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POLITICS+SPIRITUALITY+CULTURE

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JULY/AUGUST 2008

OBAMA

& THE FLAG PIN



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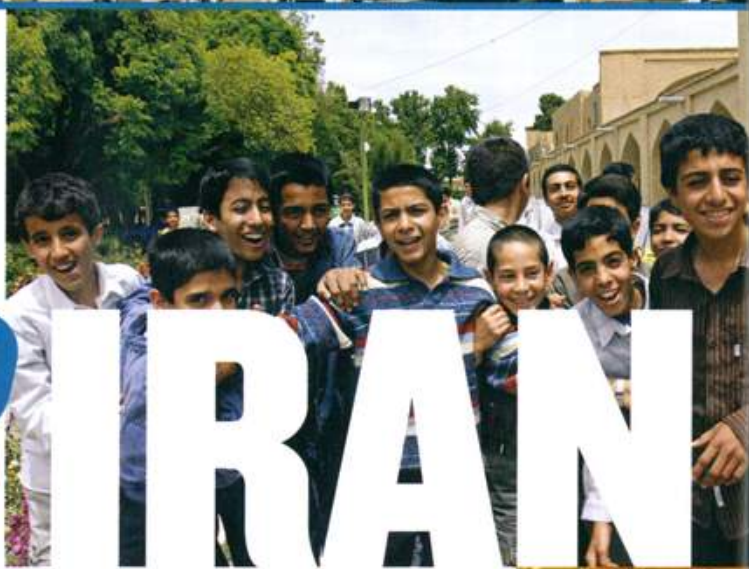
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Slavery: Reparations | Moral Dimension of Sports
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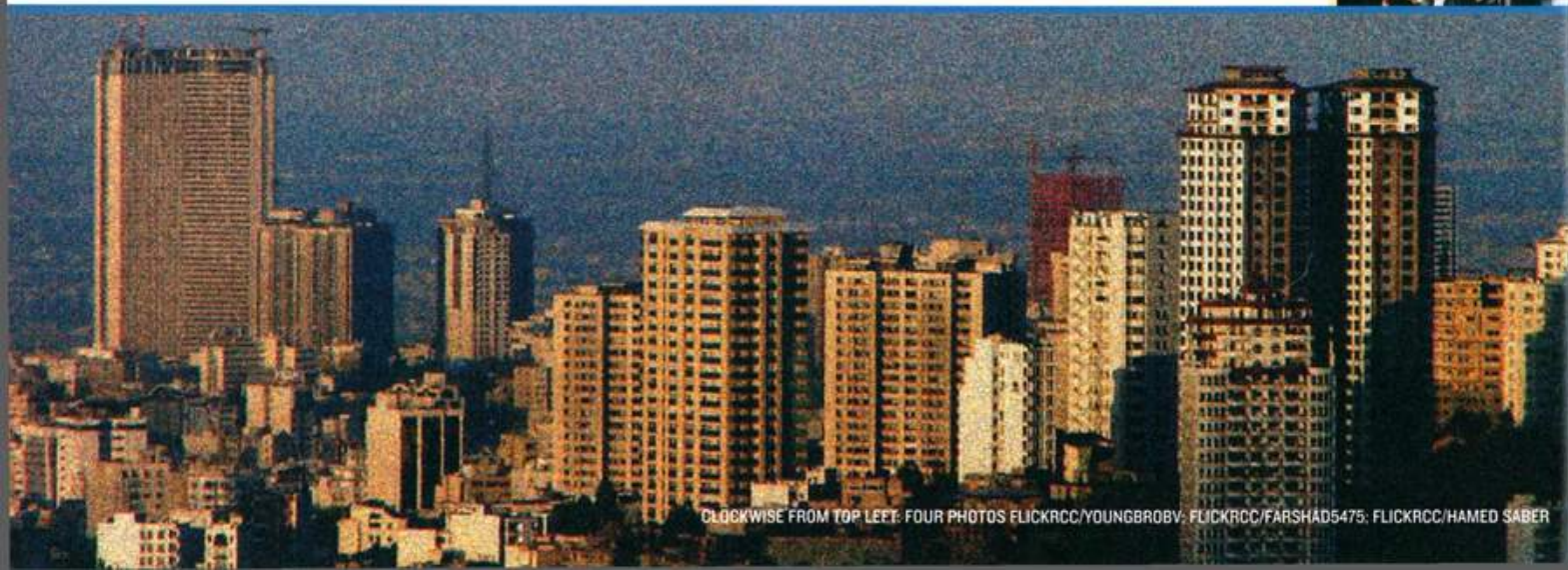
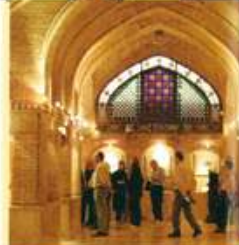


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A WEAK ALTERNATIVE: NEGOTIATIONS

A STRONG ALTERNATIVE: THE STRATEGY OF GENEROSITY AND THE GLOBAL MARSHALL PLAN

Let the United States announce it is launching a global program to dedicate at least 1-2% of our Gross Domestic Product each year for the next twenty to once and for all end Global Poverty, Homelessness, Hunger, Inadequate Education, Inadequate Health Care, and to Repair the Global Environment. Check out House Resolution 1078 co-sponsored by the following Members of Congress: Emanuel Cleaver, John Conyers, Keith Ellison, Barney Frank, Raul Grijalva, Dennis Kucinich, Barbara Lee, Jim Moran, Donald Payne. Check out the details and Endorse the Global Marshall Plan at www.tikkun.org



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THIS SUMMER:

Invite Friends, Neighbors, Co-Workers, to a Picnic, Barbecue, Afternoon Pot-Luck or Evening Gathering at Your Home or Nearby to Build Support for the Strategy of Generosity and the Global Marshall Plan

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- Meet with elected officials and ask them to endorse it
- Come to the Democratic National Convention, The Republican Convention, or the Greens National Convention and Help Us Get the Word Out (more info at www.spiritualprogressives.org).

Readers Respond

Editor's note:

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GOD WITHOUT GOD

AFTER A FRUSTRATING discussion with an atheist in-law, I told my friend Jim that atheists could be as narrow minded as fundamentalist, evangelical Christians. To which Jim replied: "if they were open minded, they'd be agnostics."

The religions and spiritual traditions of the world are fingers pointing at the moon. Scientists and religionists alike mistake the fingers for the moon. This is the problem in the science/spirituality debate.

In a classic show of intellectual dishonesty, Western atheists take aim at the straw man "finger" of the exoteric Judeo-Christian God, easily blow Him away, and pronounce that as proof for the non-existence of any "divine" plane of reality.

Physicists have no acceptable unified theory. They can't account for some 85% of the matter/energy of the universe, resorting to speculation about "dark" matter/energy which is another way of saying "it's a mystery." The various string

theories are not scientifically verifiable under any normative definition of the term and have more in common with traditional metaphysics than science. Like traditional religions, much is taken on faith.

Until scientific materialism, which is the religion of atheists, can satisfactorily deal with these huge problems, it seems like there is plenty of room for a reasonable conception (albeit not Judeo-Christian) of God.

By the way, if the Higgs boson doesn't turn up when the CERN accelerator revs up, they are in Big trouble.

WILLIAM GLASNER
Victor, NY

I AM WRITING THIS letter in response to Michael Hampson's article "G-d Without G-d" (Tikkun May/June, 2008). The author believes that he reconciles theism and atheism. However, his proposed reconciliation is only a partial one at best.

I agree with Michael Hampson that acknowledging

G-d as "the ultimate mystery of existence" sets the existential stage for a dialogue between atheists and theists about "the nature of the ultimate mystery of existence itself." At this round table discussion there will be diverse views about the nature of G-d. Participants who believe in the traditional concepts of G-d will state that G-d is omniscient or all-knowing, omnipotent or all-powerful, immutable or unchanging, eternal, and omnibenevolent or all-good. They may argue that G-d is all-good and all-powerful and compatible with the existence of evil although human beings cannot comprehend such a reality. Thus, G-d's will is incomprehensible, but they are people of faith. According to the kabbalistic view, everything is for the best. Other people of faith believe in all the traditional concepts of G-d except for the divine attribute of omnipotence. In Rabbi

Harold S. Kushner's book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, he speaks of a loving G-d who is not all-powerful.

The challenge facing those willing to sit at a roundtable discussion is that the nature of G-d seems unknowable. On *The Power of Myth* series on PBS, Joseph Campbell pointed out to Bill Moyers that if we could logically prove the existence of G-d, there would be no need for faith.

Mr. Hampson states that "it was fashionable for a while to look for gaps in scientific explanations and place G-d there, but the gaps will diminish to nothing in time: a G-d in the gaps has no future." On the other hand, he points out: "And he recognized G-d in the waiting, and in the emptiness and in the silence."

At the very least, I personally believe there is a

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transcendent, loving, benign consciousness that cares for us. I believe this on faith and not because of scientific proof. Unlike Mr. Hampson, I believe there are gaps that cannot be filled. At this point in time, we are simply not wired to comprehend the nature of G-d. Atheists and theists may agree that there is an "ultimate mystery of existence." But beyond this rudimentary agreement, how can they discover the unknowable? Yet perhaps, in the waiting, emptiness, and silence, they will take a giant leap of faith together.

DR. MEL WALDMAN
Brooklyn, NY

AS AN AGNOSTIC reader of *Tikkun* I was disappointed in Michael Hampson's "God Without God." Even though it's clear he's

read Dawkins, Hitchens and evolutionary psychologists, I don't believe any of them would be swayed by his arguments. It seems to me that enlightened Christians have already dumped the Old Testament image of God as the vengeful, paternalistic judge. Wouldn't well-read atheists, the ones Hampson wants to attract, know this? Although Hampson sincerely tried to find common ground, do you really think any atheist would be moved by concepts such as "the mystery of existence," or the Hindu "atman," or the Joseph Campbell concept of finding the divine in all religions? Nothing new here, really. However, this could be viewed as a first step. I would love to see a round table discussion between noted atheists and enlightened religious thinkers. Of

more interest is the article by Tony Jones on the emerging young American Christians. Encouraging signs for the future.

JAMES BREEDEN
San Francisco, CA

ISRAEL AT 60

EVERYONE ELSE is giving an opinion on Israel's sixtieth. Even notional Jews who have had absolutely no positive involvement in Jewish life whatsoever have suddenly come out to relieve themselves of their own antipathies by excoriating Israel. Hope it makes them feel better. Here's my contribution.

If having a state was, as some Zionists ideologues dreamed, going to normalize Jews, to make them a nation like any other, then there could be

no expectation of anything more than yet another body politic with its interests and inevitable corruptions.

In the years before statehood, my late father was president of British Mizrahi, the Religious Zionist organization. He was a passionate religious Zionist. Judaism, he argued, was not designed to be a religion of an exilic minority, but lived as a holistic, religiously animated community, where it was the dominant culture and language.

When Mizrahi went into politics in Israel in 1948, he resigned. Thus I was brought up in a house that was ideologically committed to the idea of returning to our homeland, but strongly opposed to religious parties and their politics. We were educated

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to love and to criticize. Religious values demanded and required ethical behavior, honesty, and sensitivity to all humans. I hoped, but was soon disillusioned.

Much of the world fell in love with Israel then. Any left-wing student worth his or her salt went to work on a kibbutz. But what the world loved then was an image of new socialism, not Judaism. When I first went to study in Israel as a teenager in 1956, I was shocked to discover the extent of secular, anti-religious fervor. Now, it was said, one could abandon one's religious, spiritual heritage with an easy conscience, knowing one was building a modern, post-ghetto Jewish world. This was no Jewish State and secular Zionism had nothing to say to me. I even had some sympathy with Neturei Karta at the time, for refusing to sully themselves by entering a political system whose ideas and ideals were so diametrically opposed to theirs (until I discovered their corruptions and betrayals).

Despite this, I am thankful for what I regard as the miracle of a state for Jews, a refuge on the one hand, but also a source of pride. After two thousand years, to return to sovereignty against such odds and after such extended inhuman treatment, what else qualifies as a miracle as great as the parting of the Red Sea?

By culture I was and am an internationalist. I hold no brief for flags, anthems, and the sad

trappings of nationalism. But for as long as nationalism is the flavor of the day, as long as the Kosovars can have a state, it cannot be just, logical, or equitable to deny Jews the same. And for as long as there are plenty of Muslim states it can only be disingenuous to deny Jews one.

Yet self-interest never obscured the challenges and problems. We were, after all, claiming a disputed home. Even the combative Ben Gurion conceded this was a conflict of two rights. I recall a mood in the fifties of desperately wanting peace and a desire to live in harmony and equality with Arabs wherever they were. So much was made of Christians, Druze, and Bedouin serving in the Israeli army. Despite the ongoing conflict, then and today, there is so much being done to try to repair, to build bridges. But it gets hardly any recognition and is submerged beneath the blood of conflict.

I was studying in Israel in 1967. I recall that the initial aftermath of the Six Day War was so euphoric not just because we had survived the threat of obliteration. It was euphoric precisely because we thought that now, at last, there would be peace and Palestinians would have their own state. The overwhelming majority of Haredi rabbis in those days advocated 'Land for Peace'. The rejectionists were oddities.

Slowly, it changed. I recall the pain of rejection after Khartoum and then the reaction, the arrogance, Kahana,

settlements, continued occupation and agony. I have always feared zealotry and never much liked religious fervor when it spills over from the personal encounter with God into the public realm. I have always admired the painful honesty of Yeshaya Leibowitz, who cried for the soul of an occupational military culture. I knew it could never be good, but I wondered how else one could protect oneself from those who wished to destroy and refused to talk.

Another miracle of Israel has been trying to integrate such diverse and opposite races and communities from every corner of the globe. No other country has ever tried it as repeatedly and with such high proportions as Israel. It has not always been fair or smooth. There have been many casualties, but fewer than one sees in the ghettos of Europe, or even America.

I was delighted when the Sephardim, thanks to Menachem Begin, threw off the arrogant, humiliating, left-wing Ashkenazi yoke. But then I looked at the passionate hoards and feared the mindless populism. I noticed how each new generation of immigrants was made to suffer, like children bullied in school make sure that when they reach seniority they get their own back. There was always a mood of besting the other, and of course the problem of how best to deal with an Arab minority that, despite its precious citizenship, was seen as a fifth column and has all but been pushed

into self fulfillment of it.

Yet, for all that, I was amazed that Israel turned into such a great country, despite itself. The arts, music, literature, and intellectual activity of all sorts flourished. Universities sprouted up all over the place. Idealism could be found in as much variety and color as could the worst aspects of average humanity. Yes, there was bureaucracy, corruption, *proteksia*, political haggling, and siphoning. Despite it all, everything good was flourishing too, and in recent years the economy, entrepreneurship, has made Israel one of the success stories of the technological era. Even the many Israelis who have left to succeed elsewhere still often contribute indirectly to Israel's successes. And the fact that I had nothing in common with most secular Israelis simply emphasized the complexity and contradictions of Jewish identity in a modern world.

Much maligned religion, in all its monochromes, has flourished in Israel beyond expectations too (though with growth has come intellectual regression and intolerance). Never, ever in Jewish history have there been so many yeshivahs, kollels and institutes of higher learning. I have watched the precocious child grow into a giant so that no Jewish community in the world comes near it in creativity, scholarship, and richness, not even the United States. No diaspora community today survives without Israeli input in one form or another, through

its teachers, its rabbis, and the thousands who go there to study and return to enrich local scenes.

Yet war and violence continue. The Almighty, it seemed, has wanted us to suffer. The Talmud says we can only acquire our land through suffering. Nothing has changed in the three thousand years of our existence. We have always been accused of taking someone else's land, made the wrong alliances, the wrong decisions, betraying our principles and our God. Yet somehow we have survived. So I am optimistic, where logic tells me I am a fool. Just as I am optimistic about human nature, for all that it is self-indulgent, excessively acquisitive, and egotistic.

Israel remains a country divided against itself, subject to so much hatred. There's so much wrong. It reminds me of the blind and bound Samson in Gaza. Yet it is, nevertheless, so vibrant, creative, and alive. If that's not an ongoing miracle, I don't know what is.

RABBI JEREMY ROSEN
New York, NY

Editor responds:

RABBI ROSEN'S POINT about not expecting from Israel "anything more than yet another body politic with its interests and inevitable corruptions" is somewhat undermined when he falls back into describing its development as a "miracle." It is fine to argue that Jews have the same right as every other group to a state of their own, making the same disgusting choices to promote their own self-interest over the interests of others that every

other state pursues. But what they don't have a right to do is to claim that Jews around the world have any special obligation to that state or that Judaism somehow sanctions it.

Yet this is precisely what does happen and what enrages Jews and others about Israel and the Jewish community. My congregants tell me endless stories of people who call them self-hating Jews because they are critical of the policies of this secular state of Israel, though these same people are critical of many other states on the exact same grounds (human rights violations). A few days after the last war with Lebanon broke out in 2006, I received a notification (not a request for input or advice) from the Board of Rabbis of Northern California, presumably speaking in the name of the fifty or so members, calling for a public political rally to support Israel. And whenever I pray in an orthodox shul, I'm confronted with prayers for the State of Israel and separately prayers for the IDF. It's more than a little disingenuous to claim that it's unfair to hold Israel to a religious standard of behavior if that same religion is demanding loyalty to the state—and consistently calling into question the legitimacy of Jews and even rabbis who dare to critique Israel's policies.

Israel won the war in 1948 not because God suddenly intervened miraculously—else why was God so absent in the Holocaust? It won because, as Israeli historians today have demonstrated, Israel actually had more armed soldiers than

the combined armies of the invading Arab states plus armed Palestinians, and it had the support of the Soviet Union which, through Czechoslovakia, provided Israel with the necessary arms for the struggle, and because the Arab states fought amongst themselves and were not interested then (or ever before or after) in the well-being of the Palestinian people, but only in the fantasy of dividing up Palestine among themselves. It subsequently joined England and France in 1956 in invading Egypt (not without provocation), and then won a powerful military victory in 1967—again very smart militarism but not an act of God. When they then, having conquered Palestinians who were not part of that war, decided to hold on to and create a web of settlements and military occupation and human rights abuses throughout the West Bank, Israel made a mistake at the cost of international isolation and scorn. I have often challenged people on the Left who try to make Israel into "the worst offender in the world"—it is not—and I've refused to participate in anti-war demonstrations that try to compare Israel's sins with the far more heinous crimes against humanity being perpetrated today by the U.S. government in Iraq, China in Tibet, Russia in Chechnya, and Sudan in Darfur.

Personally, I feel a huge tie to Israel and its people, because they are my family. Precisely for that reason I feel a need to protect it from its self-inflicted wounds and to stop it from continuing its self-destructive policies, just

as I would feel if a member of my family, deeply wounded psychologically, were cutting her/himself and inflicting dangerous and potentially lethal wounds on her body. I might even call the police to stop this behavior if s/he refused to do psychotherapy and instead just insisted that I hated her/him and sought her destruction, meanwhile denying her behavior though everyone else saw it clearly. Tough love is what is called for today for Israel, not an endless singing of her praises. But that tough love cannot be administered by a world whose own hands are equally dirty. That's why I've called on friends of Israel to join in an effort to change the dominant way of thinking in the Western world—away from the Strategy of Domination and toward the Strategy of Generosity. If the United States and Western countries were in fact engaged in a massive Global Marshall Plan, we'd have the moral standing to intervene in Israel/Palestine. But then, such intervention might be less needed, because if Israel existed in such a world, its own sense of what is "realistic" would dramatically change, and it would be far easier to propose forms of society-wide psychotherapy that might actually work and have a real impact in both Israel and Palestine (another wounded society whose own self-destructive behavior must be addressed by people in the Arab and Muslim worlds).

Celebrating Capitalism's Global Success

BY GEORGE VRADENBURG

WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF A TRANSFORMATIONAL shift of economic, financial, political and (ultimately) military power from the United States to a new generation of nations: China, India, Russia, Brazil, the Persian Gulf states and others. This shift reflects an era of extraordinary historic progress in reducing levels of global poverty, and it also reflects a massive shift of the relative share of total global wealth from wealthy nations to historically poorer nations. The United States represented almost 50% of global economic activity after the end of the Second World War; it now represents less than 30% of global economic activity and that percentage will be inevitably dropping further in the coming years.

No longer are we confronting a world where five of the six billion humans living on earth are in abject, less-than-\$2-a-day poverty. That's the old narrative. We are now in a world where five of the six billion humans on earth are on a predictable rising economic arc. That isn't the end of poverty by any means, but it is to say that striking progress on global poverty is occurring. And it is occurring because more nations are embracing global trade and the international financial system.

This rapid and broad extension of global prosperity is good for America. Continuing this progress requires continued attention to certain critical actions. First, we should extend the benefits of free trade by phasing out the subsidies paid by Europe and the United States to their agricultural sectors, subsidies which harm subsistence farmers in the poorest nations of the world. Second, governments and private investors must accelerate efforts to reduce the dependence of the world on oil. It has been estimated that over \$1.5 trillion a year in wealth is transferring from oil-consuming nations to oil-producing nations (some of that wealth is financing terrorists). That wealth transfer is proving to be a drag against the economic rise of the low and middle class families in oil-consuming nations around the world. Third, the international community must continue its efforts to eliminate the corruption in the governments of poor nations (take Myanmar, for example).

What is the political reaction to this decline in poverty around the world here in the United States? Strikingly, the

very "progressive" elites that championed a war against global poverty are now reacting with alarm because they see the growth in third-world wealth as coming at the expense of low and middle income families in America.

This reaction is generating protectionist policy proposals that would, if implemented, be counterproductive to the fight against global poverty. While it is true that income inequality is rising in the United States, this rising inequality is occurring because those with certain education levels or skills or in certain economic sectors are better positioned to take advantage of growing global markets and wealth than others. Surely the response to this challenge is not to create barriers to the very global trade that is spreading global prosperity, but rather to increase our investment in primary and secondary education and in health (where our performance is terrible), job retraining (where our efforts are misdirected and mismanaged), and innovation (life science and energy, as two examples).

The competitive strength of other nations is growing in part as the result of their increasing investment in education, health and basic research. At the same time, the United States is disinvesting in basic education and in the research and development (R&D) that is the fuel of our own innovative strength. Our rate of national R&D investment has declined from 2% of GDP to less than 1%, even as the rate of investment in China and other nations is climbing above 3% of GDP. Unless we change our investment priorities, the growth in productivity here will decline and our nation will not be able to sustain current existing standards of living for our people.

Our country should not demonize the growth of the rest of the world, but applaud it. Our country should not heed the call to retreat into isolationism and protectionism, but continue to embrace and extend globalization. Our country should not send taxpayer money overseas to be plundered by autocrats, but should invest it in the education and health of our own people and in the innovative capacity of our own people.

Global economic growth, the decline of poverty and the sharing of global power is not something this nation should fear, but applaud. ■

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

Obama the Nominee

BY MICHAEL LERNER

BARACK OBAMA'S NOMINATION BY THE DEMOCRATS IS the most significant progressive electoral victory in several decades. The hard work of peace, environmental, social justice, human rights, anti-racist, women and gay activists created the climate in which he could win. But the Left could only win because Obama was able to embody the spiritual dimension and elicit in many Americans deeply repressed desires for community, mutual recognition, authentic and non-manipulated feelings, and ultimately a sense that our lives have a higher meaning than the frenetic pursuit of money, power, fame, sexual conquest and accumulation of things that have dominated American life for many many decades under Republican and Democratic presidencies alike.

There have been a lot of bad feelings expressed by supporters of Senator Hillary Clinton about the sexism she experienced on the campaign trail, and some feel that she ultimately lost because, as a woman, she did not get equal respect. The sexism by the media and by some men in the primary states was indeed fierce and disgusting. But we have to ask what man, even one as smart and hard-working as Hillary Clinton, could have done as well in these primaries, if he had represented, as she did, the established leadership of the Democratic Party who voted for the Iraq War and continued to fund it? Her gender and resulting support from women helped her overcome that supreme obstacle.

Exit polls indicated that a significant portion of Senator Clinton's voters were considering voting for Senator McCain instead of Senator Obama. It may be that some of those were disgruntled feminists who want to punish the Democratic Party for decisions that hurt Clinton's candidacy. But not many fit that category, because McCain's opposition to Roe v. Wade and his likely packing the court with yet more right-wing justices who seek to dismantle women's rights makes him an unlikely candidate for feminist support. The majority of those of Senator Clinton's former supporters who will vote for McCain were people who were attracted to her more because of her appearance as the militarist candidate who talked the language of "obliterating Iran" and who had to be pushed kicking and screaming into the position of calling for an end to the Iraq war in 2009. Far from working against her, it was only her gender that made it possible for her to have held together in the same electoral coalition the feminists with the anti-choice and most pro-war elements in her party, and no man taking her political stance as a supporter of a militarist consciousness for many years would have had a chance against Edwards and Obama in the political climate of 2008.

Obama supporters and, we are certain, the overwhelming majority of Hillary supporters, believe it is important to try to



Supporters listen as Senator Barack Obama campaigns in Davenport, Iowa.

overcome the bad feelings of the very hurtful campaign and to celebrate this very simple fact: Tens of millions of Americans have been willing to contemplate and support the possibility that either a woman or a Black man could be the next president of the United States.

Realists, wake up. It was you "realists" who only a short while ago were teaching us that no Black and no woman could ever make it to that level of power in the racist and sexist realities of American society. They may not this time in 2008, but the certainty that they cannot is once and for all broken.

This is how it has always been in our world. Most of us get intimidated into passivity because "the realists" badger us into accepting a reality we despise. Yet the most significant changes in human history have always occurred because some small group of people was not willing to be badgered that way any more.

Of course, what changed wasn't changed by Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama, but rather by hundreds of millions of interactions that have taken place on a daily basis for at least the past thirty years between people influenced by the anti-racist and feminist movements and people who had not yet gotten the message. Now they get it, have assimilated it, and are ready to work with it.

Something very powerful is changing. The willingness of so many Whites to vote for a Black man who started his career as a community organizer and who remains committed to social justice and an end to poverty may at times feel like a modern day miracle, even though his programs may be deficient in some ways. Ditto the willingness of so many White working class men to support a woman candidate for president is a reason to rejoice. That a

woman was able to become the more conservative mainstream candidate deserves our appreciation, because even though—having watched Margaret Thatcher and Golda Meir in office—we know that a woman may end up being just as insensitive to the suffering of the poor and just as militarist as any man could be, we recognize that the struggle against sexism and the uprooting of the worldview it has generated (including in particular “toughness” as a central value) is one of the most important struggles taking place in the world today, and one that we wholeheartedly support.

Could we please, as a society, take a moment, perhaps this July 4th, to celebrate the goodness and decency in so many Americans that made this shift possible, made possible major advances in the struggle against racism and sexism? It’s certainly worth celebrating! And even a reason for pride in what is good in America!

While we are at it, we should also acknowledge the wisdom of Republicans in not allowing ageism to keep them from supporting John McCain. Though the media did its best to stir up “concerns” that a man who would be in his mid-seventies would be making critical decisions should John McCain be elected president, the voters nominated him because they agreed with his politics. Perhaps they know what the media won’t acknowledge, that age does not

have the same impact on everyone, that an older man or woman may have as much wisdom, life energy, soul and body beauty, intellectual clarity and even sexual potency (read Phillip Roth’s *The Dying Animal*!) as a younger person, if not more, and that the discrimination against older people is irrational and a moral evil that needs to be combated. It’s a testimony to growing political maturity in America that the 2008 elections are not being determined by age, race or gender.

And talking about overcoming discrimination, if you’ll pardon the digression, we could also use this July 4th to celebrate the decision of the California Supreme Court to allow gay marriage. *Tikkun* has vigorously opposed homophobia in the religious and secular worlds from the moment we started as a magazine, and we are proud to note how many people of faith are now assembling to counter the efforts by the gay-bashers to pass a constitutional amendment for California this coming November that would reimpose the ban on gay marriage. Recent polls indicate that a majority of Californians now support gay marriage. Let us hope that in this, as in so many other spheres, California is the vanguard of future cultural transformation.

LEARNING FROM OBAMA’S MISTAKES IN THE SPRING

THE OBAMA CAMPAIGN WOULD BE WISE TO REFLECT ON the underlying meaning of some of the problems it faced in the spring. For our purposes, we can start with Senator Obama’s remarks to a small group of SF Bay Area Obama funders in which he talked about the bitterness he was encountering in many voters in the hinterlands of Pennsylvania who, he seemed to be suggesting, were so unmoored by their constantly deteriorating economic circumstance that they were turning to anti-immigrant sentiments, reliance on guns, and religion.

The media, responding to Senator Hillary Clinton’s attacks on what Obama said, focused on the seeming elitism in Obama’s statement—portraying White working class and lower middle class voters as ethically inferior because of their alleged bitterness. But Obama had meant no such thing—he was accurately reporting his own experiences in talking to thousands of people who were rightly angry about the way that our government has skewed our economy to favor the rich at the expense of everyone else.

But why include religion in a list of responses to this anger when the other two items were clearly seen as negative by his San Francisco supporters? The answer, of course, is that those supporters, like most of the activist elements in the progressive world, often do see religion as just as much a problem in American culture as guns and anti-immigration sentiments.

Seeing religion as a substitute gratification grabbed on to by people who are otherwise oppressed is an insight that has been part of liberal and progressive culture for at least 150 years. Unfortunately, Senator Obama, like many in the liberal and Marxist traditions of the past 150 years, got it wrong—because he identified the needs that are being systematically denied as purely material,

thereby falling into the “It’s the economy, stupid” mistake of the Left.

In the research we did for ten years at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health we found that it was not only material, but spiritual deprivation that was at the heart of much of the pain that Americans experience today. That’s why even at the height of American prosperity in the Clinton years, a powerful resurgence of right-wing religious forms was providing an avenue of expression for people whose needs were being ignored by the liberals in the Clinton administration, the Democratic Party, and even in parts of the liberal churches.

Similarly, the revival of a religious Left has not gotten much traction to the extent that it adopts the liberal political and economic agenda and makes it “religious” by finding some useful Bible quotes to back up the peace and justice planks of the Democrats. Valuable as that may be, it too misses the deeper pain that has led people to embrace right-wing religions.

What we discovered in groups that we ran for over ten thousand middle income working people is that most people spend their days in a work world governed by the “bottom line” that judges institutions and social practices to be efficient, rational or productive to the extent that they maximize money and power. Day after day, people breathe in the message that to be rational in this society is to “look out for number one” and treat other people instrumentally—that is, as valuable to the extent that they help us achieve our own goals and desires.

We were struck, however, by how bitter many people feel about this way of life. Over and over again, middle income working people told us that they felt they were wasting their lives because their economic survival required them to do work that in no way

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connected to their hunger for a higher meaning to their lives, what Rev. Warren correctly described as a desire for a purpose-driven life.

Moreover, as people bring the values of “looking out for number one” and believing that getting their own needs is the highest possible good into their personal lives, they find that their families and friendships become increasingly unstable, as more and more people switch from one relationship or marriage to another, imagining that the next one might satisfy yet more of their needs. No wonder people feel lonely, afraid, and deeply troubled by a society in which the narcissism is bred not by some peculiarities of one generation or another, but by the fundamental notions of rationality that predominate in all of the major economic and social institutions. For a full account of these dynamics, please read my book *The Left Hand of God* (paperback, 2007, HarperOne).

For this very reason, we’ve been urging candidates in every political party to embrace a “New Bottom Line” in which corporations, social practices, government policies and individual behaviors are judged rational, efficient or productive not only if they maximize money or power, but also to the extent that they maximize love and caring, kindness and generosity, ethical and ecological sensitivity, enhance our capacity to treat others as embodiments of the sacred and to respond with awe, wonder and radical amazement at the grandeur of the universe.

In seeming to endorse a reductive materialist explanation rather than articulating the real spiritual crisis, Senator Obama, whose writings and public talks in the past clearly demonstrate a profound understanding of the politics of meaning/spiritual politics that has been at the core of *Tikkun* since its inception, may have critically weakened his credibility among many who might otherwise embrace his candidacy.

If Senator Obama does explicitly embrace a spiritual politics, he can transcend the left/right dichotomies that have torn our country apart. What remains to be seen is whether he can do that in the context of a Left whose religio-phobia is both pervasive and unconscious (many on the secular Left have as little clue of the put-downish nature of their feelings and remarks toward religious people as men had forty years ago about the nature of their sexism), and a media determined to make every mistake into a fatal error no matter who the candidate. We will be addressing this issue at our meeting at the Democratic National Convention in Denver (our gathering will take place at St. Paul’s Church, 1615 Ogden Street, Denver, on Sunday Aug. 24 and Monday Aug 25th).

Rev. Jeremiah Wright

A SECOND ISSUE THAT EMERGED IN THE PRIMARIES WAS FOCUSED ON Obama’s close relationship with his own pastor, Rev. Wright, in light of Wright’s sermons castigating the American empire. In his sermons, Wright often went far over the border of civil discourse, as when he said “God damn America.”

Yet that is precisely the discourse of many of us trained in the prophetic tradition. The biblical prophet Jeremiah and many of the other prophets made clear that God was in fact going to damn the Jewish society and the Temple of

ancient Israel unless they changed their ways, in particular how they treated the poor and the oppressed. When Isaiah stood outside the Temple on Yom Kippur, he told those who had brought their animals for sacrifice and were piously observing the fast for this day of atonement that God considered their fasting and sacrifices detestable because the worshippers had not cared for the poor and homeless and had not liberated the oppressed.

What Wright has been saying is what many writers in *Tikkun* have been trying to say for the past twenty-two years: that the American empire will also be destroyed, and perhaps along with it much of the rest of the world, unless we are able to get off our path of materialism and selfishness structured into the capitalist system and take a new path of love, generosity, caring, and awe and wonder. This is the essence of the repentance (*teshuvah*) that spiritual progressives must embrace and persuade the American majority to embrace. Only that repentance could have the capacity to save human civilization from destruction in the next hundred years (some say thirty years).

Wright was correct in thinking that Barack Obama is not articulating these prophetic messages, but has sought to shape his campaign in policy terms that fit rather than fundamentally challenge the dominant ideas that shape contemporary American politics, economics and our corporate-driven globalization of selfishness and materialism.

What a perfect moment, Wright and some of his supporters believed, for the voices of a religious Left to come forward and insist that the Democrats, both Clinton and Obama, really understand and address the deeper problems facing American society, and challenge the blind identification of “progress” with endless material growth rather than with spiritual enlightenment and ethical and ecological sensitivity. For several decades many of us Liberation theologians have raised this critique, and because of Wright’s special relationship with Obama he was perfectly positioned to have a positive influence in American self-understanding if only he took care to help those who did not share his perspectives to recognize what was legitimate in his critique.

Sadly, Wright’s own personal and political limitations undermined his capacity to articulate his critique in a way that could be heard by the majority of Americans. Filled with rage, he seemed little concerned with having his words understood. And that made it easier for Obama to then avoid the truth in the content of many of Wright’s statements and to focus only on the legitimacy of his rage, which Obama did beautifully by seeming to equate that rage with

the moral legitimacy of the pain being experienced by White working people in the United States.

In acknowledging once again the suffering of White people, Obama was also challenging the political correctness discourse of the Left which has often devolved into debates about who is “most oppressed” among various groups whose needs have been systematically ignored or repressed. Obama’s point was that if we are to transform American society, we need to have a movement that is not only composed of oppressed groups who are fighting against each other for a larger piece of the pie. For decades we’ve been urging the progressive forces to focus more on the suffering of White working class people and, yes, in particular the ways that this society has systematically maltreated White working class men, while the Left has seemed to care nothing about them.

At that point in the campaign, after Obama made his deservedly famous speech on race in which he gave equal attention to the suffering of Whites as to the suffering of the normal categories of “the oppressed,” the debate could have ended. Instead, Rev. Wright came back with a series of TV appearances to keep the issue alive, and in the last such appearance once again returned to a dismissive and put-down language of others, and simultaneously embraced and extolled Louis Farrakhan, the Black Muslim homophobe and racist whose anti-Semitic remarks have made him anathema not only to the Jewish establishment but to people like me. If you want

to understand why Farrakhan is anathema, please read the heated dialogue between me and Cornel West on this topic which appears in the book we wrote together in 1995, *Jews and Blacks: Let the Healing Begin*. The only thing that has changed since we wrote the book has been the virulence of Farrakhan’s homophobic and anti-Semitic statements.

After Wright’s TV performance, Obama totally disassociated himself from Rev. Wright, and, a few weeks later when a Catholic priest visited Obama’s Chicago church and made strongly put-downish remarks about Hillary Clinton, Obama resigned from that church. It remains to be seen whether this same set of issues will be re-raised in the general election campaign through sleazy attacks by the GOP supporters who ran the attacks on Senator Kerry in 2004.

Obama would be wise to disassociate himself explicitly from the bashing of Whites and White men, and the religio-phobia that has been a stock-in-trade of the Left (and even more so of how the Left is perceived by the rest of the population). The more Obama discusses the suffering of Whites and White working class men, and the more he affirms the importance of a spiritual politics along the lines we’ve developed in the Network of Spiritual Progressives’ Spiritual Covenant with America, the more his candidacy will be successful in doing the very kind of uniting he has promised for the United States.

OBAMA, ISRAEL/PALESTINE AND AIPAC

MIDDLE EAST PEACE ADVOCATES WERE SHOCKED and deeply distraught the day after Obama’s team celebrated his capturing the Democratic presidential nomination, when the Senator followed Senator McCain and Senator Clinton’s appearance at an AIPAC gathering by trying to outdo them in pandering to the Likud agenda that is now defined by many in the Jewish establishment as the only way an American can be labeled “pro-Israel.” While Obama has backed away from his most egregious statement (that Jerusalem must remain “undivided,” the code word used by hard-liners to indicate their unwillingness to share Jerusalem as part of a Palestinian state, despite the desires of the close to 150,000 Palestinians who live in East Jerusalem), the attempt to prove himself “loyal” to “the Jews” (which doesn’t, apparently, include most *Tikkun*-style Jews) may significantly limit what he can accomplish once in office (as it would McCain or Clinton).

Obama enthusiasts argue that the most important goal at this point is for Obama to get elected, and once elected he will “flip-flop” back to a peace perspective on Israel/Palestine and even on Iraq where his call for withdrawal in the first year has now been seriously qualified by talk about the need to consult with the military before implementing his plans (Bush having already shown us the relevant point, that the President gets to pick his own military commanders on the basis of what they are likely to see and tell him). Others urge “critical support,” noting that Obama even in office is

unlikely to challenge the AIPAC-formed right-wing consensus in the Jewish world unless we in the peace movement begin to coalesce, focus our resources and energies in the way that J Street promises to do, and give Obama reason to believe that the peace camp can provide him adequate “cover” for a more principled stand.

Still others in the progressive world remain skeptical. They argue that unless Obama builds a political base for a peace consciousness now, while he is running, his presidency will prove to be little more than a rerun of the tragic Clinton years in which the Clintons retained power by embracing the worldview of global capital and its desire to downsize government’s capacity to put restraints on the worst excesses of the capitalist system. The main lasting achievement of the Clinton years was the election of the worst president in modern American history, whose tenure continues for another six months. We don’t need a re-run of that kind of presidency.

Or do we? At least some in the liberal world are saying that if that was all that Obama could bring us, it would still be so much an improvement over another Republican presidency as to make it worth it to swallow one’s criticisms of Obama’s capitulation to AIPAC.

That’s the current debate. Since as a non-profit we have to be super-cautious in putting forward our own views on this kind of electoral matter, we can only conclude by asking you: Where do you stand? (Write to: letters@tikkun.org). ■

Not Wars But Conversations

BY GRAYLAN SCOTT HAGLER

WHY SHOULDN'T A PRESIDENT SIT DOWN WITH leaders of other nations, particularly when we have problems with them? John McCain and Hillary Clinton scoffed at Barack Obama's suggestion that he would sit down with heads of state, even those who are perceived as being our enemies. The question seems to revolve around the idea that Obama suggested that he would sit down with Cuban, Iranian, and Venezuelan leaders without preconditions for the conversations. Both Clinton and McCain have pegged his approach to foreign policy as naïve, demonstrating his immaturity when it comes to international politics. But the question that we all should be asking in the midst of all this political posturing is what is wrong with talking?

It seems to me that it is better to talk than to bomb, shoot, and kill. Talking is a far better option, particularly if it has the potential to avert the pain and destruction of wars. In wars no one really wins. There may be victors, but the price of winning is extremely high, and leaves an indelible scar on the face of humanity. This means that we have to overcome the macho male dominated approaches that have permeated our dealings in foreign policy and government-to-government negotiations. We have held on to mantras like: "to the victors belong the spoils," "might makes right," and "praise the Lord and pass the ammunition." But this approach has gotten us years of colonialism, the denial of legitimate claims, and the refusal to consider legitimate grievances, particularly when it has led to the stalemate of my gang of allies over here against your gang of allies over there. No, we cannot carry on in this way because a smaller globe necessitates models of reconciliation and not continued divisiveness through non-dialogue and non-interaction. It is a far better idea to talk.

As a preacher I am reminded of the teaching that speaks about going to the altar with your gift, but cautions that if you have a grievance with your neighbor, your brother or sister, you are to put your gift down and go and make peace with your neighbor, brother or sister. The idea is that God does not want gifts and sacrifices as an empty expression of our faith. Rather, God requires that we make peace, even daring to make peace with those we don't agree with. Reconciliation in the world and between neighbors is the highest gift that anyone can offer to God, according to this teaching.

But in a world where there are egos to be maintained, and power dynamics where the other is reduced to an object, the way we have functioned internationally is that civility is predicated upon what can I gain from it, and upon whether you will surrender and submit to what I need. If we lived like this in families they would not survive; and neither would neighborhoods and communities. Likewise it is destructive to function in the world family in this way.

From a faith position and among people of conscience, we yearn for a new paradigm. Those of us of conscience and faith see the world through what others might call a naïve lens. Others call our desire to talk instead of posture an unreasonable and immature

approach to the dangers of the world. But faith and conscience demand that we approach the world and our interactions in this kind of naïve and unreasonable way. The position is called faith. We must have faith in the good character of other human beings, and eventually our refusal to participate in the bravado of machismo, threatening and finger-pointing kinds of politics, will gradually but effectively convert the world to a new way of engagement.

Recently, on a plane to Cleveland, Ohio, I was seated next to a business man. We began to talk about the elections. He forewarned me that he was a conservative. He mentioned to me that he could never vote for Obama because Obama had said that he would sit down with "our enemies." In response to his assertion, I asked whether or not he had ever sat down with a business adversary, and inquired the reasons that he would do so. He stated that he would sit down with a competitor to further his business interest and to see if there was a way the two of them could develop a working relationship for a better and more efficient business edge. He added that both he and his competitor would need to get something compelling from the arrangement in order for each to engage further. I told him that I understood that and it made perfect sense. Then I asked for him to think about this kind of business arrangement in the world of international politics. If it was valid for him to sit down with a competitor, wouldn't it also be valid for nations and heads of nations to sit down with the kind of mutual respect that he would bring to a business meeting?

In business conversations there is recognition that each has something to offer, that each must give up something, and that each will potentially gain something. This is why we need to talk even with those who are seen as our enemies. In a world where numerous nations hold the ability to destroy the world, and where more nations are gaining this kind of destructive potential annually, it is imperative that we learn to talk and settle differences. To have the conversation, just as in the business arena, presupposes that each understands that they need the other to achieve their goals. This is also important in the international political arena – we need each other if we are going to feed the world, save the world from climatic catastrophe, and to maximize the human potential that exists around the globe. In order to have valid conversation each must be humble enough, and in order to further future working relationships each must make agreements that help to build friendship and trust.

What I am advocating here may seem naïve and unreasonable on my part, but I have witnessed in the micro lasting relationships between previously bitter enemies built over conversation and the breaking of bread, and I have to ask: if that is valid person to person, why wouldn't that be valid and necessary nation-to-nation? I pray that we have the real courage to talk rather than to fight. ■

Rev. Graylan Hagler is National President of Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice of the United Church of Christ, and Senior Minister of Plymouth Congregational UCC in Washington, DC.

Current THINKING

Congress Enables More Years of War

While the media's attention was focused on the presidential election primaries, the Iraq war not only continued but was once again re-funded by the Democratic Congress that had been elected to end it. The mechanism was the same old trick that had been refined by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and her comrades Rahm Emanuel and Stenny Hoyer.

The House votes for a budget package that has tens of billions of dollars to continue funding the war in Iraq, other elements that give liberal Congresspeople some programs for the most oppressed, and a stipulation that the war monies should be used to help end the conflict and bring the troops home by a certain date. The bill is then sent to the Senate, where it is whittled down considerably and its

restraints on the war are largely undone. Then it goes to the president who finds the remaining restraints too fierce and hence vetoes the whole package and calls on the Congress to send him a bill he can sign, else they will be abandoning "the troops."

At this point, it's all in the hands of the Speaker. She can, as she has done for other issues, simply say: "No, there will be no bill till the president accepts our requirements." In that case, there's little the President can do. All funding bills must originate in the House of Representatives according to the U.S. Constitution. But if the Speaker puts the bill back on the floor of the House, now largely rid of all the positive elements restricting how and how long the Iraq war should continue, then the Republicans can ally with a small

section of conservative pro-war Democrats of the Lieberman style and provide a majority for the funding of it. At that point, the liberal anti-war Dems get to cast a vote against the war without being in real conflict with the opportunistic leadership of their Congressional caucus. They get to have it both ways.

The only losers in this process are: **a.** the people of Iraq, who continue to suffer; **b.** the vets and the GIs; **c.** the global environment; **d.** the ethical options for the rest of the world.

This cynical process, somewhat obscured by all the attention given to the primaries, accounts for why the war has gone on without massive outcry. But let us be clear: this has been an immoral process. The blood of tens of thousands of innocent people who might otherwise

be alive or not wounded or not disabled is on the hands not only of President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and the U.S. Armed Forces, the CIA, and others of this ilk who were "only following orders," but also on the hands of Nancy Pelosi, Stenny Hoyer, and their many allies who have voted hundreds of billions of dollars to keep fighting this war throughout the past two years.

The media is a major culprit here, as it was in buying the lies and half-truths put forward by the Bush Administration and recently re-revealed for the nth time, this time by former White House Press Secretary Scott McLellan whose task it was to disseminate these lies and half-truths from the Bush Administration to the media and thence to the public. ■

Iran

And here they go again, the media and the Congress giving the Administration virtually no serious investigation or critique of the claims that Iran is a growing threat to U.S. interests or likely to develop nuclear

weapons. When the leading Iranian cleric in a society whose power is ultimately vested in the clerics publicly proclaims that Iran has no interest in nuclear weapons but does need to develop nuclear power, the media gives

it short shrift. When the Chair of the House Judiciary Committee sends a letter to the President warning that an attack on Iran without prior authorization from the Congress would constitute an impeachable offense, the

media barely notices. And who can notice, when the climate had been set by Democratic hawk Hillary Clinton who courted right-wing elements of the Jewish world by talking about "obliterating Iran" should it attack Israel,

while McCain tries to compete for being militant and Obama is put on the defensive for suggesting that he would talk with the Iranians. Here, again, the context is set in part because no one is challenging the rhetoric of the Right.

No wonder, then, that Prime Minister Olmert of Israel addresses AIPAC with the plea that all means necessary must be used to prevent the Iranians from getting the very same kind of nuclear power that some environmentalists are returning to as a cleaner environmental alternative. Or will it be “former Prime Minister” Olmert unless he delivers a preemptive strike on Iran—something that Israelis and the US have been discussing for months? Scenario: Israel attacks, Iran responds with rockets on Israel. Then the United States escalates and seeks to attack major targets in Iran through a massive bombing. The war-fever is re-stoked and the Republicans suddenly look like the better group to carry out what might quickly slide into a war with Iran just in time to pull the election to the Republicans rather than elect a man like Obama who has been vilified as unprepared for this kind of military situation by his fellow-party member Hillary Clinton. Kadima Party member of the Israeli Cabinet Shaul Mofaz almost blew it when he announced, a day after his rival for power in Kadima, Ehud Olmert, had met with President Bush to secretly work out the details of this plan to

attack Iran, that the attack on Iran was now inevitable. The quick renunciation of his statement from all the power brokers may soon appear to be more in the form of “Hey, stupid, don’t blow it for us—we have a plan here that will help the Right stay in power in Israel as well as in the United States, so why don’t you shut your mouth?” The answer, of course, is that Mofaz wants to make it harder for this attack to take place while Olmert is still Prime Minister and might get the credit for it among Israelis who would welcome a preemptive strike. By talking super-militant, Mofaz actually made it necessary for Israel and the United States to slightly defer their time table.

All this could be prevented were Congress to pass a restriction on budget appropriations requiring that the Administration get prior approval from Congress for any form of military strike at Iran in the form of a resolution specifying for what purposes and for how long the authorization was in effect. From our standpoint, an attack on Iran would be a disaster for the peace of the world, for the United States, for Israel and for the Iranian people (who, like the Iraqis, are people just like us, and deserve our caring rather than our bombs).

Why don’t the Dems pass such a resolution? Because they fear being identified as “weak” and naive in not recognizing the threat of a nuclear Iran. As we’ve argued, the power of the Israeli and

American nuclear arsenals make any aggressive use of nuclear power by Iran extremely implausible, no matter how much Iranian President Ahmadinejad rants about Israel disappearing from the face of the earth. But the real way to protect the United States and Israel is to change our approach to foreign policy, stop seeking to control the world, withdraw our troops immediately from Iraq (not in some indefinite future), and build our policy on the Strategy of Generosity outlined in our Global Marshall Plan (details at www.spiritualprogressives.org).

The good news: the growing interest in the NSP version of the Global Marshall Plan (there are dozens of other versions circulating in cyberspace). While the NSP and *Tikkun* are prohibited from putting very much energy into supporting a specific piece of legislation, we are not prohibited but mandated to do public education, and

the underlying values of the Global Marshall Plan are very much what we have been seeking to promote for the past twenty-two years of *Tikkun*. So the introduction into Congress of House Resolution 1078 helps call attention to those underlying ideas, and that’s why we are delighted to witness the growing number of Congressional Reps who are endorsing that resolution. But many many elected officials who should be signing it haven’t done so yet—so talk to your Congressperson to see whether they’ve read or understood the plan.

We will be bringing the idea of the Global Marshall Plan to the Democratic National Convention August 24 and 25 in Denver (you are welcome to come—detailed information will be at www.tikkun.org by the middle of July). Repeated phone calls and letters to the Republican National Convention have so far yielded no response. ■

Protest Against Torture Training at the School of Americas

We hope you can join us at the annual protest against torture that *Tikkun* and the Network of Spiritual Progressives will be co-sponsoring with the School of the Americas Watch—at Fort Benning, Georgia, the weekend before Thanksgiving, November 21-23. Details of making arrangements will be

on our website www.tikkun.org by early October, but right now put the dates aside on your calendar.

Meanwhile, when candidates seek your votes, ask them to support the Global Marshall Plan and the other planks of our Spiritual Covenant with America. ■

Transforming the U.S. Media: Commercial Free at Last

by Allen D. Kanner

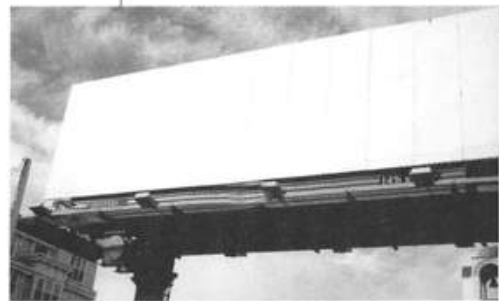
ON JANUARY 1, 2007, SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL WENT commercial-free. The “clean city” law that went into effect last year in South America’s largest city means the metropolis no longer tolerates billboards, flashing neon signs, and electronic message panels on its streets and buildings, fliers and bulletins in its public spaces, and advertising on the sides of its taxis and buses. Strict limits have been imposed on the size of signs on storefronts. “We are aiming for a complete change of culture,” said Roberto Tripoli, president of the City Council. Columnist and historian Roberto Pompeu de Toledo called the law “a rare victory of the public interest over private, order over disorder, aesthetics over ugliness, of cleanliness over trash. For once in life, all that is accustomed to coming out on top in Brazil has lost.”

In the United States, Vermont, Maine, Hawaii and Alaska all prohibit billboards, as do about 1,500 towns across the country. This is a remarkable development, especially since there is an assumption in American society that mass and massive marketing is necessary for corporate capitalism to thrive. The billboard bans indicate how fed up people are with the marketing deluge.

Nevertheless, the prevailing wisdom is that for businesses to be competitive, the nation’s economic system requires a commercially driven media intent on penetrating as deeply as possible into people’s lives and psyches. It is therefore unthinkable that the government would adopt policies that would seriously impede marketing, such as banning advertising to children, or even more comprehensively, transforming the media from commercial-driven to commercial-free.

Yet in terms of social benefits versus harm, we now have decades of experience with the corporate-funded media, enough to conclude reasonably that it is a failed experiment. The experiment began in 1934 with the passage of the Communications Act, which locked into law the commercial structure of radio and all subsequent publicly owned media, such as television, the Internet, and billboards. There was very little public debate during the period before the government decided to hand the media over to corporations, although a movement in favor of non-commercial radio did flair up for several years before the already powerful radio networks crushed it.

We learned from this experiment that corporate advertisers aggressively pursue their goals irrespective of the harm that marketing generates. We have also learned that through their marketing clout corporations are able to control the media by stifling opposing perspectives and molding the content of news and entertainment programs to keep them in line with the corporate agenda. We have found that advertising itself, as it evolves with modern



São Paulo is a city known for its public art and now for its lack of commercial advertising as well.

VISION

I surrender to love in Nasir al-Din and Nazareth.

I pocket my kippa in Khirbat Iribbin
wondering what might have been.

I plead for the bringer of rain and dew to come
to the groves of Dayr al-Dubban.

I lay down my arms (for what it's worth)
along the road to Tarbikha and Tall al-Turmus.

I pray in the holy tongue of reaching and remembering
for the House of Bread and the House of Meat.

I wash myself in the custom of Wa'arat al-Sarris,
first feet, then hands, then with ablutions of the face.

—Joshua Weitz

technology, is an extraordinarily effective tool for influencing people's values, behaviors, and beliefs, especially when it occurs in a context where other views are systematically marginalized. It is time to try something different.

What might a commercial-free U.S. media look like? I would like to offer the following suggestions in the spirit of sparking discussion and subsequent action. I suspect that any media system, commercial or not, will be flawed and subject to its own forms of bias. The key question, therefore, is whether a commercial-free media significantly improves upon one dependent on corporate funding.

As I envision it, a commercial-free media would begin with a ban on all commercial sponsorship. The media would be supported primarily through generous—and legally guaranteed—public funding. The funds themselves would be distributed to promote diversity (class, race, sex, etc.) on all levels, from production to performance. Local media also would be generously supported.

How would people learn about the products and services that are available? It's worth noting here that ads routinely include misleading, exaggerated, or false claims, crucial omissions regarding the downside of products, and emotional manipulation. As such they are extremely poor sources of information. To replace them, publicly funded websites and publications would be created devoted to reliable ratings of products and services. Evaluators would be hired who are independent from the industries being assessed.

Would we have fewer media sources if we went commercial-free? Possibly. But perhaps not, given that local media would flourish. In terms of quality, the enormous cultural diversity that would be unleashed would easily put our current media fare to shame. We also have clues from the BBC, Pacifica, and other commercial-free stations that quality improves when programmers are not pressured to appeal to the lowest common denominator to increase sales.

As a psychologist, I am concerned that children are already engaged with the media 6.5 hours a day while spending 2.25 hours with their parents. Our challenge is the wise use of media, not its endless production.

How would life feel without the marketing deluge? Commercial-free at last. ■

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Obama and the Flag Pin

by Peter Gabel

WHEN BARACK OBAMA STOOD OPPOSITE HILLARY CLINTON DURING the Pennsylvania debate without his flag pin on, he was actually being an American hero. Practically inviting the inevitable exposure of his naked lapel by George Stephanopolous and Charles Gibson, Obama was willing to stand with the authenticity of his being against a demand that he adhere to a false image of “we,” and hope that by doing so we could all break through to another level of connection to our common humanity.

In truth, all of us watching the debate have longed from birth to enter into an authentic relationship of mutual recognition with the Other, with all other beings. This desire is at the very heart of our social nature—it is the foundation of every baby’s search for eye contact, for sensual nurturance and holding, for the completion of the self that only occurs through the reciprocity of authentic connection.

But tragically for all of us, we are born into a world that is not fully “there” yet. For a complex of reasons, as much as we long for each other, we are in flight from each other, passing each other with blank gazes on the street, hiding behind artificial self-presentations that we ourselves monitor moment to moment to keep each other at a safe distance. In place of the authenticity of mutual Presence, we condition each other to take on the artifice of this or that “role;” and in place of the authenticity of a supple and vulnerable human community, we require each other to pledge allegiance to a common mental image of community that blankets a universal solitude.

Thus the flag pin. When Obama stands before us as a candidate for president without his flag pin on—in his birthday suit, so to speak—he is appealing to all of us to trust that we can come out from behind our wall of coercive images and take the risk of being there for one another as who we really are. And when Stephanopolous and Gibson draw a threatening attention to the fact that he is not wearing the pin, they are actually expressing their anxiety that Obama might succeed, that if he were to become our leader, we might all be expected to become present to each other in a true relation of I and Thou as a loving and vulnerable humanity (themselves included). Thus although they are quite possibly liberals “in private” and do not privately believe that presidential candidates should be required to wear certain pins, in their public roles as “objective” journalists, they chose to engage in a play neutrality that sought to police Obama’s ethical intentions on behalf of “the American People.” Against Obama’s courageous manifestation of and call for authenticity, the role-playing journalists chose to try to isolate the man and collude with the fearful image-world that supports, that actually is, the status quo.

Nothing that I’m saying here is meant to denigrate the value of patriotism as an identification with the best aspects of American history and culture, and Obama’s willingness to challenge a coercive form of flag idolatry is in some ways a distinctly American accomplishment. I like the way Obama sometimes wears the flag pin and sometimes does not, showing respect for the cultural achievements of the historical community that he seeks to represent while resisting any fixed and robotic deference to a false image of community that traps all of us in a painful spiritual isolation. In some ways, the very best aspect of Obama’s campaign has been the quiet confidence with which he has maintained his autonomy from the cascade of challenges to his “loyalty” that have underlain not just the flag pin drama, but also the uproars over Reverend Wright, Bill Ayers, and Bittergate. That autonomy is not really about separating himself from irrational and unfair allegations; it’s about reaching out toward us through an invisible ether and affirming that we are all really Here and that a less crazy, more loving world is possible. ■



An Obama supporter offers a member of the media a flag pin to protest the criticism Obama received for occasionally not wearing one on his lapel.

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The Contest and the Spectacle

by Eli Zaretsky

1. The Contest

EVER SINCE THE INVENTION OF THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM IN JACKSONIAN AMERICA, America's primaries and elections have alternated between contests and spectacles. Although the two have much in common—notably the acts of watching and being watched—there are important differences between them. A contest is a trial or struggle for victory involving roughly equal individuals; a spectacle is an event or scene that rivets the attention. Rules, procedures and the equality of all participants are crucial to a contest; there are no rules or procedures to a spectacle. A contest has a clear end point; spectacles drag on until the last onlooker leaves. Contests produce heroes; spectacles produce celebrities. Contests make onlookers feel exalted, as the contestants push beyond what they could not have accomplished without competition; spectacles often leave onlookers feeling degraded, as they sense they are somehow experiencing the lesser and not the nobler human capacities. Given the nature of the two-party system, it is no surprise that the Democratic Primary process, which opened in the form of a contest, has turned into a spectacle. Let us see how and why this occurred.

The first thing that makes a contest is a prize. In this case, the prize was the leadership of the Democratic Party. That prize was especially valuable because the Democratic Party had revolutionary and charismatic roots—in the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian uprisings against the elitism of the “founding fathers.” Historically the party of the white outsiders, of “rum, Romanism and rebellion,” that is of saloon-keepers, immigrants and white Southerners, the party was transformed during the New Deal into something like the American analogue to a European-style worker’s party. Its chief defect during the 1930s, its compromises with the white South in such matters as the Agricultural Adjustment Act (which excluded sharecroppers), was remedied in the 1960s by its commitment to civil rights. To its first great universal entitlement program, Social Security, the party added a second, Medicare. To gain the leadership of the Democratic Party, then, was to gain control of a great legacy; it was very different from gaining the leadership of the Republican Party, which began as the party of a heroic, antislavery-minded middle class but became the party of the rich.

A long struggle for control of that legacy preceded the contest for the 2008 Democratic nomination. Beginning in the 1970s, it had become clear that the party had to transcend its roots in the industrial epoch. One response, epitomized in the slogan “the era of big government is over,” was to embrace neo-liberal globalization in an uncritical manner. Taking a leaf from the party of Big Business, some Democrats including the Democratic Leadership Council, and such reformers as Gary Hart, Michael Dukakis and Bill Clinton, denounced “class struggle,” as long as it arose from workers, blacks and immigrants. Corruption, the destruction of pension and health plans, the turning over of the great industries to financial speculators, the transformation of cities into theme parks, the privatization of education, the subordination of scientific research to commerce, the debasement of the public sphere: Democrats not only allowed this lethal tsunami of privatization to occur, they actively promoted it under the rubric of “the third way.”

Of course, the Democrats did this because they were pursuing the professional classes, the soccer moms, and the educated, suburban elites who were relatively uncritical of neo-liberal globalization. In place of class politics, the Democratic Party supported the two-earner family, multiculturalism and the politics of recognition, the new, middle-class consumerist spirit of post-Fordist capitalism spawned by the Sixties. The problem was that this strategy left

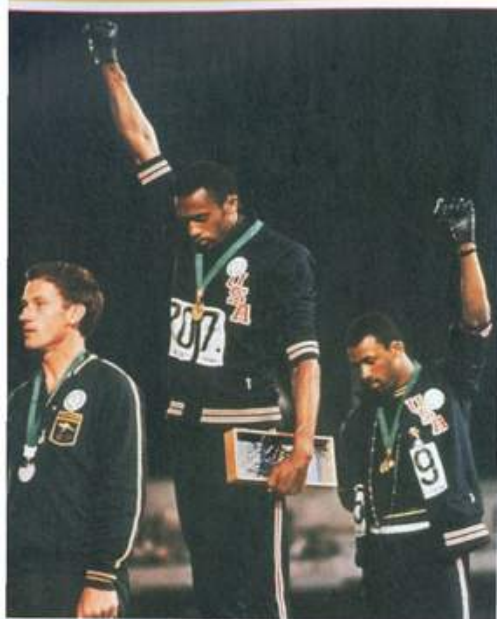
out the older working class base of the Democratic Party. While Democrats called for a non-ideological liberalism, one that might “cut through” a supposedly sterile Left/Right distinction, the Right failed to get the message. Running against the cultural Left, America witnessed, as Thomas Frank observed, “a French Revolution in reverse—one in which the *sans-culottes* pour down the streets demanding more power for the aristocracy.” The atrocities that followed included the impeachment of Bill Clinton in 1998, the stealing of the 2000 election and the invasion of Iraq.

These atrocities precipitated the struggle for the Democratic legacy. At first, supporters of the Clinton administration and their current opponents were joined in opposition to the Right. For example, Moveon.org was created to fight the Clinton impeachment. However, in the early twenty-first century a divide opened. The Internet especially provided a pathway for Democratic insurgents who began to blame the vacillations and compromises of the Clinton administration for opening the way for the Republicans. The support of roughly half of the Democrats, including Hillary Clinton, for Bush’s 2002 authorization to use force in Iraq, proved a turning point. Pathetically, by caving in to “war on terror” intimidation, the Democrats in Congress squandered the moral force required to tell the American people that, for the most part, their sons and daughters had died for nothing in Iraq, that their treasure had been squandered, their future held hostage, and the carefully nurtured reputation of the United States thoughtlessly trashed. By 2004 Howard Dean’s candidacy, based on a new generation of young people, on the Internet and on a principled opposition to the war, was directed as much against the Clinton legacy as against the Republicans.

Ultimately, Barack Obama won the contest for the Democratic Presidential nomination because he spoke to this conflict most directly. By contrast Hillary Clinton, a Democratic Party insider who was herself already a target of the Dean insurgency, began her campaign by identifying with the “third way” revolution in the Democratic Party, including its uncritical embrace of the market and casual manipulation of symbols of identity (itself based on marketing techniques). John Edwards, on the other hand, resurrected the older paradigm of the Democratic Party, which charged the government, and especially the president, with advocating for the disadvantaged, and serving as a counterweight to big business. Obama, however, tried to articulate a third possibility, which seemed to echo Rousseau’s idea of the “general will,” as distinguished from the “will of all.” The will of all is an aggregate, which composes a democratic majority by putting together the many particular interests that comprise a society; the general will is the common set of values that all the groups in a society share. To state the American people’s common values—for example, patriotism, fairness, and decency—is to court banality, but to enact and embody them was something else. That is what Obama seemed to be about. In doing so, he gave voice to the Democratic insurgency and turned it into a narrow majority within the party, and potentially within the country.

By late February or early March, Obama had won the nomination. By February 19 he had won eleven straight primaries. For Clinton to best him she had to win all the remaining primaries at 60-70% of the vote, and that was extremely unlikely. The Clinton camp responded with a series of stories concerning the super-delegates’ responsibility to choose a candidate on the basis of “electability,” but these were always fantastical. Although the origin of the super-delegate idea did lie in the campaign professionals’ reaction to the McGovern defeat in 1972, the purpose of the super-delegates was always to *influence* the primaries, never to *overturn* them. In 1984, for example, the super-delegates announced their preference for Mondale over Hart, and Mondale won the primaries. In 2008, the system worked as intended when numerous super-delegates announced for Clinton, thus bestowing her air of “inevitability.” Had the super-delegates ever overturned the overall primary vote, the costs would have been the





suppression of the African American vote (key to Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Missouri), and the youth vote. Indeed, such a decision might well have destroyed the party. Thus Senator Patrick Leahy was right when he said on March 28, 2008, "Senator Clinton has every right, but not a very good reason" to stay in the race. What then happened? How did a contest turn into a spectacle?

2. The Spectacle

LET US RETURN TO THE MINDSET THAT EXISTED LAST FEBRUARY, THAT IS, THE MINDSET OF the Democratic contest. At that point there were clear and definite *rules* that governed the contest. For example, everyone agreed that the victor would be the one who received the most delegates in the primaries. Similarly, everyone agreed that the primaries held in Florida and Michigan would not count. Such agreements were deeply rooted in conceptions of fairness, equality and meritocracy inseparable from the idea of a contest. In a contest, furthermore, any individual could participate, regardless of race, gender or ethnic origin (although in this particular contest the contestants had to be born in the United States). Political contests also were thought to prioritize argumentation and rhetorical persuasiveness, as shown by the importance assigned to debate. There seems, finally, to have been a certain resonance between the *form* of the nominating process, namely the contest, and the *content* of the politics that triumphed in February and March, namely universalism. Obama seems to have won because he presented himself as a unifier, indeed, as the first person in a long time who affirmed universalism and who wanted to take the country back to its last true moment of self-knowledge, the Civil Rights movement.

The spectacle, by contrast, is something different. Spectacles, like contests, exist in all societies, but the modern spectacle is the product of the commercial revolution of the nineteenth century. Like advertising, spectacles appeal to the senses, to primal loyalties, to unconscious wishes and to charisma. Their purpose is to obscure, not clarify issues. The modern spectacle developed alongside the two party system and as we are now witnessing, party politics can provide the greatest of all spectacles. Spectacles, furthermore, tend to revolve around individuals. The Lincoln-Douglas debates (1858-60) were our greatest political contest, but the birth of the party system revolved around a charismatic individual, Andrew Jackson. After the battle of New Orleans, wrote Michael Rogin in *Fathers and Children*, Jackson portrayed "himself as the tribune of the people against selfish and entrenched leaders. He relied on personal leadership to overcome [obstacles]. He fought conspiratorial enemies who were seeking to overwhelm republican virtue." After he left the presidency a new breed of politicians appeared, "men of humble origin who challenged genteel officeholders by courting voters assiduously in the oral style of rural vernacular" (Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution*). Critical to these new politicians was the refusal to offer voters clear-cut alternatives, especially on divisive issues such as slavery. Instead they substituted ties of personal loyalty to a leader, "the sentimental bonds which develop among men who have worked as a team in victory and defeat, and ... the pragmatic importance of winning for the sake of gaining office or exercising power" (David Potter, *The Impending Crisis*).

The distinction between the contest and the spectacle is a heuristic one, but it can be clarifying. If I am correct in asserting that what we have witnessed since February is the transformation of a contest into a spectacle, then it is important to note that this transformation accompanied an increasing emphasis on race and gender, the two great axes of the cultural revolution of the sixties, the two great identity groups within the Democratic Party, the two forms of oppression and inequality that render existing claims to universalism false. Let us begin with the significance of race, which actually erupted first.

The turning point in the history of the modern Democratic Party was the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, and subsequent attempts to right racial injustice such as affirmative action and bussing. The latter attempts in particular precipitated the decline of the party, which seemed poised on the hinge of an impossible dilemma, favoring blacks against disadvantaged whites or turning toward whites to the disadvantage of blacks. Obama, a black man who did not run as a black candidate, cut through this dilemma decisively. This raised the hope of a genuine revival, a return to the party's greatness, rooted in a sense of justice that

(top) Extending gloved hands skyward in racial protest, U.S. athletes Tommie Smith, center, and John Carlos, left, stare downward during the playing of the Star Spangled Banner at the Summer Olympic Games in Mexico City, 1968.

(middle) Angela Davis raises her fist in a radical salute as she enters court for a bail hearing in San Rafael, CA, June, 1971.

(bottom) Obama receives the Chairman's Award from Julian Bond, chairman of the NAACP, at the 36th NAACP Image Awards.

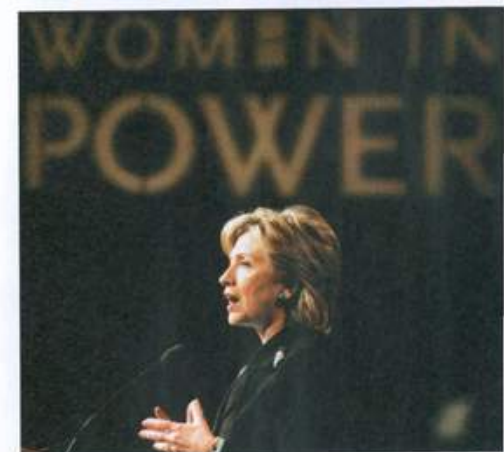
transcended party. However, there was no way to deny that much of Obama's charisma rested on his role as the first viable black candidate for president in American history. The spectacle involved in the symbolism of a black president, in other words, was present from the first. Nothing demonstrated this more than the surprised enthusiasm of numerous commentators, including Chris Matthews, Howard Fineman, Tim Russert and David Brooks to the initial Obama victory in Iowa, the night of January 3, 2008. To a man, these hardened, cynical, battle-scarred veterans predicted that Obama would win the New Hampshire primary a few days later and would be swept to the nomination.

The symbol of the first woman president soon followed. In the five days between the Iowa Primary and the New Hampshire Primary the women's vote shifted from a 5% advantage for Obama to a 12% advantage for Clinton, a change of 17%, and this in a party that is 55% female. Later in Ohio, Clinton won 58% of women voters, including 68% of white women. Even when one parses these numbers to account for differences in age and education (Clinton's support is much stronger among older and less educated women), these numbers are significant. As Geoff Garin, one of Hillary Clinton's pollsters, wrote, "if you have to pick a niche in the Democratic Party, women is a pretty good niche to have."

Later the post-Iowa shift was described as the "New Hampshire effect": Hillary "gets backed into a corner, takes a few days to find her footing (or her voice), then fights back against a perceived injustice—the 'boys' club,' the news media, the disenfranchisement of voters. This prompts an outpouring in her favor, whether because of sympathy for a perceived victim or anger at the forces against her or a belief that some injustice is, in fact, occurring. And then she works it, with fund-raising appeals and pleas at rallies, where she makes her fight for survival a fight for the larger cause." In fact, the whole country and especially men pulled together after New Hampshire and tried to see things through Hillary's eyes. Frank Rich, Hendrick Herzberg and Bob Herbert all wrote eloquent columns criticizing Obama for calling Hillary "likeable enough," rightly saying we all have to bend over backward to protect against sexism.

Of course a large proportion of Clinton's female support was based on agreement with her positions, or on other estimates that she is the best person for the job, for example by reason of her experience, "toughness," intelligence and the like. But it is hard to avoid the conclusion that there was an additional factor. Anyone who understands the special obstacles and forms of derogation that all women face can understand why a woman would bond with another woman, even if they did not see eye to eye on every issue. Any woman who has been harassed by her employer, degraded by a male doctor or professor or lawyer or accountant, whistled at in the street, suffered through an abortion or a divorce or a bad marriage with a bullying husband can sympathize with Hillary's compelling story. Here was a woman who took second place to her charismatic, philandering husband for decades, stood by him through public pilorying, became an object of taunts and insults herself, and yet emerged with her inner strength intact, able to compete more than competently in the male-dominated world of presidential politics, albeit with scars, but also with humanity, generosity and admirable good humor. Any empathic person would be inclined to support such a person, and certainly women, who have gone through the kind of things that Hillary has gone through, would be so inclined.

Of course, identity politics can create oppositional as well as supportive voting blocs. Therefore, in the midst of the New Hampshire reversal, almost like a magician who distracts an audience to perform a trick, the Clinton circle set out to racialize the campaign. They did this by such tactics as dropping hints on Obama's drug use and comparing the Jesse Jackson campaigns of the 1980s (which were explicitly based on the Rainbow Coalition, rather than the effort to articulate a general will) to the Obama campaign. Disingenuously, Hillary Clinton claimed to take Clinton supporter Robert Johnson at his word that, when he insinuated "Barack Obama was doing something in the neighborhood; I won't say what he was doing," he was referring to community organizing and not to drugs. The Clintons paid a big price for the strategy of racialization. According to John Judis, "in a December Pew poll, Clinton trailed Obama among black voters in South Carolina by only one percentage point—44 to 43%. Even as late as the post-New Hampshire primary Pew poll, Obama was (continued on page 71)



(top) Member of the Women's Liberation Party drops a brassiere in a trash barrel in protest of the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City, N.J., on Sept. 7, 1968.

(middle) Women's rights leader Gloria Steinem marches in the "Fight the Right" march in San Francisco April, 1996.

(bottom) Hillary Clinton speaks at the EMILY's List luncheon in Washington.

Obama as Reparations

by Charles P. Henry

WOULD THE ELECTION OR EVEN THE NOMINATION OF BARACK OBAMA FOR president of the United States represent a form of racial reparations? After all, affirmative action is considered by some a form of reparations and Geraldine Ferraro has suggested Obama is an affirmative action candidate. Nearly everyone agrees that the unprecedented success of his campaign marks a turning point in American race relations. The question is—turning towards what?

Explanations for Obama's success have often emphasized his calmness, coolness and lack of anger. MSNBC's Chris Matthews said, "no history of slavery ... all the bad stuff in our history ain't there with this guy." Conservative writer Shelby Steele contends Obama is "a bargainer who makes a very specific deal with whites: 'I will not use America's horrible history of white racism against you, if you will promise not to use my race against me.'" In exchange the bargainer grants a kind of innocence or moral absolution for White goodwill and generosity. Rush Limbaugh calls him a "magic Negro." Like many popular culture roles played by Sidney Poitier, Morgan Freeman, Will Smith, Don Cheadle and others, he is there to assuage White guilt. Obama himself acknowledges that some see his candidacy as "an exercise in affirmative action" based on "the desire of wide-eyed liberals to purchase racial reconciliation on the cheap."

This apparent reaffirmation of White innocence has led some to question Obama's "Blackness." Author Debra Dickerson has contended, "Black, in our political and social reality, means those descended from West African slaves." By Dickerson's logic even those descended from West Indian slaves don't count. *Daily News* columnist Stanley Crouch joins Dickerson in claiming Obama has not "lived the life of a black American." Ironically, it was Obama's 2004 Illinois Senate race opponent, Alan Keyes, who first charged that Obama was not Black enough: ironic because conservatives are constantly attacking victimology and identity politics.

None of those charging Obama with a deficit of Blackness were to be found defending him for his association with the "too Black" Rev. Jeremiah Wright. The association with Rev. Wright was jarring precisely because it challenged the views of those who saw Obama as someone who if not detached from America's racial past was certainly not bitter or angry about it. The cognitive dissonance created by the public perception of Obama embracing as a family member someone with the views of Rev. Wright forced Obama to confront race head on.

Obama's March 18 speech on race was both honest and nuanced. He did what one would expect a politician to do in disagreeing with Wright's most controversial remarks. However, he then went beyond the conventional in refusing to disown Wright. Obama said the Chicago minister "helped introduce me to my Christian faith, a man who spoke to me about our obligations to love one another, to care for the sick and lift up the poor." He added, "I can no more disown him [Wright] than I can disown the black community." In short, Obama tried to speak to what for him were the positive notions of Blackness—the good stuff.



An unidentified man is led to a police car in the Watts section of Los Angeles August 13, 1965, after his arrest during a second riotous night.

Yet Wright's statements also forced Obama to recall the history behind Black anger. Speaking in Philadelphia about a Constitution that embraced slavery he said: "words on a parchment would not be enough to deliver slaves from bondage, or provide men and women of every color and creed their full rights and obligations as citizens of the United States." He remembered the protests and struggles in the streets and courts. And he linked a history of legalized discrimination to "the wealth and income gap between black and white, and the concentrated pockets of poverty that persist in so many of today's urban and rural communities."

Even as he defended Wright and Black anger in general, Obama sought to reach out to White voters. He argued that those persons of Wright's and Ferraro's generation may have good cause to be bitter and angry. Despite their service to this country they have faced obstacles and limitations imposed on them by others. We can understand them without agreeing with them.

Obama's speech is remarkable precisely because it attempts the kind of nuance and understanding so rare in American racial discourse. The United States government has never convened anything resembling a truth and reconciliation commission to remember and seek remedy for the wrongs committed from the time of slavery through Jim Crow to the present. There have been, however, numerous "study" commissions, and one of the most influential studies of American race relations, Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* (1944), was funded by the Carnegie Foundation.

Prior to the urban disorders of the mid-to-late 1960s, social scientists did not seem interested in applying the new science of survey research to Black populations. Thus the anger and bitterness reflected in the violence in Watts, a Los Angeles neighborhood, just days after the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, caught both social scientists and the general public by surprise. What followed was a host of "riot studies" including that of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Commission) appointed by President Lyndon Johnson in 1967. The Kerner Commission concluded, after 600 pages, "the nation is rapidly moving toward two increasingly separate Americas." Yet the sociologist Kenneth Clark in his testimony before the commission was pessimistic about the outcome. "I read that report ... of the 1919 riot in Chicago, and it is as if I were reading the report of the investigating committee of the Harlem riot of '35, the report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of '43, the report of the McCone Commission on the Watts riot." Clark proved prophetic.

Late in his second term, President Bill Clinton sought to take on the challenge of separate Americas by appointing a presidential advisory board on race. Chaired by the distinguished historian John Hope Franklin, the board was to assist the president in a year long "great and unprecedented conversation about race." From the beginning the board was plagued by disagreements with the White House, complaints from conservatives that their views were not welcome and charges from other minority groups that the proceedings were too focused on African American concerns. Although Franklin wanted to take up the issue of reparations, Clinton deemed it not a "productive" issue for discussion. The board did, however, deal with the issue of an apology for slavery. In a remarkable transcendence of the issue it concluded since an apology could not be adequately expressed in words—it would make none!

Someone who did take up the issue of reparations was conservative activist David Horowitz. During Black History Month of 2001, he offered the campus newspapers of some fifty elite universities an advertisement entitled "Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Blacks Is a Bad Idea for Blacks—and Racist Too." Most campus newspapers rejected the ad but seven—Brown, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Duke, the University of Chicago, the University of Arizona, and the University of California at Berkeley and at Davis—chose to run the ad (the last two newspapers later apologized).

A firestorm of criticism rose on each campus that ran the ad. As the campus newspapers came under pressure the debate shifted from reparations to press censorship. The *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *U.S. News & World Report*, ACLU, NAACP, and others all



Police officers subdue a man in New Orleans, Oct. 8, 2005. At least one police officer repeatedly punched the 64-year-old Robert Davis, accused of public intoxication, and another officer assaulted an Associated Press Television News producer as a cameraman taped the confrontations.



Arnold Lewis stands outside his home in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward July, 2006. While he guts and repairs his Lizardi Street duplex, the 46-year-old television repair man is living in a FEMA trailer. He is discouraged with the pace of recovery in this predominantly black, low-income neighborhood.

rallied in support of Horowitz. Ironically, those newspapers that did not run the ad were spared any criticism over press censorship. Horowitz had exactly what he wanted, a debate on what he perceived as a lack of tolerance on liberal college campuses for conservative viewpoints, and showed up at Berkeley two weeks later to argue the issue.

Lost in the debate over freedom of speech was any substantive discussion of the issue of reparations. Such Horowitz pronouncements, for example, as “what about the debt Blacks owe to America” (for ending slavery) served to reduce the possibilities of calm, cool discussion and genuine understanding of differing perspectives, as Horowitz must have known. The Horowitz ad is a masterful example of the historic tradition in American racial discourse. Those with power and resources are able to frame the issue of race in a way that either gives them an advantage or precludes serious discussion. This tradition has either individualized Black claims for justice, denied Whites’ responsibility, or made them the victims. This paternalistic tradition also holds that whatever action Whites take must be in the best interest of Blacks—even if Blacks argue otherwise.

More than a half century ago James Baldwin published one of the best critiques of such discourse in “Everybody’s Protest Novel.” Baldwin targeted literature that attempts social improvement by stirring its readers into moral outrage. Such works as *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *Native Son*, Baldwin maintained, have almost the opposite effect on social change. Instead of provoking self-examination or radical criticism, they lead us to a kind of comfortable anger that affirms our own moral framework. This “medieval morality” is inadequate to confront the implications of slavery or the racial injustices that follow it.

For Baldwin, protest novels—and, by extension, racial discourse in general—refuse to acknowledge the fundamental difficulties of moral improvement. Martin Luther King Jr. was quick to add that our technological capabilities had far outstripped our moral capacity to control them. Or, as he stated the problem, we have “guided missiles in the hands of misguided men.” Baldwin believed the first task was to find a language that conveyed a moral message without entirely sacrificing complexity to intelligibility. After all, he stated, American public discourse has no way to accommodate a story that so deeply undercuts its own assumptions.

Reparations are exactly such a story. It is ironic that a word that means “to repair” has come to signify just the opposite, “to divide,” in contemporary America. As Obama has said, “talk show hosts and conservative commentators built entire careers unmasking bogus claims of racism while dismissing legitimate discussions of racial injustice and inequality as mere political correctness or reverse racism.” Rather than framing

reparations as reverse racism as did Horowitz, columnist Charles Krauthammer sarcastically endorsed giving each African American \$5,000 if they would promise never to raise the subject of racial inequality again.

Unfortunately, writers like Krauthammer and some reparations advocates themselves have succeeded in framing reparations discourse as solely or mainly about money. When one shifts the dialogue away from who pays and who receives to ask about an apology, the framework changes and the answers become more convoluted. After all, we live in an “age of apology” in which the Pope apologized to Galileo, Australia has created a “National Sorry Day” for indigenous peoples, and two United States presidents, Clinton and Bush, have apologized to Africans for the slave trade—but not to African Americans for slavery.

An apology would mean an official recognition that a gross harm had occurred and acceptance of responsibility—not guilt—for that harm. Most importantly, a reparations process, which starts with an apology, includes a solemn guarantee that such actions will not be permitted to happen now or in the future. Comments by public figures, like Bill O’Reilly’s that he might have to put together a lynching party to go after Michelle Obama if she doesn’t show proper pride in America, do nothing to reassure Blacks that we live in a “post-racial” or “color-blind” society. That is why cultural reparations in the form of human rights curricula in schools and museums of remembrance are important forms of restitution.



*Will we come together
around the newly
activated young people,
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build a new discourse of
reparation, reconciliation
and common humanity?*

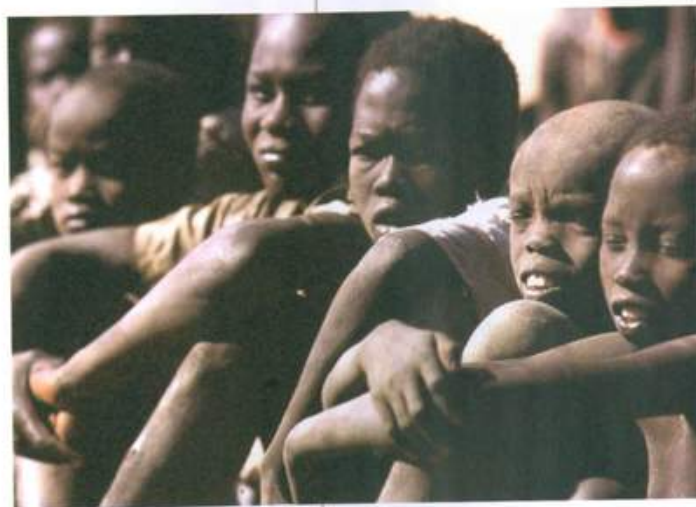
Many countries, in addition to the United States, have trouble dealing with the past because the past is still with them. Memory of historical injustice is not a trivial matter to be swept under the rug in the name of progress. A nation is an intergenerational community, and the existence of historical obligations is predicated on our moral relations to our successors. Memory, or more precisely remembering, is an important part of the identity of individuals and communities. The moral identity of a nation may be defined as the remembrance of those events that comprise its obligations and entitlements.

So how will the election of 2008 be remembered? Will it mark the continuation of American superpower rhetoric that boasts an exceptionalism dividing us from the rest of the world while denying the history that undercuts it? Will we simply pat ourselves on the back for entertaining the nomination of a woman and an African American for the highest office in the land? Or will we come together around the newly activated young people, women and Blacks and build a new discourse of reparation, reconciliation and common humanity? ■

Charles P. Henry is professor and chair of the Department of African American Studies at the University of California at Berkeley. His most recent book is Long Overdue: The Politics of Racial Reparations.

Faith in Action: Ending Slavery, Together

by Austin Choi-Fitzpatrick



SLAVERY STILL EXISTS. IF YOU'VE BEEN PAYING ATTENTION OVER THE LAST FEW years, you'll have noticed this theme cropping up again and again. It started like a low rumble coming from human rights advocates, humanitarian workers, and missionaries the world over. A resurgence of a very, very old sort of exploitation was taking place among those least able to defend themselves. People at the margins of the economy, whether the global economy or their own village economy, were forced to do work with little or no pay and unable to leave because of violence and fear. That's what slavery is: forced work, no pay, and violence.

If you've been paying attention you've noticed that this issue takes an astounding number of forms: human trafficking, forced prostitution, bonded labor, forced marriage, forced conscription into armies... the list goes on, checked only by the limits of human imagination. These horrible things are happening to children, men, women—anyone caught in the fissures and gaps of an economy with nobody looking after them. And then there are the numbers: 27 million held in slavery worldwide, tens of thousands right here in the United States.

I've been working on this issue for years now and will be the first to admit that this steady stream of statistics and stories is bleak. But I've got to tell you about what else I've been seeing—something beyond slavery. Flashes of hope. Glimpses of freedom. I work for an organization called Free the Slaves. The more we learn the more we're convinced that

The faces of boys are shown as they wait to be released in Madhol, southwest of Khartoum, Sudan. An Arab trader sold 132 former slaves, women and children, for \$13,200 in Sudanese money to a representative of the Swiss-based charity, Christian Solidarity International.

“ हर बच्चे का है अधिकार
रोटी, खेल, पढ़ाई, प्यार ”



Children celebrate their freedom under a banner reading: 'Every child has the right to bread, play, study and love' at the Bal Vikas Ashram in northern India. The Ashram rescues children from the carpet loom industry and works with parents to provide education and training.

complex problems require ambitious solutions. And these solutions must get us all thinking about slavery in terms of freedom.

We recently released a book (*Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves*), written by sociologist and Free the Slaves president, Kevin Bales, that sketches this ambitious solution. We believe it's going to take a mass movement of people standing up against slavery. People like you and me. It's also going to take governments enforcing their laws against slavery. And it will take corporations that have the courage to take a hard look at their supply chains, removing slavery wherever they find it. International groups like the UN and non-governmental organizations have a role too, building infrastructure for large-scale anti-slavery work. We think that together we can end slavery in twenty-five years. The book's most important contribution is that it opens a window into a world in which each of us has a role to play.

So lately, I've been asking myself: *What's the role of faith communities in all of this?* My search for answers has broadened my horizons and gladdened my spirit. In thinking about slavery and abolition, Christianity comes immediately to mind. The relationship isn't a clean one. Many a theological battle was waged before the notion of freedom for the enslaved took root in Christian consciousness. In fact, broader ideas of freedom were slow to catch on, as lauded abolitionist William Wilberforce painfully displayed when he said that "taught by Christianity, [freed slaves] will sustain with patience the sufferings of their actual lot... [and] will soon be regarded as a grateful peasantry" (Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*).

And yet, there they were, Christians leading the last anti-slavery movement (and a few rebellions) some 200 years ago. In retrospect it may seem natural that the church would get involved in this effort. But it's important to remember what else the church was doing at the time. The church was also busy *using the Scripture to defend slavery*. The sociologist Christian Smith has pointed out that the "worldviews, moral systems, theodicies, and organizations of religion can serve not only to legitimate and preserve, but also to challenge and overturn social, political, and economic systems."

So who was doing the challenging and overturning? Who had the gumption to stand up against slavery when it was at its zenith? We must remember that the slave trade was one of the most significant industries in the global economy. It was backed by religious leaders and economic elites. And who stood up to say, "let's do away with a principle engine of the world economy because it's the right thing to do"?

It was people of faith. A handful with the courage to draw on the very best of their prophetic tradition and articulate a vision of freedom.

Sounds great! So who all's got this vision of freedom? Just Christians? The Buddhist tradition forbids the trading of weapons and people. Within Islam the Prophet Mohammed was fierce in his denunciation of slavery. His statement that "There are three categories of people against whom I shall myself be a plaintiff on the Day of Judgment. Of these three, one is he who enslaves a free man, then sells him and eats this money" echoes into the present. Within Hinduism a vibrant freedom movement is challenging the caste system and the slavery it supports. The Jewish faith has brought us one of the most significant narratives of emancipation: the Exodus of Jews out of enslavement.

In fact, abolitionist movements have been happening within religious movements for thousands of years. Wang Mang, the Buddhist Chinese Emperor, may have been the first powerful abolitionist. He outlawed the slave trade in 9 CE, some 2000 years ago. Beginning in the eleventh century the Ismaili Muslim Druzes sect began criticizing slavery. They were also a leading voice in the call for abolition in the middle of the twentieth century. The nineteenth century reformer Sayyid Ahmad Khan has been called "the Islamic William Wilberforce." Hindu social workers, journalists, and doctors were at the forefront of the effort to end the practice of *devadasi*, or temple prostitution. In 2000 the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism signed a statement which reads: "Human trafficking destroys someone's spirit, displaces them from their community, and creates wounds that will never heal." The

Free Methodists recently issued a declaration against slavery, their *ninth* since 1797. The Church of the Brethren's 2007 resolution states: "We confess our complicity in the global network of slavery through consumption of goods and services that have been produced by slave labor."

It is with these prophetic voices in mind that we can begin to ask ourselves: *What would a radically interfaith movement against modern slavery look like?* What tools, traits, and traditions do each of the world's religions bring to the table when it comes to this historic work? Think about it: for thousands of years individuals and small groups of reformers have been asking themselves these questions about their own faith. Can you imagine the courage it took them to blend faith in action for the purpose of cultural transformation?

I'm firmly convinced that this is exactly what we need—faith in action—an interfaith abolitionist movement linking people of all faiths together as they take action against slavery and for freedom. Sound unlikely? In fact, the struggle to end slavery has already resulted in unlikely alliances. Secular feminists have joined with stalwart evangelicals to pass landmark legislation on this issue. Both communities regularly contribute to the growing awareness that trafficking for sexual exploitation simply shouldn't exist.

What's needed now is unprecedented: an even broader movement of believers from all walks of life and from all faiths. These are historic times, and a world free from slavery is within reach. This effort will only be successful when we work together from the best of our respective traditions, from the highest expressions of our faith. Together we can ensure that our children live in a world free from slavery. So let's get started. Against slavery, for freedom. Today. ■

Austin Choi-Fitzpatrick is the National Outreach Coordinator at Free the Slaves where he directs Faith in Action, an interfaith initiative against slavery and trafficking. Learn more at www.freetheslaves.net or by emailing faith@freetheslaves.net.

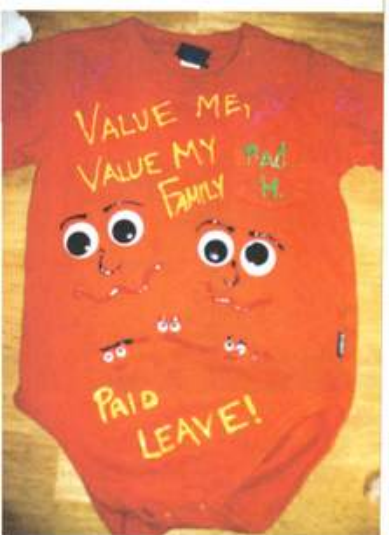
Can a Group Like MomsRising.org Lead the U.S. to a New Bottom Line?

by Nanette Fondas



CONTEMPORARY MOTHERS HAVE BEEN NOTORIOUSLY DIFFICULT TO ORGANIZE for political action and social change, perhaps because they are chronically over-worked, sleep-deprived and likely to be busy organizing something themselves. But now a cyber-savvy, bootstrap organization called MomsRising.org seeks to change that. Recruiting thousands of mothers (and anyone who has a mother!) to join via its web site, MomsRising.org may have found the formula to engage, educate, and amplify the voices of America's millions of mothers—and in the process raise awareness of the idea of a New Bottom Line in America.

The "Power of Onesies" campaign displayed baby clothes decorated with family leave and universal health care slogans at state capitols across the United States, as well as Washington, D. C.



Why a Moms' Movement?

THE TUG OF WORK AND FAMILY: THAT'S WHAT'S ON THE MINDS OF MOST WOMEN IN America—"most" because most do become mothers (82% by the age of forty-four) and most mothers (75%) work in the paid labor force. Indeed, these mothers are so busy juggling their work and family commitments, they may be forgiven for not knowing that, on average, mothers earn 27% less than their male counterparts (with single mothers earning a whopping 40% less). And "juggling" is the word used when a mother is handling things relatively *successfully*. There are millions of mothers who would love to juggle but instead find themselves crushed: by the wage hits; by the lack of flexibility in their jobs (both to work reduced and/or flexible hours—particularly when children are young and without pay or promotion penalties—and to take time off when a child is sick or has a health or school emergency); by the realization that they must tolerate sub-standard child care because good alternatives are unaffordable; and by the fact that taking a leave, even an unpaid leave, following childbirth will surely lead to a pink slip.

It is facts like these that led Joan Blades and Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner to write a book called *The Motherhood Manifesto* and—when their research revealed that U.S. policies to support mothers and families lag well behind those of other industrial nations—to found MomsRising.org in May of 2006. Though the founders did not know one another before pairing up to write the book, this was a match waiting to happen. Stay-at-home and working mothers had been essential to the success of the second wave of the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s, but since then mothers have not had a leading voice. Certainly pivotal books have been published along the way—including Naomi Wolf's *Misconceptions* (2001), Anne Crittenden's *The Price of Motherhood* (2001), and Judith Warner's *Perfect Madness* (2005)—which led to hopes that a mothers' movement would grow, but it never took off.

Blades and Rowe-Finkbeiner realized that organizing mothers was of key importance to moving the United States toward becoming more family-friendly and by doing that help women take the final step toward equality. Blades knew better than perhaps anyone in the country how to use new technology and specifically the Internet to organize and mobilize ordinary citizens for political action—she and her husband founded the 3 million-strong online grassroots organization MoveOn in 1998. And she is a mother, one who was shocked, she tells, to find out how often mothers today hit invisible "maternal walls" (akin to "glass ceilings") of job and wage discrimination that impede their families' economic security. Rowe-Finkbeiner was less surprised by the scary statistics surrounding modern motherhood in the United States, having authored *The F Word: Feminism in Jeopardy—Women, Politics, and the Future* in 2004. She had also experienced first-hand some of the difficulties moms face such as the need for health care, parental leave, and other support following a child's birth.

Thus, they formed a team readied by knowledge, practice, and lived experience to move mothers and their allies to make social, political, and cultural change. Via house parties where people view a documentary version of *The Motherhood Manifesto* as well as email "outreaches" that can be passed along easily to other potential supporters, MomsRising.org started building a member list, which has grown to over 130,000. They also gathered eighty-five national and state organizations to become aligned with MomsRising. The aligned organizations represent a wide variety of groups including faith groups, child advocacy groups, unions, healthcare organizations, parenting groups, family advocacy groups, women's organizations, and mothers' organizations.

The MomsRising.org mission is summarized neatly by the acronym MOTHERS, in which M is for maternity and paternity leave, O for open, flexible work, T for technology and after-school programs, H for healthcare, E for excellent childcare, R for realistic and fair wages, and S for sick days for all. Once a person joins MomsRising.org, she or he can participate in working to make positive change in the MOTHERS areas in several ways. One is by taking the action called for in the email message each week (sometimes more often). Sometimes this involves signing a petition to support a piece of legislation, for

example the Healthy Families Act, the Fair Pay Restoration Act, or the Breastfeeding Promotion Act. Other times it involves actually visiting a Congressperson's local office or even participating in a campaign such as the popular "Power of ONEsie" display of decorated baby onesies in front of the Washington state capital to promote paid family leave. Members also send memorable e-cards to their friends to encourage them to join MomsRising, and they educate themselves by visiting the MomsRising.org web site, clicking on any of the MOTHERS topic tabs and the many other links therein, and reading and commenting on blog posts.

Can MOTHERS Build A New Bottom Line?

FOR MEMBERS OF THE TIKKUN COMMUNITY AND THE NETWORK OF SPIRITUAL Progressives, MomsRising.org is an organization of interest because it implicitly accepts the challenge of building a New Bottom Line and working for transformation in large institutions so that human beings can love their families and care for them. This entails legislative advocacy and consciousness-raising to prod work organizations to develop a sense of respect for their employees' non-worker/productive, non-material, non-individualistic selves. Indeed, MomsRising implicitly stands for the idea that no one should have to choose between the job they need and the family they love.

MomsRising's members, unfortunately, have shared numerous stories of job loss and demotions imposed on them by un-transformed organizations—when they needed, for example, a less rigid work schedule; acceptance of pregnancy on the job; the same, competitive wage others in comparable positions were receiving; or breastfeeding support, such as privacy to pump milk for a newborn. Members' messages conveying these stories usually end with a plea for help in changing the American workplace to embrace the less tangible needs of mothers (and every human being) for connecting, caring, reciprocity, and love.

It is quite possible that mothers are first to feel the harsh realities of the old bottom line. Mothers still do the second shift (most of the child care and family chores on top of their paycheck jobs) and feel the toll that overly greedy jobs, bosses, and organizations take on their families and themselves. And if mothers are still the primary caregivers in their families, does that not mean their little ones feel the crush too? Of course it does, and mothers know this. It is their voices (and those of their allies) that can help lead to a New Bottom Line—to what MomsRising calls a truly family-friendly America.

Devising workable policies in service of this aim lies at the heart of the MomsRising platform. It is nothing less than the seed of the idea of a new social contract—one that recognizes that the obligations felt by post-war corporations toward workers and communities and the middle class security they provided must be updated for an age when job losses and churn are accelerated and most mothers are in paid employment. As Rowe-Finkbeiner likes to point out, the United States has changed over the past several decades, but work/family policies have not: they are stuck in a 1950s mindset of wife-at-home with children; and many countries have outpaced the United States in adapting to 21st century realities.

This is one of the great challenges at this moment in U.S. history. Few Americans would be anything but grateful if the organizations in which they labor could help them realize synergy between their work and non-work lives. For those who find this mission compelling and urgent, MomsRising.org offers the opportunity to amplify their voices and place them at the center of the nation's political dialogue. A mom at home can become a naptime activist; a mom at work can become a lunchtime activist. Until now, it was nearly impossible for busy mothers to participate in our democracy with such intensity and impact. Their conversation in the MomsRising virtual kitchen has new power to move their issues and those of their families from the back burner to the front—even if mother is still a little tired. ■

Nanette Fondas has authored award-winning articles on the economics and sociology of work, family, and management; and taught at Harvard, Duke, and UC Berkeley. She recently joined the executive team of MomsRising.org.





The Moral Dimension of Sports

Are Baseball Owners' Investments Our Business?

How concerned should we be if the same people who invest in our "National Pastime" (above left) also invest in companies that are enabling the horrors of Darfur (top right)?

1. Patriotism at the Ballpark

by Peter Gabel

LAST MONTH I DROVE MY TWELVE-YEAR-OLD SON DOWN FROM SAN FRANCISCO to Los Angeles to attend Opening Day of the baseball season at Dodger Stadium. We're both Giants fans; we love going to games together; the Giants were kicking off the season against their great rivals, the Dodgers. But it turned out we were going to much more than a baseball game.

Prior to the game, as always, the crowd of some 50,000 was instructed to stand and remove our hats for the Star Spangled Banner. On this ceremonial Opening Day, however, the National Anthem was accompanied by the unfurling of a gigantic American flag that gradually covered the entire outfield. As an opponent of the war in Iraq and coercive patriotism, my son never wants to stand for the Anthem, and I've had to go through verbal contortions to persuade him that in spite of our common feelings about this matter, he should still stand in order to not appear to show contempt for others around us or at least to avoid being punched in the mouth, but that we could do so without standing at attention or putting our hats over our hearts, as is the custom of true believers.

But the giant flag was more morally compromising, and I was the one who snapped when at the height of the ceremony, three Navy jets, described as "bombers" over the public address system, flew overhead with a deafening roar. As I ran up the steps to the rear of the stands to escape with a shred of my conscience remaining, my son shouted "Dad!" and scurried after me not really knowing what panic had suddenly overcome me, the supposedly reasonable, balanced one with all the explanations. And our moral trial wasn't over: the whole thing happened all over again in the "seventh inning stretch" between the top and bottom halves of the inning, when the normal "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" was replaced by a glorious singing of "God Bless America" (since 9/11, this ritual substitution has occurred throughout the major leagues on weekends and on special occasions).

The Giants lost 5-0, but the idea was that at a higher level we had participated in a ritual that had reaffirmed our national unity. The point is the more telling when you consider that since the game was in Los Angeles, and even factoring in the self-selection of those who go to baseball games, more than half that crowd likely voted for Kerry, opposed the war, and felt confusedly pulled along by some iconic larger "We" that overpowered and more-than-half-silenced them.

The point here is that sports as a cultural phenomenon is much more than a game, and also more than a "business" as the media cynics sometimes characterize it—it is an important

public activity saturated with moral meaning that plays a role in shaping popular consciousness. And because sports is overlain with this moral dimension, progressives should insist that sports be a contested terrain from a moral standpoint rather than just ceding this cultural arena to the Right as the supposed political haven for winners and tough guys. We have already seen a positive example of this kind of progressive resistance in the worldwide demonstrations against the running of the Olympic torch prior to this summer's Olympic Games in Beijing, contesting China's claim to international legitimacy as the host of all of the world's sports teams by challenging its occupation of Tibet and its investments in Darfur.

But the same kind of moral struggle should be carried out across the sporting spectrum, including, for example, challenging the willingness of so many American sports teams to require their players to wear the Nike "swoosh" in spite of Nike's exploitation of international child labor, or allowing the noisy louts on Fox Sports Net's "The Best Damn Sports Show Period" to utter any sexist thoughts that come into their minds on national television. If sports are going to be wrapped in the American flag, let's challenge those who do so to also celebrate the positive accomplishments of American social movements and the progressive moral values by which these movements in part have redefined American identity. Major League Baseball's decision to spend the entire 2007 season honoring Jackie Robinson for his courage in risking his life and health to break baseball's color barrier in 1947 is an excellent example of just this kind of public linkage of sport with a commitment to social justice, and it contrasts sharply with baseball's normal fare of military spectacles glorifying how tough we are and how we can kick people's asses.

The article that follows shows how the moral dimension of sports plays out in the context of the investment practices of team owners—in this case, in the investment decisions of the owners of one of Tikkun's local baseball teams, the San Francisco Giants. At the present time, baseball ownership groups and the media who report on them conceive of team ownership as basically a form of private investment like any other, with owners having the right to manage their assets and pursue their own economic self-interest without regard to the moral and social consequences of their actions. But this self-interested and privatized view of the prerogatives of owners and investors overlooks the fact that sports teams have a public and civic relationship with the team's home city, with that city's culture and values, and with the tens of thousands of fans who provide the team with its revenue precisely because of this communal identification. And it's in significant part because of this communal dimension, because teams representing cities travel all around the country to play other teams representing cities (as opposed, say, to conceiving of the games as the Chevron owners vs. the Safeway owners) that baseball has become known as "The National Pastime." This quasi-public nature of the team is what accounts for the fact that Congress has taken upon itself to oversee and regulate baseball in ways that would be inconceivable in the case of most private businesses, recently criticizing both players and owners during televised public hearings regarding steroid use and other drug practices that, according to many members of Congress, undermine the integrity of the "National Pastime" and contradict the morally uplifting influence that baseball is supposed to have on each successive generation. Thus the very same public moral elements of the game that justify the National Anthem, the Navy jets, and other conservative patriotic rituals also provide the basis for an ongoing moral scrutiny by Congress that would be perceived in other corporate contexts as an intrusion on the individual rights of owners and players. ■



Opening Day at Fenway Park in Boston, MA, home of the defending World Series champion Red Sox. Patriotic American symbols dominated the ceremony, from a massive flag to the bomber jets' flyover. Since 9/11 such symbols have been increasingly intertwined with professional baseball.

Peter Gabel is Director of the Institute for Spirituality and Politics and Associate Editor of Tikkun.



In happier days Barry Bonds, seen carrying the Olympic Torch in 2002, was the face of the Giants, and MLB. Years of federal steroid investigations have produced questions regarding the legitimacy of his achievements, as well as criminal indictments on charges of perjury and obstruction. Besides an internal investigation led by a minority-owner, baseball's management and ownership groups have faced little scrutiny for their role in the "Steroid Era."

The Moral Dimension of Sports

2. The Case of the Giants

by Jack Ucciferri

IN APRIL OF 2007, STEVEN SPIELBERG WROTE AN OPEN LETTER URGING THE CHINESE Communist Party to take a leadership role in the negotiation of an end to the genocide in Darfur.

"I believe," Spielberg wrote, "there is no greater crime against humanity than genocide. I feel strongly that every member of the world community has a moral and ethical responsibility to act to prevent such crimes, to eliminate the conditions in which they are bred and to combat them wherever they exist."

China reacted by dispatching a high level envoy to urge the Sudanese leadership to accept an international peacekeeping force, but Chinese state-controlled companies continued to do business with the Sudanese government and the humanitarian crisis is as desperate as ever.

And so, ten months after writing that letter, Spielberg made international headlines and drew the ire of the Chinese government by resigning his post as artistic advisor to the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, writing a statement sent to the Chinese ambassador that his "conscience will not allow me to continue with business as usual."

Conscience—the complex of ethical and moral principles that control, inhibit, or guide actions—is again becoming a legitimate factor in economic decisions. Our society's collective conscience knows that business as usual is not good enough when business as usual means supporting genocide.

The Darfur divestment movement is the latest chapter of a decades-long movement to inject some minimal humanitarian standards into the international capital markets. As the genocide in Darfur, Sudan rages on, targeted divestment from companies whose operations support violent conditions in the Sudan region has emerged as one of the key strategies of peace advocates.

The Sudan divestment movement—a coalition of committed celebrities, students, investors, and religious groups—has successfully lobbied a broad range of investors to avoid investing in a small group of extremely problematic companies, most of which are Chinese owned.

Theoretically, capital markets exist to efficiently allocate investment resources, but efficiency in this context is a dynamic notion. A business practice that exploits stakeholders or the environment is calculated as efficient—and rewarded accordingly in the capital markets—until opposition to the practice raises the associated costs and renders them inefficient. Cultural resistance to bad corporate behavior directly impacts the pricing of corporate securities.

By urging (or shaming) prominent investors into divesting from certain companies, activists leverage the power of capital markets to send a message that doing business with certain egregious companies will come at a social cost. Through loss of customers and business partnerships, through negative media attention, rising cost of capital, potential litigation, and the prospect of stricter regulations, the costs of being linked to culturally unacceptable business practices often translate into significant impacts on a company's bottom line. Capital markets can be and should be harnessed to achieve beneficial results for humanity. Social license to operate is—and should be—a requisite consideration in the strategic planning that corporate boards of directors have the fiduciary duty to undertake.

The most prominent historical example of a successful divestiture campaign was the campaign to divest from international companies operating in South Africa during the apartheid era. That campaign pursued a strategy of methodically altering the cultural landscape related to apartheid and thereby altered the risk calculation of investing and doing business there. Though it took many years to gain traction among large investors, as soon as institutional U.S. investors began to withdraw financial backing from companies operating there, major corporations perceived that their social license was at stake and they *(continued on page 73)*

On the very real possibility of Transformational Change

by Marjorie Kelly

FOREBODING IS IN THE CULTURAL WIND THESE DAYS. LEONARDO DiCaprio tells us the ecological crisis has brought humanity to *The 11th Hour*, esteemed biologist E.O. Wilson issues *An Appeal to Save Life on Earth* in the subtitle to his book *The Creation*, while Cormac McCarthy garners a 2007 Pulitzer Prize for his novel *The Road*, depicting the chilling specter of life after a nuclear war, where a father and his emaciated son fight off cannibals as they make their way across a charred landscape. Meanwhile, Christians by the millions read about coming end times in the *Left Behind* series. And on “Coast to Coast AM”—the most popular nighttime radio program, carried by 500 stations and the XM Satellite Radio network—an increasing amount of programming is devoted to the signs and wonders (UFO sightings, disappearing honeybees) thought to foreshadow the end of civilization in 2012, prophesied by the ancient Mayan calendar.

Many have lost hope. I had a long talk about this recently with my twenty-nine-year-old nephew, Dimitri, a Ph.D. student in political science. Like others, he holds the deep conviction that damage to the biosphere is irreversible, that there is no chance of turning aside from catastrophe. In his future work, he told me, “I’m going to document the demise of our civilization.” There was no humor in his voice when he said this, as we huddled together over coffee at a gathering for a family wedding, his wife Cody beside him, seven months pregnant.

“When were you born?” I asked him. “1979,” he said.

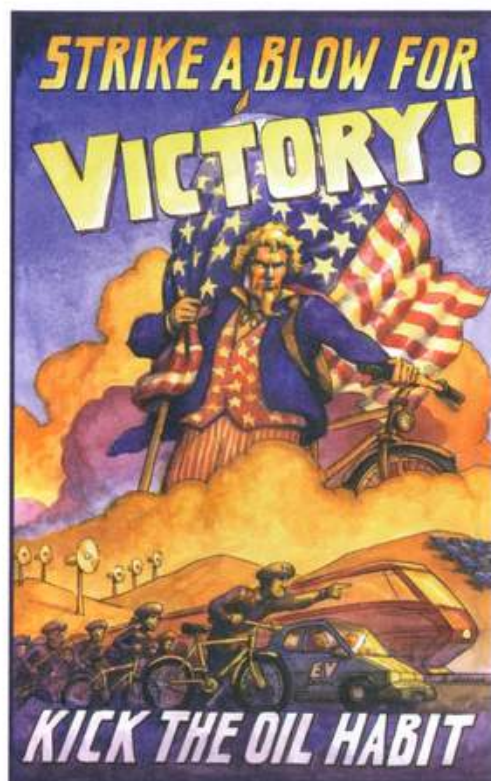
It struck me that Dimitri had grown up in the era of 1984—the title of George Orwell’s dystopian novel—for he had come to adulthood in a political milieu defined by doublespeak: where politicians talk about clear skies and compassionate conservatism, while increasing pollution of the skies and removing any trace of compassion from government policies. From the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 until now, Dimitri’s world has been shaped by a virtually unbroken conservative hegemony. He has never known any other culture.

It has been an era of deep denial about global warming, the end of the petroleum age, and growing wealth inequalities—an era, not incidentally, when former oil men have occupied the White House. As their time draws to a close, the shield of cultural denial they’ve held in place is beginning to crack, as the reality of our ecological dilemma penetrates.

Something is dying. We sense this: it is in the looming feeling of foreboding. But many do not yet accept the possibility that something is also being born.

Make no mistake about it: trouble lies ahead—likely big trouble, in the form of rising seas, unprecedented species extinction, a painful withdrawal from increasingly scarce and expensive fossil fuels, a greater frequency of droughts and hurricanes, and perhaps a prolonged economic downturn as icing on the calamitous cake. We’re not getting off scot-free here. We’re like a nation of alcoholics, gambling addicts, and compulsive over-eaters, confronting the need to give up excessive consumerism, casino-like financial returns, and gluttonous fossil fuel use. We may have to bottom out before we sober up. Change tends to happen only when things go terribly wrong.

Things do seem to be careening in that direction. Experts predict that oil production will





Imagine the current world economy—already in ecological overshoot—multiplied by four. Now picture the impact on the biosphere. Things are going to get worse before they get better.

The Other Side of Calamity

BUT OUR ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT CANNOT GROW INDEFINITELY. AT SOME POINT WE EITHER snuff ourselves out. Or we sober up.

That's the question I wish to take up here: What lies on the other side of calamity? Is it the complete and utter collapse of civilized life as we know it? Or might it be transformation of the most profound and hopeful kind?

This was the unspoken question that hung over a class I taught in January, at Schumacher College in England, titled "Can the Earth Survive Capitalism?" I began the class by talking about what's wrong with the current design of capitalism, and planned to move next into solutions. But I found the class wasn't ready for that next step. Their minds were on "collapse." That was the word I heard casually bandied about in hallways and over dinner, as I came to realize that many of these students—schooled as they were in deep ecology—were convinced that what lay ahead was ecological collapse, after which, they thought, we would regenerate our civilization at the village level.

A number of students were from Totnes, where Schumacher College is located, which was the first in what is now a movement of "Transition Towns," where the community is preparing for a carbon-constrained future by creating an Energy Descent Action Plan. Local change excited these students. They seemed to subconsciously imagine that the larger economic system—corporations, the stock market, banks—would somehow implode and be vaporized.

"There are two worldviews in this room," I said to them, as I set aside my lesson plan and opened up an hour for unplanned discussion. "I think it's important we put them on the table." One is the view of total social collapse. The other is a view of transformation—not the advent of utopia, but a kind of muddling through to a new economy that arises out of the one we have. "You don't want to think about total collapse," I said. "If it comes, we won't be tending our community gardens, we'll be dealing with a new form of fascism."

It's transformation I'd like to argue for here, as I did in that classroom—though I want to emphasize I don't see it as some kind of inevitable destiny. If we delude ourselves that our desired future will waft toward us, as on some favorable breeze, we'll still be waiting when the rising seas claim the ground beneath our feet. Nor would I argue that transformation is our likely future. It's highly unlikely, if we let capitalism grind along in its relentless way. I wouldn't even argue that this transformation has begun, nor would I say its spread is inevitable.

What I am saying is that transformation is possible.

I will add that it would be an achievement against the odds, not unlike the American Revolution, where a tiny band of revolutionaries took on the most powerful empire on the planet, and won.

We can work a profound transformation in our economy. But here's the trick: winning this one won't be about defeating some enemy. Would that it were that simple. No, our challenge is to take on ourselves, our own entrenched habits, and our deepest ways of conceptualizing



We did it once, we can do it again. Conservation posters from World War II.

our place in the world and the nature of the human project.

What is in the offing is a massive cultural turning, global in scale and unprecedented in its swiftness, which will likely begin by tackling climate change and then radiate into every nerve and sinew of industrial society—overturning long-settled economic ideas about the nature of human motivation, the definition of wealth, and the meaning of success. Major economic institutions must also be redesigned at their core.

If it's hard for Dimitri's generation to imagine that this kind of cultural turning is possible, it may be because they've yet to live through anything like it. But large-scale turnings are something their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents have known something about. When Dimitri's mom and I were young, a black person in the South could not sit down at a Woolworth's lunch counter and order a grilled cheese sandwich. High school girls were denied athletic teams, and were not permitted even to wear slacks to school until my senior year. People smoked on airplanes.

Dimitri's grandparents in World War II saw industry convert overnight to wartime production, with families saving toothpaste tubes and aluminum foil for airplane factories. His great-grandparents saw deeper transformation in World War I, with the collapse of monarchy. In a stunningly short ten years, 1908 to 1918, revolutions swept the Ottoman Empire, China, Russia, and Europe, until by the end of the Great War crowns were rolling in the streets.

From today's vantage point, it's tempting to look back and see these changes as inevitable, or easy. But at the time they seemed impossible. Just as impossible as change seems today.

Many Futures Remain Possible

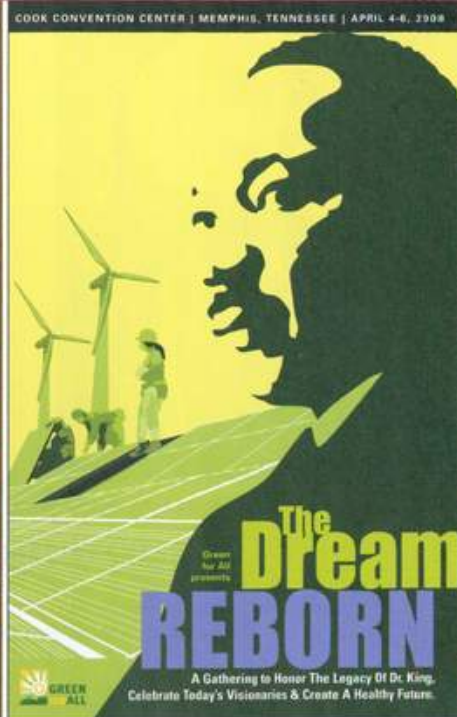
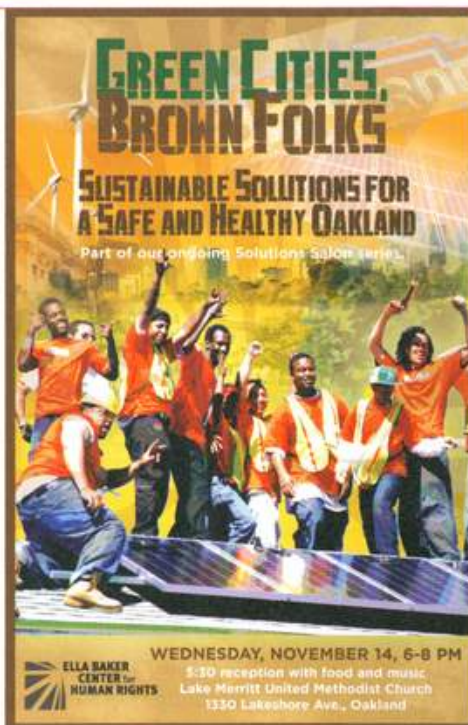
THAT SYSTEMS CAN TRANSFORM IN DEEP AND LASTING WAYS—WITHOUT DESTROYING themselves—is a lesson we can take from history. To understand why and how this kind of change happens, we can look to systems theory, which offers insights useful to our situation today.

Large-scale systems change is the focus of my colleagues at the Tellus Institute, a Boston think tank founded thirty years ago by physicists and scientists, where the three co-founders—all in their sixties—have taken on a final collective project of charting a plausible course for a "Great Transition" into a culture of sustainability and equity. This focus grew out of scenario planning the institute undertook in the mid-1990s, when it convened an international group of scientists and development professionals to explore alternative global futures. The scenarios and their quantitative models have been used by groups like the United Nations Environment Programme, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The premise of this work is that massive change is inevitably coming in the years ahead, but the outcome is not foreordained. The Tellus framework outlines four broad possible future paths.

In a **Market Forces scenario**, current trends in resource use continue to increase through 2050, as other nations converge toward American lifestyles. With population rising and economic output quadrupling, the strain on ecosystems becomes unbearably severe. By 2050, carbon emissions soar well beyond safe ranges, and the result is runaway climate change and a radically damaged biosphere.

In a **Policy Reform scenario**, government emerges as a powerful actor, embracing ambitious policies to reduce energy use, carbon emissions, hunger, and income inequity. Problems



(left) *The Green Jobs Corps—a collaboration among community-based organizations, unions, the City of Oakland, CA and private companies. It will provide local Oakland residents with job training, support, and work experience so that they can independently pursue careers in the new energy economy.*
(right) *On April 4-6 2008, the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, over 1000 people came together in Memphis, Tennessee to celebrate Dr. King's extraordinary life, and present ecological solutions to heal the earth while bringing jobs, justice, wealth and health to all our communities.*

are solved by government fiat. Yet given the likely resistance of corporate lobbyists, it's hard to imagine this occurring without massive citizen demand, which can only arise from broader cultural awareness. Policy reform in the absence of cultural transformation likely is a fantasy.

A **Fortress World scenario** envisions that reform fails and problems cascade into self-amplifying crises. Environmental conditions deteriorate, combining with food insecurity and emergent diseases to foster a health crisis. The affluent live in protected enclaves amid oceans of misery. With governmental priorities focused on security, draconian police measures sweep through hot spots of conflict. This is the plausible future of our foreboding.

The future we have yet to focus on is that of a **Great Transition**. Here we may be prodded initially by higher fuel prices and carbon constraints, but ultimately we embrace traveling less, consuming less, living in smaller houses—not with a sense of deprivation, but because we recognize that quality of life matters more than quantity of stuff. Conspicuous consumption is seen as a vulgar throwback to a coarser time. With the ecological crisis deepening our sense of connection, there is recognition of the need to guarantee a decent minimum for all. This is the source of the massive citizen demand that alone can drive both governments and markets to adequate measures and innovations.

The first two scenarios—business as usual and policy reform—represent the status quo and incremental change from the status quo. Both are transitional states, for neither is plausible as a stable future. In the long run, we face a choice between two worlds: collapse or transformation.

There's a knife-edge phenomenon at work, where we can be pitched into one of two profoundly different worlds, as the result of tipping points. Today we talk about negative tipping points, like the melting of the Greenland ice sheet. We need to also understand positive tipping points. And that brings us to systems science.

Systems Science and Transformation

SYSTEMS THINKING LOOKS AT A VARIETY OF NATURAL SYSTEMS—FROM ORGANISMS AND ecosystems to social systems—and sees them as open systems in a steady state. They are “open” in that they require constant throughput of energies, substances, and information. They maintain a steady state by self-repair of their internal structures. These internal structures are not fixed, like a clockwork mechanism, but are self-organizing. Thus when conditions outside a system change substantially, the system survives through self-transformation. It makes a sudden, creative advance into novelty.

Fundamental transformation is not only possible, *it is the routine way natural systems evolve*. Radical change is as common as grass in world history, because it is as common as grass in the life of all living systems.

But here's the critical point: What unlocks social transformation is a shift in values, because values are at the core of a self-organizing human system. To value something is to care about it deeply, making it the True North of our internal guidance system. Values give meaning to human action and legitimacy to institutions, for they define what is good, true, and beautiful. As such they direct human action. We do not simply maximize our individual economic outcomes as the economist's “rational actor” model would have us believe: we do pursue our interests, but that depends on what we think our interests are, which is a matter of values and social norms.

We can detect the beginning of a values shift in the unnamed spiritual hunger felt by many today. As capitalism threatens the life of the planet, so too does it threaten the life of the human spirit. For many people, the endless cycle of work and consumption leaves them feeling dead inside, unsatisfied, alienated from what really matters. In *The Left Hand of God*, Michael Lerner writes of the interviews he and his colleagues did at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, finding among middle Americans a pervasive sense that their deepest life energies are being depleted, that life is filled with meaningless activity, that they are going through motions imposed on them by outside forces. The interviews speak of a hunger for something more—for work that contributes to a larger good, for lives of purpose and meaning.

(continued on page 74)



In this article, Marjorie Kelly assures her nephew Dimitri that this can be a hopeful time of transformation in which to raise his daughter, Mariana, pictured above in his arms.

Integral Politics

and the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture

by Steve McIntosh

I HAVE ALWAYS IDENTIFIED MYSELF AS A "SPIRITUAL PROGRESSIVE," but I think it is possible to be both "spiritual" and "progressive" while continuing to cherish the economic and personal freedoms that are an indelible part of America's "capitalist" system. Nevertheless, I appreciate the sentiments and concerns being expressed by Rabbi Michael Lerner and other writers for *Tikkun* Magazine. At the same time, I'm also disappointed by the relative failure of progressive politics to make much of a positive difference in America during this decade. As I've thought about what can be done to improve the "political condition" of our country, I've come to see how every problem in the world is, at least in part, a *problem of consciousness*—a result of worldviews that are no longer adequate to the challenges of our time. So it follows that the solution to almost every problem involves the *raising of consciousness*. And by following this insight about consciousness, I have come to appreciate how the newly emerging "integral perspective" is our best hope for raising consciousness in America.

The integral perspective recognizes that consciousness evolves through a series of distinct worldviews, each of which results in new perspectives, new concerns, and new values. These worldview stages have been carefully mapped through the empirical research of developmental psychologists such as Robert Kegan and Lawrence Kohlberg, as well as through the research of sociologists such as Ronald Inglehart and Paul Ray. This research confirms that the American political milieu can no longer be accurately characterized as only a simple left-right continuum. Rather, our national political landscape can also be understood as a three-way struggle between the historically significant worldviews identified as traditionalism, modernism, and what is coming to be known in integral parlance as *postmodernism*.

The word "postmodern" is, of course, a battleground of meaning. But even though it has been used to describe discrete subsets of culture, such as art movements or critical academic theory, integral thinkers use this term as an overall description of the distinct worldview that has arisen in the last fifty years as an alternative to the stale materialistic values of modernism and the chauvinistic and oppressive values of traditionalism. This large demographic group (comprising approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population) is also known as the "cultural creatives," the "post-materialists," and the "green meme." Although there is as yet no clear agreement on terms, the "postmodern" label is becoming the most widely used



TRADITIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

PERCEIVED LIFE CONDITIONS: an "evil" world in need of law and order; a suffering world where God's law should reign supreme

WORLDVIEW AND VALUES:

- sacrifice self for the group's transcendent purpose
- a "black and white" sense of right and wrong
- loyalty to the rules of the mythic order
- salvation through obedience and faith

CONTRIBUTION TO THE CULTURE: sense of civic duty; law and order; respect for authority; strong moral regard for group members; preserves traditions; loyalty; hope, and a strong sense of faith

PATHOLOGIES: rigid intolerance; dogmatic fanaticism; prejudice; fundamentalism; chauvinism

CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES: followers of traditional religions; patriotic nationalism; conservative ideologies; military organizations

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES:

feudalism; dictatorships; bureaucracy; command and control organizations

EXEMPLARY LEADERS:

Winston Churchill; Pope John Paul II; Billy Graham

ESTIMATED PERCENT OF WORLD POPULATION: 55%

ESTIMATED PERCENT OF WEALTH & POLITICAL POWER: 25%

TECHNO-ECONOMIC MODE OF PRODUCTION:

agrarian; trading; maritime

KEY TECHNOLOGIES:

writing; law; centralized political authority; the wheel; spiritual practices and rituals

TYPE OF MEDICINE:

traditional medicine; folk medicine; faith healing

THE TRUE:

scripture of the mythic order

THE BEAUTIFUL:

children and family; art approved by a rightful authority representing the wholesome themes of "the One True Way," country music; gospel music

THE GOOD:

God's will; the eightfold path; the flow of the Tao; the rules of the mythic order

AVERAGE NEUROLOGICAL ACTIVATION: increased neocortical activity with continuing influence of the limbic system

TRANSITION TRIGGERS: higher education; cognitive dissonance caused by scriptural contradictions; the power of science; poverty; allures of modernism

OTHER NAMES FOR THIS STAGE: conformist consciousness; mythical consciousness; absolutistic thinking; concrete operational; blue meme

MODERNIST CONSCIOUSNESS

PERCEIVED LIFE CONDITIONS: opportunities for a better standard of living and improved social position for the individual; need to escape oppressive dogmatic systems; need to demystify material world

WORLDVIEW AND VALUES:

- achieve wealth, status, and "the good life"
- progress through science, technology and the "best" solution
- winning, competition, and striving for excellence
- individual autonomy and independence—liberty

CONTRIBUTION TO THE CULTURE: meritocracy; upward mobility; the middle class; excellence through competition; science; technology; confidence in progress

PATHOLOGIES: materialism; nihilism; exploitive; unscrupulous; selfish; greedy

CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES: corporate culture; modern science; mainstream media; professional sports

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES: democratic capitalism; corporations; strategic alliances

EXEMPLARY LEADERS: John F. Kennedy; Bill Gates; Margaret Sanger; Carl Sagan; Isaac Newton

ESTIMATED PERCENT OF WORLD POPULATION: 15%

ESTIMATED PERCENT OF WEALTH & POLITICAL POWER: 60%

TECHNO-ECONOMIC MODE OF PRODUCTION: industrial economy

KEY TECHNOLOGIES:

scientific method; advanced mathematics; reason; logic; industrial technologies; transportation technologies; communication technologies

TYPE OF MEDICINE: scientific and allopathic medicine

THE TRUE: objective truth; reason; that which can be materially proved

THE BEAUTIFUL: fashionable symbols of power and prestige; glamour; classical music; jazz music

THE GOOD: progress; liberty; material wealth; status; opportunity; higher education; "the good life"

AVERAGE NEUROLOGICAL ACTIVATION: left brain dominated

TRANSITION TRIGGERS:

spiritual experience; dissatisfaction with possessions; feelings of emptiness; guilt; allures of counter culture

OTHER NAMES FOR THIS STAGE: achievement consciousness; mental consciousness; strategic thinking; formal operational; orange meme

because it describes well the antithetical relationship between much of this worldview and modernist and traditionalist culture.

The postmodern stage of culture has already made significant progress in the fight for human rights, through the progress it has made in raising our society's concern for the environment, and in the way that American culture has now become more tolerant of alternative lifestyles and more conscious of the values of spiritual pluralism. Although there is obviously much more work to be done in these areas, when we compare our current national culture to the state of American culture in the 1950s, it appears that evolution has been achieved through the rise of the postmodern worldview. And this worldview is continuing to actively develop and persuade people about the importance of its issues and concerns. Yet there are also signs that this worldview is no longer showing the same creative vitality and dynamism that characterized its emergence in the 1960s and 1970s. As we come to appreciate the way culture actually evolves, we can see that it is unlikely that the majority of Americans will experience a "great awakening" and adopt the postmodern worldview anytime soon. Although postmodern ranks are growing, at this rate it may take generations before the majority of the American body politic becomes conscious enough to effectively deal with our environmental crisis and elect leaders who will conduct a more moral foreign policy. And just scolding people, just admonishing them to care more and be more responsible is not going to produce the results we need. The pace at which our global problems are increasingly becoming "more local" requires that spiritual progressives find a way to become more effective at raising consciousness.

The Integral Stage of Culture

ALTHOUGH THE HEALTHY VERSION OF THE POSTMODERN WORLDVIEW REPRESENTS THE most evolved form of culture that has yet to appear, postmodernism is not the end of history. So as we come to see signs of postmodernism's consolidation, as we recognize both the successes and failures of postmodernism, we can begin to discern how the next stage of cultural development is likely to appear. Integral thinkers contend that the next significant worldview to emerge along the timeline of human history will be something very much like the distinctive new worldview now being enacted by integral philosophy.

Integral values include an enhanced sense of personal responsibility for the problems of the world, new insight into the developmental nature of the "internal universe of consciousness and culture," and an enlarged appreciation of conflicting truths and dialectical reasoning. People who have gained an integral perspective appreciate the problem-solving potential of evolutionary philosophy, and they aspire to harmonize science and spirituality. And perhaps most importantly, the integral worldview provides the ability to more effectively use the values of all previous stages of development. This emerging understanding, known as "integral consciousness," thus strives to achieve new cultural evolution through its enlarged ability to evaluate and discern that which is beautiful, true, and good.

Unlike the worldviews of traditionalism, modernism, and postmodernism, which tend to see each other primarily for their pathologies, the integral worldview can more clearly see both the good and the bad of each worldview in proper proportion. The integral perspective thus recognizes that each one of these worldviews has made (and is continuing to make) indispensable contributions to the structure and function of our society. And this increased sense of sympathetic solidarity and empathy for the healthy values of every worldview allows integral thinkers to better distinguish and tease apart the pathological aspects of traditionalism and modernism (as well as postmodernism) from the foundational and enduring values of these worldviews—values which we must retain and use in our efforts to build higher levels of civilization.

History shows that modern and postmodern culture cannot be sustained unless the enduring contributions of earlier levels of social development are in place and functioning. For example, without a stable base of traditional culture, attempts to develop functional forms of modernist culture often collapse back into the chaos of pre-traditional social structures as a result of corruption and conflicts between rival groups. And just as healthy

forms of traditional culture are a precondition for the establishment of the cultural structures of modernism, healthy forms of modernist culture are likewise prerequisite for the successful establishment of postmodern culture. Although we are now confronted with the global problems created by modernism's inherent limitations, such as global warming and environmental degradation, unduly aggressive foreign policies, and the excessive materialism seen in much of the developed world, the postmodern consciousness that is generally required to recognize, criticize, and address these problems is itself predicated on the underlying and ongoing successes of modernism. That is, the majority of spiritual progressives have achieved their worldcentric perspectives as a result of having benefited from the prosperity and educational opportunities that come from living in the developed world. Most postmodernists are insulated from life-threatening violence, and most do not have to worry about how they are going to feed their children. And this freedom from the pressing threats to survival and security that affect so many in the developing world is generally necessary for the development and maintenance of worldcentric forms of morality among politically significant portions of a population.

Thus, from an integral perspective, the values and social structures of traditionalism, modernism, and postmodernism must work together as a kind of "cultural ecosystem" wherein each stage continues to contribute its enduring and foundational values, and wherein the pathologies and negative evolutionary scaffolding of these stages are subject to continuous pruning and moderation. Moreover, "the battle begins anew with every birth"—the research confirms that children generally pass through these developmental stages as they grow up. So just as the perspectives and capacities of these older worldviews are necessary for the continuing functionality of our society as a whole, the ongoing viability of these cultural structures is also necessary for the healthy development of each individual as they grow up from childhood.

The integral worldview's evolutionary perspective on values yields a new understanding of what might be called the "physics" of the internal universe of consciousness and culture. And through this deeper understanding of how dynamic systems of agreement are formed within a culture, we come to see why postmodernism is not more successful politically.

In summary, the integral perspective is a worldview that transcends but also includes the values of postmodernism. The integral worldview carries forward all the essential principles and sensibilities of the postmodern worldview while simultaneously integrating the best of postmodernism together with the foundational values of the pre-traditional, traditional, and modernist worldviews. The integral worldview thus achieves its evolutionary advance through an integration and harmonization of all previously existing worldviews within a new and inclusive light. Indeed, the whole point of integral consciousness is to move beyond the idea of "old paradigm bad, new paradigm good." This is not to say that integral thinkers value every worldview equally; they readily see that postmodernism is generally more evolved than any previous worldview, but they can also see where postmodernism is not evolved enough to effectively deal with the growing global problems that are here today.

How Integral Consciousness Can Achieve Political Evolution

SPIRITUAL PROGRESSIVES ARE KEENLY AWARE OF THE FACT THAT MUCH OF THE postmodern political agenda is effectively trumped at the national level by the approximately 30 percent of America that has a center of gravity at the traditional stage of consciousness. And ironically, it is the rise of postmodernism that has produced the culture war and provided the very life conditions that have politically empowered the religious right.

Yet from an integral perspective we can see that when we fight the culture war we only strengthen the more regressive segments of these older cultural structures. The more we condemn the "value poverty" of traditionalism and modernism, the more we push people into their corners, feeding into the fears that give rise to each stage's particular kind of orthodoxy. And as the orthodox segments of each worldview become more powerful, this makes positive progress more and more difficult.

The cultural structures of postmodernism originally gained energy and power in the

POSTMODERN CONSCIOUSNESS

PERCEIVED LIFE CONDITIONS: presence of exploitation; corrupt hierarchy; environmental degradation; shallow materialism; suffering of others

WORLDVIEW AND VALUES:

- inclusion of those previously marginalized or exploited
- consensus decision making and egalitarianism
- environmentalism and preference for "natural"
- multiculturalism and spiritual diversity
- personal growth of the "whole person"
- sensitivity

CONTRIBUTION TO THE CULTURE: worldcentric morality; recognition of human potential; increased responsibility for people and the planet; compassion and inclusion; celebration of the feminine; renewed spiritual freedom and creativity

PATHOLOGIES: value relativism; narcissism; denial of hierarchy; contempt for modernism and traditionalism

CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES: progressive culture; critical academia; environmental movement; political correctness; the Netherlands

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES: democratic socialism; consensus committees; self-directed teams

EXEMPLARY LEADERS: John Lennon; John Muir; Martin Luther King Jr.; Margaret Mead; Joan Baez; Allen Ginsberg

ESTIMATED PERCENT OF WORLD POPULATION: <5%

ESTIMATED PERCENT OF WEALTH & POLITICAL POWER: 10%

TECHNO-ECONOMIC MODE OF PRODUCTION: informational economy

KEY TECHNOLOGIES:

non-violent resistance; postmodern music, art and poetry; constructivist critique;entheogens; spiritual practices

TYPE OF MEDICINE:

holistic—scientific, traditional, naturopathic, homeopathic, herbal, shamanic, psychological

THE TRUE:

subjective truth; whatever is true for you

THE BEAUTIFUL:

nature; modern art; tribal art; new age music; 60's music; psychedelia

THE GOOD:

sustainability; that which is best for all the people and the planet

AVERAGE NEUROLOGICAL ACTIVATION: right brain dominated

TRANSITION TRIGGERS:

dissatisfaction with seeking; failure of alternative culture to provide cures or answers; growing "expense" of rights and entitlements; desire for greater results; allures of integral solutions

OTHER NAMES FOR THIS STAGE:

affiliative consciousness; pluralistic consciousness; holistic thinking; postformal; consensus; green meme

INTEGRAL CONSCIOUSNESS

PERCEIVED LIFE CONDITIONS: conflict between at least 3 previous stages; looming global problems; failure of postmodernism to offer realistic solutions

WORLDVIEW AND VALUES:

- new insight into the "internal universe"
- confidence in potential of evolutionary philosophy
- personal responsibility for the problems of the world
- renewed appreciation of previous stages' values
- appreciation of conflicting truth and dialectical evaluation
- aspiration for the harmonization of science & religion

CONTRIBUTION TO THE CULTURE: practical world-centric morality; compassion for all worldviews; revival of philosophy; seeing spirituality in evolution; overcoming the culture war; renewed insistence on achieving results

PATHOLOGIES: elitist; insensitive; aloof; lack of patience

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: world Federalism; any structure appropriate for given life conditions (orgs. from any of the previous levels)

EXEMPLARY LEADERS: Albert Einstein; Teilhard de Chardin; Alfred North Whitehead; Ken Wilber

ESTIMATED PERCENT OF WORLD POPULATION: <1%

ESTIMATED PERCENT OF WEALTH & POLITICAL POWER: <1%

TECHNO-ECONOMIC MODE OF PRODUCTION: global systems economy

KEY TECHNOLOGIES: dialectical evaluation; spiral analysis; systems science; spiritual practice

TYPE OF MEDICINE: integral—scientific, holistic, plus emerging spiritual and subtle energy medicine

THE TRUE: harmonization of science and spirituality; the evolutionary significance of values

THE BEAUTIFUL: nature; the arts of each level in their emergent phase; the unification of extreme contrasts

THE GOOD: evolution; the prime directive

AVERAGE NEUROLOGICAL ACTIVATION: increasing integration of right and left brain hemispheres

TRANSITION TRIGGERS: need for a greater sense of community; spiritual experience; allures of postintegral culture

OTHER NAMES FOR THIS STAGE: authentic consciousness; systems thinking; autonomous; self-actualized; yellow meme

1960s and 1970s by pushing off against the problems of the modernist-traditionalist establishment. Postmodernists seized the ground of antithesis and used this stance to build alternative forms of culture that continue to serve us today. However, the indelible imprint of cultural antithesis that characterizes postmodernism at a deep level has now become a significant hindrance to further progress.

Rabbi Lerner has written that: "To succeed, the antiwar movement needs to change from a movement that is 'against' to a movement that has a positive vision of what it is actually for." Moreover, Rabbi Lerner acknowledges some of the positive progress that has been achieved by modernism. Yet the progressive politics championed by many writers for *Tikkun Magazine* continue to be colored by a polarizing rejection of many of the core values held by modernists and traditionalists. And it is this kind of polarizing separation that continues to fuel the culture war and prevent progressives from achieving more widespread agreement for the important social and environmental outcomes they care about. Therefore, in order to become more effective at raising the consciousness of the American body politic overall, progressives would do well to relinquish their grip on postmodernism's "identity of antithesis" and show greater respect for our modernist and traditionalist cultural heritage. This is not to suggest that the integral worldview is seeking a middling compromise with the right—integralists are not "Machiavellian realists." Rather, the integral perspective strives for a new synthesis that transcends and includes the best of what has come before.

Integral thinkers recognize how each worldview's enduring and healthy values are closely woven together with their pathologies. And in order to tease apart the dignities from the disasters we have to "get in close" so as to better appreciate, and even identify with the positive values of these older worldviews and make them our own. It is this ability to get in close to the healthy values of every worldview that distinguishes the integral worldview and empowers it to produce cultural evolution. In fact, this ability to better integrate diverse values is actually a new epistemological capacity. Just as modernism brought an enhanced *cognitive* capacity for reason and logic, and just as postmodernism brought an enhanced *emotional* capacity for compassion for the disadvantaged and oppressed, the integral worldview provides an *enhanced volitional capacity* to "metabolize" a wider spectrum of values. This emergent capacity, known as dialectical evaluation, or what Ken Wilber calls "vision logic," is able to effectively synthesize and integrate the enduring and foundational values of every worldview. And it is by better appreciating and embodying the values of each worldview that we will find new powers to persuade a significant portion of Americans to adopt a more progressive politics.

If we want to make political progress in America, if we want to see our elected leaders adopt more worldcentric and environmentally conscious policies, the integral perspective indicates that we need to start by raising consciousness at the traditional level, and thereby help everyone to move up from where they are. But we can't expect the majority of people with traditional centers of gravity to simply change their minds and become postmodern; in general, the next step for them is modernism. The healthy values of modernism serve as an important bridge between the patriarchal values of traditionalism and the postmodern values of feminism, multiculturalism, and environmentalism. So as I'll now explain, it is by helping a portion of those with a *postmodern* center of gravity to move up to an *integral* center of gravity that we can make the most progress at getting a portion of those with a *traditional* center of gravity to move up to the modernist stage.

The dynamics of our culture's internal ecosystem show us that stages become ripe for transition when they are most successful—when they deliver the successes, and the corresponding problems created by those successes, that are generally required for the emergence of the next stage. We can see this in history in the way that modernism originally arose after the reformation of Christianity in the Protestant countries where traditional culture had become most successful. And we can also see this in the way that large blocks of postmodern culture have only emerged where modernism has become well established. So if we want people to move up, history tells us that the best way to make that possible is to help the stage they're at to become successful enough to serve as a platform for its own transcendence.

Therefore, the way to raise consciousness within the American (continued on page 76)

The Jews Who Wrote in Arabic

A suggestion that may bear fruit in twenty years

by Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

IT STRIKES ME HOW LITTLE AWARENESS THERE IS AMONG MANY MUSLIMS AND JEWS OF THE TREASURES that we share. This is especially true of issues concerning what Muslims term *Tawhid*, or pure monotheistic theology, and concerning the inner work of transformation, what they call the Greater Jihad, and we call *Tikkun Hammidot*. There has been some terrible propaganda by Islamists on the web: based on misunderstood words in the Qur'an, propagandists have been comparing Jews and Christians to apes and pigs. But the many Muslims who reject such slanders may also not be aware of how much we, Muslims and Jews, have learned from and given to each other in the past.

There exists an entire literature in Judeo-Arabic. Many people have no idea that some of the greatest Jewish writers wrote in Arabic and Judeo-Arabic, were greatly influenced by Muslim thinkers and influenced them in turn. Rabbi Bachya ben Joseph ibn Paquda authored the first Jewish system of ethics, in the year 1040—in Arabic. His *Al Hidayah ila Faraid al-Kulub* was not translated into Hebrew until more than a century had passed, under the title *Hovot Halevavot* (*Instruction in the Duties of the Heart*). He shared significant ideas in that book with Muslim thinkers of the time such as the great Al-Ghazali, and there are different theories about whether Bachya influenced Al-Ghazali or the other way round. In the twelfth century Maimonides produced one of the great philosophic statements of Judaism, the *Guide To The Perplexed*. It is still influential today. Again, it was written in Judeo-Arabic.

"Judeo-Arabic" refers to several Arabic dialects spoken by Jews in Islamic countries and written in Hebrew script. It is still spoken in some places today. The medieval works in Judeo-Arabic were closer to standard Arabic than were later works. Maimonides himself wrote some of his works in standard Arabic and some in Judeo-Arabic, depending on his desired audience.

I have copies of *Duties Of The Heart* and *Guide For The Perplexed* with the Hebrew text in one column and the Judeo-Arabic in the other. Thinking of the way in which Jews have been characterized in Islamist broadcasts and literature as apes and pigs, I felt that it would be of great import if we could make these and other classic volumes available in Arabic script.

I envisage a project in which we would scan Judeo-Arabic works into a computer, and create a program to transliterate the scanned material from Hebrew fonts into Arabic. Then we would need to find scholars of medieval Arabic who would be able to offer in brackets current Arabic terms for the original old ones, so modern Muslims could easily understand them.

I would like to see the finished product made available on the web so that, for instance, Rabbi Bachya's *Gate to Oneness* (*Sha'ar Hayichud* in Hebrew, *Bab al Tawhid* in Arabic) would be available for people to read in Arabic. While the current atmosphere in parts of the Muslim world may not be conducive to publicizing the existence of such a website, in the long run it could serve as a possible lever to change the tenor of our relationship.

From my childhood on I had a certain romantic feeling about Islam. I was raised in Austria, where many youths avidly read the adventure books of Karl Mai. Some of the adventures described were in North America, some even in South America, but almost an equal number were in Islamic territories—*Dar al-Islam*. The hero, a stand-in for Karl Mai, was named Kara ben Nemsi and his sidekick was named Haji Halef Omar. When I came across a transliteration of the Fatiha, the opening Sura of the Qur'an, I was fascinated by the

بالتعب وسعدتم بالعناء فهو عزم
 شريف منذ ان اخذتم باهداب العمل
 وقامت عنكم فكرة هذه الخدمة
 العامة وها هي الآن بين ايديكم
 كالخوان جمع كل مالد وطاب لا
 يشع الانسان منه ولا يمتريه منه
 يشم كتاب في الاحوال الشخصية
 والاحكام الشرعية لشريعة موسى
 الكليم عليه السلام يأخذ بيد كل
 طالب فידله على مايريد لا يكافه
 تعباً ولا يجسمه مشقة لا سيما الغريب
 عن العبرية وما مع قليلين. نعم ان
 بعض العلماء الاوائل كسعد القيومي
 وموسى الميموني وغيرهم رضى الله

בעת ומצאת לסדרו בלשון המדוברת בארץ
 העמים בשפה קרה הערבה והעדרה ובה
 הלכת בעקבות 'נאמנו הקדמונים. הגאון
 רבינו סקדיה והרמב"ם הלכו וכו' וכו'. ומלאת
 ההסרון אשר העדיף נחש לנו בכל עת
 ובכל עת, העם הגדולים בחשך. אשר לא
 ראו אור תורה ודבר, וראו עתה אור גדול
 וישישו בשמחה. הסוקקים ועורכי הדינים
 לאימותם ללשונותם יטענו מיערת הרבש
 והאורנה עניהם ויאמרו האם חמנו ראונו
 אזה. חוקים ומשפטים צדיקים. וידו ויברכו
 את שמך כי היית להם לאב ולמורה צדק.
 והדרישו את קדוש יעקב. ואת משפטי אלדי
 ישראל יעריצו. באמרו כי מי נוי גדול. אשר
 לו חוקים ומשפטים צדיקים. ככל הרמזה
 אשר שם כשה לפני בני ישראל:
 לצורנו נוהילה ישיב שופטנו כנראשונה
 וייעצנו כבתחלה. ואז תמלא הארץ דעה את
 ה' כמים לים מכסים. ואחרי ידיו לך כנהד
 זה להשיב בישראל עוד ספרים יקרים.
 טובים ומעריצים. הדרך צלה רחב עיד אמר
 וענה צדק. ויהי נועם ה' עליך. ומעשה ידך
 ימונן. ויצא לך שם כשם הגדולים אשר
 בארץ. באדיר הפין מוקירך וסכנך כעריך

words "Bism'illah ArRahmani ArRahimi, Al Hamdul'illa Rabb Al
 Alamin, Maliki Yaum Ad'din." I could clearly see Hebrew behind
 them. Whenever I had the opportunity to read something that was
 available in the German or, later, English translation, I always
 found more that was beautiful, noble and praiseworthy.

Later on, when after my yeshiva years my outlook broadened, I
 found much in the Sufi literature that impressed me. The following
 story is an example of what I came to honor in relationship to my
 sense of *Shiviti* (a symbol of the Deity used in prayer).

A Sufi master had a circle of twenty close disciples. Many of
 these were envious of one disciple who seemed likely to become the
 successor of the Sheikh. Their master became aware of their grum-
 bling and gathered them, giving them the following task: each of
 you bring me a live bird and assemble here again for my next in-
 structions. This they did and as they stood around the Sheikh, he
 ordered them to go to a place where no one could see them and kill
 the bird and then return. When they returned, nineteen of them
 presented their dead bird to the Sheikh. He asked the twentieth,
 "Why did you not kill your bird?" He responded, looking down at
 his feet, "My master, I could not find any place where I would not be
 seen."

In one of the great Kabbalistic morality books, the *R'eshit
 Hochmah*, we find a story quoted by Rabbi Isaac of Acco that was
 taken from a volume of dervish tales. There are other tales in which
 the Rabbi of Damascus learned with great respect from a Muslim
 Sheikh. A Shiite mullah shared with me that his father in Iran, an
 expert on Islamic *halachah*, known as *Fiqh*, would in cases of diffi-

Ritual rules on
 marriage were
 printed in Arabic
 and Hebrew for
 Arabic-reading
 Jews in this 1912
 book by Mas'oud
 Chay Ibn Shim'on.

cult decisions confer with the local Jewish expert on *halachah*, the Hacham. On the other side of things we have the
 beautiful Hebrew version of the Qur'an done by Professor Rivlin. Recently the Hebrew translation of Rumi's poetry
 was published in Jerusalem.

This brought me to the idea of having Judeo-Arabic classics (and by extension also Judeo-Persian texts, which
 were written in the Farsi language but in Hebrew letters) easily available online for Muslims who would like to read
 them. In addition to the books by Maimonides' son and grandson, there is of course the most authentic Arabic trans-
 lation of the Bible that was done by Saadya Gaon.

So I am looking to bring together a team of people; some with a scholarly background, some with technical ex-
 pertise, and others with a knowledge of Hebrew and Arabic. This project will make it possible for the people study-
 ing in madrassas to read these texts and learn to appreciate them. In fact I have it from a reliable Muslim source that
 a link to such a website would be offered to people learning to become imams. I believe that such an effort will over
 time bear irenic fruit.

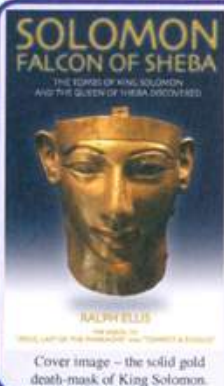
This is what I would like to see, although I haven't got the energy at the age of eighty-three to push this project. The
 only thing that I can do is plant the seed in people's minds to get together and to create a social and financial instru-

ment to put this on the web. I know at least of some people
 with the appropriate academic and digital know-how
 who might be able to make it happen.

So, *Tikkun* readers: if you have an occasion to talk to
 somebody who might be fired up by this idea and who
 wants to see peace between our two worlds, then ask him
 or her to get in touch with me. ■

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, better known as "Reb Zal-
 man," is the father of the Jewish Renewal and Spiritual Eldering
 movements, and an active teacher of Hasidism and Jewish Mys-
 ticism. If you are interested in this project please contact him at
 zalmans@aol.com.

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The Death Penalty is Losing

by Glen Stassen

AT THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF Christian Ethics and Society of Jewish Ethics, William Montross of the Southern Center for Human Rights received a long, sustained, and enthusiastic applause—longer than for any plenary address I can remember. This year we met in Atlanta, Georgia, where Montross is a public defender. He gave us a challenge for all spiritual progressives, and for my particular Christian tradition as well.

Racial Injustice

MONTROSS OBSERVED THAT THE "DEATHBELT" STATES (VIRGINIA, the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas) have executed 90% of the human beings who were legally put to death in the United States in the last twenty years—and these are the states where most lynchings took place. Indeed, "Many say that today's executions are nothing more than yesterday's lynchings."

In Georgia, you are 4.3 times more likely to be sentenced to death for killing a white person than for killing a black. Similarly in Oklahoma, Illinois, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Alabama. Since 1976, fifteen whites have been executed for killing a black person in the United States; 283 blacks for killing a white victim. A Stanford University study concluded that the blacker you look the more likely you are to be executed.

Montross testified: "I saw a trial of a black man in Alabama. The whole jury was white men over forty; the jury was chosen in the morning, with no challenges; everyone in the courtroom was white. The prosecution put on its case. The defense attorney made no defense, but just said to the jury, 'if you can show this man mercy, you are better men than I am.' He got death."

African Americans comprise 26% of Alabama's population, yet only one of the forty-two elected district attorneys is black, and not one of the judges on Alabama's appellate court is black. Of all the states that have the death penalty, 98% of all U.S. chief district attorneys are white, and only 1% are black.

The criminal justice system as a whole is grossly biased against blacks and against the poor. Young blacks have a higher chance of going to prison than to college. In 2002, approximately 791,600 African American men were in prison, and only 603,000 were in higher education. The U.S. makes up 5% of the world's population, but it has 25% of the world's prison population. 48% of those in prison are black. They come out of prison with poor prospects for jobs, or for education. One-third of all African American men in Alabama have lost their right to vote. With the death penalty, once a person is executed, there is no way to correct a wrong sentence. This is a gross violation of the human rights of persons created in the image of God.



Gov. Corzine signs the bill abolishing the death penalty in New Jersey—the first state to do so in forty years. John Goodwin, a photographer and activist with the New Jersey Anti-Death Penalty Executive Committee, documented the effort in pictures (on this and next four pages) and words (sidebar, next page).

ABOLISH THE DEATH



ENDING THE DEATH PENALTY IN NEW JERSEY

BY JOHN GOODWIN

Lorry Post, founder of New Jerseyans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (NJADP) summed it up, "Faith was the foundation of the group." Lorry's 29-year-old daughter had been murdered by her husband but Lorry had pushed for imprisonment rather than execution. Later, his Presbyterian pastor asked him to become involved in a campaign to attempt to prevent the Florida execution of Pedro Medina who may well have been innocent of the murder for which he was executed, a botched electrocution during which his head caught fire.

The U.S. Supreme Court halted executions in 1972 finding capital convictions to be "arbitrary and capricious" but it did not rule the death penalty to be unconstitutional. It thereby permitted states to re-write their death penalty laws. The New Jersey Council of Churches (NJCC) had fought unsuccessfully to keep New Jersey from re-introducing the death penalty but it was put back on the books in 1982.

In 1998 the NJCC gathered together ten Protestant leaders to discuss the death penalty (DP). They produced a "pastoral letter" expressing "the most profound compassion for the suffering of innocent victims and their loved ones" but at the same time opposing "violence and death as a form of punishment." The letter was an encouragement for increased anti-DP church activity. My own denomination, the United Methodist Church, (UMC) has opposed capital punishment since 1956. In 1999 the New Jersey UMC established a task force to abolish the DP, I signed on as co-convenor and later joined the executive committee of NJADP as well.

In 1999 Lorry Post, Celeste Fitzgerald, a Roman Catholic laywoman who later became the NJADP director, and others, established NJADP as a secular organization which first worked for a DP moratorium and a state DP study commission. As a secular group NJADP was able to attract a broad range of persons and groups. Soon priests, rabbis, ministers, and nuns were joined by thousands of others and groups ranging from law enforcement organizations to labor unions and the league of women voters.

The study commission held open hearings in which they heard from both pro and anti-DP persons and in early 2007 the commission issued a report calling for an end to the DP in New Jersey. The report, plus thousands of letters, visits, meetings, and calls convinced enough state legislators to vote to abolish the death penalty in New Jersey.

FOR INFORMATION ON THE DEATH PENALTY:

Death Penalty Information Center, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

Equal Justice USA, www.ejusa.org

National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, www.NCADP.org



Classism

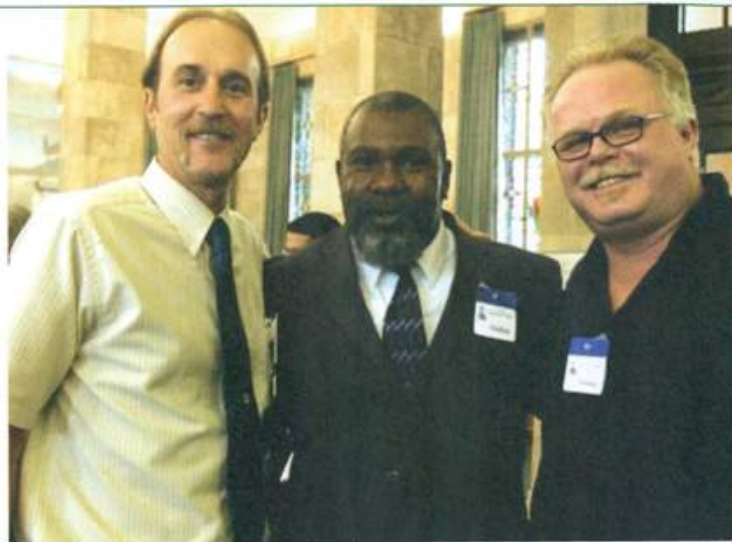
THE GLARING INJUSTICE IS NOT ONLY THE SYSTEMIC racial bias, but also the bias against whoever cannot afford an expensive defense lawyer. Arguing for the death penalty in his book, *For Capital Punishment*, Walter Berns admits that no one with money has ever gotten the death penalty in U.S. history.

Gary Ridgway murdered at least forty-eight women in Seattle. Eric Rudolph detonated a bomb at the Olympics in Atlanta, murdering two and injuring a hundred. Terry Nichols helped Timothy McVeigh kill 168 people by blowing up the federal building in Oklahoma City. McVeigh was executed but neither Gary, Eric, nor Terry got the death penalty. Why? They were of huge public interest, so they were represented by competent lawyers.

Churches and Synagogues

MONTROSS CHALLENGED US: "I WANT TO REMIND YOU how powerful your voice once was, and to inspire you to find that voice again." The churches led the movement to abolish slavery, the anti-war movements, and the Civil Rights movement. "A delegation of rabbis, with members from places as far apart as Memphis and Nova Scotia, who traveled to Birmingham in 1963, [came to] a mass meeting at the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church to proclaim their support for the movement." The churches (and synagogues) contributed leaders, symbols, inspiration, meeting places, organizers, and the troops. They contributed the moral voice that declared the criminal justice system that was enforcing segregation morally wrong. (My own Jewish brother-in-law, Martin Berger, came with his legal talents to Mississippi, where he got to know Marian Wright Edelman, similarly volunteering her talents.) "Think back— who do you see at the front of the civil rights movement? You see black pastors and Catholic priests and Jewish rabbis—walking arm in arm, down the street—facing racism and hatred and violence as one." We need that leadership now.

In my own books, *Capital Punishment: A Reader* and *Kingdom Ethics*, I point out: "The Mishnah... makes the



death penalty almost impossible. . . . Modern Israel has never had capital punishment, and the American Jewish Congress says 'capital punishment degrades and brutalizes the society which practices it, and is . . . cruel, unjust, and incompatible with [human] dignity and self-respect.' Almost every Christian denomination that has spoken on the death penalty, has opposed it as an attack on the value of human life and human rights. So have the Pope and the U.S. bishops. Jesus rejected the death penalty for the woman caught in adultery. The passage usually cited by defenders of the death penalty (Genesis 9:6) Jesus interpreted as a prediction—if we engage in killing people, we will be killed (Matt. 26:52)—and certainly not as a command to kill criminals. Paul wrote: "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the LORD.'" Every instance of the death penalty mentioned in the New Testament is clearly presented as an injustice: beheading John the Baptist; crucifying Jesus; stoning Stephen; stoning other Christians; threatening the death penalty for Paul; Roman persecution of Christians in the Book of Revelation.

Now is the Opportunity: Change is Already Happening

OPPOSITION TO THE DEATH PENALTY IS NOW GROWING. ILLINOIS GOVERNOR GEORGE RYAN pointed out that the error rate in Illinois for convicting persons to death had reached over 50%, as thirteen people have been exonerated and twelve have been put to death." He commuted all the remaining 167 death sentences to life. More recently, New Jersey has now abolished the death penalty.

The U.S. Supreme Court suspended the death penalty because of extensive evidence of racism and class bias. But then in 1976, they gave the go-ahead again. Yet 100 persons who had been sentenced to death since then were exonerated by April 9, 2002, because they were found to be erroneously convicted. With DNA evidence proving large numbers of convictions false, people are increasingly aware that the death penalty is biased, unjust, and full of errors.

The majority of Americans now say they prefer life without parole over the death penalty (*Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 15, 2006). It costs \$12.3 million to execute someone, but \$1 million to keep that person in jail for life. A life sentence allows an erroneous conviction to be corrected—as it was for that 100th exonerated person, Ray Krone, an innocent U.S. mailman who had been imprisoned for ten years, waiting for execution for a murder he had nothing to do with.

When Gallup has asked only the question, "Are you in favor of the death penalty for a person convicted of murder," without mentioning the alternative of life without parole, support for death increased while the United States was fighting World War II, eventually reaching 69% during the Korean War. But during the more peaceful times of the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations, support for the death penalty dropped dramatically to a minority of 42%. Then during the national frustration over the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandals of the Nixon administration, combined with presidents who took a more self-righteous and punitive attitude, support grew steadily to 80% in 1994. Then it dropped to 63% during

Facing page:

(left) Juan Melendez, exonerated and released from Florida's death row after seventeen years, spoke numerous times throughout New Jersey, to the press, public and a state commission, in support of the anti-death penalty campaign.

(right) Lethal injection is the most common method of execution in the United States.

Above:

(left) Instead of presenting another anti-death penalty bill after others had failed, the NJADP campaign pressed the state to create a death penalty study commission. The NJADP brought numerous effective speakers to the hearings including, left to right: attorney Lorry Post (who with his wife June did not seek the death penalty for their daughter's murderer), Bill Babbitt (whose brother was executed), Nate Walker (see p. 47), June Post, and David Kascynski (Executive Director, *New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty*, and brother of "Unabomber" Ted Kascynski).

(right) Ray Krone (the 100th incarcerated person freed on DNA evidence), Commissioner Eddie Hicks (whose daughter was murdered, and who represented the NJADP on the New Jersey study commission), and Kirk Bloodsworth (the first person freed on DNA evidence) were among those who spoke before the commission.



(top left) Larry Peterson, a New Jersey inmate freed thanks to the work of Vanessa Potkin and other lawyers at the Innocence Project, with Sister Helen Prejean (Roman Catholic nun, author, and activist whose story served as the basis for the film "Dead Man Walking").

(top right) Bill Babbitt and Janet Beddoe (a lay Episcopalian who, among other roles, acted as the campaign's liaison with her church) walk to a study commission hearing at the state house.

(bottom right) The NJADP set up a table at an unrelated public meeting in New Jersey attended by liberal Catholics and encouraged attendees to write the commission.



the Clinton administration, but rose a bit to 69% during the W. Bush years. Support seems to depend on whether the United States is at war, on economic frustration, and on the spirit of the presidential administration. If our next administration does not engage in new wars, and does not voice a self-righteous urge to punish, we can expect support to decline further. Already a majority prefer life without parole.

In 2006, executions dropped to a ten-year low, down to fifty-three (they had been ninety-eight in 1999). Texas killed most of those—twenty-four out of the fifty-three. But even in Texas, the number of death sentences handed down by courts dropped 65%, in the ten years from 1996 to 2006. As the Los Angeles Times reported, "Public opinion seems to be changing."

We Will Win in Stages

WE WILL WIN THE VICTORY OVER THE DEATH PENALTY IN STAGES: IF ANOTHER STATE commutes or abolishes the death penalty, as Illinois and New Jersey did, this adds momentum. Thus one place to battle is in state legislatures and with state governors.

Many states are not giving out death penalties or are giving out far fewer ones. Thus another place to battle is in the court of public opinion, classrooms, churches and synagogues, and the media, all of which affect juries and prosecutors.

Data show the death penalty stimulates imitation, so states that kill criminals experience



Nate Walker (top) spent eleven years in prison for a non-lethal rape he did not commit. He was freed from life plus fifty-year jail sentence through the work of Centurion Ministries. David Shephard (bottom), who served ten years of a thirty-year sentence for a non-lethal rape, was freed after DNA evidence proved his innocence. New Jersey residents, both men spoke out at hearings and press conferences in support of the AJADP campaign.



more homicides. But data also indicate there are effective ways to decrease homicides (See *Kingdom Ethics*, chapter 9). We all need to learn and to teach what does work to prevent murders.

The related problem is class and race bias throughout the criminal justice system. Here the battle is for justice in sentencing generally, including drug sentencing, and adequate funding for the public defenders. Churches in Georgia organized to visit the courts and the prisons, were shocked by what they saw, and persuaded the state finally to get a public defender system.

The Supreme Court is the eventual target. The new DNA evidence of many erroneous convictions, combined with the clear evidence of racism and class bias, combined with the shift in public opinion and in presidential leadership, can provide persuasive pressure. It may take some new appointees.

Montross is calling for churches and synagogues to visit the courts and prisons, and to mobilize our members to push for justice and human rights in the criminal justice system and against the death penalty. We are entering a time of hope for change. Will we answer? ■

*Glen Harold Stassen is the Lewis B. Smedes Professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary. His *Kingdom Ethics* won the Christianity Today award for best book of 2004 in theology or ethics.*

Human Rights and Ecology

by David Seidenberg



"After The Sunrise" by Israeli artist Betty Rubinstein

The Problem

THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN ECOLOGY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IS A DEEP ONE. IT'S NOT only found in opposing the building of a toxic waste incinerator near a poor community, or fighting the exposure of children to endocrine-disrupting pesticides. It goes beyond issues of environmental justice, or the impact of pollution on people's quality of life, beyond those places where human rights and the environment are obviously congruent.

Nor is it in the perceived moments of conflict between human rights and the environment, such as the false choice between making jobs and saving a forest, as in the fight between Redwood activists and Pacific Lumber. Most of the time, these conflicts arise from economic assumptions that don't account for the real value of an intact ecosystem.

A deeper intersection is found in the great human tragedy that could accompany global warming. If predictions hold and the rising sea creates millions of refugees from coastal areas

(God help us), then shelter, which should be a right, will become an impossibility. Any government trying to protect the most basic human needs and rights would find itself in extreme crisis under such circumstances, and many governments will be tempted to discard human rights in the name of national emergency. It is this kind of scenario, this kind of vanishing point in the distance, that makes me think: How can anyone ever talk about human rights without talking about the earth? But this is not the deepest connection.

Where we find the deepest depths, so to speak, is not the places where human rights and ecology coincide or conflict, but where human rights, in its most general formulation, makes us blind to our place in the earth—it's not the *effect* of global warming, but, on the spiritual level, its cause. It is this: Human rights are grounded in the essential equality of human persons ("All men are created equal," or the less familiar UN Declaration, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights"). This notion of rights, beautiful in isolation, appears to rest on the *essential inequality* of all other species and non-human individuals, of ecosystems, even of the earth itself, making everything else subservient to human desires.

In Jewish terms, this problem is embodied by the concept of God's image. If we read the Torah on the simple level, it looks like only we humans are "created in God's image." In that view, it sounds like no other species or need has value compared with human life: "One who saves a human life saves a complete world"; "Every person should say: For my sake the world was created."

The root of this perspective on humanity is one of the great contributions of Judaism: we are called to affirm the sacredness of every person, Jewish or not, enemy, friend, or neighbor. That is the world I want to live in, a world that respects human rights, and grounds them in what makes each of us human—but what is it that makes us human?

Our Humanity

MANY OF US DOING ECOLOGY THINK ABOUT THE QUESTION THIS WAY: OUR HUMANITY emerges from our relationship with all life—not just with other human beings—and from our connection to the earth. One can experience this in the inspiration we feel from other animals, in our love (our *biophilia*, as E.O. Wilson calls it) for the diverse beauty of all living things, even in the human capacity to live in almost every ecosystem existing on this planet. "Fill the earth and *connect* with her," one might say.

Human diversity arises from ecological diversity. The reason why there are different human cultures and religions is not only or primarily political, it's that each society finds unique ways to teach the generations how to live in harmony with a particular place through rituals and stories. Hence, *lulav* (palm branch) and *sukkah* (temporary structure) on the fall full moon. Hence, the teaching that *adam* (person) is so-called because the human was created from the *adamah* (earth or soil).

This way of seeing our humanity is not only embodied in Jewish practice, it is also part of Jewish thought. This is the inner teaching behind the midrash: "Everything that was created in the world, God created in the first human." In Kabbalah this teaching goes deeper: "Adam, the first human, was created at the end [of the sixth day] so that he would include everything else in his likeness and image" (Shnei Luchot Habrit); "Adam is the whole, and all creatures are Adam, and he is called by the name of them all" (Yosef Ashkenazi).

If education is a human right, must it not also be a human right to live connected to the world that teaches and nurtures us to become human? If freedom of speech is a human right, is it not also a human right to hear the speech of the fields or forest?

This is the first step in overcoming the blind spot: recognizing that we become human through our roots in and communion with all the species and all the beauty around us. If we have the potential to become holy, then this too is holy.

Beyond Equality

THE SECOND STEP: EVERY MODERN DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACKNOWLEDGES THAT we have rights because we are "equal." From a rabbinic perspective, that's far too incomplete. God's image is not only what makes us equal in relation to God; it is also what makes us

unique, hence unequal, to each other.

The *Mishnah* writes: "Why was the first human created alone? When a human coins a hundred coins with one seal—all of them look the same. The Holy One coins every person with the seal of the first human, yet no one resembles his fellow, and therefore everyone should say: 'For my sake the world was created.'"

The point is not just that every person is a unique expression of God's image, nor is it that everything exists to "serve" you. It's that every person stands, as it were, at the beginning of creation, as unique as the first created human, unique in relation to the whole of creation. The beginning of a new species—this is the uniqueness that is as meaningful as the world itself.

Lenn Goodman explains this well:

The human case is recognized as a special case of ... nature at large and the species it contains. For the *Mishnah* predicated the special sanctity of each human life on the likeness of each human being to a world or a natural kind. Note the order of the argument. Not: Thou shalt respect and protect nature because it is the abode of human beings, but rather: Thou shalt respect and protect human lives because they are, in their own way, miniature worlds and complete natural kinds.

In other words, the statement "For my sake the world was created" is rooted in the immeasurable value of creation. What may have sounded denigrating of the world is quite the opposite.

Similarly, we read in the *Zohar* that the faces of the ox, eagle, and lion of Ezekiel's chariot represent the spectrum of all animals *as well* as the diversity of human faces. With the addition of the fourth side of the chariot—the human face—they stand for the four letters of the name of God, YHWH. Human diversity, human uniqueness—the source of what we could call human rights in Judaism—corresponds to, is known through, the diversity and uniqueness of all the species of creation, and of creation entire. This diversity is the face of God. The fullness of being human is, simply, known in and through the diversity of the whole.

Jubilee and Land Rights

THE LAST STEP: WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT RIGHTS AS THOUGH THEY WERE A GIVEN, BUT THE concept of rights is not explicit in Judaism or the Torah. Rather, we have obligations to other human beings that are immutable, for example, the obligation to give food to whomever is hungry, which would imply that each person has a right to ask for food and a right to be fed. If Boaz has an obligation to let Ruth glean in the field, then Ruth has a right to glean in the field.

In essence, human needs, such as hunger, comprise the basis for human rights, and they trump other societal norms, such as "property rights." Property in particular, especially movable wealth, has rather a low standing on the scales of the law in Judaism compared to basic human needs. This contrasts with much of Anglo-American law, which, for example, allowed the export of food from Ireland to England while people in Ireland were starving, because forcing merchants to sell food cheaply in Ireland would have impinged on their property rights.

Property in Judaism entails a responsibility upon its owner to use something well (i.e. by leaving the corner unharvested and letting strangers glean), rather than giving the owner a right to dispense with it however he or she wishes. The lower status of property rights is the norm with one exception: No matter what a person did with their family's ancestral land, however it was sold, they could never lose that "property" forever. In the Jubilee year it would return, if not to that person, then to their descendants.

The point of this observation is not how strong the right to ancestral property is. It's not even human rights, though we will see how they emerge. It's that the only thing that is framed unequivocally as a right in the Torah is concerned with the human connection to land.

The Jubilee year itself, along with the six Sabbatical or *Shmitta* years that preceded it (one every seventh year), was a time when no one was allowed to farm the land, because the land "desired" her rest, her Shabbat. It is the land that has the *right* to rest, the right not to be bought or sold forever. Of all things in the Torah that can be (continued on page 78)

HUMAN RIGHTS AND ECOLOGY

(continued from page 50)

construed as rights, this is the only one that clearly fits our modern concept of a right. We know that because God's covenant with the Israelites is this: the land will get to rest for a full year of Shabbat no matter what we plan or do. Let her rest and you can rest with her; don't let her rest and you will be thrown into exile, while she still gets to enjoy her Sabbaths.

That's what we might call an inalienable right.

The rights of the land provide the only context in the Torah where the most basic human needs are also expressed as rights: a person has a right to be freed from slavery, to be freed from debts, to be provided for in whatever he or she lacks. Most importantly, every family had its equal share of the land, a unique portion of the land of Israel that could never be lost permanently, and this relationship existed *without* people owning the land in our modern sense, and without people having the right to do anything they wanted to the land. In God's voice: "You cannot sell the land in perpetuity, for the land belongs to me, and you are strangers and squatters alongside me." (Leviticus 25)

The Jubilee is the foundation of human rights in the Torah. The advent of Jubilee is when we "call out 'Liberty!' in the land, to all those dwelling with her." This is the sequence: the land rests, freedom blossoms, the people have peace.

What Must Be Done

"THE MISHNAH SAYS 'FOR MY SAKE the world was created,'" writes Reb Nachman of Breslov. "If the whole world was created for my sake, then I better pray for the whole world!" Prayer, in the midrashic and Hasidic realm, is what the Jews use instead of weapons to change the world. It is words used for a higher purpose, spoken because they come from truth, rather than because they are useful. Prayer is found in what we call protest, in the very highest sense.

This article is, among other things, my own protest to the Jewish community: If you care about human rights, about social justice, start caring about the environment! With the exception of a few groups like American Jewish World Service and

the Shalom Center, none of the social justice organizations, and, especially, none of the activist ones like Progressive Jewish Alliance, are doing anything for the earth. Instead they say, "We agree with the sentiment but we don't have time to spare for that."

This is the blind spot: We care about the earth but people come first. As if there could be people without earth! It's a blind spot that overwhelms our compassion for the more-than-human world around us.

Last year, with all the many tragedies in the world, with all the criminal negligence of the United States in Iraq and all the terrorism there, two comparatively minor things happened that shocked me. Both illustrate this blind spot.

A Garden

THE FIRST WAS THAT AN EXTRAORDINARY community garden, serving the very poorest Los Angeles neighborhoods, was bulldozed by its Jewish owner and sold to build a warehouse, even though the city had offered to buy the land for the same price. Why eminent domain was not used I can't say, but I can say that not one organization in the Jewish community of Los Angeles, not one, raised even a peep. No rabbi, not even this one, said to the owner, "You are violating Jewish law, the rules of the 'adjacent owner,' and the principle of *darkhei shalom*, the injunction to do even what is not obligatory in order to make peace in the world."

I can only guess about other people's motives, but I think that because the debate was falsely cast as one between property rights and untenanted squatters, and between Jews and anti-Semites (one gardener, out of hundreds, said something anti-Jewish and was roundly condemned by his fellow gardeners), that we said: Those people are not our people. The Jews said: We care about property rights more than the "*naches*" (pride, pleasure) of poor people gardening.

But gardening is more than pleasure. Should people have a "right to garden"? Not in so many words, but people do have a right to connection with the earth, and a right to food security and to opportunities that allow them to be self-sufficient. And

the city, if it has an obligation to protect the rights of its citizens, also has an obligation to foster sustainable community and to nurture projects that model a sustainable future.

Does the land have a right to be gardened? The right of the land, even land that is no longer part of a native ecosystem, is to be used for its best purpose. Isaiah said: "[T]he God who formed the land...did not create her to be waste (*tohu*); for settling upon (*lashevet*) did the One form her." What counts as settling and what counts as waste can be debated, but going from being the site of gardens to being the foundation of a warehouse is definitely a descent towards *tohu*.

Keeping Our Heads in the Sand

THE SECOND SHOCK FOR ME WAS THE General Assembly (GA), the national conference of the Jewish Federations, also held in Los Angeles two falls ago. What shocked me was the program: out of dozens of sessions, not one, not a single one, was about our responsibility to the environment, or what the Jewish community should be doing, or any aspect of the earth or ecological problems—not even with respect to the land of Israel. This in the year when the whole United States (with the exception of a certain house in Washington) finally awakened to the reality of global warming.

What did happen, besides the usual array of professional development topics—how to raise money, how to partner with rich people, how to create a good budget, along with some discussions of social justice programming—was this: session after session about Israel's summer war in Lebanon against Hezbollah: why it was right; why it was actually successful, despite appearances; how to sell it to the American public. (By the time the GA happened, the Israeli public had already made these "talking points" irrelevant.)

Everyone I talked to in the GA or its member organizations said the same thing: Why do you expect better?

What I want to know is: How can you possibly care about "the land of Israel" or the Jewish people, and not care about the

Consciousness Commodified: The Attention-Deficit Society

by David Loy

DO WE FAIL TO SEE THE NATURE of the liberated mind, not because it is too difficult to understand, but because it is too obvious? Maybe we cannot find what we are searching for because it is in plain sight, like the spectacles that rest unnoticed on my nose.

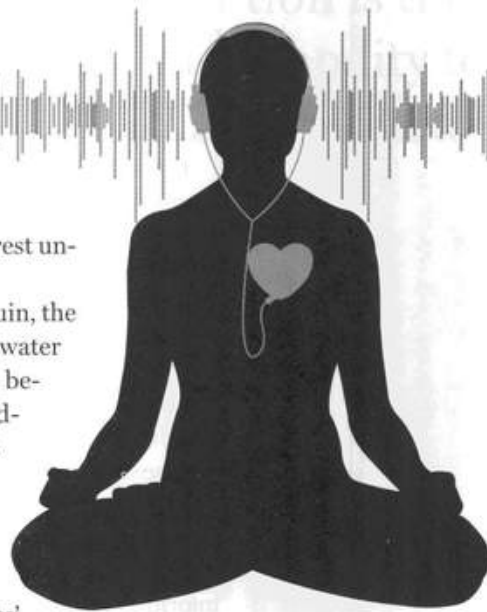
According to the seventeenth-century Japanese Zen master Hakuin, the difference between Buddhas and other beings is like that between water and ice. Without water there is no ice, without Buddha no sentient beings—which suggests that deluded beings are simply “frozen” Buddhas. “Let your mind come forth without fixing it anywhere,” says the most-quoted line from the *Diamond Sutra*, prompting the great awakening of the sixth Chan patriarch Huineng, whose *Platform Sutra* makes and remakes the same point. “When our mind works freely without any hindrance, and is at liberty to ‘come’ or to ‘go,’ we attain liberation.” Such a mind “is everywhere present, yet it ‘sticks’ nowhere.” A mind that dwells upon nothing is the unborn Buddha-mind itself, according to Chan master Huihai: “This full awareness in yourself of a mind dwelling upon nothing is known as having a clear perception of your own mind, or, in other words, as having a clear perception of your own nature.”

These teachers are pointing to the same realization:

Delusion (ignorance, *samsara*): attention/awareness is fixated (attached to forms)

Liberation (enlightenment, nirvana): attention/awareness is liberated from grasping

Although the true nature of awareness is formless, it becomes trapped when our attention is conditioned—that is, when we come to identify with particular forms. Such



identifications happen due to ignorance of the essential “non-dwelling” nature of our attention.

We are familiar with such teachings, yet an important implication is not usually considered: the danger of what might be called *collective attention-traps*. Meditation practices make me more sensitive to my attachments: the places where my awareness is stuck. But my problems with attachment are not just my own. We tend to have the same problems because as members of the same society we are subjected to similar conditioning and so tend to get stuck in similar ways. How different is our present conditioning from social conditioning in the time of the Buddha, and in other Asian Buddhist societies? How has the development of the modern/postmodern world affected human attention generally, not only in *what* we attend to, but *how* we attend to it? The constriction or liberation of awareness is not merely a personal, individual matter. What do contemporary societies do to encourage or discourage its emancipation?

These questions are important because today our awareness is conditioned in at least three new ways that did not afflict previous Buddhist cultures and practitioners.

The Fragmentation of Attention

MEDIA COVERAGE SUGGESTS THAT ONE OF OUR MAJOR CONCERNS ABOUT ATTENTION IS THE lack thereof. Attention-Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have become serious medical issues in the United States, originally among school-children but now among young adults as well. According to the *New York Times*, the use of drugs to treat Attention-Deficit Disorder in young adults doubled between 2000 and 2004 to 1% of adults under sixty-five, and the share of children using such drugs increased to almost 5%, despite increasing concern about their side-effects. What are we to make of this?

Buddhist practice evokes images of meditation with minimal distractions. The “IT revolution”—personal computers, the Internet, email, cell phones, and iPods, etc.—encourages an unremitting connectivity that pulls us in the opposite direction. As we become attentive to so many more people and so many more possibilities always available, is less attention available for the people and things most important to us?

Consider, for example, how MP3 players are changing the ways we listen to music. A century ago, you are part of a live audience, and once you are there you are there, so you settle down and focus on the music being performed. For me today, strolling along with my iPod, the decision to listen to any particular “selection” is never completely settled in the sense that I can instantaneously change what is playing if I become dissatisfied with it, for any reason at any time, simply by pressing a button. I must, in effect, continually decide to listen to this particular song. Does awareness of these other possibilities distract my attention from the music I am actually hearing?

Of course, this point applies just as much to many other aspects of our lives: TV channel-surfing, the surfeit of books and DVDs (obtained via Amazon *One-Click* orders!), video games, surfing the net, etc. Our old foraging habits were based on info-scarcity, but suddenly, like Mickey Mouse as the sorcerer’s apprentice, we find ourselves trying to survive an *info-glut*, and the scarcest resources have become *attention* and *control over our own time*. The Swedish scholar of information technology Thomas Eriksen has formalized this relationship into a general law of the information revolution: “When an ever-increasing amount of information has to be squeezed into the relatively constant amount of time each of us has at our disposal, the span of attention necessarily decreases.”

One problem with such an avalanche of information (and therefore shorter attention spans) is that it challenges our ability to construct narratives and logical sequences. The MIT professor Sherry Turkle has noticed that some of her students now reason and arrange their ideas differently. “There is this sense that the world is out there to be Googled,” she says, “and there is this associative glut. But linking from one thing to another is not the same as having something to say. A structured thought is more than a link.”

In place of the usual Buddhist warnings about clinging and attachment, many of us now have the opposite problem: an inability to concentrate. Yet an attention that jumps from this to that, unable to focus itself, is no improvement over an awareness that is stuck on something.

The Commodification of Attention

FOR MOST OF US IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD, THE GREATEST "ATTENTION TRAP" is consumerism, which involves sophisticated advertising that has become very good at manipulating our attention. Today the big economic challenge is not production but keeping us convinced that the solution to our *dukkha* (suffering) is our next purchase. According to the pioneering advertising executive Leo Burnett, good advertising does more than circulate information. "It penetrates the public mind with desire and belief." That penetration may have been lucrative for his clients, but there are other consequences, as Ivan Illich pointed out: "In a consumer society there are inevitably two kinds of slaves, the prisoners of addiction and the prisoners of envy." Whether or not one is able to afford the desired product, one's attention is captured.

Recently it has become more evident that attention is the basic commodity to be exploited. Ben Franklin's old adage needs to be updated: not *time is money* but *attention is money*. According to Jonathan Rowe's article "Carpe Callosum," the key economic resource of this new economy is not something they provide, it's something we provide—"mindshare," to use the new idiom. But, he asks, "What if there's only so much mind to share? If you've wondered how people could feel so depleted in such a prosperous economy, how stress could become the trademark affliction of the age, part of the answer might be here."

A turning point in the development of capitalism was "the enclosures" in sixteenth- and eighteenth-century Britain, when villagers were forced out of their traditional homes because landlords could make more money raising sheep. Rowe discusses "the ultimate enclosure—the enclosure of the *cognitive commons*, the ambient mental atmosphere of daily life," a rapid development now so pervasive that it has become like the air we breathe unnoticed. Time and space have already been reconstructed: holidays (including new commercialized ones such as Mother's Day) into shopping days, Main Street into shopping malls. Advertising is infiltrating into every corner of our conscious (and unconscious) awareness. Sports stadiums used to have ads; now renamed stadiums are themselves ads. TV shows used to be sponsored by ads; today product placement makes the whole show (and many movies) an ad. The jewelry company Bulgari sponsored a novel by Fay Weldon that included over three dozen references to its products. A 2005 issue of the *New Yorker* did not include any ads because the whole magazine was a promotion for the retail chain Target. Children are especially vulnerable, of course, and while half of four-year-old children do not know their own name, two-thirds of three-year-olds recognize the golden arches of McDonald's.

In the past one could often ignore ads, but enclosure of the cognitive commons means they now confront us wherever our attention turns. Unless we're meditating in a Himalayan cave, we have to process thousands of commercial messages every day. As Rowe emphasizes, they do not just grab our attention, they exploit it:

The attention economy mines us much the way the industrial economy mines the earth. It mines us first for incapacities and wants. Our capacity for interaction and reflection must become a need for entertainment. Our capacity to deal with life's bumps and jolts becomes a need for "grief counseling" or Prozac. The progress of the consumer economy has come to mean the diminution of ourselves.

Consumerism requires and develops a sense of our own impoverishment. By manipulating the gnawing sense of lack that haunts our insecure sense of self, the attention economy insinuates its basic message deep into our awareness: the solution to any discomfort we might have is consumption. Needless to say, this all-pervasive conditioning is incompatible with the liberative path of Buddhism.

The Control of Attention

DICTATORSHIPS CONTROL PEOPLE WITH VIOLENCE AND THE THREAT OF IT, TO RESTRAIN what they do. Modern democracies control people with sophisticated propaganda, by manipulating what they think. The title of one of Noam Chomsky's books sums it up well: *Manufacturing Consent*. We worry about weapons of mass destruction, but we should be

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as concerned about weapons of mass deception (and weapons of mass distraction), which may be more insidious and more difficult to detect. To cite only the most obvious example, the disastrous 2003 invasion of Iraq would never have been possible without carefully orchestrated attempts to make the public anxious about weapons that did not exist. It was easy to do because 9/11 has made us fearful, and fearful people are more susceptible to manipulation.

Traditionally rulers and ruling classes used religious ideologies to justify their power. In premodern Europe the Church supported the "divine right" of kings. In Asian Buddhist societies karma offered a convenient way to rationalize both the ruler's authority and the powerlessness of his oppressed subjects. In both, people were told: You should accept your present social status because it is a consequence of your past deeds. In modern secular societies, however, acquiescence must be molded in different ways.

According to the Australian scholar Alex Carey, the twentieth century was characterized by three important political developments: the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power, and the growth of propaganda as a way to protect corporate power against democracy. Although corporations are not mentioned in the Constitution—the Founding Fathers were wary of them—corporate power began to expand dramatically towards the end of the nineteenth century, so successfully that today there is little if any effective distinction between major corporations and the federal government. Both identify wholeheartedly with the same goal of continuous economic growth, regardless of its social or ecological effects. (We are repeatedly told that any unfortunate consequences from this growth obsession can be solved by more economic growth.) This often requires foreign intervention, for our access to resources and markets must be protected and expanded, usually under the guise of "defending ourselves." In effect, we have only one major political party: the Business Party, with two different faces that promote much the same agenda.

Continual economic growth requires that we define ourselves primarily as workers and consumers, while accepting that our present government and economy are "the best in the world." Instead of raising questions about this orientation, the mainstream media—our collective nervous system—serve to rationalize that belief system. Only a very narrow spectrum of opinion is considered acceptable, "realistic," and whatever problems arise require only a few minor adjustments here and there. As the earth begins to burn, as ecosystems start to collapse, the media focus our collective attention on the things that really matter: the Superbowl, the price of gas, the latest murder or sex scandal.

The Liberation of Collective Attention

WHO OWNS OUR ATTENTION, AND WHO SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE WHAT happens to it? Rowe concludes that we need a new freedom movement, to "battle for the cognitive commons. If we have no choice regarding what fills our attention, then we really have no choice at all." From a Buddhist perspective, however, it seems doubtful that any social protest movement could be successful without an alternative understanding of what our attention is and what alternative practices promote more liberated attention. It is not enough to fight against billboards and Internet banner ads without also considering: what does it really mean for awareness to be here-and-now, deconditioned from attention traps both individual and collective? Is awareness to be valued as a means to some other end, or should we cherish its liberation as the most valuable end? The Buddhist answer to such questions is clear. What is less clear is what role that answer might play in our collective response to the challenge. ■

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Separating Faith from Belief

by David Tacey

IN HIS REVIEW "WAITING FOR SPIRITUAL ATHEISTS" (*TIKKUN*, MARCH/APRIL 2008) Dave Belden wrote: "Faith is often used as a synonym for belief, but can better be seen as its opposite, if faith is the quality that allows us to go forward in love, service, and joy when we have no certainty. If we have no certainty of belief and no compensating rational hope of progress either, then what stops us from sinking into despair?"

I would like to support these words and expand on them. It is important today to separate faith from belief. Belief is a rapidly diminishing element in human society, especially among the educated and those who are exposed to scientific principles and methods. It is clear that belief is in decline in the West, but we cannot afford to lose faith as well. Unless faith and belief are untied and separated, we will find that the loss of belief encouraged by science and education leads to a corresponding loss of faith—not only in God, religion, or transcendence, but also in humanity, society, and the future.

Many religious traditions seem to deliberately fuse faith and belief, and this is self-serving on their part. The ideological component in every tradition would compel us to "believe" in their propositions, and claim that this is the only way to "faith." It is said that if you believe in the tenets and dogmas of a particular tradition, you are a person of faith. But many in religious traditions are people of belief, and have not yet arrived at faith. It is possible to "believe" in God, but not to have faith in God, in which case the belief is merely conceptual or intellectual, and does not involve the whole person in an ongoing relationship with mystery or the universe. Faith is more spiritual and more difficult than belief. It is not the result of intellectual assent to a series of propositions but comes from a spiritual commitment to reality. Belief is no more than intellectual compliance with things presented for our consideration. As such, it is one step up from opinion.

For many of us today, the journey of true faith begins when the safety and assurance that belief provides is discarded, and we stand before the mystery of life, unarmored by dogma or creed. The moment when we enter into relationship with the spirit, when we take the plunge and step forward into life, is when faith begins in earnest. It is important for nonbelievers to have faith in the world, in politics, in the ability of society to change and the individual to transform. Faith in this sense is an existential element of personality and society, and is something that should be nurtured by education and government. It is vitally important that both secular and religious authorities work toward the establishment of conditions in which faith can prosper and develop. These are different kinds of faith, to be sure, but they are linked. Both require the individual to connect with realities beyond the self, and to develop the compelling sense that he or she is in dialogue with those realities and that this dialogue is hopeful and has value. Politics without faith is bland and dead, but politics with too many beliefs degenerates into ideology and becomes a form of manipulation.

Faith has to be recovered for the majority of people, not only for "believers." It is possible for agnostics to have faith, and for atheists as well. After all, often the atheist is the

person who finds a "theistic" God to be unbelievable, and who has the courage to say so. This does not mean that such a person is without faith, and the first stage of securing a life of faith could be to assert an atheist or agnostic position, to clear the deck of beliefs, and to be open and vulnerable to experience. Then the "God above God," as Paul Tillich wrote, might rise above the horizon of our awareness, and we might be open to an encounter with something that can utterly transform us. ■

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Who Should Take Care of the Poor?

by Tony Campolo

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, RON SIDER, A PROFESSOR AT PALMER THEOLOGICAL Seminary in Philadelphia, created an organization called Evangelicals for Social Action. Sider, author of one of the most important religious books of the last fifty years, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, was out to convince the Evangelical community that caring for the poor was a Biblical imperative. By using Scripture, Sider made many Christians aware that they could not avoid the call of God to live sacrificially and to give what they could to help those millions of persons, both in America and in the Third World, who have been oppressed by poverty.

At first, Sider's critics claimed that what he wrote was nothing more than another version of that "Social Gospel" that had become the hallmark of theological liberals. But Ron Sider persisted and was soon joined in his movement by a host of others who wanted to bring social and economic justice to the poor and oppressed of the world.

Today, there are very few Christians who do not readily acknowledge that Christians are responsible for helping the impoverished peoples of the world. Even the most fervent Fundamentalists who adhere to "that old-time religion" now fully subscribe to making help for the poor a requisite for living the Christian life. What is not agreed upon, however, is how to do this.

Many politically conservative Christians agree that reaching out to the poor and providing the help they need is part of declaring the whole Gospel, which they are required to bring to the whole world; but they contend that helping the poor is something that the Church should do, and they find nothing in the Bible that requires that the government should be taxing its hard-working citizens and handing out their money, in one way or another, to help the poor. There are many conservative Christians who claim that it is a form of robbery to take wealth from hard-working Americans and hand it out in welfare checks and "entitlement programs" to the needy, both at home and abroad. They say that benevolent giving to the poor is Biblically required of Christians, but that the redistribution of wealth, facilitated through taxation to provide services and handouts to the poor, is robbery. Ron Sider and his organization, Evangelicals for Social Action, have won the battle over whether or not we should care for the poor. Evangelicals everywhere presently acknowledge that requisite. Now the question, however, is, "How shall we live out this mandate which is prescribed by over 2000 verses of Scripture?"



Recently, a group of Evangelicals calling themselves "Red Letter Christians" (alluding to the words of Jesus which are indicated by red letters in some versions of the Bible) are asserting that charitable work by churches and other faith-based organizations is not enough to even begin to accomplish God's will on behalf of the poor and oppressed. The government, these Red Letter Christians say, must become a partner with the Church by helping the poor in ways that are beyond the means of the sacrificial giving of church goers. They say that raising the minimum wage, making provisions for universal healthcare, taking action for the cancellation of Third World debt, providing daycare for the children of the working poor, addressing the AIDS crisis among the poor of Africa, and addressing a host of other needs of the poor are beyond the ability of faith-based organizations. In opposition to these Red Letter Christians are those more politically conservative church folks who need to see some Biblical legitimization for this claim that the Church should partner with government in efforts to meet the needs of those whom Jesus calls "the least of the brethren."

Before getting into proof-texting, we Red Letter Christians declare that we believe that Christ is "Lord of All." That means to us that God is at work through *all* of the institutions of society to accomplish His will in the world, and that God's efforts are not confined to working through the Church. When it comes to God's will being done "on earth as it is in heaven," we believe that God is at work endeavoring to transform the world that is into the world that God wills for it to be. Furthermore, we believe that it is through each and every "principality and power," which God created to this end that God struggles to make the Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven. Government, Red Letter Christians believe, is one of those "principalities and powers" that are referred to in the Pauline Epistles (see Colossians 1; Ephesians 6:12). We believe that there is no sphere of society wherein God is not pressing to become Lord and to bring the values of His Kingdom into play. To deny that God wills to accomplish His will through government is to limit His Lordship in society.

Beyond such theological assertions, there is evidence throughout the Hebrew Bible that rulers are held responsible for their governments' caring for the poor. For instance, in Isaiah 10:1-3, there is condemnation of those legislators who create laws that fail to benefit the widow and the orphans and serve the interests of the rich and powerful. In our highly individualistic western culture, we often fail to see that collectives, such as nations, will be judged by how they have responded to the needs of the poor and oppressed (Matthew 25:31-46).

We Red Letter Christians are calling on those who are committed to doing God's will to invade all sectors of the societal system (which includes the government, the world of business, the arts, and the educational institutions), and through them be a voice for justice on behalf of those who have no voice.

What we want to see happen is that faith-based ministries doing their works of charity on the micro level and cooperating with government initiatives on the macro level will bring about increasing evidence of God's Kingdom breaking forth here on earth. We are committed to this vision even as we wait for Christ's return, when He will complete the good work that needs to be done by God's people for the wretched of the earth (Philippians 1:6). ■

Anthony Campolo, Ph.D., professor emeritus at Eastern University, founded the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education. His most recent books are The God of Intimacy and Action and Red Letter Christians.



Governmental agencies such as FEMA and Headstart (top right and above) as well as volunteer organizations like church soup kitchens (above left) are both needed to help the poor.

Culture

BOOKS | FILM | MUSIC

[BOOKS]

Change We Can Believe In

DEEP ECONOMY: THE WEALTH OF COMMUNITIES AND THE DURABLE FUTURE

by Bill McKibben, Times Books, 2007

BREAK THROUGH: FROM THE DEATH OF ENVIRONMENTALISM TO THE POLITICS OF POSSIBILITY

by Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger, Houghton Mifflin, 2007

Review by Roger S. Gottlieb

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS' impact on humanity in general, and global climate change in particular, cannot be simply read off from the bleak statistics that define them as physical events. No matter how many species disappear, glaciers melt, or droughts drive people into desperate poverty, our collective human response will depend, in part, on factors extrinsic to ocean water levels and percent of CO₂ in the atmosphere. Political views, moral values, and spiritual aspirations, many of which preexisted or function independently from our beliefs about the environment, will lead us in one direction or another.

These uncontroversial generalities are born out in the vivid contrast between Bill McKibben's *Deep Economy* and *Break Through* by Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger; and, not surprisingly, in my assessment of their comparative worth. To this extreme leftist and critic of the spiritual bankruptcy of modernity, *Break Through* is in many ways a pretentious and superficial attempt to maintain as much of the current social order as possible, despite the looming catastrophes that result from our current regimes of production, consumption, and self-understanding. *Deep Economy*, by contrast, calls for deep changes in all these areas, and therefore my response to it is much more sympathetic.

There is, however, a signal irony which looms over authors and reviewer alike. The environmental crisis is so different from anything humanity has experienced before, involving such an overwhelming combination of technological, cultural, economic, and political factors, that, at best, the solutions we propose are only reasonably informed guesses, if not desperate hopes. Yet, it is rare for writers or reviewers to recognize that the order of the day calls for rather large doses of intellectual humility.

* * *

Break Through touts itself as a deep shift in environmental understanding. The authors reassure us that they are all for the environment, but they are profoundly critical of many of the beliefs and values of hitherto existing environmentalism. For example, they argue that it is a mistake to think that environmental activism produced the legal and policy gains of the last decades—for these were really a predictable consequence of higher standards of living generated by capitalist-driven economic development. Only a rich populace, they write, can care about the “post-material” needs of clean air and protected forests. They go on to state that environmentalists have defined themselves as for “nature” and against “people,” thus dooming their efforts to at best limited success and in any case ignoring the fact that

people are part of, not separate from, the rest of the planet. As well, environmentalists have frightened, depressed, and bored the public with their endless gloom and doom scenarios. In fact, there is every reason to look at global warming as an exciting opportunity for exuberant innovation and increased human mastery. The unfettered human spirit has risen to great deeds before, and it can do so again—if depressing environmental forecasters, interest groups holding on to their place in the old economy, and governments more interested in regulation than innovation just get out of the way.

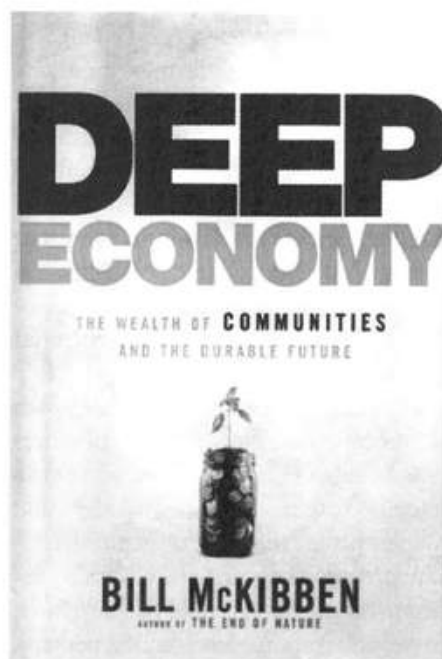
This is especially true of Americans, they argue. Environmentalists in particular and liberals in general have, as they write, “failed to speak to the *pursuit of uncommon greatness*, which is a fundamental aspect of the American character. Americans are motivated as individuals to seek their own unique purpose in life. To suggest that this drive is somehow anathema to community or social capital is to miss something fundamental about what it means to be ... an American.” This celebration of the individual is a crucial point for, as we shall see, *Deep Economy* is staunchly opposed to the environmental and emotional effects of what it terms American “hyper-individualism.”

Before exploring McKibben's work, however, it is necessary to offer a brief

assessment of *Break Through*. On the one hand there is nothing exceptionable (if nothing particularly original) in pointing out that environmentalists need to offer hope as well as warnings, that environmental policies need to take into account human needs as well as owls and redwoods, or that environmentalists (like Republicans, Marxists, feminists and the AFL-CIO) can be mistaken, hypocritical, or self-serving. When Nordhaus and Shellenberger criticize conservationist opposition to wind farms off Martha's Vineyard, or narrow-sightedness in failing to integrate environmental policies into more comprehensive economic plans, or belief that science alone without serious political debate can determine social policies, they make solid points.

What is not at all solid, however, is their suggestion that these are new points—for virtually all of them have been made by other environmentalists. Environmentalism, like Judaism, socialism, and vegetarianism, is made up of a whole gamut of different orientations. The environmental justice movement has criticized the conservationist focus on nature over people, for example, and the websites of most of the major environmental organizations have ideas about integrating environmental changes in ways that benefit the economy as a whole.

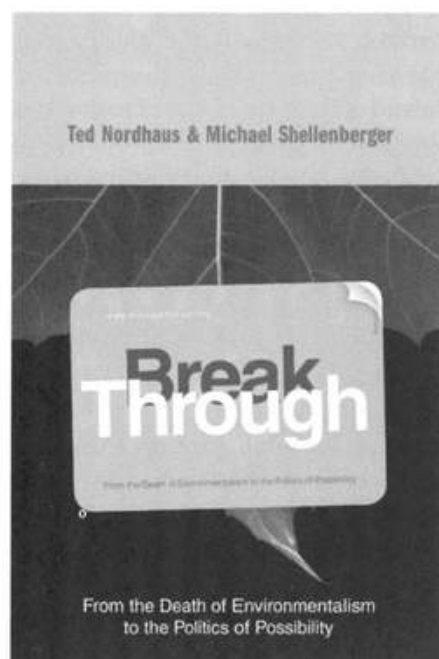
Much more serious, however, are *Break Through*'s two fundamental, and fundamentally mistaken, premises. The idea that environmentalism is always a consequence of modernity is simply dead wrong. There are environmental themes in indigenous religions and peasant communities, which use combinations of myth, tradition, and community involvement to manage and protect natural resources. There is environmentalism in the Third World today: sixty thousand organic farmers in Bangladesh who know that chemicalized agriculture makes people sick; the Sarvodaya movement of Sri Lanka, which has struggled for decades for economic development that serves human interests rather than the Gross National Product; local fisherman warning that mega-trawlers will destroy fish stock; villagers telling highly trained engineers not to build big dams. In many



cases it is those without formal training, the “unmodern” types, who have been correct. To ignore the ecological values and environmental activism of the “poor” and “undeveloped” is, intentional or not, crude cultural chauvinism. If the global scope of the present environmental crisis makes today’s environmental concern different from that of the past, it does not make it completely different. (More than two millennia ago Isaiah was critical of people who “join house to house, until there is room for no one but themselves.” Sound familiar?)

The second premise that Shellenberger and Nordhaus are working from is a rather simple-minded confidence that prosperity once achieved can never go away. The fact that the standard of living of the American working class has been (by various measures) flat or declining since the 1970s, or that a great deal of the globe’s post-World War II development is predicated on a soon-to-evaporate supply of cheap oil, does not figure into their calculations. Neither does the possibility that current Third World immiseration is in some ways caused by global capitalism, which destroys subsistence agriculture while propelling hundreds of millions into landless poverty.

The ideas of *Break Through* have achieved some notoriety. Polemics in which “all those other guys are well-intentioned but only we have the right idea” often have some appeal. Wouldn’t it be great if the



failures of the environmental movement are the fault of environmentalists—and not that of the power of global corporations, militaristic governments, and a population sadly addicted to consumerism?

But most important, wouldn’t it be wonderful if global warming, acid rain, species depletion, and all the rest could be solved without making any real change in the way we live? We can keep capitalism, the individual freedom to do practically anything we want, and the dominant values of our culture. We’ll just let ingenuity and some great big technological fixes take care of it. We put catalytic converters on cars, we took the lead out of gasoline, solar power just got a lot cheaper, we can do this. Cheer up. Think positive.

As much as I view *Break Through* as a thinly veiled apology for the status quo, I also wish its authors were correct. Surely we have a lot better shot at dealing with what we face if we can pretty much do the same kind of thing we’ve done before. It’s damn unlikely, but maybe there is a technical fix for global warming that will keep our other habits in place.

What’s the matter with that?

The matter, says Bill McKibben, is that alongside its truly catastrophic ecological effects, business as usual simply does not make people happy.

Many readers will know McKibben’s

first book, *The End of Nature*, which argued that human-made climate change spelled the end of the cultural idea of nature as a place or force separate from people. Since then his many writings have contrasted the information we get from television with what we get from nature, questioned the human value of technological advances, and argued that societies can achieve a good life on low consumption. Full disclosure requires me to share that he is an acquaintance of mine.

Deep Economy furthers many of McKibben's earlier themes, focusing them on a simple question: what is an economy for? His answer will resonate with anyone who has ever been taken with Doubters of Progress like Thoreau, Gandhi and E.F. Schumacher ("Small is beautiful"). We are now at the point when "more and better," which seemed to go so naturally together, have begun to separate. And this for three reasons: first, the seemingly effortless increases in production and consumption we've seen over the last sixty years were based on cheap energy, a one-time bioprize from fossil fuels. Oil, however, will only get more and more expensive, rendering our throwaway, long commuting, import-food-from-across-the-world economy more and more costly. Second, even if fossil fuels remain cheap, other resources—clean water and arable land, for example—simply cannot sustain prolonged growth on the American model. Too much water is wasted, and it's becoming scarce; too much land is overused and is becoming desert. If China and India become the new United States, the life-sustaining systems of the planet will simply break down. Third, all this consumption is not making us content. Thinking only of our own needs, desires, real estate, credit cards, and lifestyles, unconnected to other people outside of our nuclear family (and even that in a rather limited way), we have become increasingly depressed, anxious, drug-dependent, and cheerlessly promiscuous. By a whole series of psychological measures, each generation has more stuff and is less content than the one before.

McKibben asks us, therefore, to use less energy, travel less, eat local food, get to know our neighbors more, and exchange

labor rather than money. These changes—exemplified in local farmers' markets where food is fresh and people have ten times as many conversations as in supermarkets—will sustain the earth and our psyches both. We need to accept that industrial civilization has limits, and that human connection trumps gadgets and unlimited mobility. In community is ecology, but also intellectual creativity, and emotional meaning.

McKibben is too morally astute not to see the difference between telling a suburban American and a Chinese peasant to make do with less. He acknowledges that in some places "more" is still justified: education, running water, basic electricity, access to information, gender equality. But if Americans consume less—taking, perhaps, Europe as our model—that will leave biospheric room for the truly poor to improve. Even so, he argues—and in true McKibben fashion offers dozens of compelling, hopeful examples—there are many places where development can aim to sustain a decent life within existing communities rather than by creating American-style high consuming hyper-individualists.

* * *

Intellectually, morally, spiritually—I'm with McKibben. I've believed for years that the environmental crisis requires more than a technical quick fix and some economic innovation. It is, rather, a challenge to our entire civilization: philosophy, religion, economics, and our sense of our own identity. All these and more must shift if humanity is to be sustainable. McKibben, then, strikes me as the realist here, and not Nordhaus and Shellenberger, who want the reader to be content with some important policy shifts and confidence in the American can-do spirit.

But just because the changes McKibben advocates are so enormous—and so opposed by dominant economic and political structures—his answer may be too far out of reach. Once down the path of individualistic consumerism it may be too much for most people to return to a sense of community. In our response to global warming we might have to settle for much more efficient cars, much cleaner coal fired power plants, tax incentives for sustainable

energy, and less chemical/energy intensive agriculture. This is vastly less than McKibben's vision, but it might enable us to blunt the more extreme effects of global climate change and limp long until the next crisis.

If winters are warmer, some island nations drown and the storms are worse; if droughts get worse, ecological refugees stream across borders and tropical diseases march north and south; well, we'll just have to get used to it.

Between what we're willing and able to change and what we'd rather die than change we face the possible limits of our culture and our technology. Right now I don't know what's possible and ultimately neither do the authors of these books. As we confront the awesome scope of climate change we'd better start with this humbling admission, and with the fear it evokes. And we'd better be willing to take a long hard look at other people's ideas, even if they seem dead wrong. ■

Roger S. Gottlieb is professor of philosophy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Two of his recent books are A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and our Planet's Future and Joining Hands: Politics and Religion Together for Social Change.

RESPONSE TO GOTTLIEB

*by Ted Nordhaus and
Michael Shellenberger*

ROBERT GOTTLIEB ENDS his review of *Break Through* exhorting us to "take a long hard look at other people's ideas, even if they seem dead wrong." If only he had taken his own advice. From beginning to end, Gottlieb misses the point, not simply misunderstanding our book but outright misrepresenting it.

Gottlieb accuses us of "a rather simple-minded confidence that prosperity once achieved can never go away" when in fact we dedicate an entire chapter of our book to documenting the ways in which

Americans over the last three decades have become ever more insecure socially and economically even as they have become more affluent. Moreover, we explicitly reject the notion that progress and prosperity "can never go away" and criticize environmentalists for imagining that they could effectively advocate for environmental action without tending to the social, economic, cultural, and political conditions that make such action possible.

He further projects upon us his own "crude cultural chauvinism." We criticize environmentalists for conflating developed world environmentalism with social movements in the developing world that happen to have ecological elements but typically are centrally focused upon improving economic and social conditions. We contrast western conservationists who pay little attention to the macro drivers of Brazil's deforestation—debt, inequitable land distribution, and lack of economic development—with the martyred Amazonian activist Chico Mendes, who was first, foremost, and to the end a labor organizer whose primary battle with landowners was to defend the rights of rubber tappers to make a living from the forest. Similarly, the famous tree huggers of India were hugging trees to protect them from outside loggers because they wanted to log the trees themselves. Cultural chauvinism, on the other hand, suggests that there is a metaphysical and transcendent environmentalism linking wealthy environmentalists in the United States worried about global warming to indigenous people who are as often at war with nature as they are in harmony with it.

Finally, Gottlieb suggests that we argue that all we need do is wait for innovation and technological fixes like catalytic converters to fix global warming just as we have fixed past environmental problems. This is precisely the opposite of our argument. One of the central premises of our book is that global warming is a profoundly different problem, in scale and in kind, than past environmental problems and will demand of us profoundly different solutions. Carbon emissions will not be regulated away—they are too centrally connected to the very basic functioning of our economy and our societies. Global energy use will

double and probably triple over the next century as China, India, and the rest of the developing world make the long climb out of subsistence poverty that most Western environmentalists consider a birthright. This will be so no matter how much New England philosophy professors lecture the global poor about the emptiness of materialism and consumption and even if every American and every member of every other affluent society chooses to live like Saint McKibben.

Solving global warming will require us to invent and build an entirely new global energy economy and do so as quickly as possible. There will be great opportunity for human societies that take up this challenge and there is great danger should we fail to do so. Placing a vision of our collective future at the center of our politics—one that embraces human agency, ingenuity, and opportunity rather than hectoring Americans with visions of ecological apocalypse and moralizing against the evils of modernity—is what will be necessary to call Americans to this challenge. ■

Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger are chairman and president, respectively, of the Breakthrough Institute and co-authors of Break Through: From the Death of Environmentalism to the Politics of Possibility.

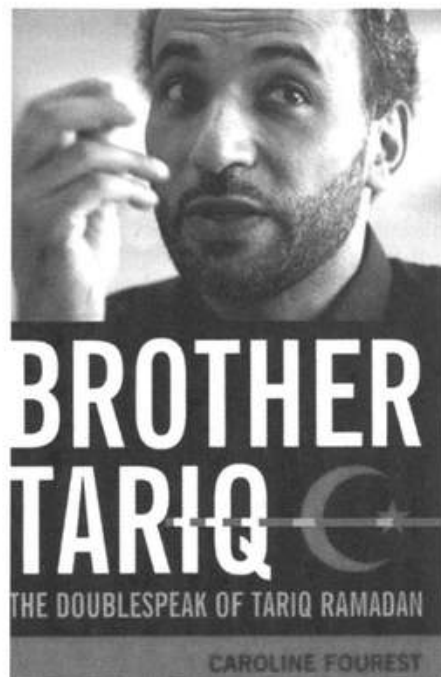
[BOOK]

FOR A TRUE ISLAM

BROTHER TARIQ: THE DOUBLESPEAK OF TARIQ RAMADAN, by Caroline Fourest
Encounter Books, January 2008

Review by Andrew Stallybrass

THE THESIS IS SIMPLY STATED, and is not wholly implausible: Tariq Ramadan, the charming, articulate and convincingly *médiatique* grandson of the Egyptian founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, is really a "Trojan horse." He talks genially and smilingly of moderation and an Islam compatible with Western, democratic values, but he really promotes a fundamentalist brand



of Islamism that is close to the most extreme and violent forms. Our fears are then stoked by the fact that Hamas, Al Qaeda, the Sudanese government, and even the Iranian regime are reputed to have had links with the Muslim Brotherhood. "His approach, seemingly moderate, succeeds in attracting more or less modern Muslims that he will gradually initiate into radicalism, and then fundamentalism, the environment that produces future terrorists," says journalist Caroline Fourest, in her book newly translated from the French.

Fourest offers her skills for the necessary "decoding of his message." But her book is a wearying wade through innuendo, condemnation by smear through tenuous links, and quotes removed from their context. "Tariq Ramadan can often claim that he is attacked on account of his family background or the people he is in contact with, rather than for what he says," Fourest says, yet this is exactly what she does for much of her book.

In writing about matters of faith and belief, it is hard to be neutral, and Fourest is not. Denis MacShane, a British Labour Member of Parliament, who graces the book with a foreword, notes, "Unlike Caroline Fourest, who is a devoutly militant atheist, I respect religious belief." As do I, so perhaps I should declare my colors: I am a Reformed variety of Christian, but active in interfaith dialogue. And I confess that I rather doubt whether a "devoutly militant atheist" is capable of providing us with a fair and rounded picture of a

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militant Muslim. I should further confess that I know Tariq and his brother Hani. At a conference that I organized a few years ago, I asked two imams present what their evaluation of Tariq was, in private and separately. They were in surprising and contradictory agreement. The harder-line imam called him "a dangerous reformer," the other told me, "I hope that I don't shock you if I say that I think that he may be the Martin Luther of Islam."

Again and again, Fourest condemns Ramadan for not being a Muslim liberal or a cultural Muslim, for not promoting and preaching "a progressive, enlightened Islam." Fourest quotes Ramadan as wanting to avoid "the creation of a second-rate Islam, an Islam without Islam"—and the implication is that this is exactly what she, the author, wants. She appears to criticize Ramadan for advocating "a form of progress that takes place within the framework of the sacred." But Ramadan is not, and has never pretended to be anything other than a fervent Muslim who, like many believers of other faiths as well, wants his faith to permeate society. The obsession with a privatized faith locked safely and discretely in the personal domain is a minority modern European obsession.

On Fourest's partial and selective

quoting, Ramadan seems to have much in common with many evangelical Christians and indeed Catholics. Ramadan, like many believers of other faiths, is against euthanasia, abortion, divorce, and doesn't approve of homosexuality or premarital sex.

Fourest talks with approval of "modern, liberal, rationalist and secular Islam." But these are all labels that Ramadan has never sought. It is not easy to stick our simple labels on him, but he claims to respect the rules of the European democratic system, and shows no signs of seeking to impose his views other than by argument. He

is more open to reason and more reasonable than some of my evangelical friends!

For example, in a recent article "Manifesto for a new 'We'" (the full version is available at www.tariqramadan.com), Ramadan says that "Millions of Muslims are, in fact, already proving every day that 'religious integration' is an accomplished fact, that they are indeed at home in the Western countries whose tastes, culture, and psychology they have made their own." But in the face of legitimate fears, Western Muslims must "develop a critical discourse that rejects the victim's stance, one that criticizes instead radical, literal, and/or cultural readings of the sources. In the name of the guiding principles of Islam, they must take a stand against, for instance, the use and misuse of their religion to justify terrorism, domestic violence, or forced marriage."

Of course, perhaps all this is just another example of the Ramadan doublespeak. But isn't it just possible that he actually means what he says?

Fourest's accusations of doublespeak are never easy to disprove, since any intelligent communicator tries to tailor his message for his audience—and there is nothing necessarily suspicious, underhanded or dishonest in this. It is simply a matter of using language, idioms, and images that

one's audience can understand. A nuclear physicist talks differently to fellow physicists than he does to the general public. MacShane notes, fairly, "Ramadan has had to act as the link between so many different worlds. Perhaps he is simply asked to do too much, or to say and do things he simply cannot say or do."

Tariq and Hani Ramadan can indeed both be criticized for suggesting that divine law is above the law of men. But the twentieth century gave us many examples of the iniquitous laws of men. The Nuremberg trials at the end of the Second World War reminded us of the limits to obedience to the laws of the Nazi state. Our conscience is, and must remain, a final arbiter of right and wrong. And for the believer, ideas of what is right and wrong will naturally be rooted in their faith.

"Britain gladly welcomed jihadists," Fourest claims, with a relentless coloring of her spectacles. This is how she describes then U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair's inclusion of Ramadan in an advisory committee on Muslim extremism, which was total folly for her, sheer blindness. Is it not also possible that Blair was better informed than her? The same applies to the prestigious post that Ramadan was offered at Notre Dame University in the United States. Fourest approves of the revocation of his visa two weeks before the Ramadan family's departure for the United States—the Ramadans' Geneva home was already emptied and their belongings were on the high seas. There was no possibility for an appeal of the decision, or any public explanation.

Throughout, there is a tiring shrillness of tone. Fourest is shouting at us. Former U.K. Prime Minister, Dame Margaret Thatcher, "the iron lady," is guilty of "transforming England into a nerve center of Islamism." Fourest implies that Ramadan falsely claims to be an imam or a theologian, when "he has no degree from Al-Azhar University." But Islam has little by way of standardized training for imams. Different European countries are now considering requiring some such standard training, and there is much to be said for it—but it is foreign to traditional Islam. Any local community can appoint its own imam without referring to any outside

authority. Fourest shows little understanding of the actual workings of Islam and its fundamentally unstructured nature. As a left-wing Frenchwoman, she doubtless places herself light years away from the Bush administration. But her obsession with structures and hierarchies strangely mirrors America's inability to come to terms with Al-Qaeda not as a Western, capitalist enterprise, run from the top down, but as an unstructured current of small groups sharing a common thinking.

Factual errors abound. The Geneva Islamic Center (where Hani Ramadan is director) is not, as Fourest says "just a stone's throw from the United Nations" but the other side of town, and in any case, so what? She repeats the ludicrous affirmation that "whatever happens, demography is on the side of the Muslims; a thousand years from now and Europe will be Muslim." This argument is more usually promoted by the racist right wing, and it totally ignores the fact that most Europeans of Muslim faith, or European residents from countries of Muslim culture, do not practice their faith, and that many "Muslims" are for better or for worse rapidly secularised by the surrounding culture: surely a fact that Fourest could be expected to rejoice in? Hafid Ouardiri is not the "rector of the Geneva Mosque" but was its spokesman, and he is not and never has been "close to the Wahhabite Saudis." Nasr Abu Zeid and Ibtihal Younes were not forced to divorce because of his apostasy, but had to leave Egypt for the Netherlands to avoid being compelled to divorce.

Fourest repeatedly quotes unnamed secret service sources that have their doubts about the Ramadans. The Ramadan brothers "have even been suspected of inciting hatred or acts of terrorism." And "there was good reason to believe that the Geneva Islamic Center—of which Tariq Ramadan is still an administrator—served as a European stopping-off point for militants of the FIS and even the GIA" (two of the violent Algerian Islamic movements). "The Ramadan brothers ... have quite frequently been suspected of maintaining cordial relations with Islamists involved in terrorist activities." "Do we really need to show that the Center is a meeting place for militant terrorists ... is it not enough to

demonstrate that it is unquestionably the hub of Islamism in Europe?" According to Fourest, "it is undeniable that the Geneva Center is spreading a radical and dangerous Islam"—but this is exactly what the Ramadans deny. The simple fact is that there is absolutely no proof that she can offer, and none has ever been presented in a court of law. A founding value of *our* system is that people are innocent until proved guilty. Her worst accusations are based on such suspicions, not on facts or proof.

Fourest implies that it is somewhat regrettable that the police "are not empowered to lock up preachers just because they preach fundamentalism." But she nowhere discusses the difficult and delicate challenge facing our liberal democracies: the trade-off between long-fought-for traditions of freedom and the new fear of terrorism and the longing for security. The Ramadans may well be under surveillance, given the fears that they arouse—the Swiss secret service, at least, has covered itself in ridicule, recruiting an unstable ex-criminal to infiltrate the Geneva Islamic Center, who then converted to Islam, and publicly apologised to Hani Ramadan for the harm that he tried to do. He alleged that his handlers tried to get him to plant incriminating documents amongst Hani Ramadan's papers.

If Tariq Ramadan remains silent, he gives credit to Fourest's accusations, and if he denies such claims, his "denials are too vehement to be credible." This is trial by relentless innuendo. Ramadan allows for conversions from Islam, condemns capital and corporal punishments—but according to Fourest, only under pressure from his critics. Tails I win, heads you lose! He is presented both as a brilliant propagandist and as something of a failure. It's rather hard to see how he can be both! At the time of their father's death, the Geneva Islamic Center, she claims, had "twenty dues-paying members and a public of roughly 500." Are they really such a serious threat to the peace of the world?

Fourest concludes her book: "Like his father, Tariq has understood that the future of Islamism is to be played out in the West." It may well be that the future of Islam as a whole will be greatly influenced by the way it comes to be played out in the West, by Muslims who have learned to live their

faith to the full, but as a minority, among other minorities, indeed where we are all members of minorities. Certainly that is my hope. My knowledge of the man and his work lead me to believe that Tariq Ramadan may have an important role to play in this evolution, which itself is vitally important for the twenty-first century. The two imams that I spoke with, as well as Tony Blair, seem to think so too. I'm not alone in trusting the man and his motives. Books like this will do little to help this necessary evolution. Islam, and the Ramadans, needs to be confronted with a vigorous debate of ideas. But the debate and discussion can and should be honest. If Islam is to evolve, it needs friends. This interaction is indispensable, and democrats should have faith that European Muslims will recognize and embrace the best of Europe while also making valuable contributions to repairing the worst. ■

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[BOOK]

SOULFUL AT THE START

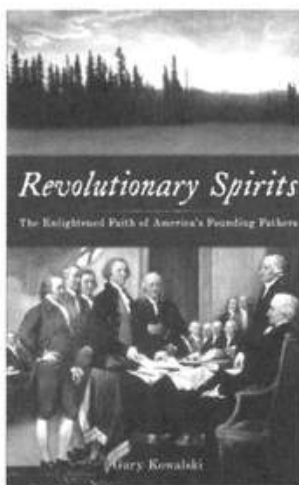
REVOLUTIONARY SPIRITS: THE ENLIGHTENED FAITH OF AMERICA'S FOUNDING FATHERS

by Gary Kowalski, Bluebridge, 2008

Review by Marcia Beauchamp

AS WE DIGEST YET ANOTHER presidential campaign in which the role of religious faith in the lives of the candidates takes a central role, Gary Kowalski's portrait of the faith of the most conspicuous Founders comes as a helpful historical reminder. *Revolutionary Spirits: The Enlightenment Faith of America's Founding Fathers* surveys the religious views of six of the best-known and most frequently invoked of the Founders of the United States of America (Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Thomas

Paine, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison), and finds their spiritual leanings grounded in the Enlightenment ideals of reason, science, and progress. Through anecdotes, samples from handwritten letters, reports of those who knew them, and a bit of careful inference, Kowalski shows that they were neither the atheists some of their contemporaries accused them of being, nor were they orthodox Christians who sought to establish a Christian nation, as some claim today.



Kowalski, a Unitarian Universalist minister, Harvard Divinity School graduate, and author of *The Souls of Animals and Science and the Search for God*, combines history, biography, theology, science, and philosophy to tell the story of not only the faith of these Founders, but also the social and cultural milieu that gave shape to their ideas and their lives. Like Unitarian Universalists today, the Founders, as Kowalski describes them, would agree that the sources of their faith were the "Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science and warn us against the idolatries of the mind and spirit."

According to Kowalski, each was a liberal in the truest sense, "one who cherishes liberty," and all were progressives who believed "in the doctrine of progress." Theirs was a faith that was practical and "natural," in the sense that the natural world was the place where each of them found evidence of divine intelligence. Each in his way was captivated by the scientific discoveries and theories of the day, and each participated in the public discourse of science within his specific area of interest. Predictably, this affected their faith stances, and Kowalski claims the Founders were "influenced less by biblical religion than by the intellectual awakening known as the Enlightenment."

Certainly, as Kowalski reminds us, the Enlightenment project in Europe and the Deist theology with which it was related

became associated with "a cerebral, cold-blooded philosophy," but he claims that in America it was "seldom atheistic: more often it was soulful, earnest, and intensely moral." Specifically, Kowalski asserts, "[The Founders'] enlightened faith is key to understanding the spiritual identity of the country." While this seems most certainly true, it is only one half of the story.

The ideal of religious freedom—not mere tolerance—first arrived on American soil in Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1632 with the appearance of a young Puritan preacher named Roger Williams. Williams was called to serve in a parish by the Colony's governor, John Winthrop, who was a staunch defender of the Puritan message. However, upon arrival, Williams almost immediately began questioning the forced conformity in matters of faith that was central to the colony's attempts at creating cohesion, and presumably safety, in very uncertain circumstances. Over 100 years before the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom was passed, Roger Williams wrote:

Sixthly, it is the will and command of God that (since the coming of his Son the Lord Jesus) a permission of the most paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or antichristian consciences and worships, be granted to all men in all nations and countries; and they are only to be fought against with that sword which is only (in soul matters) able to conquer, to wit, the sword of God's Spirit, the Word of God.

Some scholars believe that John Locke may have read this treatise written by Roger Williams while he was back in England negotiating the charter for the colony of Rhode Island—land Williams had purchased "from love" from the native people of the area. That was another of Williams' shocking perspectives on Massachusetts Bay Colony: he believed the land on which the colony was founded belonged to the

native people living there, not to the King of England who ratified its charter.

In contrast to the ideal of full religious liberty originating from Enlightenment principles, Williams derived his notion of freedom from the Protestant belief in each human's direct relationship with the divine. After seeing the ravages of religious wars and persecutions during his own childhood in England, Williams could not believe that the God of his Christian Bible could sanction either bloodshed or hypocrisy in exchange for a vain confession of faith. Williams called for "a hedge of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world." Williams's defense of free conscience also had secular influences—as a young man he was a clerk to Sir Edward Coke, an early defender of citizens' rights and a challenger of the tyranny of monarchy.

It is true that the faith of the Founders Kowalski describes is a key to understanding America's spiritual identity, but so is the faith of the first Puritan settlers, a faith that gave rise to mottos such as "united we stand, divided we fall." The cohesion of the congregation of the faithful, Winthrop's "city on a hill," was meant to be a beacon to the world of what a community united could accomplish even in harsh conditions.

The relationship between these two contributions to our collective spiritual identity has been, and continues to be, evident. It is codified in the Constitution and Bill of Rights: one provides for our common compact, and one for the protection of individual rights. Even the first clause of the First Amendment, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," applied only to the federal government at the time of its ratification. Although Madison advocated extending the protection for religious liberty to the states, this compromise allowed the states that still had tax supports for religious institutions to avoid disestablishment until ratification of the 14th Amendment—after the Civil War.

Kowalski makes several references to the failure of the Founders to directly address the issue of slavery as they crafted the Constitution, and their hope that future generations would be better able to deal

THE TORAH IN THE PALM OF THE HAND

Ten commandments in every breath
Mt. Sinai in a bump;
and forty years of wandering
in one sad man's eye.

The hidden tree is in the yard.
The fallen leaf says kaddish.
The grass waves a thousand tongues
in liturgy of the lawn.

That you can open your eyes is torah
what you make of it is mishnah:
what you add to it, gemara.
Centuries of wisdom could not lift your arm.

You are going where you have come from,
lay your skin by your clothes.
Open your wine cup wide
high as the roof of your house
and welcome the rain.

—Rodger Kamenetz

with it, but he does not explicitly connect this failure to their practicality and belief in progress. Unfortunately, even after a bloody Civil War that ended slavery as an institution, it took the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. to demand that the time was *now*, over the well-meaning advice of many white liberals to wait for a better time, to address the legacy of inequity that still existed for Blacks in America in the 1950s and 1960s. It is interesting to note that Gandhi inspired King's activism, and the success of the movement he led was in large part thanks to the organizational strength of the Black Churches. Rather than Enlightenment principles such as Reason, King, according to his wife, believed that "love is the eternal religious principle." King's contribution to the history of our collective spiritual identity reveals the deeply important role that emotional religious expression has played in making real the promise of freedom that was written into the Constitution.

Each generation should take George Mason's advice and return to our fundamental principles to assess their import for

our times. Revisiting the faith of our Founders is a crucial exercise in that process. However, their faith is only one facet in the total "spiritual identity" of our nation (and the individual and collective identities of the Founders), as they knew full well. They believed that a lively multiplicity of faith perspectives (as well as those of no faith) in the public square would insure against any one perspective gaining tyrannical power over the rest. More crucial even than remembering their faith stance is to remember their conviction that freedom of conscience is a human right that precedes any other right, including any the state itself would claim. In the words of the Williamsburg Charter of 1988, "Rights are best guarded and responsibilities best exercised when each person and group guards for all others those rights they wish guarded for themselves." ■

Marcia Beauchamp is the former coordinator of Religious Liberty Programs for the First Amendment Center, and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco.

[BOOK]

MARK LILLA'S POLITICAL THEOLOGY

THE STILLBORN GOD: RELIGION, POLITICS,
AND THE MODERN WEST

by Mark Lilla, Knopf, 2007

Review by Eugene B. Borowitz

TWO FORCES HAVE LONG contended for supremacy in society: religion and politics. Monotheism exacerbated this struggle in the West as it intensified the power of faith and sporadically engendered zealotry and fanaticism. Mark Lilla's stimulating new book *The Stillborn God* retells the story of thinkers' efforts to understand and tame these contesting dominions. Lilla deftly yet deeply reviews the critical books and abstract arguments that have guided discussion of the topic over the years and often still do. His concern is theory, but he brings a human touch to his analysis of the grand ideas that have proposed—but



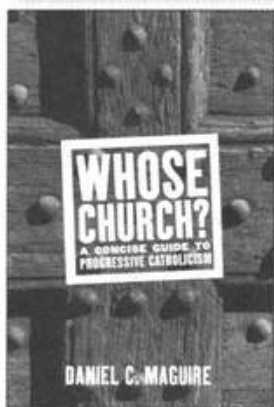
WHOSE TORAH? is a brilliant and groundbreaking new book in which noted scholar Rabbi Rebecca Alpert discusses what the Torah actually says about sex, war, poverty, the environment, and other major contemporary issues.

"No one has more deftly woven threads of feminism, Jewish wisdom, and progressive politics into a single fabric than Rebecca Alpert."

—RABBI ARTHUR WASKOW, founder and director of the Shalom Center

"Gives compelling voice to the values and politics of progressive Jews who care about the fate of the world and everyone in it."

—ADRIENNE RICH, poet and 2006 winner of the National Book Foundation's Medal of Distinguished Contribution to American Letters



WHOSE CHURCH? is a pithy and provocative new book by famed social ethicist Dan Maguire, who presents a progressive Catholic take on sex, social justice, and the environment.

"With a broad and deep knowledge of the Catholic tradition, a deft creativity, a twinkle in his eye, and a scintillating writing style, Daniel Maguire maintains that the Catholic moral tradition can and should be a very progressive tradition."

—REVEREND DOCTOR CHARLES CURRAN, renowned Catholic moral theologian



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regularly failed—to settle this millennial conflict, and that lead us to our current theoretical impasse.

His small book pivots on what he calls “The Great Separation,” the Hobbes-inspired notion that “church and state” must be kept apart if we are to contain human brutishness—what Lilla in other contexts connects with the Gnostics’ itch to work a radical cure on this sick world. Despite his concentration on theory, Lilla never forgets the reality behind this problem: the wars of religion which for sixty years after the birth of Protestantism swept across much of Europe. Faith as a motive for inflicting human suffering seemed so self-refuting a notion that the daring call for a wall between church and state won many adherents. Writers are often so eager to glorify the post-Renaissance, early-Enlightenment empowerment of the human spirit on its own that they slide over the negative impetus to this unprecedented political arrangement, but not Lilla. The Jewish heart, with its old scars from this era of ghettoization and other forms of persecution, is particularly grateful for Lilla’s emphasis on the political effect of the desire to relieve peoples’ suffering. It knows that the daring idea of citizenship indifferent to church membership made possible the emancipation of our people after 1500 years of pariah status in Europe.

Lilla’s impressive parade of the early separationists leads him to what many readers will surely find an uncommon shift of direction. He acknowledges that one might well follow what he calls the Anglo-American (practical) development of this grand idea, that is, how the great American “experiment,” as he regularly terms it, has, in fact worked out. However, he is neither a political scientist nor a philosophical pragmatist. Rather, he seeks an encompassing theory of human self-government (in effect, an ahistoric “grand narrative,” just what many postmodernists have come to disparage), and therefore turns his attention to the great nineteenth and early twentieth century German theoreticians in this field. He first leads us along Kant’s rationalistic path of state glorification and then up the mental heights of Hegel’s expansive apotheosis of the nation as we tremblingly

get glimpses of the chasm of Nazism opening ahead.

In contrast to the many writers who make bumbling reference to the Hebrew Bible or its rabbinic development, Lilla’s occasional comments about premodern Judaism are quite sure-handed. That, however, hardly prepares us for what now follows. Lilla breathtakingly insists that the German rationalistic effort to move beyond Kant and Hegel, and the subsequent post-World War I collapse of the old adoration of the mind importantly involved two Jewish theoreticians, Hermann Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig. (He also briefly discusses a third Jew, though one of a later period, Ernst Bloch, author of *The Principle of Hope*, an unrepentant Stalinist who had no use for Judaism.)

Lilla turns to Cohen and Rosenzweig because he believes they remedied what he considers the ultimate source of religion as a social pathogen, its notion of revelation—specifically its faith that we can know verbatim what God wants us to do—what he more expansively terms the “nexus” between God and “man” (Lilla unapologetically uses sexist language throughout the book). That is, the One, Absolute Power of the Universe relates to people by speech—revelation. Closely related to this teaching is the notion of redemption—that this revealed teaching instructs us how to bring humankind to a trans-historic realm of goodness. The combination of the two ideas has critical consequences. Knowing what God absolutely wants people to do authorizes us to do Whatever-is-Required for we are then acting on the basis of unimpeachable Authority. Moreover, the goal of such action is the greatest possible good, for God demands that we bring about the realization of God’s rule in all human affairs. Either of these doctrines might well

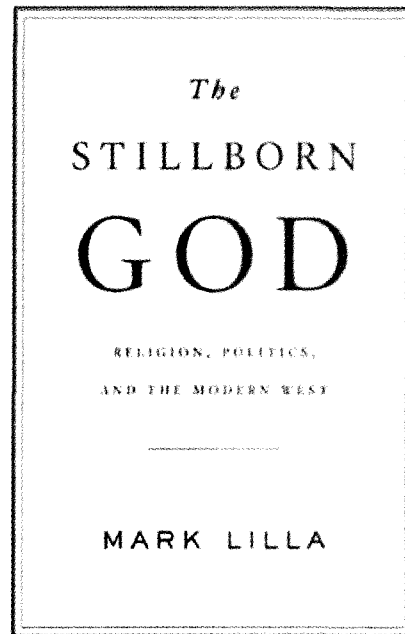
precipitate fanaticism but, particularly when united and catalyzed by the human satanic will to power, they can be explosively lethal. Thus the critical problem of Western political theology may be said to be how to “people-proof” the biblical religions’ views of revelation and redemption.

Cohen’s pre-World War I revival of Kantianism reversed the traditional nexus

between God and people. With modernity equated with rationality, it was simply illogical to believe that we could rationally know a unique reality called “God” who/which utterly transcended us but, in a further nonrational manner, communicated verbally with people. Cohen’s ingenious solution was to turn God into the most fundamental idea a rational person required since the

unity of consciousness obviously overrode the three discrete modes of thinking—science, ethics, and aesthetics—that Kantians understood rational minds exhibited. (It should be emphasized that in Cohen’s neo-Kantianism, ethics is the dominant mode of human rationality and thus the major expression of the God-human nexus.) Similarly, redemption could not rationally be the traditional messianic break with history to a new, post-historic order but only the always approaching but never achieved fulfillment of all our ethical-rational aspirations.

Lilla concedes that Cohen’s notion of God as our root concept and its ethically dominant reinterpretations of revelation and redemption might well inhibit peoples’ Gnostic itch to create the absolutely good social order. But this is precisely the God Lilla calls “stillborn.” It could not, he contends, ever create much conviction in people nor answer why anyone should ever be a Jew rather than a mythical neo-Kantian person-in-general. Even if those



theoretical objections to Cohen's neo-Kantian Judaism were debatable, the carnage of World War I effectively refuted the idea that people are or long can be rational. Thus, though Cohen's ethical revision of revelation and redemption may have theoretically resolved the problem of religion's proclivity to create zealots, Lilla believes that people cannot long take his rationalistic Judaism very seriously.

By contrast, Lilla interprets what he modestly calls Rosenzweig's "enigmatic" great book, *The Star of Redemption*, more positively. Rosenzweig simply asserts God's reality because death clarifies that we are not permanent and the world will survive us. But, taken on its own, the world is value-free. Therefore, there must be a third reality—God—which, as the Bible teaches, establishes the value-full reality that all human beings experience in the world. Revelation, the creative interaction—nexus—between God and people, happens, in grand ways once, in small ways today. But Rosenzweig ingeniously avoids the perils of our seeking to redeem the world right now by splitting the task between Judaism and Christianity. Jews, having the Written and Oral Laws God gave at Sinai, withdraw from history to live in relative isolation according to this revelation, thereby safeguarding the eternal truth until the End of Days. By contrast, he envisions Christianity as having dedicated itself to the redemptive task of converting the world to God's service and thereby inevitably compromising its biblical faith by its transformation in the cultures it infiltrates. Together then, Judaism and Christianity, in eternal difference, collaboration, and conflict, move toward the redemption neither can achieve alone but both anticipate. While Rosenzweig's God might well elicit more conviction than Cohen's God-idea and, in the process, erect serious safeguards against Jewish fanaticism by its redefined notions of revelation and redemption, Lilla judges Judaism's corollary retreat from history too monastic a regimen to ever become widely acceptable.

That, and some rueful pages on our present floundering, is about as far as Lilla can take his elegant analysis of our Western great-book/grand-theory efforts to defuse the ever present danger of religious

fanaticism. But what might have he discovered if, instead, he had explored what liberal Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish believers had learned from living, as Americans have, in a society still experimenting with a strong-ish legal tradition of separating church and state?

I shall say something about the Christian development below but my primary purpose here is to say something about how believing non-Orthodox Jews have largely come to affirm revelation and redemption in ways that make liberal Jewish zealotry most unlikely.

To begin with, Lilla, in the course of his otherwise astute treatment of Cohen and Rosenzweig, misses two developments in later Jewish life which are critical to his theme. The first of these has to do with Cohen's legacy. Lilla is correct in his judgment that Cohen's God did not long evoke great conviction among liberal Jews though there are, of course, still believers in Jewish philosophic rationalism in our community. But Cohen's teaching that universalistic ethics is the heart of Jewish belief is close to being a dogma among us. It is the reason why, believers or not, an uncommon proportion of Jews vote in American elections and why, more astonishingly, despite their high economic status and the leadership Jews have given to neo-conservatism, they persist in not "voting their pocketbooks." It is also the reason that, despite the Law, *pace* Rosenzweig, feminine clergy are now widely accepted in the Jewish community and much of what used to be called "modern Orthodoxy" has sought justification for women's study of rabbinic texts and increased leadership roles in their community. That, too, is why almost all contemporary teachers of Kabbalah have abandoned the Zohar's classic teaching of women's association with evil in the universe and the inferiority of gentile souls. Cohen's God-concept may not inspire many Jews today but most Jews nonetheless have adopted his teaching that ethics is the essence of all worthwhile religions. That belief, to put it mildly, is not a likely foundation for Jewish political fanaticism.

Similarly, what Lilla misses in Rosenzweig's reinstatement of God's revelation is that it is contentless, that all God gives to us is Presence and the sensitive human

beneficiary of that Presence then turns that meeting into specific laws or poetry or story. That is why most Jews today find the Bible so palpably stated in the language and idiom of its culture, even occasionally giving its revised versions of tales told by nearby idolatrous communities. The authority of the One, Real, God of the Universe stands behind the Bible, as many of us know today when we open our hearts to God's Presence beyond the text. Rosenzweig's theory of contentless revelation makes it improbable for anyone to say "God said so" and not be de-fanaticized by our immediately translating this into "as I, or some ancient tradition, perceive it." This God-human nexus cannot guarantee that no liberal Jewish believer will ever become a religious zealot, but it certainly rejects the absolutism that normally underlies crusades.

Rosenzweig's own political safeguard, as we have seen, came from exiling the Jews from present-day history. That makes it all the more unfortunate that Lilla only discusses Martin Buber in terms of his pre-*I and Thou* days as an emotive, mystic nationalist. The mature Buber turned his back on the solipsism of his prior teaching when, about the same time as Rosenzweig's great book appeared, he published his small but path-breaking work on dialogue, *I and Thou*. Buber's independent version of contentless revelation not only did not keep him from active participation in political life, but impelled him to it, first as a leader of religious socialism in Weimar Germany and then, most audaciously, as an advocate of a bi-national Arab-Jewish state in Palestine. Lilla's attention to classic single books—though he often quotes from others of his chosen authors' publications—may have diverted his attention from Buber. *I and Thou*, for all its universal genius, is only a treatment of relationships, climaxing in its third part in the nexus-encounter with the incomparable One (who never reverts to a dialogical "it"), God, the Eternal Thou. To see how this plays out with nations and in history Lilla would have had to discuss, for biblical times, books like *Moses*, *The Prophetic Faith*, and *The Kingdom of God*, or for contemporary history, the speeches contained in books like *Israel and the World*. He might not

have found a tidy doctrine there. He would, however, have seen the political implications of realizing that the Eternal Thou is present in every genuine encounter and that people ought to live by its corollary commandment: try never to treat "the other" as an "it." As my dear friend Steven Schwarzschild once admitted, despite his staunch intellectual adherence to the neo-Kantianism of Hermann Cohen, he knew of no one whose politics during the hellish decades of his lifetime he more agreed with than those of Martin Buber.

If Buber is the great missing voice of twentieth century Jewish political theology then surely his somewhat later Protestant counterpart is Reinhold Niebuhr. Again, no single book gives us his political theology but no mid-twentieth century voice more clearly articulated what Christian faith demanded of those who brought their religiosity into the public square. His version of the Jewish contentless revelation was summed up in his epigram, "We must take the Bible seriously but not literally," in itself a great deterrent to religious fanaticism. He amplified this stand in two other pertinent theses. The greatest danger to democracy, he asserted—one that he

exemplified by refusing to become an ally with communists on any public issue—was seeking to bring The Absolute (in any of its forms) into political affairs. And its corollary was the need for his fellow neo-liberal believers to never forget the central teaching of Christian ethics, that pride in our accomplishments or character is the abiding, pervasive sin of humankind. These critical stands may not qualify as an academically worthy political theology but they go to the heart of what believers must affirm and do lest they become their generation's zealots.

Can the contemporary versions of the post-liberal faiths of Buber and Niebuhr sustain the religious conviction Lilla found so missing in the "stillborn" Gods of universalistic rationalists like the Protestant Ernst Troeltsch and the Jewish Hermann Cohen? Sociologists tell us that the evidence about the groups most likely to espouse such beliefs today is not encouraging. Mainline Protestant denominations are continually losing members and their Jewish counterparts face a diminishing involvement with each younger cohort. The researchers also report, contrastingly, that doctrinal and demanding Christian churches are growing

significantly, although in this regard, the same is not true in the Jewish community. Perhaps Jews differ in this because of the American Jewish proclivity to reserve one's right to think for oneself regardless of what sort of synagogue one joins. We shall have to wait and see how much and what sort of conviction the current wave of Jewish spirituality engenders. The large numbers of Jews involved in synagogues which welcome intermarried families do provide a basis for enthusiasm about the fate of Judaism in our time. But the research unambiguously indicates that the present gains come at the cost of any significant Jewish future. Against these lachrymose statistics Jewish counter-wisdom suggests that, as Simon Rawidowicz argued in his essay of two generations ago, "The Ever Dying People," the salient fact about Jewish existence over the years has been that, against all ancient prognostications and contemporary nay saying, the people of Israel lives. ■

Eugene B. Borowitz teaches education and Jewish religious thought at HUC-JIR, New York. He recently authored, with Francis Schwartz, A Touch of the Sacred, a Theologian's Informal Guide to Jewish Belief (Jewish Lights).

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WHAT'S SO FUNNY ABOUT A DEAD TERRORIST?

JEFF DUNHAM: SPARK OF INSANITY
Image Entertainment, 2007

Review by Paul Lewis

WHAT CAN WE MAKE OF a comic video clip that is accessed over 28 million times in four months? Following the broadcast of Jeff Dunham's "Achmed, the Dead Terrorist" on Comedy Central last fall, it was released as part of the "Spark of Insanity" DVD, posted on YouTube, and viewed this many times between September 29, 2007 and the end of January 2008. Not only viewed but commented on by about 39,000 visitors to the site. While it would take a team of critics to read through all the responses, a brief review suggests that most are appreciative: "lol" appears frequently as do favorite quotes from the act.

Achmed's absurdly unthreatening appearance suggests that many viewers recommend the clip because it both amuses and soothes. Little more than a redecorated Halloween skeleton, Achmed is dummy short and decked out with a thin, long beard and turban made out of underpants. His remarkably expressive but also hilarious bug eyes alternate between staring fiercely and darting back and forth to emphasize a shift in his focus. His bushy eyebrows move up and down as he issues his commands. And his arms and legs dangle and shake loosely as his torso moves. Asked early on to say what kind of terrorist he is, the puppet replies, "A terrifying terrorist." But all of his attempts to scare the "infields" fall flat, and his repeated exclamations of "Silence, I kill [keel] you" become more shrill and receive louder laughter from the studio audience with each iteration.

Insecure enough to ask Dunham whether he is frightened yet, Achmed is, then, a pathetically ineffective image of radical Jihadism. A suicide bomber whose fuse went off in four seconds rather than thirty minutes, he is confused about whether he is

dead or alive. "I need some ligaments," he admits as Dunham lifts him up and tries to adjust his rattling bones, but he also says, "I feel fine. It's a flesh wound." Finally convinced that he is dead, Achmed eyes the audience, looking for his seventy-two virgins and complaining that many of them seem to be "ugly ass guys." "If this is paradise," he whines, "I've been screwed."

As the act goes on, Achmed starts to tell jokes, some not particularly PC, about Clay Aiken, Lindsay Lohan, Jews and Catholic priests—all the while laughing along with the audience. "I told a joke," he says triumphantly. After a particularly offensive wisecrack, he exclaims, "I'm killing, so to speak," an expression that highlights his utter harmlessness.

Though it's entertaining a large number of Americans, the act is far from universal in its appeal. As a richly elaborated ethnic joke, Dunham's character could easily offend traditional and fundamentalist Muslims. With his scrawny beard and underpants-turban, Achmed is a clattering caricature. And, as if this weren't enough, in expressing his frustration, the puppet makes irreverent comments like "God damn it. Oh, oh. I mean Allah damn it."

The comic appeal in the United States of this diminutive terrorist whose greatest threat is an offensive joke suggests how much we have relaxed since the period immediately after 9/11. In the aftermath of the attacks, following a week or two in which joking seemed inappropriate to many, song and cartoon parodies directed at Osama bin Laden and the Taliban began to appear online, supplanting the virulent strain of anti-Bush satire in circulation pre-9/11.

The work of Ron Piechota—an amateur musician and songwriter who was inspired by a radio station's call for songs to put on a CD honoring twin tower survivors—is typical. An instant Internet hit, Piechota's "Fifty Ways to Kill Bin Laden" rewrote the Paul Simon classic around violent images of the enemy leader's termination ("Lop off his face, Grace.... Pop open his heart with a dart.... Just rip off his balls, Paul"), while his version of a Christmas song had "Bin Laden's head roasting on an open fire."

The shift from this angry and frightened first wave of dead-terrorist humor to the



Jeff Dunham with his "absurdly unthreatening" terrorist puppet.

milder Dunham routine invites two interpretations, each connected to a political stance at the center of the current election cycle. Republicans, whose stock-in-trade has been ginning up fear (think of those pre-Election Day terror alerts), could say that the popularity of the Achmed clip suggests that we are less anxious and militant than we need to be. By reducing the image of the terrorist bomber to that of a limp, leering, almost charming puppet, the act can be seen as appealing to a desire for distraction and denial.

And yet, as the Bush administration has demonstrated, by narrowing options to fight or flight, war or surrender, too much fear can lead to poor decision-making. To the extent that "Achmed, the Dead Terrorist" helps us relax, one could argue, it contributes to exactly what we have long needed: a mood in which a more balanced approach—including an emphasis on international law enforcement, cooperation with allies, domestic security, and global outreach—can gain support. There was a time when a president, unlike the current "decider," insisted that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Perhaps Achmed's popularity and President Bush's low approval ratings are part of the same shift in public opinion. ■

Paul Lewis, the author of *Cracking Up: American Humor in a Time of Conflict*, writes about humor for *Tikkun*.

THE CONTEST AND THE SPECTACLE

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ahead of Clinton nationally by 52 to 33% among black voters. But after Clinton turned negative, Obama regularly won 90% or more of the black vote."

Racialization culminated in the Reverend Wright explosion. In discussing this incident, I want to make perfectly clear that I am referring not to the reality of Wright's life and achievements, but rather to the media spectacle that the connections between Obama and Wright provoked. Although Obama responded to the controversy with a brilliant speech (March 18, 2008) that spoke equally to blacks and disadvantaged whites, the aftermath demonstrated how impossible it would be for Obama to avoid racial politics. That this was not merely the result of the Clintons' strategy became clear when Wright appeared at the National Press Club on April 28. Considering the course of events overall, one might describe Wright as Obama's unconscious. While Obama presented himself as post-racial, Wright's apparently impulsive and unrestrained eruption evoked the blackness that every American fears lays behind the mask of whiteness that middle class blacks routinely wear.

According to many reports, there was "inexplicable" laughter, for example when Wright was asked about patriotism, at the Press Club appearance. If these reports are true, the laughter was the predominantly white audience egging Wright on (even though the audience was mostly Obama supporters). As excerpted by the media, the Wright performance was embarrassing, including, for example, letting the honkies in on supposed secrets of black culture, like "the dozens." The opening scene of Ellison's *Invisible Man* takes place in the deep South: two black youths forced to fight each other to exhaustion for the amusement of the jeering white crowd. At the National Press Club Wright seemed to bask in Obama's light, while letting America know what a fraud these Harvard "Negroes" are.

Just as the Wright incident represented an eruption from the deepest well-springs of African American history, so a driving theme in Hillary Clinton's post-Iowa campaign became the solidarity of women, the widespread conviction that Hillary was the victim of sexism and that someone entitled

to a prize had been unfairly cut back, deprived, restricted, and by a man. Of course, more than this was involved. The decline of the economy, the shift in the electorate's preoccupations from Iraq to pocketbook issues, the rising price of oil and Hillary's well-known self-image as a "fighter" all helped her campaign. So too did the Clintons' genius at simultaneously obfuscating and guiding public opinion, the media's interest in keeping the race going, and strong distrust of Obama—perhaps racist, perhaps not—in western Pennsylvania, Ohio and Appalachia. Nonetheless it is hard not to see that the emotional core of Hillary's quixotic drive to the endline, as well as the money and the votes, came from white women's sense of solidarity with her. Like the Wright protest against universalism and "assimilation," women's identification with Clinton arose from a genuine injustice, namely sexism. Nevertheless, the psychologies of the two protest movements were different. The feminist psychology that underlay the Clinton campaign, a psychology whose main spokespeople were Robin Morgan and Gloria Steinem, was a psychology of entitlement, a rage at being simultaneously idealized and thwarted. The Clinton campaign rode that wave of righteousness and anger, carefully titrated for maximum political effect. The Wright eruption, at least as exemplified in Wright's own appearance, came straight from the id, unmediated by any strategists, and it reflected the humiliation and self-abasement that accompanied hundreds of years of slavery.

Difficult as it will be for Obama to transcend the racial politics signified by his relation to Wright, his campaign is premised on his effort to do so. At the present writing, this is not the case with Hillary Clinton's supporters, so it may be worth further investigating the basis of her support. On the core issue of America's place in the world, she was the most conservative Democrat running for president. Not only did she consistently defend her vote in Iraq, explaining that Saddam Hussein was a "megalomaniac," she also defended her vote against the Levin amendment (which would have required Bush to get congressional approval for the war, failing a UN resolution) and for the Kyle-Lieberman amendment, which authorized the use of "military instruments"

in Iran. In her last debate she called for a Sunni-based NATO meant to encircle Iran and threaten it with "massive retaliation" and "obliteration." These positions were so at odds with the Democratic rank and file that they were widely taken as aimed at the general election, except for the last proposal, which was assumed to be aimed at the upcoming West Virginia and Kentucky primaries.

If Hillary Clinton's politics do not explain her appeal to Democratic women, what then of her life story? Clinton's father, Hugh, was a self-made businessman, a martinet and a bully, who regularly humiliated Hillary's mother, Dorothy. The Rodham household was the scene of unending strife, much of it political, as her father was an extreme right-winger, and her mother a New Deal Democrat. According to Carl Bernstein's sympathetic biography, Hillary grew up amid discord, with her mother continually walking out and then returning to Hugh's side. Clinton later repeated her mother's pattern. Graduating college in 1969, as second wave feminism erupted, she was highly unusual in not pursuing a career of her own. Instead she became a rural Arkansas lawyer whose true vocation was to stand by the side of a powerful man whom she alternately criticized and defended. Throughout the nineties, she was a sort of "co-president," defending her husband against "bimbo eruptions," threatening to leave him, returning to his side, representing the party militants, and so forth. Watching Hillary on a national stage today, noting her obvious verve, brilliance and combative zeal, one can imagine her saying to her mother (who travels with her on the campaign), "if only Dad could see me now." Indeed, according to Bernstein, Hillary only had one period of genuine peace, her years as Senator when she operated as her own person, rather than defining herself with and against a powerful male.

Hillary Clinton, then, has a strong identification with her mother and with women in general, and a conflicted relation with her father and with the primary man in her adult life. This is a not unfamiliar pattern, and helps explain her appeal, including the present boomlet for her vice-presidential nomination. Yet democratic elections are about more than empathy and

identification. Democratic elections presume voters who are able to weigh their immediate emotions and identifications against other, rational and universal considerations, voters who can identify with the experience of others, mediate these identifications through rational debate, and thereby turn spectacles into contests. Thus, while it is easy to understand why women in general might be inclined to vote for Senator Clinton, it is harder to understand why a left-feminist perspective has only lately and barely (cf., “The Feminist Debate,” *Tikkun* email blast, February 4, 2008) emerged. Why, in other words, has a feminist anti-Clinton position been relatively slow to materialize, and why does it remain reticent, especially given strong pro-Clinton feminist statements by Gloria Steinem, Robin Morgan and many others?

To answer this question it is necessary to form a conception not only of what is meant by feminism, but also what is meant by a Left. The idea of a Left arose in the course of the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century and has as its essence a deepening and critique of the liberal traditions of self-government, natural rights and formal equality. Genuine equality is at the center of the idea of a Left, and the meaning of equality constantly evolves in response to mass upheavals. In this conception both racial equality and gender equality were present in the origins of the Left (Toussaint L'Ouverture, the leader of the Haitian revolution against slavery, and Mary Wollstonecraft, the founder of Anglo-American feminism, were both Jacobins) but their meaning, and the relations between them, have changed and will continue to change. Socialism, in turn, sometimes equated with the Left *tout court*, was only one moment in the history of the Left.

In this view feminism is not a “stand-alone” tradition, one that can be advanced without considering the differences between Left and Right. Rather, between the 1790s, when modern feminism emerged, and the 1970s, when the particularly American version of “radical” or “second wave” feminism erupted, there was a deep divergence between what was once maligned as “bourgeois feminism” and what was equally mischaracterized as “socialist feminism.” Putting aside the many different issues that

characterized women's politics, the nub of the difference lay between women for whom the achievement of women's equality was a single issue which had to be defined and fought for in its own terms alone, and those women who regarded women's equality as one among a range of issues, including racial equality, social equality, international justice and peace. In Britain, for example, where the relations of feminists and the Left have tended to be less conflicted than in the United States, and where the role of the monarchy gives a different cast to gender than in the United States, hardly any feminists supported the election of Margaret Thatcher even though she was the first female Prime Minister in British history.

When the New Left erupted in the 1960s and 70s, it rejected both liberalism and Marxism, and tried to establish entirely new grounds for a left rooted in such ideals as participatory democracy. Second wave feminism actually arose in that context, especially in the deep South Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, with its intense self-consciousness regarding democratic small group processes. By 1970, when radical feminism as articulated by such figures as Kate Millet and Shulamith Firestone erupted, the radical feminists rejected the New Left as sexist, exploitative of women, and deaf to feminist demands. Certainly, there was truth in these criticisms, but was it the whole truth? Many other feminists at that time did not believe it was the whole truth, and for a few years, organizations like the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, the New American Movement and New University Thought argued for feminism along with a broad range of other issues. *Tikkun* itself, truth be told, has a part of its roots in this period in the history of the Left. By the late seventies, however, such “socialist-feminist” or “mixed-left” tendencies had foundered, but not because they lacked feminist support. Rather, they foundered because the Left as a whole went into decline. Nonetheless, this resulted in the left-feminist position being weakened, as we see today in the relatively unchallenged idea that a victory for Hillary Clinton is a victory for feminism. Today it is widely taken as axiomatic that the New Left was simply unresponsive to women's

demands and that only a single-issue women's movement (a movement in which such issues as race and poverty were addressed only when they involved women of color, or poor women) could address women's concerns. The conflict among feminists that existed in the seventies has been submerged in the standard histories of the period such as Ruth Rosen's *The World Split Open* or Alice Echols' *Daring to be Bad*, according to which *all* New Left men rejected *all* feminist issues.

The most important present consequence of the relative weakening of the Left in general, and of left-feminism in particular, concerns the relation of gender and race. Speaking as a feminist—a term I will not cede to those who would restrict it to women—I do not believe that sexism is less important than racism, but it is different. In an article entitled “Women Are Never Front-Runners,” published in the New York Times the morning of the New Hampshire primary, Gloria Steinem wrote: “Gender is probably the most restricting force in American life.... Black men were given the vote a half-century before women of any race were allowed to mark a ballot, and generally have ascended to positions of power, from the military to the boardroom, before any women (with the possible exception of obedient family members in the latter).” In a much more moderate vein, Hillary Clinton in a speech in Philadelphia said neither Barack Obama nor she were represented in the original Constitution. Both Steinem's and Clinton's statements, if not outright wrong, were at least misleading. Women were citizens (although unequal citizens) for centuries while blacks were slaves, and although blacks technically gained the vote before women it was not until the 1960s that they actually were able to vote in most of the country. These are not unimportant distinctions, especially given the fact that at every point in the history of feminism—the abolitionist movement of the 1830s, Reconstruction in the 1860s, Progressive reform, the achievement of women's suffrage in 1920, and the Civil Rights and New Left movements of the 1960s—gender and race have been counterpoised to one another. It will be sad indeed, if we have learned nothing from this history that can be applied to the Clinton campaign.

Let me conclude. I have suggested that the struggle between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton can be understood in terms of the role that contests and spectacles have played throughout our political history. While it is tempting to laud the contest and bemoan the spectacle, the matter is more complicated. We need contests, because ultimately we want to concede the force of the strongest argument, but spectacles are equally essential to democratic politics, as we see from the French Revolution on. Perhaps the spectacle corresponds to needs for public action, quasi-religious communion, and mutual recognition that cannot be subsumed under the rubric of rationality. In any event, the New Left, the Black Power movement, and the women's movement all unfolded under now-familiar klieg lights. The shift from a relatively unified "class" politics, characteristic of the New Deal era, to a politics based on demands for identity and recognition seems to be linked to a new predominance of the spectacle.

The dreams defeated in one period of history wind up resurfacing in another. The charismatic campaigns of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton both have their roots in the spectacles of the 1960s. Obama's quest for a "general will" harks back *before* the sixties to the Civil Rights movement and also claims to *transcend* the conflicts that followed the Sixties, but as the Wright incident showed, he will be unable to avoid the insistence on identity that emerged in that decade. Clinton began by disowning charisma for wonkishness, but the more she affirmed her roots in second-wave feminism the more intense, if also the less hegemonic, her campaign became. Sorting out the relations of race and gender and relating both to an overall telos of equality will undoubtedly consume much energy in the next administration. Meanwhile, the Left that emerged in the 1960s, as well as its Jacobin, socialist, communitarian, religious and other predecessors, constitutes an enormous reserve of social thought and moral reflection without which we will not be able to orient ourselves. ■

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SPORTS

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were forced to exit South Africa's otherwise profitable market. The racist regime immediately initiated negotiations with Nelson Mandela. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Fast-forward to 2008. The Franklin Templeton family of funds is the U.S. mutual fund company with the most significant holdings of the "very worst of the highest offender" companies, according to the Sudan Divestment Taskforce. As of August 2007, Franklin Templeton owned roughly \$3 billion worth of stock in these firms, particularly the Chinese energy giants PetroChina and Sinopec.

The oil revenues provided by these two companies alone provide one of the Sudanese government's few substantial revenue sources. Since oil was first extracted in 1999, Sudan's military budget has more than doubled. It is estimated that 70-80% of oil revenue is used to arm and pay the soldiers who are slaughtering people in Darfur.

So if certain companies are literally complicit in the worst genocide of the twenty-first century, then that means that the owners of these companies are complicit too. And that is why advocates have been urging Franklin Templeton Funds and other major investors to divest from PetroChina, Sinopec, and ONGC (Oil and Natural Gas Company, India). Save Darfur, a coalition made up of religious groups from across the political spectrum, claims several successes, noting that both Fidelity Investments and Warren Buffett's investment corporation Berkshire Hathaway both sharply cut their stakes in PetroChina after the coalition criticized them. But so far, Franklin Templeton has been obstinate, even in the face of negative media attention and shareholder petitions.

Now comes a twist. It turns out that two owners of the San Francisco Giants baseball team—"Your SF Giants," as they advertise themselves—are heavily identified with the Franklin Templeton funds. Charles Johnson, CEO/Board Chair of Franklin Templeton Investments, is part of the group of investors that purchased the Giants in early 1990s. In addition to being a

prominent member of the Giants' front office, he is also seen as having a crucial role in setting the strategic direction of Franklin Templeton policy—such as, for instance, whether or not Franklin invests in companies who are associated with genocide. And then there is Sue Burns, the Senior General Partner of the Giants, who has increasingly stepped into the limelight as the public face of the Giants ownership, following the death of her husband, Harmon Burns. Harmon joined Franklin Templeton in 1973 and "held many roles including overseeing technology and accounting and serving as chief operating officer in charge of all administration and operations and as secretary and vice president of the company" (*San Mateo Daily Journal*). Harmon, according to a Giants' statement on their website, "was an integral part of the initial group that bought the team in 1992. Without his participation, it is very likely that the Giants would have moved to Florida." It seems likely that Sue Burns would be able to influence the firm's policies, either internally or through divestment.

The Giants' identification with China went as far as their hosting the start of the recent running of the Olympic torch through San Francisco—the route changed at the last minute to avoid those protesting China's policies related to Tibet and Darfur. At the game later that day, Sue Burns proudly posed with the torch for photos, though none were released to the press, perhaps because San Francisco was not ready for such partisanship.

This raises some fundamental questions about the ethics of owning professional sports franchises. Should U.S. society hold Major League Baseball (MLB) to some minimal ethical standard? As we recently witnessed during the steroid controversy—when MLB was forced to hold an internal investigation, led by former majority leader of the U.S. Senate (and current Boston Red Sox minority owner) George Mitchell, spending millions of dollars before calming the media frenzy—the answer is clearly "yes."

"Baseball is a sport that has a special status under laws passed by Congress because it's our national pastime," said Henry Waxman (D) of California in 2005 when congressional hearings were held

concerning steroid use. "We ought to review what's happening if [steroid laws aren't] being enforced in baseball."

Congress has also intervened on the business side of baseball to exempt it (alone of all sports) from anti-trust laws and on labor, broadcasting and taxation issues.

The Giants' website promises that "The Giants' work in the community translates into a variety of unique and progressive programs dedicated to addressing some of the most pressing needs of Northern California children and their families, including health, anti-violence, youth fitness and recreation, education and literacy." And what for the youth of Darfur?

Teams such as the San Francisco Giants provide role models for our youth. "This is not about Congress checking personal behavior," said Rep. Tom Davis (R) of Virginia, who conducted the Congressional steroids hearing. "It's about people seeing baseball players as role models for their kids." Pete Rose was barred entry into the Hall of Fame for gambling and Barry Bonds' ambitions appear similarly destined.

But if Pete Rose and Barry Bonds are expected to be role models for the next generation, why shouldn't the owners who pay them be held to the same standard? In light of the public calumny that many players have had to endure in the media and in televised appearances before Congress because of their alleged ethical shortcomings, mightn't the Players Union be justified in turning the tables and raising the issue of the morality of owners' investment practices in the next round of collective bargaining negotiations?

Emphasizing the centrality of the spiritual and moral dimension of all human relations has been a central theme of *Tikkun*, and the way we can most easily make this dimension visible is by insisting on its recognition in all social practices that are or should be conceived as "public" in nature. Drawing out the public aspect of these practices allows us to legitimately assert that the practice involves all of us and that those who engage in it have a responsibility to adhere to community standards of ethical conduct. The politico-moral dimension of sport is particularly prominent right now as we prepare for the Beijing Olympics, and

if we think of the courageous actions of Jesse Owens standing up to Hitler at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, or Tommie Smith and John Carlos holding their fists high on the 1968 Olympics medal stand in protest against the mistreatment of blacks in the United States, we can see how significant the public aspect of sports can be in helping to awaken and elevate the world's moral conscience. In this context, Steven Spielberg was right to protest China's violations of international human rights in Tibet and Darfur by divesting his cultural capital from a sports event proclaiming China's international legitimacy.

But it is always easier to protest an "other's" actions, especially when that "other" is an ascendant rival. Sports fans of conscience should reflect upon why China's support of genocide is more newsworthy than the support of U.S. based mutual funds. We might find ourselves morally called to withdraw our support for the San Francisco Giants until the team's owners disassociate themselves from genocide. From an economic standpoint, "Your SF Giants" may need to be reminded who pays their bills and to face the cost, in the form of lower attendance, of being associated with immoral investment practices. But in another sense—a sense most consistent with *Tikkun's* ethic of compassion and speaking to people's inherent ethical and moral aspirations—we should encourage Charles Johnson and Sue Burns to voluntarily embrace the moral dimension of their leadership role. By supporting divestment from companies that support the atrocities in Darfur, Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Burns would be demonstrating the very ideals of fair play and justice that Major League Baseball once represented and is now working so hard to reclaim. This is an opportunity for them to make their fans proud and to serve as models for owners of franchises throughout professional sports. ■

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TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

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If we are to move beyond the current destructive phase of capitalism, we will do so because we tap the spiritual energy that progressives have yet to tap in any coherent way. Values hold the key. The hungers of the heart can be the bedrock on which we build a new social order.

A Shifting Roadmap of Values

CURRENT CAPITALIST VALUES ARE EASY TO tick off, for they pervade the cultural air we breathe. *Self-interest* is central: getting the most for ourselves and neglecting the consequences for others. *Free markets* are paramount: letting a boyish financial elite run the global economy with little adult supervision. *Growth* is the aim: indulging a fantasy of endlessly rising gains in Gross Domestic Product, the stock market, and personal consumption.

This trio of values holds together the current economic orthodoxy. But this orthodoxy is today under pressure to transform, as the world itself changes dramatically. In the years before and after the turn of the millennium, we have witnessed the end of the Cold War, the shredding of the old social contract in the wake of a globalizing economy, the rise of the Internet, the mushrooming growth of global civil society, the emergence of global terrorism, and the extinction of species on a scale not seen since the demise of the dinosaurs. From the European Union and international trade institutions to new regimes like carbon trading and the International Criminal Court, we are witnessing the formation of a global human and ecological system. The long journey of expanding human connectivity—from city-state to nation-state—has reached the scale of the planet. A global civilization is taking shape, for the first time in history. Not for hundreds of years have the values and institutions of society been in such flux.

The institutions of capitalism seek to reign supreme over this emergent world order, profiting from its global connectivity while evading responsibility for its health and maintenance. But this is a bargain that won't long endure. Financiers,

hedge funds, and corporations cannot forever seek maximum wealth on a finite planet, in a state of unaccountable liberty. As we are seeing in the credit crisis—brought on by excess speculation—the game contains the seeds of its own undoing. It is not so much an ideology as an adolescent fantasy.

An alternative set of values is emerging today, which represents the seedbed of a new public philosophy. Three principles are central:

Interdependence: Moving past isolated individualism, we are beginning to see our kinship with fellow citizens at home and neighbors abroad, with generations past and future, and with other living beings, with whom we form one unbroken chain of life. The planet's climate—which knows no boundaries—makes of us one living system. None of us can prosper if the whole suffers. Self-interest is inseparable from the welfare of others. Morality and reality are met in this new truth.

Sustainability: We are beginning to grasp that short-term, speculative gains are not the true measure of economic success, for bursting bubbles destabilize an economy. What matters is not always captured in stock price, or GDP. It no longer makes sense to suppose that ecological issues are “external” to our economy, for toxins we discard as wastes return to us in the fish and animals we consume and in the waters our children drink. Markets are a subset of the earth and subject to its requirements.

Well-being: The blind pursuit of “more” brings us not more happiness but more stress, more obesity, and more anxiety. It brings us less time for our families, less time for creative pursuits and quiet introspection. As we see that we must consume less, use less energy, become less busy, we face an opportunity to reclaim the good life in all its forms. We are relearning that security and well-being are found not in a trip to the mall but in human community, and in lives of meaning and dignity.

As we support one another in embracing these emerging values, we are reshaping culture at its deepest levels. We are living into being a new age of civilization.

A Transformational Approach to Ecology

WE MIGHT IMAGINE, FOR A MOMENT, what a transformed culture could look like, if sustainability were to become a widespread cultural norm, and the foundation for a new suite of public policies. With energy costs rising, a carbon-constrained future will not be easy. Economic hardship will increase. But with a values shift around the meaning of the good life, Americans could more readily embrace the chance to rely on mass transit, to buy local, to turn down the thermostat, to make do with less—seeing such changes less as individual hardships than as the end of gluttony and the beginning of cultural sanity.

Even with a surge of conservation and a shift to renewables, America is not likely to entirely forestall the effects of climate change. Growing seasons around the world will shift, creating regional winners and losers. Some islands and coastal areas may become uninhabitable, and climate refugees could number many millions. If we meet these developments in a spirit of self-interest, we will close our borders and retreat into gated communities. But embracing a sensibility of interdependence, Americans could grasp how our own profligacy contributes to the suffering of others. New windows might open for compassionate immigration policies and strengthened carbon limits. Rather than seeing negative events spin out of control, positive values could allow change to feed back into a rising spiral of transformation.

We might see a massive wave of interest in reducing fossil fuel use, and making transport and the built environment energy-efficient. Carpooling, bicycling, home insulation, green building, and other steps could be encouraged by government incentives, updated codes, and neighbor-to-neighbor outreach. Here is how all citizens could do their part, in a surge of solidarity on a par with World War II.

A Transformational Shift in Economics

IMAGINE THAT IN ECONOMIC POLICY, THE neoclassical paradigm evolves as it incorporates the pioneering theories of today's

progressive Nobel Prize-winning economists. Breaking the mold of rational economic man—the isolated individual out to maximize his own utilities—we embrace what George Akerlof, president of the prestigious American Economics Association, calls “The Missing Motivation in Macroeconomics.” That motivation is social norms. It's the notion that we can encourage citizens to make healthier choices by shaping the cultural milieu to make those choices more likely.

Rather than seeing endless consumption as the end of economic life, we could conceptualize success as Nobelist Amartya Sen does, as being about expanding human capabilities. In *Development as Freedom*, he describes development as “a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy.” Rather than GDP, the focus is on removing sources of unfreedom, including poverty, tyranny, and repression.

Economic policy might begin—as ecological economics does—with the carrying capacity of the biosphere. Since physical throughput cannot grow forever, allocation becomes central. It's critical to see that everyone has enough. We might also recognize that markets are not good at distributing certain kinds of resources, like our common wealth, and so we must create new institutions to protect the commons—managing the sky as a commons, auctioning emissions permits, and using the income to serve the public good.

Grounded in these ways of thinking, public policy could focus on helping the too-numerous families who are a step away from financial devastation, recognizing that when any of us are suffering, our national commitment to the pursuit of happiness remains unfulfilled. The challenge of climate change could become a historic opportunity to rebuild our infrastructure for sustainability, creating millions of green-collar jobs. A national index of well-being might take its place alongside GDP as a new measure of policy success.

A Transformational Approach to the Corporation

WITH THE CURRENT DEFLATION OF THE housing bubble likely to be followed by

the bursting of a bubble in financial derivatives, our economic downturn could lengthen. If we help policymakers connect the dots, they will see that the behavior of irresponsible banks and corporations traces its roots to the casino economy. The reckless pursuit of unsustainable, short-term gains—enabled by waves of deregulation—is at the root of many of our financial ills. Seeing this, we might leave behind our addictive fantasies of an infinitely growing pile of financial chips, recommitting to genuine wealth: the health of the biosphere and our own well-being. This awareness could create a cultural framework where, through political battles, we rein in speculation with robust new national and international institutions of capital constraints.

Drawing on the insights of new economics, we could create broad recognition that corporations do not exist to meet the needs of capital alone. Their purpose is to broadly enhance human well-being. Business people might be emboldened to speak out about the burden of meeting unceasing demands for growth in earnings, which some CEOs even today deride as “short-termism.”

Policies could be adopted to redefine fiduciary duties to include social and environmental responsibility. Corporate boards might meet these new duties by adding worker and public interest directors. Alternative, community-friendly company designs—like cooperatives, social enterprises, and employee-owned firms—might flourish, because consumers and employees seek them out. The federal government could make widespread employee ownership a major goal, and steer government contracts toward responsible firms while avoiding irresponsible firms, creating a new Moral Bottom Line.

Inexorably, the culture of capitalism might shift. The short-term focus on maximizing profits could become yesterday's management theory, replaced by a sensibility of protecting and enhancing our common life, for the benefit of generations to come.

* * *

Tangible policies and practices like these could be where transformation plays out—but where it begins is in the human

heart. As long as we imagine that our self-worth equals our net worth, that poor people are lazy or inferior, that the size of our house equals our standing in the community, capitalism will retain its hold over us. But when we begin willingly to choose time over money, to pay more for organics because clean soil is worth the cost, or to focus on the BTUs (thermal units) on our heating bills rather than the size of the check we write, we will have begun the shift that can carry us through.

It won't be quick or easy. Certainly it's not inevitable. But we can as one whole make that creative advance into novelty this eleventh hour demands.

That's the message I want to send Dimitri. I want to mail this article in a letter to him, as a way of finishing that conversation we started in the coffee shop months ago. It's important to remain hopeful, I want to tell him, for the sake of Mariana. That's his daughter, my family's first grandchild. She was born July 27, 2007. ■

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INTEGRAL POLITICS (continued from page 40)

body politic overall is to help traditional consciousness become a little more successful, by helping it better fulfill its cultural mission of contributing its enduring values to our society as a whole. And the best way to do this is to help reduce the polarization caused by the culture war. As more and more progressive postmodernists adopt the integral perspective and come to better appreciate the interdependence of all the stages of our cultural ecosystem, this will in turn help traditionalists and modernists to become more sympathetic to postmodern concerns. And as consciousness is raised across the board, this will cause America's cultural center of gravity to move forward in history, resulting in a more progressive politics.

Moreover, just as the key to political progress in America starts with raising consciousness at the traditional level by making it more successful, winning the “war on terror” is also a matter of making Islamic traditional consciousness more successful. In the long run, the best way to help the Islamic world to become less stuck in the past will be for America to move its own cultural center of gravity forward in history through the rise of the integral worldview.

It's important to see how war in the twenty-first century is being fought primarily in the internal universe. The conflicts turn not so much on the actual military engagements, but rather on the results of the battle for hearts and minds. And it's also important to see how wars are often fought with the tactics and technology of the previous era, resulting in costly losses and bad mistakes. So as we might expect, history is repeating itself in the war on terror—we're fighting it with the tactics of World War II and the Cold War, wherein torture, secret prisons, and unjustified covert operations by the CIA and others are undermining our moral authority in the eyes of the world. Thus, any gains in the external universe produced by these tactics are more than offset by the losses they create in the battle for hearts and minds taking place in the internal universe.

As consciousness is raised, Americans will come to better appreciate that implementation of a more moral foreign policy is actually a critical part of a comprehensive and effective national defense. And this realization will show us where we need to change our tactics. For example, we can put an immediate end to all forms of rendition and torture, and we can carefully articulate a more transparent and accountable role for our intelligence services. We can announce this change in direction and the reasons for it, and then we can do some things to help heal the history that is continuing to hurt us today. For instance, we can pay for a memorial in downtown Tehran that memorializes our shame for the CIA's regrettable intervention in Iran in the 1950s. We can symbolically atone for those sins, and help heal the wounds that are keeping us from developing a positive

relationship with a country whose modernists remain favorably disposed to the United States.

We can also strengthen Islamic traditional consciousness by using integral technology to help empower the more moderate voices of Islam. For instance, we could endow a prestigious prize like the Nobel or Pulitzer called "The Qur'an Prize" that could be given annually to an Arabic, Persian, or Turkish-language writer who best demonstrates that violence runs counter to Islamic principles, and that Islam is a religion of peace.

However, conducting a more moral foreign policy does not mean that we simply go soft on terrorism or adopt a predominantly postmodern foreign policy that ignores the very real threats posed by the unhealthy forms of traditional consciousness in the world. An integral approach to the war on terror involves using the solutions of every level simultaneously. For example, we can use a traditional approach by keeping the Navy in the Persian Gulf; we can use a modernist approach by continuing with the diplomacy of economic carrots and sticks; we can use a postmodern approach by apologizing and making amends for some of our past actions; and we can use an integral approach by becoming better at changing hearts and minds through the application of the kinds of integral technology I have discussed.

In the final analysis a large part of the solution to Islamic terrorism turns on the situation in Israel, but here again we need to start by raising consciousness at the traditional level. However, because of its history this will be a delicate matter. So an integral approach to raising traditional consciousness among Israelis will require that we work on multiple fronts simultaneously—continuing our commitment to their security, while also appealing to the higher moral sentiments of Israelis to find a way to better accommodate the Palestinians.

Ultimately, raising consciousness is a long-term cultural project that happens in the internal universe at the level of worldviews, values, personal identity, and loyalty. Yet as we become better at making common cause with every historically

significant worldview, we will find that the polarization of the culture war can be reduced, defensiveness can be lessened, and consciousness can thus be more effectively raised. As we prune away the unhealthy evolutionary scaffolding of these earlier cultural structures in a way that then lets us carry forward the essential and enduring values of these worldviews, we find that we can also "carry forward" many of the modernists and traditionalists themselves into a new era of progressive agreement.

The Integral Worldview Can Help Us "Become the Change" We Want to See

ALTHOUGH INTEGRAL CONSCIOUSNESS IS extremely useful as "a strategy," it is more than just a tool for problem solving. It is also an identity-providing platform for cultural allegiance, a worldview that invites our loyalty and even our passion. We can see comparisons with this from history in the way that the new ideals of modernism spread during the Enlightenment with the rallying cry of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"—a slogan which reached beyond the borders of France and served as an international invitation to adopt a new set of values emphasizing political transformation from monarchy to a new democratic society. Likewise in the 1960s, the call to transcend into postmodern consciousness was embodied in the slogan: "Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out." And despite its irreverent quality, Timothy Leary's rallying cry did serve as a potent invitation to reject the pathologies of the modernist worldview and join in a movement that reflected an entirely new set of values.

So now, as the integral worldview begins to emerge, we might expect a uniquely integral rallying cry that evokes the longing for a new politics that transcends left and right; a new science that embraces the interior domains as well as the exterior; a new art that reclaims the beautiful and the sublime; and even a new spirituality that recognizes the universal nature of spiritual experience. And it appears that the integral worldview's invitation to evolve will take the form of the slogan: *Transcend and Include*. Transcendence and inclusion is a description of the master systemic pattern of

overall evolution. It's actually another way to describe the dialectical process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. And now, through integral consciousness we can begin to appreciate how *the degree of our transcendence is measured by the scope of our inclusion*.

Once we begin to see the evolving universe from the perspective of integral consciousness, we see how profound and all encompassing evolution truly is. Evolution isn't just something that happened in the distant past; the same forces that turned rocks into rosebushes are actually more intense than ever now that humanity is beginning to understand how we are both the *products* of evolution and the *agents* of evolution. The first step was the Darwinian revolution in science; and now the integral revolution in philosophy is making it possible for us to become agents of evolution as never before.

Although the integral worldview is currently in its infancy, there are abundant opportunities to participate in this exciting cultural development. Wherever postmodern culture has become well established, there can now be found spiritual progressives who are beginning to investigate this intriguing new evolutionary perspective. The more you learn about the integral worldview, the more you may come to appreciate how its approaches are both idealistic and realistic. Browsing the web you will find a host of new books on integral philosophy, together with magazines, websites, salons, and gatherings of those who are coming together to discuss this new way of understanding the evolution of consciousness and culture. Ultimately, the best way to help those around you to evolve is to accelerate your own evolution by internalizing a larger spectrum of values. I heartily invite each of you to explore the integral worldview and begin using the power of this emerging perspective to make political progress and improve the human condition in spectacular ways. ■

Steve McIntosh (www.stevemcintosh.com), author of *Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution* (Paragon House, 2007) is president of Now & Zen, Inc. in Boulder, CO, and a graduate of the University of Virginia Law School.

earth or about what happens to the land?

The problem is, people do care about what happens to the land, in only one way: they care who owns it, who controls it. We know what happens if that's all you care about: human rights get violated in every direction, on every scale. A village's ancestral olive trees are torn up; Palestinian "*shahadin*" detonate suicide bombs; Israeli soldiers demolish civilian houses; civilian casualties pile up.

But what also happens is this: the earth gets poisoned, by pollution, and, the Torah teaches, by violence. Every war is a war against the earth, whether a full-scale war conducted by the United States in Iraq, or by Israel in Lebanon, or the low-level conflict between Jewish settlers and Palestinians, where water resources are commandeered by those with power and centuries-old trees are uprooted.

A Negev Without Bedouin

THE MOST POIGNANT EXAMPLE OF THIS for me is what is happening now to the Bedouin in the Negev desert. The reality is simple: the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) moved all the Bedouin tribes living in the southern Negev to territory in the northern Negev in the 1950s, and created a closed military zone out of their ancestral lands.

To most people, it would look like the government of Israel implicitly accepted responsibility for helping the Bedouin create a new home by the very act of moving them. But since the Bedouin are not "our" people, not Jews (even if they are "our Arabs," serving in the IDF), Israel never recognized the Bedouin's right to live in the very places that the IDF had moved them to.

Many of these Bedouin villages have standing demolition orders. Because the Bedouin were deemed squatters, they have never been given public services. That's over half a century now of not providing medical care, running water, or electricity. Only a rudimentary medical clinic built by Bustan in 2004 shamed the government into bringing medical care to the area of Wadi el-Naam. That's over half a century during which various heavy industries, power plants, and toxic waste

dumps were built close to Wadi el-Naam, because officially, the village wasn't there, and unofficially, the government wanted to drive the Bedouin from the land and "concentrate" them in government-planned townships where they had no land claims. After being touched personally by the work of Bustan in the Negev when I visited in 2003, this issue has become my own cause.

This past summer the government began to carry out its long-standing blueprint to "Judaize" the Negev by demolishing some of these "illegal" villages in order to develop the Negev for Jews. The village of A-tir, in the area of projected growth for a new Jewish middle-class desert suburb to be called Yatir, was demolished, along with Um el-Hiran, which is to be replaced by Jewish Hiran.

At the same time, the Right is pressing the Knesset to finally pass a law allowing the Israel Lands Authority (ILA) to exclude non-Jews from this and any other settlements that are built on state land. (Even Likud's Moshe Arens called the bill "undemocratic.") The ILA "needs" the law because as it stands right now, those homeless Bedouin families from A-tir could apply to live in the suburb that was the excuse for sacrificing their homes. The plan for helping the Bedouin? Give them construction jobs to build the homes they can't live in.

The human rights issues are clear here, as are the environmental justice issues, so this is one case where we don't have to think too hard about the potential conflict between the two. But the rights of the land itself are equally relevant, if we accept Leviticus as a valid picture of a just society. The land needs to be unfettered, unpolluted, respected rather than controlled. It has the right to sustain life, and not just to support buildings. Respect human rights if you want to live on the land. Respect the right of the land to rest, to be relieved of your control, if you want to take care of the people.

This respect cannot happen in a war of control.

God's Jubilee or the State's?

ONE LAST EXAMPLE, AGAIN FROM ISRAEL,

the only place where the Jubilee has modern legal significance: According to Israel's government, the state follows the Jewish tradition of releasing the land in the Jubilee year. However this happens in a rather curious manner. The state more or less owns all the lands, through the ILA and the Jewish National Fund, and it leases land to (Jewish) developments and kibbutzim for ninety-nine years. At the end of the ninety-nine years, the land, in theory, goes back to the state.

If you recall our discussion about Leviticus, this custom is the exact inverse of the Torah's injunction. Under this law, no one owns a share of the land, no family, no group, no individual. There is no share to go back to. Instead, everything belongs to the State. Nothing belongs to God.

Choose

WE NEED A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE earth, a new covenant, here and in Israel. The midrash teaches that the Torah, the blueprint of creation, was given in the desert to show that Torah is not our possession but is ownerless, available to all, Jew or non-Jew. The Torah itself gives us the covenant of the Jubilee cycle, which teaches that the land is our partner, not our possession. Our humanity is rooted in the earth, and the ground for human rights is in the rights of the land. The way we treat our ecosystem *and* the people living within it is what creates a good partnership with the land. How we implement this in each place and society will differ, but the principle is the same: pursue justice for the earth and the people. Then the land thrives, the people thrive, and human rights grow from out of our relationship with the earth. "Choose life"—not just human life, but the abundance of all life—"that you may live"—for the good of all life, the earth's good, is your life. ■

An activist, author and scholar on environmental issues, Rabbi David Seidenberg teaches on Jewish texts and spirituality throughout North America, and through his website neohasid.org. He created the savethenegev.org campaign.

Dear Swami

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

BY SWAMI BEYONDANANDA

Dear Swami:

My mind never ceases its dialogue and is always asking questions. I'm wondering if you have a secret method that can end all questions? I seem to be trapped in a mental feedback loop.

*Helen Teheven,
Midland, Texas*

Dear Helen,

First of all, you can be thankful for one thing. Your problems are all in your mind! Therefore, the solution is simple. If you want to stop the constant dialogue, you must go out of your mind and into your heart. The best way to do this is to gather all the thoughts in your head in one intense ball of tension, and then release these rapidly while breathing out: "Aaa-a-a-a-ah!" The "ah" sound is specifically related to the heart, and the process of sighing—particularly when there is a sizable sigh—allows maximum release. This isn't my idea, by the way. I learned it years ago from Sigh Baba, who was also known as "The Wizard of Ahs."

Of course, given the way the mind works you will find questions creeping back into your consciousness. No problem. Just remember that it takes two to dialogue, so don't answer them. Before long, the questions will stop and you will begin to hear answers instead. Now you're getting somewhere! Still, to clear the mind and transcend thought completely requires constant vigilance, especially nowadays when information seeps in from everywhere. No wonder so many of us are suffering from truth decay! That's why four out of five transcendentalists recommend mental floss. That's what I do. Anytime I feel the effects of too much thinking, I place my thumb and forefinger about six inches from each ear and gently move it back and forth like I'm flossing. No better way to release

excess flossophy, and go from the static of the head to the ecstatic of the heart.

Dear Swami:

I fear I may be one of those people susceptible to road rage. As a daily commuter, I am confronted by idiotic driving all the time—generally on the part of other drivers. I find myself screaming invectives, and being not at all peaceful. When I'm able to finally calm myself, I realize that there seems to be a disconnect between my spiritual understanding of things, and my reactive impulses. Any advice?

*Berndt Hofferling,
Waukegan, Illinois*

Dear Berndt,

Your letter shows wise judgment. Any time an internal impulse becomes an external out-pulse, it is time to pay attention. The first step? Don't give your power away by making someone else responsible for your well-being. Instead of shouting, "You are an inconsiderate so-and-so!" take responsibility. Instead say, "Why did I create an inconsiderate so-and-so like you in my life?"

Now granted, you are going to have strong feelings when another vehicle cuts you off. So instead of cutting yourself off, it is completely appropriate for you to express yourself fully. The trick is, to keep your inner peace peaceful even when your outer peace is in pieces. You are probably already familiar with the peace mantra, to be uttered anytime any situation threatens your peace: "Ahhhh ... PEACE on it!"

If you still feel compelled to hurl invectives, that's no problem either—as long as they are loving invectives. Given the circular nature of the universe and the law of karma—that whatever you put out in front of you will eventually come around the back and smack you in the butt—you want



to make sure you send only blessings out there. So instead of throwing "f-bombs," toss a bless bomb instead. "Hey, you blessing mother-blessor, go bless yourself! You could have blessed me over real good, you dumb bless! They shouldn't let bless-ups like you on the road, you bless-head!"

It will be a better world indeed when angry drivers roll down their windows and shout, "Bless YOU!" and hear the other driver answer, "Well BLESS YOU TOO!"

Dear Swami:

I notice you do your State of the Universe Address each year, and you can't possibly use everything in this one address that you've thought about. What do you do with the extra material?

*Tex Stedditt,
Vorr, Texas*

That's easy. I serve them as laughed-overs throughout the rest of the year. ■

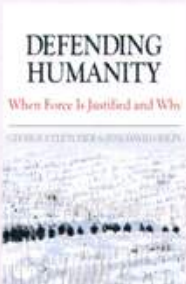
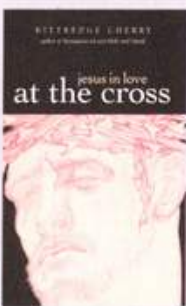
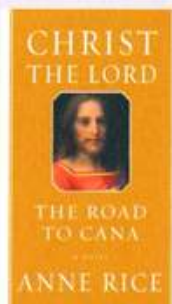
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**CHRIST THE LORD:
THE ROAD TO CANA**Anne Rice
Knopf, 2008**JOHN: A NOVEL**Niall Williams
Bloomsbury, 2008**MARY OF NAZARETH**Marek Halter
Crown Publishers, 2008**JESUS IN LOVE: AT THE CROSS**Kittredge Cherry
Androgyne Press, 2008

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES ARE FINDING IT increasingly difficult to tell their stories without resorting to novels that fill in the details left out by holy scriptures. These four novels are the latest in a long history of novelistic reconstruction that has reached fever pitch in the last decade. Marek Halter's *Mary* may be more a Jewish account than a Christian, but it fits in well with forms of liberation theology that find particular resonance with spiritual progressives. *John* tells the story of the later years in the life of the Apostle who is struggling with the failure of Jesus to reappear. Anne Rice has moved her skills from her seeming obsession with vampires to the life of Jesus, and here focuses in on one of the important years before Jesus enters Jerusalem. Kittredge Cherry's provocative article on homosexuals taking back Jesus in the March/April 2008 edition of *Tikkun* should give readers adequate preparation for her vision of "The Queer Christ," but before our many Christian readers dismiss this novel as heresy or pure political correctness, you should know that her account provides a powerful celebration of Jesus' message of love. Together, these four quite strikingly different accounts point the direction to making a reality of what might otherwise seem to be biblical fantasy.

DEFENDING HUMANITYGeorge P. Fletcher
& Jens David Ohlin
Oxford University Press, 2008

STARTING FROM THE PREMISE THAT MILITARY action is justified under international law if authorized by the U.N. Security Council or if undertaken in self-defense after an armed attack has taken place, Fletcher and Ohlin argue that international law needs to be considerably refined in the age of empires, when one's



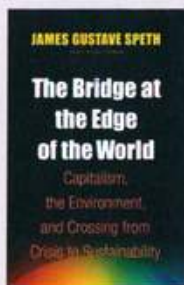
sense of "self" might be so large that an empire might believe it is acting in self-defense whenever its interests are threatened, and Osama bin Laden and his followers might feel attacked and needing defense by the very presence of that empire or its proxies in the world of Islam. So the two Columbia professors provide a carefully thought out set of guidelines on what counts as "defense," when humanitarian interventions are legitimate, why preemptive and preventive wars are almost always impossible to justify unless to prevent what is an obviously imminent threat, why to challenge notions of collective guilt such as that advocated by Alan Dershowitz's justification for collective punishment of all the Palestinians in a given area for the acts of a few terrorists, and much more. Carefully reasoned from the standpoint of those who still rely on violence to achieve national ends, this book should become a classic for the foreign policy "realists."

SURPRISED BY GODDanya Ruttenberg
Beacon Press, 2008

SUBTITLED "HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE RELIGION," Danya Ruttenberg's very personal account includes: rejecting the sterile religion of her childhood, dancing her way through punk culture, the cancer-induced death of her mother, and her path through a meditation-oriented Judaism that eventually opened the doors for a deep encounter with God, found through her own religion. At every point, Ms. Ruttenberg is sharp in her insights about the world and about herself. Soon to become an ordained rabbi, Ruttenberg gives us reason to be hopeful about the future of American Judaism.

**THE BRIDGE AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD**James Gustave Speth
Yale University Press, 2008

JAMES SPETH HAS BEEN A PIONEER AND LEADER in environmental institutions for over four decades, but this is not a book of doom and gloom. Instead it lays out a path beyond the limits of today's environmentalism. Speth does not fall for the current delusion that the capitalist marketplace will solve the environmental problems once investors realize how much money there is to be made in environmentally friendly enterprise, and he recognizes that the shift of once-public responsibilities and functions into private hands for market-based management has made it more difficult to develop the kind of democratic government that will be needed to check corporate irresponsibility. Speth understands that America's addiction to growth must be challenged, and that we need to learn to recognize what is "enough." In recognizing that what environmentalism needs most is the forging of a new consciousness, Speth's book becomes a powerful support to our Network of Spiritual Progressives—indispensable reading!



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