we would have to offer the Arab peoples a state also, and that call is equally obvious—Arabama. ■

Swami Beyondananda is the comic alter ego of Steve Bhaerman and can be found online at www.wakeuplaughing.com.

Poems by Alan Shapiro

How

In the bedroom of the after life a phone is ringing
 On a bed side table beside a bed whose sheet
 Is smooth as steel, the crypt-cold pillow unindented,
 And how the absence of a blanket on the hard bed's
 White sheet on which the pillow rests reveals
 The cold's irrelevance, how nothing heavier
 Has ever lay down on it than the blanket
 That isn't there, the ringing of the phone that never stops,
 And how it rings and rings is how the living call,
 And how the dead reply is how it goes on ringing.

Watch

Bad luck, bad history:
 The right arm shriveled,
 the hand curled
 in on itself,
 unusable,
 the crippled gait

I try hard
 not to stare at
 when I see him
 in the playground
 I walk past
 every day,

out on the court
 alone, his good hand
 hoisting the ball
 up, banging the ball
 on rim or backboard
 so that it bounds

away and he has to
 lumber after,
 the gimped leg dragged
 like a ball and chain
 across the blacktop
 over and over,

indefatigable,
 his voice announcing
 the last seconds
 of the game forever
 playing in his head
 that he's always win-
 ning.

Genetic damage.
 Damage of history,
 of shame inside
 the pleasure inside
 the pity of
 not being him,

of being white,
 and then the panic
 the day he calls me
 over,
 saying, Hey man
 can you help
 a brother out?

Panic of borders
 breached, of history
 in the sour air
 I'm breathing as I reach
 into my pocket
 for what he wants,

sour air of history
 when he sighs,
 and shakes his head,
 and smiles at me
 so wearily
 without surprise

as if his days were
 days of just
 this kind of thing
 to get through, to
 put up with, saying,
 shit man, I don't

want your money,
 holding out to me
 the wristwatch
 he can't with one
 hand, understand?
 buckle to his wrist,

and could I do it?
 and now I'm fumbling
 with the frayed band
 that I can't make
 fit through the opening
 of the metal clasp,

and so he talks me
 through it, teaching
 me how, the way

a father does,
 teaching the child
 something he better
 learn, teaching it
 patiently but
 with a patience that
 the tone says
 isn't inexhaustible,
 You got to slow
 down, just ease it
 through the slot
 a little softer
 like it wants
 to go there on
 its own, like that,

man, yeah, like that,
 and it's done,
 he's turned away,
 he's finished with my
 being anyone
 of use, I'm finished

being useful,
 and again the cocked
 arm hurls the ball
 up toward the hoop
 and the fans go crazy
 as the announcer
 cries out three two one.

Breaking News

The girl on the screen
 is telling
 something,
 eyes
 not looking
 at the camera,
 voice a babbled
 drone, ghost town
 of un-
 inhabitable
 affect--
 difficult
 to hear
 till it falls
 faint behind the voice
 of the interpreter
 whose words obedient
 and diligent build up
 a tower around her
 brick by articulate
 brick
 till there is
 nothing left
 to notice
 as the lens widens
 but the charred sandal
 in the foreground,
 how the breeze
 blows back the smoke
 still rising from it
 so that it's running
 toward me
 as it runs in place.

DOING DECEMBER DIFFERENTLY

Nicola Slee & Rosie Miles
Wild Goose Publications, 2006

SUBTITLED "AN ALTERNATIVE Christian handbook," Slee and Miles have put together a guide that will be of use to any family facing the social pressures of the American mainstream's holiday season. It is packed full of specific ideas about how to turn Christmas into a spiritually sensitive celebration in a multicultural world so sharply divided between the wealthy and the extreme poor. It even has a section on Jewish and Muslim perspectives on Christmas. Get this in advance and discuss these ideas as well as the ideas in our editorial with your family and friends before the holiday season begins.

**THE BIBLE AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURE**

Gerd Theissen
Fortress Press, 2007

FROM REBEL TO RABBI

Matthew Hoffman
Stanford, 2007

IS THERE ANY REASON AN ORDINARY person should know what's in the Bible? German Christian theologian Theissen makes a powerful presentation of some core Christian ideas and shows how they might apply to the contemporary world. For an exciting contrast, read Hoffman's study of how some Jews have sought to reclaim Jesus in the modern world and how that enterprise played out in the shaping of modern Jewish culture, early Zionist ideas, and Jewish revolutionaries.

**THE INTEGRAL VISION**

Ken Wilber
Shambhala, 2007

THIS IS A MERCIFULLY SHORT version of Ken Wilber's integral philosophy, which purports to provide a map that distills the major components of the wisdom of the world into a unified theory of everything. Wilber's intellectual audacity is stunning and insightful, and Shambhala has produced a small 232-page book that is so visually beautiful that it's a pleasure to read. Unfortunately, Wilber's politics are somewhere between conservative and reactionary, and his vision of levels of consciousness breaks down the closer it gets to our own period and what lies ahead, but the effort is courageous and there's much to be learned even by those of us who have been part of the Integral Institute and been underwhelmed by its intellectual substance and the thinness of its vision for the future.

**THE TYRANNY OF THE MARKET**

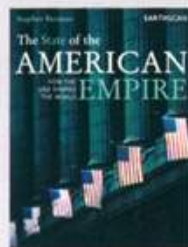
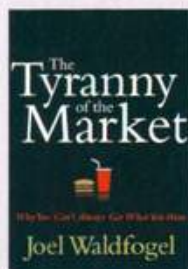
Joel Waldfogel
Harvard University Press, 2007

THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE

Stephen Burman
University of California Press, 2007

JOEL WALDFOGEL TAKES UP THE MYTHOLOGY of the market responding to our wants and desires, and shows how it often leaves out many people who are unable to get very much of what they want. A professor at the Wharton School of Business, Waldfogel is constrained in his critique, though he demonstrates points that have been made for many decades by academics connected to the Union of Radical Political Economists. Yet this book could be very persuasive to those who will not listen to voices that have an explicitly progressive agenda.

There's nothing constrained about Burman's book—it is a powerful and accessible compendium of the facts about the American empire and exactly how the U.S. shapes the world. Learn about the role of U.S. investment, the dollar, capital transactions, multinationals, oil consumption, climate change, military spending, international financial institutions, and much more, plus ideas on American ideology and culture wars. Beautifully presented with color maps and graphs, it should be in the library of every person involved in social change activities.

**OFFERINGS OF THE HEART**

Rabbi Shawn Israel Zevit
Alban Institute 2005

ALTHOUGH SHAWN ZEVI is a reconstructionist rabbi and a spiritual teacher of the Jewish Renewal movement, his *Offerings of the Heart* is as relevant to Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu congregations as to the Jewish world. Zevit shows how to heal the financial/spiritual split and to build congregational life that embodies the very values that the congregation professes in its prayers and sacred texts. This book is a true gem.

**UNCOMMON ARRANGEMENTS**

Katie Roiphe
The Dial Press, 2007

EACH GENERATION PAMPERS ITSELF INTO believing that it has discovered sexuality and the problems of monogamy all by itself. Cultural critic Katie Roiphe helps dispel that notion with seven portraits of married life in London literary circles from 1910 to 1939. Everyone from H.G. Wells' wife Jane Wells and Rebecca West, to Katherine Mansfield, Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, and Virginia Woolf appear on these pages. One learns that the complications of relationships have been here for a long time, and will likely persist. Roiphe captures the stories with exquisite precision and beautiful language.



Spiritually Rich Holiday Gifts

Inside, we argue for making this a holiday season where you give gifts of time and energy, not of things. But if you are not convinced, and still feel the pressure to give things, here are some gifts that would simultaneously make a contribution to our world!



1. A year's subscription to *Tikkun* at reduced cost.

Friends and family will treasure this gift each time it arrives next year, and feel blessed to have you in their lives. Our reduced price: \$25 total for the first two gift subscriptions, and \$18 for each one after that. Click on "Subscribe" at www.tikkun.org to order your gift subscriptions by credit card, or send your list of gift recipients and a check or credit card info to pete@tikkun.org and we will process the gifts for you. Call us at: 510-644-1200 with this information if you do not have web access.

2. A year's membership in the Network of Spiritual Progressives at reduced cost.

Your gift recipient gets full membership benefits, including reduced prices to our conferences and NSP materials. Click on "Join and Donate" at www.spiritualprogressives.org to order your gift NSP membership by credit card, or send the gift information and a check or credit card info to pete@tikkun.org, or call 510-644-1200 with the same info. Our basic membership category, usually \$40, is available for \$30 with this offer. Each gift membership also includes a subscription to *Tikkun*.



3. A gift registration for our third annual Spiritual Activism conference in Washington D.C. in Spring 2008.

Registrations cost \$150 if you buy them before December 25th. After that, regular prices will be higher, even for members of the NSP. Check our websites in early November for dates and preliminary information for this thrilling conference.

4. A copy of the *Tikkun Reader*

Essays by Michael Lerner, Peter Gabel, Harvey Cox, Judith Plaskow, Arthur Green, Joel Primack, Arthur Waskow, Estelle Frankel, Naomi Wolf, Kim Chernin, Tony Campolo, Yitzhak Frankenthal, Cherrie Brow, David Korten, Deepak Chopra, Jim Wallis, Andrew Kimbrel, Jonathan Schell, Vandana Shiva, Fritjof Capra, Julian Levinson, Or Rose, Rachel Adler, Zygmunt Bauman and more. To order the Reader or other books by *Tikkun* authors, click on "Store" at www.tikkun.org.

