

Tikkun

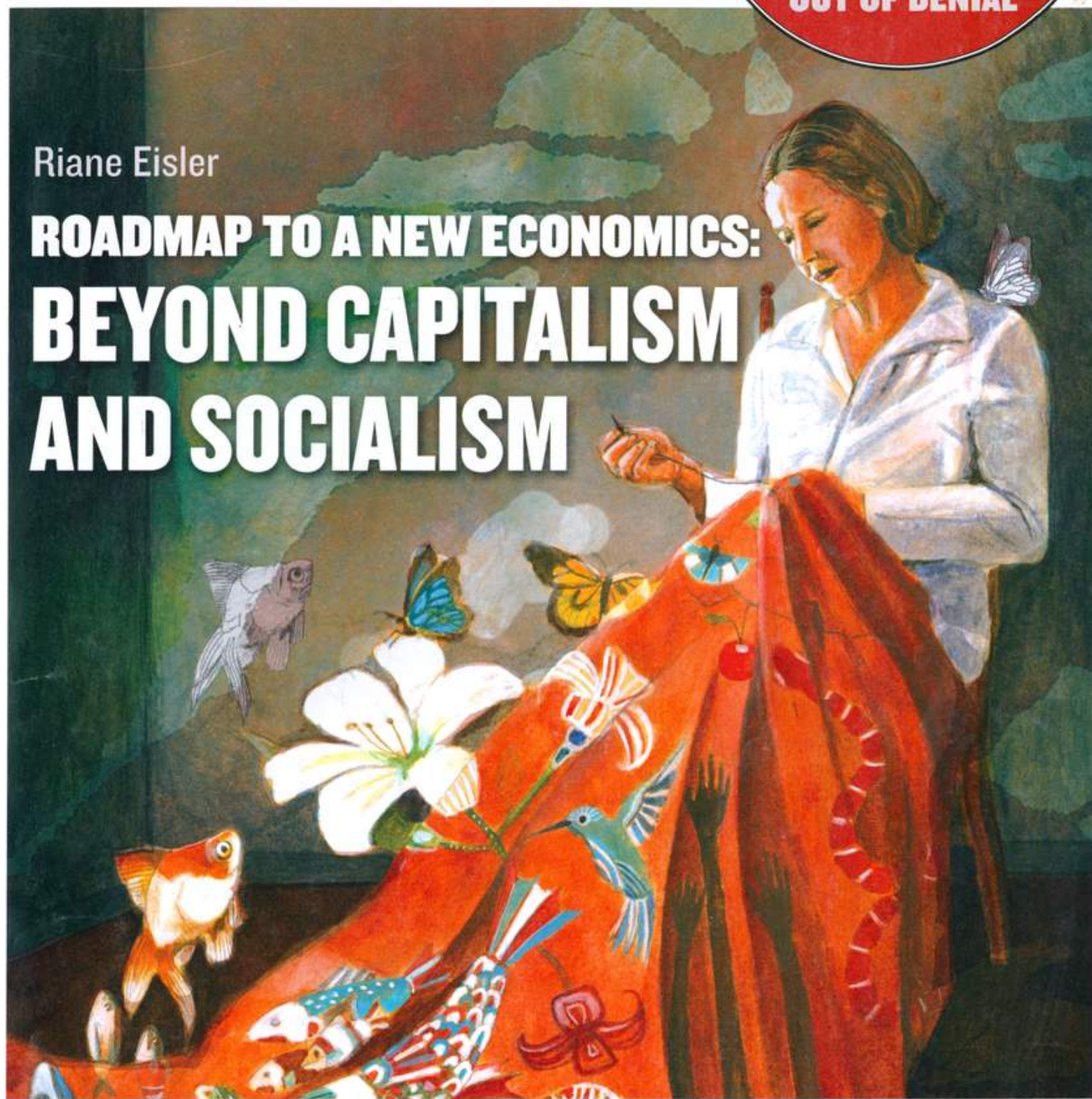
POLITICS+SPIRITUALITY+CULTURE

(tē·kūn) To mend, repair, and transform the world. NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009

KIM CHERNIN
ZIONISM AND
HEARTACHE
OUT OF DENIAL

Riane Eisler

ROADMAP TO A NEW ECONOMICS: BEYOND CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM



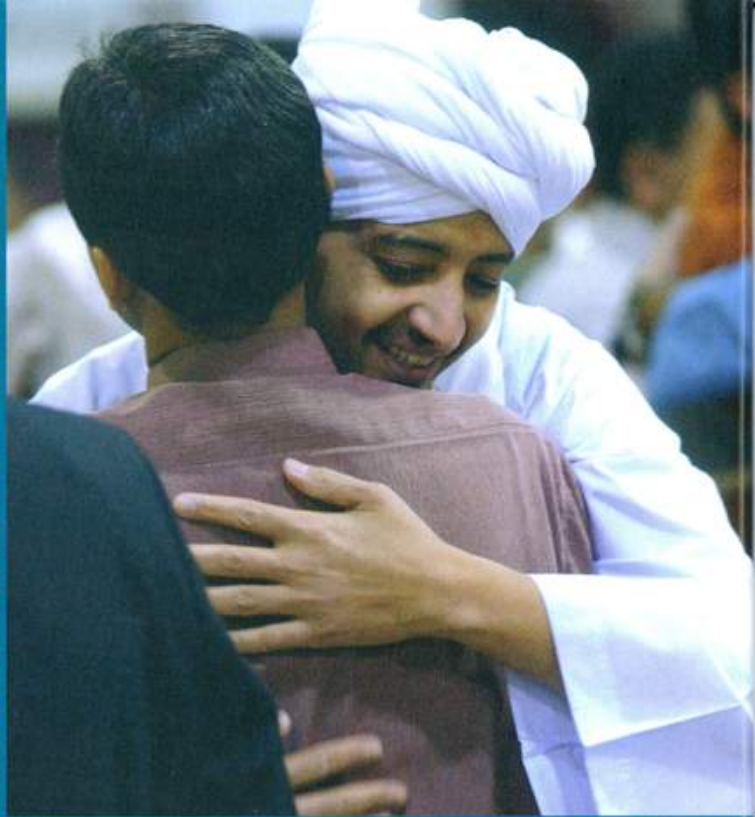
\$5.95 U.S./\$6.95 Canada



6 02648 64858 5

NEW APPROACHES TO CHANUKAH AND CHRISTMAS, p.33

PLUS: The Yes Men Fix the World | Health Reform Missteps | Dorrien on Societal Redemption | Prayer and Nonduality | Kimelman on Heschel | Zunes on Goldstone's Gaza Report | Ezrahi on Chana Bloch | Shasha on Avivah Zornberg



FOR ALTERNATIVE HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

On pages 33–42, we present approaches to celebrating Chanukah and Christmas that turn away from consumerism and toward the revolutionary potential of these holidays. But that leaves out the other celebrations that many observe during fall and the dark days of winter, including those pictured here. Clockwise from top left: Chinese New Year in Oakland, California; Eid al-Fitr (in fall this year, anyway) in Tyler, Texas; Kwanzaa in Charlotte, North Carolina; and Winter Solstice in Vancouver, Canada.

Help us compile the best ideas on how to reclaim all the holidays and make them spiritually deep for the people who celebrate them: email ideas to RabbiLerner@tikun.org.



3 LETTERS

6 **THE CONTRARIAN:** Capitalism: Change It or Tame It?

Editorials

7 **Just Say "NO" to the War in Afghanistan** by MICHAEL LERNER
Obama is not considering the only viable approach to this war.

10 **Implement Goldstone's Recommendations to the UN about the Gaza War**
by MICHAEL LERNER
A lifelong, passionate Zionist has produced a decent report.

12 **Democrats' Attacks on Goldstone** by STEPHEN ZUNES
Their attacks—all bluster and no substance—will not help Israel.

Politics and Society

FEATURE ARTICLES

17 **Roadmap to a New Economics: Beyond Capitalism and Socialism** by RIANE EISLER
Economics as if women, men, children, and their future actually mattered.

21 **The Long Path Out of Denial:**
Zionism, Heartache, and a New Vision of Israel and Palestine by KIM CHERNIN
How a "naive Zionist" took in the narrative and emotion of the Palestinian point of view.

13 **Health Reform: Where Obama Went Wrong** by LEONARD RODBERG
The Democrats claim to be "building on what works" with their proposed health reforms.
But does the private system really work for people who need care?

15 **The Yes Men Fix the World** Review by MICHAEL LERNER
Two cultural "terrorists" share why they love striking fear in the hearts of corporate leaders and explain how they do it.

29 **Free Speech or Fee Speech: Progress in Latin America; Confusion in the United States** by ALLEN D. KANNER
Fed up with commercial media? Look south for new solutions.

30 **The Awe-Based Challenge to Positive Psychology** by KIRK J. SCHNEIDER
Don't settle for palliatives. Experience the full depth, pain, and glory of life.

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE HOLIDAY SEASON

33 **Chanukah Guide**
Celebrate the World's First Recorded National Liberation Struggle!

36 Christmas Guide

37 **Advent 2009: The End of the World As We Know It**
by JONATHAN WILSON-HARTGROVE
An invitation to welcome God's economy in our lives and world this Advent season,
with a note to Jews about how we might wait for the Messiah together.

41 **Twelve Gifts in Hard Times** by AL FRITSCH
Try not to spend money on gifts this Christmas. Here's how.

Top:
TheYesMenFixTheWorld.com

Front Cover:
Kristina Benetyte
(kristinabenetyte.com)

Rethinking Religion

CHRISTIANITY

- 43 Society as the Subject of Redemption: The Relevance of the Social Gospel** by GARY DORRIEN
The Social Gospel has changed the world, and it's not done yet.
- 51 King's God: The Unknown Faith of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** by ROBERT JAMES "BE" SCOFIELD
Few people know just how fully King rejected traditional views of Jesus and God.

JUDAISM

- 46 Subversive Bible Study: A Review of Reuven Kimelman's Audio Coursebook** by DAVID ELCOTT
No Bible story or quote has just one meaning. The Bible is complicated!
- 48 Abraham Joshua Heschel's Thesis on the Unity of Jewish Theology** by REUVEN KIMELMAN
If Heschel is right, the diverse Jewish traditions are not so contradictory after all.
- 54 Prayer and Nonduality** by JAY MICHAELSON
The secrets of the mystics aren't so secret anymore.

Culture

BOOKS

- 56 Late Love**
Blood Honey by Chana Bloch
Review by SIDRA DEKOVEN EZRAHI
- 58 Children of Israel?**
The Invention of the Jewish People by Shlomo Sand,
translated by Yael Lotan
Review by TZVI MARX
- 60 Plumbing the Psychological Depths of Humanity**
The Murmuring Deep: Reflections on the Biblical Unconscious
by Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg
Review by DAVID SHASHA
- 63 How to Heal**
Beyond Evidence-Based Psychotherapy by George Rosenfeld
Review by ROBERT L. WEISMAN

POETRY

- 57 Blood Honey** by CHANA BLOCH

FILM

- 65 Political Pictures**
The Informant!
Review by DAVID TERRITT

HUMOR

- 80 Dear Swami**
Where Swami answers your questions
and you will question his answers.
by SWAMI BEYONDANANDA

COME INTERN OR VOLUNTEER AT OUR OFFICE IN BERKELEY, CA

Tikkun/NSP is looking for students and/or recent college graduates, people taking a break mid-career, and retirees who would like to work on changing the world now. For details and how to apply, go to WWW.TIKKUN.ORG/INTERNS.

ASK THE AUTHOR!

We'll interview our authors for 20 minutes, and then they'll take questions from YOU.

6 p.m. Pacific Time (9 p.m. Eastern)
every Monday
Call 1-888-346-3950 for free!
Then enter this code: 11978#

November 2: Michael Nagler

November 9: Kim Chernin

November 16: Robert James "Be" Scofield

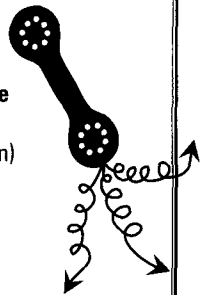
November 23: The Yes Men:
Andy Bichlbaum and/or Mike Bonanno

November 30: Stephen Zunes

December 7: Riane Eisler

December 14: Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

See full schedule and listen to previous calls at WWW.TIKKUN.ORG



Readers Respond

A NOTE ON LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

As Tikkun increases its Web presence by posting online exclusives at www.tikkun.org and www.spiritualprogressives.org, and by sending e-mails to anyone who asks to be placed on our list (send requests to Generosity@Tikkun.org), we are increasingly publishing responses to online as well as print articles in this section of the magazine. We welcome your responses to our articles. Send your letters to the editor to Letters@Tikkun.org. Please remember, however, not to attribute to Tikkun views other than those expressed in our editorials. We e-mail, post, and print many articles with which we have strong disagreements, because that is what makes Tikkun a location for a true diversity of ideas. Tikkun reserves the right to edit your letters to fit available space in the magazine.

A NON-DUALIST VIEW OF GOD

I WANT TO RESPOND TO JAY Michaelson's excellent article (*Tikkun*, September/October 2009)—in which he brought to our attention the presence of true monism native to Judaism—and thank him for the richness of the background and the quotations. He makes the case for a change of perspective based on an appreciation of the limitations of the traditional model. Given the paradigm shift that we are now experiencing, the old model can inform our thinking but is no longer sufficient in and of itself ... we can no longer pretend to believe in the ultimate reality of dualism. All of what happens in this world takes place within a single system, which includes both what we call the good and the evil.

We need to surrender our narcissism in which we each see ourselves as prime subject. We need to surrender to being a cell in the organic *Melech Ha-Olam*, a bio-monism for the planet in which we are all living cells contributing to the planet's life.

The reason why this is not simply a heresy is because the monistic

approach is in greater harmony with what we know about the composition of the universe. In transcending dualism with monism, we are now able to create a theology that allows us to massage the differences between the particularly Jewish and the universal, so that we can develop "files" of our own that are compatible with those of others.

I believe that our question today is whether we can reformat Jewish tradition in such a way that the old files of rabbinic and biblical Judaism will remain compatible with what we create. Will we have to jettison a lot of what we have inherited? Some of it is, without a doubt, incompatible in the present.

We need to write new Jewish software that is intentionally created/ designed so that it can read files created in traditional applications and operating systems that are no longer current. Such software needs also to be capable for Judaism to be more ecumenical and in harmony with the needs of current life ... we need to engage poets and dreamers to breathe life into our mythic world, which is in great need of re-enchantment. Without entering into a feeling/empathic

connection with Earth, all our intellectual cogitation will not save human life on this planet.

[This letter was edited for length. It can be read in full at www.tikkun.org/letters.]

REB ZALMAN HIYYAH
SCHACHTER-SHALOMI
Boulder, CO

ISRAEL'S CAMPUS CRITICS

DAVID THEO GOLDBERG AND Saree Makdisi (*Tikkun*, September/October 2009) argue that an aggressive and well-funded pro-Israel lobby attempts to silence alternative views on American campuses. This may be true in some cases, but it is also only one part of the story.

In Australia (and almost certainly in most Western countries including the United States), there is a well-organized pro-Palestinian lobby that argues for the destruction of the existing State of Israel, and for its replacement by an Arab State of Greater Palestine. This lobby has achieved virtual hegemony in key sections of the academic and intellectual Left and actively seeks to silence two-state advocates who attempt to

present a balanced view of the Middle East conflict that supports moderates and attacks extremists on both sides. This lobby, which sadly includes some so-called left-wing Jews, uses all the obnoxious tactics described by Goldberg and Makdisi, including the use of poison letters to universities in an attempt to intimidate their critics.

Goldberg and Makdisi's contribution would have been far more useful if they had exposed extremists on both sides of the debate.

PHILIP MENDES
Victoria, Australia

David Theo Goldberg and Saree Makdisi reply:

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THOSE WHO sent comments appreciative of our essay "The Trial of Israel's Campus Critics." Philip Mendes's letter calls for the sort of greater balance about which we are critical in the article. Treating unequals with the sort of

equality called for in the letter constitutes another way of deflecting criticism without taking seriously, let alone discussing, the sorts of issues we have raised.

[For more letters critiquing this article see our website.]

ALICE WALKER ON GAZA AND RWANDA

IT'S ONE THING TO RUN ARTICLES with which you have strong disagreements in the name of publishing a wide diversity of opinion. It's quite another to give up your long-standing editorial and intellectual integrity just so you can sprawl the name of a famous person on your cover.

Alice Walker's vitriolic screed (*Tikkun*, September/October 2009) is a perfect example of someone who left home with her mind made up and was not going to allow facts, actual history, or reason to stand between her and her prejudgments. And so, in her narrow, prejudiced world, it's white, European, colonial men who cause all the pain now

Engaging The Other: The Power of Compassion

4th Annual International Conference

San Mateo, CA. Nov. 12-15.

Keynote speech by

Michael Lerner on Nov. 12.

Panel with David Belden on Nov. 13.

Info at www.chiworld.org.

suffered by women of color. The fact that the perpetrators of violence upon women in Eastern Africa are young African men who were not born when the last Belgian left that part of the world is of no import to her.

Her version of Israeli history and ignorance of Arab and Muslim culture is so one-sided as to read like an Ahmadinejad speech. And I say this as someone who has opposed the occupation since 1972. Gaza women's support for Hamas and the rocketing of kindergartens in Sderot; or why

Tikkun

EDITOR	Michael Lerner
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	Peter Gabel
MANAGING EDITOR	David Belden
ASSISTANT EDITOR	Alana Yu-lan Price
ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN	Design Action Collective
POETRY EDITOR	Joshua Weiner
ASSISTANT POETRY EDITOR	Lindsay Bernal
FILM CRITIC	David Sterritt
ACADEMIC EDITOR	Akiba Lerner
LITERARY EDITOR	Julian Levinson
WEB DESIGN	Craig Wiessner and Derrick Kikuichi
FULFILLMENT	Pete Cattrell and Kay Shearer

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Gil Anidjar, Bradley Shavit Artson, Michael Badler, David Biale, Paul Buhle, Arnold Eisen, Roger S. Gottlieb, Mark Levine, Shaul Magid, Ruth Messinger, Ben Naparstek, Or Rose, Stephen Zunes

INTERNS AND EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

Special thanks on this issue to Erin Shitama and Martha Woolverton (editorial).

Bob Anshuetz, Alexandra Early, Will Pasley, Amol Ray, Kay Shearer, Vanessa Ta, Sandra Yolles, and Dimitri Zagoroff (editorial); Damian King (illustration); Daniel O'Leary (web); Suzanne Sherman (image research); and Matt Switzer (archive).

PUBLISHERS George & Trish Vradenburg

Articles in *Tikkun* do not necessarily reflect *Tikkun's* position on any issue. *Tikkun's* positions are presented in our editorials. To submit a manuscript or send a letter, please email magazine@tikkun.org.

RCS
rider circulation services

Send your Letters to the Editor to letters@tikkun.org

EDITORIAL BOARD

Rachel Adler, Gar Alperovitz, Aiki Barnstone, Michael Berenbaum, Chet Bowers, Jay Cantor, Abby Caplin, David Cohen, Dan Cohn-Sherbok, Josephine Donovan, Elliot Dorff, Terry Eagleton, Leslie Epstein, Sidra Ezrahi, Lynn Feinerman, John Felstiner, Barry Flicker, Saul Friedlander, Nan Fink Gefen, Laura Geller, Ann Gleig, John P. Geyman, David N. Gibbs, Erik Gleibermann, Nancy Glock-Grueneich, Barbara Goldberg, Jill Goldberg, David Gordis, Jonathan Granoff, Arthur Green, Colin Greer, Mary Grey, Jamey Hecht, Burt Jacobson, John Kelly, David Kim, Reuven Kimelman, Linda Kintz, Richard La Brecque, Joann Locascio, Daniel Matt, Bob McChesney, Balmurli Natrajan, Elliot Neaman, David Newman, Greg Palast, Ilana Purdes, Robert Pinsky, Judith Plaskow, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, James Ponet, Douglas Rushkoff, Aviezer Ravitsky, Wade Clark Roof, Michael Sandel, David Saperstein, Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Richard Schwartz, Chaim Seidler-Feller, Gerald Serotta, Rami Shapiro, Stanley Sheinbaum, Richard Silverstein, Uri Simon, Graeme Taylor, Emily Warn, Arthur Waskow, John Welwood, Miryam Ehrlich Williamson

ADVERTISING & PERMISSIONS

Alana Price at 510-644-1200 or magazine@tikkun.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS

1-800-395-7753 or subscribe@tikkun.org

TC OR NSP MEMBERSHIP

Kay Shearer at 510-644-1200 or kay@tikkun.org

Tikkun (Vol. 24, No. 6, ISSN 0887-9982) is published bimonthly by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. © 2009 *Tikkun* magazine. All Rights Reserved. *Tikkun* is a registered trademark of the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Tikkun*, P.O. Box 460926, Escondido, CA 92046. Periodical-rate postage paid at Oakland, CA and additional mailing offices by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Publications mail agreement number: #1549111. Canada mail distributor information: Express Messenger International; P.O. Box 25058; London BRC, ON N6C 6A8. Subscription price for 6 issues: U.S. residents \$29.00; U.S. institutions \$40.00; Canadian residents \$39.00; all others \$43.00. Payment in U.S. dollars required. Printed in USA. ♻️ Printed on recycled paper.

Israel would build a security wall in the first place; or how Israeli shelling of Gaza is always in response to the latest missile, mortar, or sniper attacks are all just inconvenient truths that don't fit her thesis. Nor does the treatment of Bedouin women by their own husbands and fathers. Her implication that Muslim men placing their women's modesty ahead of their physical safety is the result of living in an "afflicted society" (i.e., under European colonial rule) would be funny if people's lives were not at stake.

Ms. Walker shows she is not anti-Semitic but only opposes the government of Israel by recounting the tales of Jews who became martyrs in the U.S. civil rights movement. Hers is the Hollywood version of Jews. We're good people as long as we die for a cause but not if we try to defend ourselves or have the temerity to win a war that we did not start on our own. Oh well, I guess I'm just not Ms. Walker's kind of Jew.

[This letter can be read in full on our website.]

DAVID STOLOW
Millburn, NJ

SANCTIONS ON ISRAEL?

I DO APPRECIATE *TIKKUN*'S ethical stand. But somehow no one ever challenges Israel directly, as happened in South Africa. You can say the two situations are vastly different and the African form of apartheid/occupation was more severe.

Anyway, the recent decision to go ahead and build more Israeli settler housing, despite all the nice speeches, makes me think sanctions or something like what happened in South Africa is necessary to get Israel to move in a positive direction towards a real two state answer.

Israel doesn't seem to be hearing *Tikkun* or the United States for that matter. By Israel of course I mean the present government.

To be specific, I would like to see an American Jewish group propose

sanctions or even a cut in U.S. funding to Israel if it won't join the U.S. and Palestinians in cooperative work toward a two-state solution before this West Bank situation gets any worse.

BARRY WRIGHT
Gilroy, CA

TOO MUCH IDEALISM

I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR concerns with regards to President Obama's handling of profound health care reform in the United States (*Tikkun*, May/June 2009).

I want to share with you the following worry, better expressed in the following Spanish saying: *Ni tan adentro que te quemes ni tan afuera que te hieles.*

This saying may be translated approximately as, "Not so inside that you get burnt, not so outside that you freeze."

My worry is that by being so idealistic we may end up being frozen.

I hope that you are feeling well now.

CLAUDIO DURAN
Toronto, Canada

Rabbi Lerner replies:

THANKS, CLAUDIO. POLITICS IS often a process of compromise between opposing forces. Unfortunately, many progressive and liberal people are liberal about their liberalism, not fighting with all their capacities to push their elected officials toward their views. In that case, the elected officials feel much more pressure from the Right, so the compromises that they make end up being far less principled than they would be if there were a strong force coming at them from liberals and progressives. As long as the elected officials feel that they can count on the liberals to be wimpy rather than demanding and insistent, the nature of the compromise becomes more offensive; whereas the more insistent and powerful we are in our demands, the more likely that the compromises that inevitably take

place in politics will be compromises that reflect some of our values.

UPLIFTED AND DIGNIFIED

JONATHAN GRANOFF'S ARTICLE was touching.

We lose sight of the dignity of the spirit, and it takes someone like Jonathan to bring light to it. Let's have more from this special person. He seems to enjoy it and, as in all his work, he is very good at it.

MITCH GOLD
Toronto, Canada

I AM FEELING VERY WEARY TODAY on this journey we call life.

Weary, indeed.

From all of my trials, all of my challenges, and all of my failures ...

I just needed to tell you that your article is infinitely moving and inspiring

Absolutely gorgeous.

Thank you for sharing it with all of us.

You have blessed me, today, and although I am reluctant to speak for others—surely, you have blessed all who have been touched by your words ...

Dignity, indeed ...

Infinite blessings to you,

Jonathan.

L'shalom,

PENNY JOY SNIDER-LIGHT
Greater Boston Area, MA

[For more inspiration from Jonathan Granoff, go to www.tikkun.org/daily and put Granoff in the search box.]

MORE LETTERS

For letters on health care, alternatives to capitalism and current banking, the Middle East, the Christian social gospel, nondualism, and more, in response to articles in the print magazine or those on our website, and for uncut versions of the letters here, please go to www.tikkun.org/letters.

Capitalism: Change It or Tame It?

BY GEORGE VRADENBURG

GO SEE MICHAEL MOORE'S NEW MOVIE, *CAPITALISM: A Love Story*. This movie's string of anecdotes, albeit highly selective, dramatically questions whether our political and economic system is working as it should. Intriguingly, a parallel vein of deep discontent finds expression in the recent Town Hall/Tea Party/9-12 Movement and other criticisms of increased government intrusions in our daily lives. A common theme from the Left and the Right: the American system is out of control and in the hands of corporate managers and politicians out of touch with ordinary Americans.

The Left calls for a political system less subservient to corporate interests, a corporate system more responsive to workers, and a cultural system not driven by greed.

The Right calls for a less intrusive political system, a corporate system more responsive to investors, and a cultural system imbued with religious values.

As the resident Contrarian, I believe that our democratic capitalist system is fundamentally sound and that confidence in this system can, with reforms, be restored. Common calls for political, economic, and cultural reform in the criticisms from the Left and from the Right paint the way.

As Detroit's example shows, citizen consumers and citizen investors drive the capitalist system. They vote their preferences by what they buy and by whom they elect to corporate boards. Contrast K-12 education, where capitalism is not present: kids have no choice (absent wealth) but to go to schools that, by most measures, are failing. Recognizing the control mechanisms inside capitalism is important in understanding where reforms can best function.

Moore argues that, in a capitalist system, the workers (as opposed to consumers, investors, or managers) exercise no control. Over time, however, through personal choice and improved education, the workforce has grown in size, productivity, and aggregate income. Employees in declining manufacturing sectors (e.g., steel, tobacco, and consumer electronics) have used education and job training to drive employment in growing knowledge industries (e.g., technology, financial and business services, and health care).

Even with aggregate growth in the economy, however, there has been an increasingly inequitable distribution of personal wealth and income. A weak consumer base and shrinking middle class are a drag on capitalist performance. So, reforms are needed. Income mobility must be strengthened through improved performance in education and job/entrepreneurial training systems so that employees can better compete in a global labor marketplace. Corporate shareholder election systems should be strengthened to better control manager compensation systems. Moore

argues that worker-controlled cooperatives should substitute for investor-controlled companies to assure more income equity, but it is difficult to see how a worker cooperative without investors or finance-oriented incentives would succeed. The fact that this form of corporate organization is not widely employed suggests its weakness.

Moore also contends that the financial crisis was the result of politicians protecting the corporate managers who bankroll political campaigns. The Right simply blames government intervention and mismanagement. The explanation is more complex. An interventionist Congress and the Federal Reserve sought to keep money cheap and to extend home ownership to minorities and low-income people unable to afford home mortgages; and companies used that cheap money to create new mortgage products without an adequate understanding of the systemic risk being created. Reforms to regulate financial system risk and to reduce the influence of money by shortening election cycles and using public financing can address both financial and political system weaknesses.

One additional reform step not being discussed would be to require companies to report the actions they are taking on social issues to investors. For example, company disclosures might report efforts to achieve reduced greenhouse gas emissions, energy conservation, or improved workforce satisfaction. Such disclosures would create incentives for corporate managers to take steps to mitigate injuries of a social or environmental nature related to their corporate activities.

It is no doubt true that capitalism, by its very nature, responds to the financial interests of those with ownership stakes (including us, through our own 401k plans, pensions, and other investments). It is that financial accountability that has created corporate incentives to respond to consumers. But investors' interests increasingly require that companies exercise social responsibility as well, since addressing climate change and energy costs, and having an educated and motivated workforce are essential to sustainable financial success.

Democratic capitalism, using an appropriate regulatory system, is the engine that best responds to our preferences and drives overall prosperity. For that reason, increasing numbers of countries are embracing different flavors of democratic capitalism and enjoying political stability and unprecedented reductions in poverty as a consequence. We should seek to repair our system, not abandon it. ■

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

Just Say "NO" to the War in Afghanistan

OR SHOULD WE CALL IT "AGAIN-ISTAN?"

Some people never learn. The arrogance of empire? Ignorance of history? Political opportunism? Or cowardice to confront the global challenges we face?

These factors probably all contribute to the current incredible situation, in which the United States is debating whether to escalate its military presence there or maintain a lower-level intensity, relying on mechanical warfare in order to focus the war instead in Pakistan. Neither option makes any sense.

What is absent from the debate (just as it was absent when the United States escalated the war in Vietnam or when it created the war in Iraq) is the perspective of the peace movement and of spiritual progressives.

Instead, President Obama had the audacity and shortsightedness to declare that the fight in Afghanistan is a "war of necessity" that is "fundamental to the defense of our people." Talking about switching the war from Iraq to Afghanistan might have seemed a politically clever way to show that he was not "soft" when he sought the presidency, but restating that rationale now that he is president has boxed him into the same misconceptions that have led the United States into losing wars for the past fifty years.

The narrow argument for war in Afghanistan, based on America's unresolved trauma from September 11, is that if al-Qaida gets control through the Taliban of a country in which it can train militants, it will strike again at America, perhaps this next time with nuclear weapons that it acquires from Pakistan, which has them, or by obtaining homemade or stolen atomic weapons.

It's not that it is impossible to imagine terrorists acquiring a nuclear weapon and detonating it in the United States. The scientific knowledge and the means of implementing it are out there in the world. Many countries have already built these weapons, and nuclear proliferation increases the likelihood that they may fall into ever more irresponsible hands.

There is plenty to fear when hundreds of millions of people feel so desperate and angry that they might be willing to use such weapons. The error in the reasoning behind the "war on terror" is that this nightmare scenario cannot be prevented by the United States imposing itself on one country after another in the Middle East and in every other area where terrorists might be able to steal or develop nuclear weapons.

In the short run, the United States needs to improve its defensive capacities through careful scrutiny of the airplanes, boats, and



Trucks abandoned by the defeated Soviet Army in Afghanistan were photographed thirteen years later by the invading U.S. Military. Some people never learn.

containers that reach this country. Such scrutiny measures, some of which were implemented after September 11, should be given greater attention. But the deep truth is this: there is no way to ensure that a group of terrorists will never obtain and set off an atomic bomb in an American city. As the technology of mass destruction and delivery of bombs becomes more sophisticated, the vulnerability will increase, regardless of what happens in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, or other countries in that region. The solution has to lie with eliminating people's desire to destroy us.

Acknowledge the Causes of Terrorism

THE WHOLE NOTION OF A WAR ON TERRORISM IS FUNDAMENTALLY misguided. Terrorism is a tactic used by people who do not have the powerful armies of the world at their disposal, and hence they will use homemade or stolen weapons against those who they believe to be oppressing them. If you have a population of 6.7 billion on the planet, the only way to absolutely control terrorism is to put surveillance devices into every home in the world so that everyone is so terrified of the police and so scared to express their anger that they have no possibility of resorting to terror. In that case—total fascism—the solution is far worse than the problem.

The obvious alternative is to address the grievances and problems that lead people to want to strike out against the West in general and the United States in particular. We've mentioned these in past editorials:

1. The Western impact on traditional societies has been destructive. While helping to develop a small middle class, the penetration of American corporations, the Western global media, and

the capitalist marketplace have fostered an ethos of individualism, materialism, and selfishness. This is correctly perceived as having partially destroyed the religions and forms of cultural/communal solidarity within which people felt a sense of higher purpose and meaning to their lives. We recognize that many traditional societies have a strong downside, based as they are on authoritarian and patriarchal practices that are themselves oppressive. But the way to challenge those effectively is to support the development of spiritual and religious renewal that educates girls, empowers women, validates individual freedom within (not counterposed to) commitment to a community, and affirms the humanity of others in different spiritual and religious traditions. In short, we should actively support spiritual renewal, rather than attempt to replace traditional religions with the religion of the capitalist marketplace.

We cannot beat fundamentalism through consumer materialism and the ethos of “looking out for number one.” This is especially true because of the changes that accompany such materialism and selfishness: the weakening of family ties; the prevalence of pornography and cheapening of sex into another commodity for sale and manipulation in the competitive marketplace; the elimination of any kind of economic safety net provided by people who genuinely care about you; and the obliteration of spiritual consciousness in favor of a one-dimensional version of technocratic rationality in which the accumulation of money and power is seen as the only real value in life. These changes are sure to evoke a powerful, angry, and at times violent response from those who have benefited from living in communities in which caring for each other has been part of their daily lives. If the alternative to fundamentalism is subjugation to Western values and to Western military and economic domination, people will take up arms and they will find a way to reach the United States with terrorist violence. These same concerns play out in a different but potentially just as violent way inside some parts of the United States itself, when right-wingers articulate this anger—ignoring how the social alienation and disintegration they rightly lament is rooted in the capitalist marketplace they champion—and then seek to channel that anger against liberals and enlightenment values, even at times advocating violence against President Obama.

2. Moreover, even those who are not motivated primarily by a desire to resist Western forms of modernization are moved to violence by the effects of capitalist economic penetration. One need only look at the huge belts of poverty in the ghettos and barrios of major cities around the world to see the degree of hunger and malnutrition, to recognize the growing prostitution of young girls and boys desperately seeking to feed their families, and to witness the hundreds of millions of economic migrants and refugees seeking some place to make a living. These victims of our global economic arrangements are sitting ducks for ideologies that preach anger and violence against those Western powers that are seen as arrogantly ignoring this suffering. The fundamental disrespect and even humiliation that people in traditional societies experience when their own children begin to respond to the ethos of the marketplace, breaking away from traditional families so that they can sell themselves through prostitution or through pursuing

self-interest and material gain at the expense of their connections to traditional spiritual communities, cannot be underestimated. Extremist forms of fundamentalist Islam or other forms of religious or political ideologies will spread and provide people with a way to express their anger at the West.

3. While claiming to bring democracy, we’ve simply imposed governments that agree to protect American corporate power. The Karzai government in Afghanistan tried to steal its recent election and proclaim itself a democracy—but fooled no one. The Iraqi democracy was imposed under occupation by U.S. troops and is unlikely to sustain itself once the United States really withdraws (not just its combat troops, but also the 80,000 “advisers” and countless independent contractors from the West). So while the West pretends that its mission is humanistic and aimed at spreading democracy and human rights, its hypocrisy becomes evident, thereby fueling people’s willingness to engage in violence against those who are perceived as occupiers.

Champions of the war in Afghanistan willfully ignore all this. They imagine that all this anger can be contained by yet another military intervention. They ignore the history of the Afghans’ successful resistance to one foreign occupier after another, including the British and the Soviets. They refuse to acknowledge to themselves that the U.S. occupation of Iraq increased the violence of civil war, providing the weapons that Iraqis might have had no other way to obtain.

A Strategy to Disempower Terrorists

WAR IS NOT THE ANSWER, AND CERTAINLY NOT A WAR RUN BY THE United States.

The first step that is needed is to abandon the notion of a “war on terrorism.” Drop it. Proclaim it already won. Or more honestly, acknowledge that there never can be a war against terrorism because terrorism is a tactic—the tactic of attacking civilians to spread fear. And that tactic has been used by the United States in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and many other places in the world.

The second step is to replace the notion of war with the notion of police actions aimed at protecting people from organized bunches of criminals who seek to terrorize domestic populations or to impose their own religious, political, or economic rule on local communities that do not want that rule. The creation of an international police force of this sort, charged also with protecting development projects to improve the quality of life of people on the village and small-town level, should be given the highest priority. Moreover, representatives of countries that together represent the majority of the citizens of the world must be significantly involved in the formulation of this force. We should try to get this created through the United Nations: not a toothless police force like those which have characterized the UN presence in Sudan, Rwanda, and the Congo, but a force that has a mandate to use all appropriate means to protect citizens against the harassment and oppression imposed by groups like the Taliban. But if there is no such willingness on the part of these countries to participate in creating and financing such a police force, the United States and other Western countries should not step into that space but should instead focus on defending their own borders, while continuing to beg the

peoples of the world to step up and share the responsibility for creating an international police force whose sole aim is to protect local communities from the violence of those who seek to impose their rule by force.

The third step is for the nuclear states to eliminate nuclear weapons. A careful global effort to protect every nuclear facility and to govern the creation and production of nuclear power should replace nuclear proliferation—but this will never happen if the nuclear states retain their own nuclear stashes. What, for instance, could possibly induce Arab states or Iran to eliminate the possibility of nuclear weapons when they know that Israel has close to 200 such weapons of its own, which it may rely on in case of war? Or what could induce India or Pakistan to reduce their nuclear arsenals as long as they fear each other's—or China's—nuclear weapons? As long as the current nuclear powers retain their weapons, proliferation is inevitable, and with it comes the danger of crazies obtaining those weapons and using them in terrorist attacks.

The fourth step is for the advanced industrial societies, led by the United States, to launch immediately a Domestic and Global Marshall Plan that would dedicate between 2 percent and 5 percent of their gross domestic product each year for the next twenty to once and for all end global poverty, homelessness, hunger, inadequate education, and inadequate health care, and to repair the global environment. We've outlined a way to do this that would avoid the corruption that has bedeviled various aid plans, as well as prevent the mistaken allocation of this aid to ruling elites, thus ensuring that the aid goes toward building the economic, educational, and health infrastructures that could succeed in permanently defeating global poverty. This step must be taken alongside of and with equal priority to the first three steps, and not as an afterthought or delayed till the other steps are shown to be effective, because they will not succeed unless they are accompanied by this step and its explicit articulation of an alternative worldview. Check out this "strategy of generosity" at www.spiritualprogressives.org.

The fifth step is to give public support to the creation and sustenance of those in the religious and spiritual world who are teaching variants of their own religions that insist on the need to respect and actively provide caring for all, including for members of other religions. It should be a high priority to provide training, education, and media support to those who are seeking to renew their own religious traditions in ways that emphasize the equal rights and entitlements of women and girls, the need to acknowledge that there are multiple paths to salvation or to connection with God, and the need to rejoice in the diversity of religious and spiritual approaches and to acknowledge them all as potentially valid to the extent that they themselves are committed to ethical, ecological, and communal values likely to enhance peace, mutual understanding, and deep spiritual connection to the universe.

Finally, step six: the Western countries, starting with the United States, must publicly insist that, although they are adopting a strategy of generosity in part because doing so is in our best interests, having finally come to the understanding that in the twenty-first century our well-being (both individually and as a society) depends on the well-being of everyone else on the planet, the

deeper reason is because we know generosity to be morally right. We must recognize that the path of arrogant self-interest and self-aggrandizement that has characterized the West's interactions with the rest of the world is morally wrong. For that reason, we must start this new direction with a serious process of repentance, in which we publicly acknowledge the hurts we and other Western countries have imposed on the rest of the world. Using the South African model of Truth and Reconciliation, we should set up tribunals in which we in the United States listen to the testimony of those who have been hurt by the role of Western colonialism and imperialism, including Native Americans, African Americans, and immigrant groups in the United States, and extending this process to all the countries of the world where U.S. or Western economic and political involvement has caused pain and humiliation. This process should become a center of our public discourse. It should be taught in our schools. Any media that uses the public airwaves, publicly supported electricity, public mail, or public-supported streets and highways should be mandated to give some prime time coverage each day to the presentation of this information.

In short, we either pursue the same old ethically, environmentally, and economically destructive policies of war, or we embrace a new path of fundamental change. This new path should be based in part on repentance and atonement for how we have gone wrong. And it should replace the capitalist ethos of looking out for number one and the commitment to "progress" (understood as the endless accumulation of new material goods and electronic gadgets) with a new ethos of love, generosity, ecological sanity, and awe and wonder at the grandeur of the universe.

What Keeps the United States from Adopting a Rational Strategy in Afghanistan?

THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT IMPEDIMENTS TO THIS TRANSITION IN American consciousness that constrain Obama and the other very decent people who are running the society at this moment. They include:

1. The military and its worldview. Obama administration officials may know that a military strategy cannot win, but they still ask for more troops because they imagine that they can pacify a country through techniques of sophisticated counter-insurgency.



No way will this work. The military lacks the appropriate ideological framework and troops. Military training is all about the most effective way to dominate others, to kill. If you train a pit bull to bite, don't get angry at it for biting. If you train a military to dominate, don't be surprised if it is not the mechanism for building trust, whether that is in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Israel/Palestine.

2. The greed and economic interests of America's corporate elite. The elite have convinced themselves that they really are acting in a generous and caring way in the world by spreading the capitalist marketplace. The truth is that business does in fact improve some aspects of life for people: it provides more material goods for some sectors of the population in countries around the world. But it's easy to focus on the improved quality of life for the developing middle classes in many countries while ignoring the increased suffering for other sections of the population that corporate policies have engendered. Corporate leaders have immense power in shaping the American political discourse in ways that tend to reinforce the military option as the only "realistic" possibility. Deeply rooted in a materialist worldview, they are unable to even begin to see how their global system marginalizes other values in other cultures, like the value of connectivity to the land, to community or to God/spiritual life.

3. Public ignorance. The erosion of political culture in the United States, the focus on short-term fixes, and the dumbing-down of the population by the media cause astounding levels

of ignorance about the rest of the world and about the suffering of our own neighbors inside the United States

4. Eight years of undermining international law, honesty, reasoned debate, and a sense of the proper and restricted role of the military.

If you want to get out of a hole, the first thing to do is to stop digging. That's our advice to Obama: say no to the military. Fire McChrystal, Gates, and all his major supporters who helped leak the information about what he thought was necessary, rather than going through you first, Mr. President. Announce the six-point strategy for U.S. security articulated above. Close down the thousand American military bases around the world and use the savings to launch the Domestic and Global Marshall Plan. Act resolutely, without hesitation, and replace those advisers and those military leaders who will not actively embrace this direction. Use your power as commander in chief and ignore the right-wing media barrage you will certainly face, no matter what you do.

Obama could take this path. He is not doing so. Nor is there anyone in the public sphere ready to talk this language. That is why it is so very important for YOU, dear reader, to spread these ideas, to help us develop and refine the articulation of them, and to work with us to bring these ideas into the public arena. And come to our national conference June 11-14, 2010, in Washington, D.C.

God puts it simply enough in the Bible: Behold I have set before you this day life and death. Choose life. ■

Implement Goldstone's Recommendations to the UN about the Gaza War

JUDGE RICHARD GOLDSTONE'S REPORT ON THE assault by Israel on Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009 criticized human rights violations by Hamas in its shelling of Israeli population centers, as well as the far greater number of human rights violations by Israel against Palestinian civilians. It called for Hamas and for Israel to conduct credible objective investigations into what happened and, failing that, called upon the UN to refer these cases to the International Criminal Court.

Goldstone is an internationally respected jurist who played an important role in investigating crimes of the apartheid government in South Africa and in creating the Truth and Reconciliation Process that helped make peace between South African blacks and the white minority that had previously oppressed them. When the Security Council established International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda in 1993-1994, Goldstone was appointed chief prosecutor for both. He was a member of the International Panel of the Commission of Enquiry into the Activities of Nazism in

Argentina (CEANA), which was established in 1997 to identify Nazi war criminals who had emigrated and transferred victim assets (Nazi gold) to Argentina. Goldstone was chairman of the International Independent Inquiry on Kosovo from August 1999 until December 2001.

Goldstone serves on the board of directors of several non-profit organizations that promote justice, including Physicians for Human Rights; the International Center for Transitional Justice; the South African Legal Services Foundation; Human Rights Watch; the Center for Economic and Social Rights; and the Brandeis University Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life.

He is a trustee of Hebrew University and a lifelong and passionate Zionist.

None of this stopped the pro-settler right-wing lobby in the United States and Israel from denouncing him as a self-hating Jew and his report as anti-Semitic. The lies flew wildly: that his report did not mention the provocation of Hamas in its shellings of Southern Israel, that he criticized only Israel but not Hamas, that the report did not recognize the right of a country

to defend itself against terrorism, and more.

Given the similar distortions about *Tikkun* that we have suffered throughout the years, we were hardly surprised. The truth is that both the Right and the center of the Jewish world in the United States and Israel are so emotionally blinded by fear of Palestinians and fear of what others will say about any lack of adequate zealotry in defending Israel that they lose all capacity to make rational judgments.

In this context, we interviewed Judge Goldstone in October. We urge you to read that interview carefully to get a full sense of the decency, moderation, and strong commitment to Israel's well-being that comes through. You can find it in the "Current Thinking" section of our home page at www.tikkun.org or by putting the following URL in your web browser: www.tikkun.org/goldstone.

Goldstone refutes the argument that attending to these human rights violations of international law will somehow slow down or deflect the peace process. There is no peace process. The Netanyahu government is all too happy to negotiate with the Palestinian Authority, but the only Palestinian state it is willing to concede is one that holds in place hundreds of thousands of West Bank settlers and denies the Palestinians control over their own border (in short, a mini version of the outdoor prison they call Gaza, where Israel prevents the import of food and medicine in a deliberate attempt to physically weaken the entire

population as collective punishment for the sins of a small Hamas force).

The most likely outcome of the Goldstone report is that the Israeli government will set up a sham "investigation" (like the CIA investigating its own role in Guantánamo or Abu Ghraib, or the U.S. military investigating its own abuses in Iraq), thus appearing to take the Goldstone report seriously while continuing the cover-up. Only a truly independent and credible investigation would provide a legitimate way for Israel to avoid being taken to the International Court. Israel would have to cooperate with but could not control the process or outcome of the investigation. (It refused to cooperate with Goldstone, but top Israeli officials have indicated to me personally that they know that was a mistake.)

The Obama administration has claimed that a focus on human rights violations is a distraction from peace negotiations. But as Judge Goldstone points out in this *Tikkun* interview (in which Rabbi Brian Walt assisted), there can never be peace without justice, because the resentments and unhealed anger created by human rights abuses (on both sides) need to be acknowledged and healed, or there is little chance that any peace agreement could withstand the fury and violence that unhealed anger at injustice will keep creating.

Meanwhile, all who support peace in the Middle East owe a lasting debt of gratitude to Judge Richard Goldstone. ■

This Holiday Season

IN PAST YEARS OUR PRIMARY MESSAGE AROUND THE Holidays has been: don't turn Christmas, Chanukah, Eid, Kwanzaa, etc. into orgies of material consumption. Celebrations of materialism corrupt our children's values. They equate "caring" with "how much are you willing to spend on person x or y." Of course this creates depression and feelings of worthlessness in the minds of many who can't afford to spend at the level that the media portrays as "normal for an average family." In short, such materialism undermines the spiritual intent of the holidays.

To enhance the spiritual meaning of these holidays, we've created a special location on our website (www.tikkun.org/holidays) where we will publish the best suggestions for how spiritual progressives can celebrate not only the December holidays, but all the holidays of all the religious and secular communities, including Easter, Passover, Shavuot, July 4, Ramadan, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and many more. We are just starting to accumulate the best ideas on how to reclaim these holidays and make them spiritually deep for the people who celebrate them. We invite you to email us materials that you think ought to be posted on that site. Feel free to send us your detailed guidelines about how to spiritually enhance whatever holidays (from every tradition) you'd like to see deepened or enriched (and sometimes, as in the case of July 4, transformed in focus from a narrower

nationalistic, chauvinistic, tribal, or fundamentalist approach to a more universalistic, humanistic, or God-centered approach). Send these to RabbiLerner@tikkun.org.

Meanwhile, because *Tikkun* and the Network of Spiritual Progressives are suffering from the economic meltdown, we would greatly appreciate it if—in the case that you decide you do want to spend money for gifts—you'd consider buying people in your life gift subscriptions to *Tikkun* magazine (special rate of \$25/sub). Or buy them a membership in the NSP (we'll take them at the lowest income level: \$40 per gift membership) or a low-cost \$100 registration for our D.C. conference June 11-14. The focus of the conference is "Supporting Obama to BE the Obama We Voted For—not the inside-the-Beltway pragmatist whose compromises are undermining his popularity and demobilizing social change forces." Speakers will include Sister Joan Chittister; former *New York Times* correspondent Christopher Hedges; Rev. Jim Winkler, chair of the Board of Church and Society of the Methodists; Jonathan Granoff; and many more). Please send us a list of gift recipients with their addresses and emails, and we will send them a gift card announcing your gift in time for the holidays (send this to kay@tikkun.org and put "Holiday Gift Subs" in the subject heading, or send a check to 2342 Shattuck Ave, #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704). ■

The Yes Men Fix the World

Review by Michael Lerner

SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHETHER TO LAUGH OR CRY AT SOME OF THE scenes in this engaging and insightful documentary about the antics of the Yes Men. The film, which opened in New York and San Francisco in October, is one of the most significant pieces of political theater about capitalism to be made available to a mass audience, and its greatest strength is its humor and light touch, which provide a balance to the moral outrages that the film exposes.

The Yes Men are two committed social change activists who have managed to present themselves as representatives of several major corporations and then to use that position to expose corporate crimes that have been known but not fully grasped by the public or the media. Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno are white, middle-aged men, neatly attired in corporate suits, who enter various settings and give talks to audiences who take them at their word and find nothing strange about their presentations. In one such caper, they talk to their audience about the "inevitable" loss of lives that the pursuit of profit-uber-alles requires and use a gold-sprayed skeleton as a prop to illustrate how their corporate hosts have learned to put profit as the highest good. Rather than attack this corporate ethos, they perform as though they are behind it all the way, and that allows audience members to feel safe about revealing their own commitment to putting profits above human lives.

In another scene, they get invited to represent Dow Chemical on a BBC broadcast, where they announce that Dow has agreed to spend the \$12 billion it will take to rectify the pain created by Dow's subsidiary Union Carbide twenty years before in Bhopal, India, where its plant exploded, killing hundreds and maiming thousands. Dow's stocks drop precipitously in the next few hours as investors, instead of rejoicing in the news that their company has finally taken moral responsibility for the well-being of those whose lives it had wounded, react by selling their stocks for fear that their profits may temporarily decrease. And in yet another scene, the Yes Men present themselves as representatives of the federal government's Department of Housing and Urban Development and—as the mayor of New Orleans and the governor of Louisiana look on in shock—announce that the government will now take the steps to open up housing unnecessarily closed to residents, as well as seriously rebuild New Orleans after having neglected it for years following Hurricane Katrina.

In each of these last two cases, the Yes Men reveal what a morally grounded corporation or government would do, in contrast to what is actually happening. In each case, the fraud is soon uncovered, and the Yes Men are confronted by a hostile media that questions whether these activists have caused more pain by raising hopes that are dashed within hours. Community activists in Katrina-affected areas and Bhopal respond by saying that the corporations and government have done little to rectify the damage, and that the Yes Men's prank might actually put that inaction into public consciousness after years of neglect!

The Yes Men are a grown-up version of the Yuppies—the Yes Men's self-presentation and analysis are similar but much deeper. Their film provides background for the specific corporate crimes they are exposing while positioning all this in the context of the fundamental distortion: the placing of corporate profits above the well-being of the human race. The Yuppies rarely made these

theyesmenfixtheworld.com



The Yes Men are Andy Bichlbaum (above with the famous utopian edition of the New York Times and below left) and Mike Bonanno (below right). For information on the times and venues of the movie, visit the website listed above.





Top: Andy with activist Satinath "Sathya" Sarangi in Bhopal, India.

Bottom: Andy and Mike with "Gilda," the Dow Chemical acceptable risk skeleton.

connections, and seemed to suggest that acts of individual "unveiling" of the outrages were sufficient. The Yes Men, on the other hand, make it clear that they see their actions only as a stimulus to and not a replacement for the development of a social movement that could transform the entire global economic and political system.

That they convey this message with humor, grace, and wisdom makes this film an invaluable tool for education. But even for those who already concede the points, the film is so funny and pleasurable that you've got to see it and bring your friends! And the Yes Men are really "tikkunistas": their film is titled *To Fix the World*—quite literally what we are all about!

The Yes Men Interview

How did you acquire the chutzpah to go up against the corporate world? How did you get radicalized in the first place?

Mike Bonanno: My parents had the idea that we should have a healthy disrespect and mistrust of authority in order to look out for ourselves as well as others.

Also, I grew up in the suburbs, and that was something to rebel against. Because the suburbs were so monotonous and it felt like there was nothing to do. I really loved going back to Brooklyn to visit my grandmother, because it seemed like there was a real environment there with people doing things. I think my formative years were about rebelling against the idea of a uniform consumer society and at the same time having this kind of generational teaching about what can go wrong with abuse of power.

My dad is Hungarian, and my mother is Dutch. They both came over after World War II, basically as kids. My mother tried to ride a scooter around the world and got a lot of fanfare. She has all these little newspaper clippings about it—you know, sponsored by a scooter company and stuff. This was in the 1950s, so I think it was seen as a bit outrageous to go on a scooter to Iran and Afghanistan. So I grew up with those stories, as well.

And my parents were into folk music in the early '60s and that sort of thing.

Andy Bichlbaum: Well, my grandfather died in Auschwitz. I only understood that when I was twelve or fifteen—my father never wanted to talk about it. I am Jewish: I went to Hebrew school and all that and spent a year in Israel when I was nineteen. So yeah, I got aware of all that at a certain point and I'm not sure how it transmuted into activism. Somehow I started to really want to do something in college and kind of stumbled into things later in my life. Like doing this, much later in my life.

Let's see ... when did I become conscious of the problems with corporate America? I guess I would be able to trace it to ACT UP [the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power]. I was probably aware of it before then, because I was writing ... fiction that touched on the same themes. Then when I moved to San Francisco I became aware of a lot of things. [ACT UP] was really an amazing machine—they did a lot. And it is largely due to them that we got an AIDS policy eventually. The way that a few people doing clever things could have an effect on the world was dramatically demonstrated to me by ACT UP.

How did you meet?

Mike: I did a project where I switched the voice boxes of the talking Barbies and GI Joes and put them back on store shelves and claimed responsibility as the Barbie Liberation Organization. And Andy had done a project where he had inserted gay content into a macho video game. We had these two common friends who independently contacted us and told us that we had to talk to each other. That was when we started working together, about fifteen years ago now.

What was the video game story?

Andy: I worked at this games company. It was my longest job, like a year. I decided I would put a bunch of kissing boys in this video game because I wanted (continued on page 78)

ASK THE AUTHOR!

November 23:

The Yes Men:

**Andy Bichlbaum
and Mike Bonanno**

We'll interview Andy and/or Mike for 20 minutes, and then they'll take questions from YOU.

6 p.m. Pacific Time (9 p.m. Eastern)

Monday, November 23

Call 1-888-346-3950 for free!

Then enter this code: 11978#

See full schedule at
www.tikkun.org



health insurance, reductions in planned Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements to hospitals and other providers; cuts in subsidies to Medicare Advantage plans (the private plans that provide insurance to Medicare recipients); and reduced waste and fraud in Medicare and Medicaid are counted on to yield the necessary funds.

Congress is envisioning devoting nearly \$1 trillion to this program over ten years. Unfortunately, even this substantial sum is not nearly enough to enable everyone to buy insurance under this plan. According to the Congressional Budget Office, between 17 million and 25 million people will need "hardship waivers" and will remain uninsured. So the designers of this plan have failed to achieve even their most basic goal.

The Public Alternative

THE ALTERNATIVE THAT OBAMA MIGHT have chosen is the public route to real health care reform, using Rep. John Conyers' Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act, HR 676. This plan is straightforward. It would expand the existing Medicare program so that everyone would be covered via automatic enrollment, just as seniors are automatically covered now when they turn 65. It would provide comprehensive benefits, much improved over the existing Medicare program, which has deductibles and co-pays that keep many seniors from getting the care they need. It would allow free choice of doctor and hospital, which would remain independent, as they are now. A public agency would process and pay the bills, and the system would be financed through a progressive tax.

Numerous studies conducted over the past several decades have shown that—in sharp contrast to a plan that relies on private, for-profit insurance companies—such a simplified, publicly funded system would cost no more than we are now spending. Estimates based on a number of studies performed over the last decade suggest that covering the uninsured and improving the coverage of the underinsured, including eliminating co-pays and deductibles, would cost about \$250 billion each year. On the other hand, the reduction in the cost of insurance administration

(Medicare averages 3 percent overhead, while insurance companies average 20 percent)—along with savings in hospital and doctor billing costs, savings from bulk purchasing, and savings from the better coordination of care that a single funding source could achieve—will yield even more than that in savings. The excess could be used to retrain those who are now processing insurance bills, so they could begin doing *useful* work.

A Medicare for All program could be paid for in many ways. The simplest would be through a payroll tax in which, for instance, employees would pay between 4 percent and 5 percent of their paycheck while employers would pay between 8 percent and 10 percent. For both employers and employees, this would be a significant saving compared to what they're paying now.

Further, a Medicare for All program, unlike the congressional plans now on the table, offers real tools for containing costs in the future. These include the use of annual budgets, especially for hospitals; the planning of capital investment; and an emphasis on primary care, coordination of care, and more cost-efficient ways of paying for physician services.

Conclusion

PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE IS A defective product that needs an expensive fix. By building his program on private insurance, President Obama has tied himself to a system that is too expensive and is unlikely to achieve the goals he has set. It will not lead to universal coverage and cannot contain costs going into the future.

On the other hand, an expanded Medicare for All system can provide comprehensive services while costing no more than we now spend, and it provides real mechanisms for containing costs. Should a private mandate plan be passed, the problems of the health care system will not go away. Real health care reform will continue to be essential. As costs continue to climb faster than incomes, health care will absorb a larger and larger fraction of our national livelihood. At some point, we will have to move to a unified public mechanism for funding health care that will be truly sustainable. ■

THE YES MEN

(continued from page 16)

to leave the job. I was fired after 80,000 copies of this game were shipped to store shelves with these hordes of boys that would come out and start kissing. But what I didn't expect was that it turned into a worldwide media sensation, so that kind of got me interested ...

I hadn't really intended it so much as an activist thing exactly. I certainly hadn't expected it to become a media story. And when it did happen, it occurred to me ... wow, this is useful.

Then I had this idea: everyone should know about this, everyone should do this. And the funniest thing to do would be to create a kind of cultural "terrorist" organization that would be about funding all kinds of people to do this. And create this big fake umbrella organization that people would think is real, and that would convince people there is a big movement going on and all kinds of people are doing this.

So you created a website to talk that up. But how did that turn into the Yes Men?

Mike: In 1999 there was all this activity going on around the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle. There was this huge protest being planned. We wanted to go but we were in other parts of the world. Andy just threw up a fake website for the WTO that was satirical: it was meant to be funny, to be a joke. The idea was people would go to the fake website and be confused for a moment, read this



Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno show off the "SurvivaBall" they designed to save corporate executives from the effects of global warming.

Roadmap to a New Economics: Beyond Capitalism and Socialism

by Riane Eisler

WHEN THINKING OF A NEW ECONOMICS, LET'S NOT THINK OF STOCKS, bonds, derivatives, or other financial instruments. Let's think of children. Let's ask what kind of economic policies and practices are good for children. Let's ask what's needed so all children are healthy, get a good education, and are prepared to live good lives. More fundamentally, let's ask what kind of economic system helps, or prevents, children from realizing their great potentials for consciousness, empathy, caring, and creativity—the capacities that make us fully human.

Once we address these questions, we can start designing the road map to the economic system we want and need: one that promotes not only human survival but also full human development.

We must design such a system, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it is the economically sensible thing to do, particularly as we move into the postindustrial knowledge-information era where the most important capital is what some economists call "high-quality human capital." Indeed, Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen concurs that the aim of sound economic policy must be human capacity development.

This I agree with. But I want to add that for a truly new economic system, we need a broader definition of human capacity development than a purely economic one. Which brings us back to the children and to our human capacities for caring, empathy, consciousness, and creativity.

When children are the starting point for a new economic paradigm, the first step is to go beyond the tired debate of capitalism versus socialism and all the other old isms. Both capitalist and socialist theory ignore a fundamental truth: the real wealth of nations—and the world—consists of the contributions of people and nature.

Adam Smith and Karl Marx ignored the vital importance of nature's life-sustaining activities. For them, nature exists to be exploited, period. As for the life-sustaining activities of caring for people starting in childhood, they considered this merely "re-productive" labor, and not part of their "productive" economic equation.

In other words, their focus was on the market—for Smith to extol it and for Marx to excoriate it. Neither included in his economic model the life-sustaining sectors, without which there would be no market economy: the household economy, the natural economy, and the volunteer economy.

The first step toward building a truly new economics is a *full-spectrum* economic model that includes these sectors and gives real visibility and value to the most essential



Riane Eisler is a systems scientist and cultural historian, president of the Center for Partnership Studies, and author of the international bestsellers *The Chalice and the Blade* and *The Real Wealth of Nations*. See www.rianeeisler.com.



When socialism or capitalism are applied as part of domination (not partnership) systems, the results include violence, inequities, and the destruction of the environment, whether it's the pall of industrial smog spreading across China (top) or the oozing of an American oil spill (below).

human work: the work of caring for people and for our natural environment.

The move to this comprehensive economic model in turn requires understanding something else ignored in conventional economic discussions. This is that economic systems don't arise in a vacuum: they are influenced by, and in turn influence, the larger cultural system in which they are embedded.

The Failures of Capitalism and Socialism

IN THE WAKE OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC MELTDOWN THAT BEGAN IN 2008 HAS COME AN outcry against capitalism, especially against its latest stage of "neoliberalism" with its massive deregulation of powerful moneyed interests. Critics point not only to the havoc wreaked by deregulating banks and other financial institutions but also to the gargantuan size and power of multinational corporations; the widening gap between haves and have-nots, both between and within nations, caused by the globalization of "free markets"; and the decimation of our natural environment by irresponsible business practices. Some argue that capitalism must be replaced with socialism because historically capitalism has been unjust, violent, and exploitive of both people and nature.

But this argument reflects yet another old way of thinking that we must re-examine and transcend: classifying societies in terms of conventional categories such as socialist vs. capitalist, religious vs. secular, rightist vs. leftist, Eastern vs. Western, industrial vs. post-industrial, and so forth. None of these categories describes the totality of a society's beliefs and institutions—from the family, education, and religion, to politics and economics. Since these old categories focus only on particular aspects of a society, they are useless for understanding what a more equitable, sustainable, and caring system really looks like.

The social categories of *partnership system* and *domination system* reveal the core configurations of societies that support two very different kinds of relations. The domination system supports relations of top-down rankings: man over man, man over woman, race over race, religion over religion, nation over nation, and man over nature. The partnership system supports the relations we want and urgently need at this critical juncture of history: relations of mutual respect, accountability, and benefit.

If we re-examine the critique of capitalism as unjust, violent, and exploitive, from this perspective we see that, in reality, it is a critique of the structures, relationships, and values inherent in domination systems—be they ancient or modern, Western or Eastern, feudal, monarchic, or totalitarian. Long before capitalist billionaires amassed huge fortunes, Egyptian pharaohs and Chinese emperors hoarded their nations' wealth. Indian potentates demanded tributes of silver and gold while lower castes lived in abject poverty. Middle Eastern warlords pillaged, plundered, and terrorized their people. European feudal lords killed their neighbors and oppressed their subjects.

A domination system of top-down rankings has also characterized the two large-scale modern applications of socialism: the former Soviet Union and China. Both turned out to be authoritarian and violent. And while they alleviated some economic disparities, they were hardly egalitarian.

In 1984, I visited the Soviet Union as one of two U.S. delegates with Nordic Women for Peace, which marched on both Washington, D.C., and Moscow to enlist support for nuclear disarmament. While ordinary Russians lived in overcrowded quarters, often with two families crammed into a small flat, we were put up in a luxury hotel's royal suite with gilded furniture and a grand piano in its foyer. And while most Russians lacked even the most basic consumer goods, we and the Soviet officials hosting us drank champagne and ate caviar and other delicacies.

Nor did these regimes protect our environment any more than capitalist nations did. In fact, their record is just as abysmal—as evidenced by disasters such as Chernobyl and Lake Baikal in the USSR and the strip mining, air pollution, and other environmental calamities of China.

In short, the historic records of neither capitalism nor socialism hold real promise for a new, more sustainable and equitable economic system. Since capitalism has

gained ascendancy, its failures are more evident. And it is true that, at this point, we need to leave the destructive aspects of capitalism behind.

This does not mean we should discard everything from capitalism and socialism. We need both markets and central planning. But to effectively address our problems, we have to go much deeper, to matters that conventional economic analyses and theories ignore.

To construct a more equitable and sustainable economic system, we have to take into account the larger social contexts out of which economics derive—specifically, the degree to which these orient to either a partnership system or a domination system.

Economics, Societies, and Values

ECONOMICS IS ABOVE ALL ABOUT VALUES. SO TO CHANGE ECONOMICS, WE MUST ALSO LOOK at cultural beliefs about what is valuable or not valuable. And one of the distinctions between partnership and domination systems is what is and is not considered of economic value.

In both the Soviet Union and China, socialism was imposed in cultures that oriented closely to the configuration of the domination system. The core configuration of this system consists of top-down rankings in the family and state or tribe maintained by physical, psychological, and economic control; the ranking of the male half of humanity over the female half, and with this, the devaluation by both men and women of anything stereotypically considered feminine; and a high degree of culturally accepted abuse and violence—from child- and wife-beating to pogroms, terrorism, and chronic warfare.

A close orientation to this configuration can be found in societies that have little in common when looked at through the lenses of conventional social and economic categories such as communist or capitalist, Eastern or Western, secular or religious, and so forth. For example, viewed from the perspective of conventional categories, Hitler's Germany (a technologically advanced, Western, rightist society), the Taliban of Afghanistan and fundamentalist Iran (two Eastern, religious societies), and the would-be regime of the rightist-fundamentalist alliance in the United States seem totally different. But all have the same basic dominator configuration.

Neoliberalism, for example, was part of a regression to a domination system. It can best be understood as a means of maintaining top-down control. Although neoliberal rhetoric is about freedom, what this really means is freedom for those in control to do what they wish, free from government regulation. Neoliberal policies were designed to reconsolidate wealth and power in the hands of those on top, and its mantra of "trickle-down economics" conditioned people to accept the "traditional" order, under which those on the bottom have to content themselves with the crumbs dropping from their masters' opulent tables. The neoliberal promotion of "pre-emptive war" against Iraq also continued the traditional reliance on violence by dominant groups to impose their control. And the neoliberals' alliance with the so-called religious Right reinforced still another core component of domination systems: a "traditional" male-headed family where the ranking of one half of humanity over the other half is presented as normal and moral, and children learn early that it's very painful to question orders, no matter how unjust.

Moreover, with this ranking of male over female came another distinguishing feature of neoliberalism: its contempt for the "soft" or stereotypically "feminine," as in their vitriolic attacks on what they called the "nanny state." Accordingly, a key neoliberal requirement was that government programs designed to care for people, such as health care, child care, and aid to poor families, be defunded both in the United States and through "structural adjustment policies" in the "developing" world. In short, neoliberalism was really dominator economics.



Being a kid in Sweden isn't all hot tubs—it's also learning how to create more of a partnership society. As early as 1969, it was recommended that schools in Sweden counteract traditional gender roles. In 1980 a curriculum for this purpose was made compulsory for schoolchildren over the age of seven, and in 1998 for pre-school children from one to six years of age.

ASK THE AUTHOR!

**December 7:
Riane Eisler**

We'll interview Riane for 20 minutes, and then she'll take questions from YOU.

**6 p.m. Pacific Time
(9 p.m. Eastern)**

Monday, December 7

Call 1-888-346-3950 for free!

Then enter this code: 11978#

See full schedule at
www.tikkun.org



FOUNDATIONS FOR A CARING ECONOMICS

Progress in building any one of these foundations will set in motion progress in all the others in an interactive dynamic of change.

FOUNDATION 1: A FULL-SPECTRUM ECONOMIC MAP.

This map includes the household economy, the unpaid community economy, the market economy, the illegal economy, the government economy, and the natural economy.

FOUNDATION 2: CULTURAL BELIEFS AND INSTITUTIONS THAT VALUE CARING AND CAREGIVING.

These beliefs and institutions orient to the Partnership System rather than the Domination System and include a shift from dominator to partnership relations in the formative parent-child and gender relations.

FOUNDATION 3: CARING ECONOMIC RULES, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES.

These government and business rules, policies, and practices encourage and reward caring and caregiving; meet basic human needs (both material needs and needs for human emotional and spiritual development); direct technological breakthroughs to life-sustaining applications; and consider effects on future generations.

FOUNDATION 4: INCLUSIVE AND ACCURATE ECONOMIC INDICATORS.

These indicators include the life-sustaining activities traditionally performed by women in households and other parts of the nonmonetized economy, as well as the life-sustaining processes of nature, and do not include activities that harm us and our natural environment.

FOUNDATION 5: PARTNERSHIP ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES.

These more equitable and participatory structures support relations of mutual benefit, responsibility, and accountability rather than the concentration of economic assets and power at the top.

FOUNDATION 6: AN EVOLVING ECONOMIC THEORY OF PARTNERISM.

This economic theory incorporates the partnership elements of both capitalism and socialism, but goes beyond them to recognize the essential economic value of caring for ourselves, others, and nature.

Source: *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics*, by Riane Eisler. Berrett-Koehler, 2007.

The partnership system has a very different configuration. Its core elements are a democratic and egalitarian structure in both the family and state or tribe; equal partnership between women and men; and a low degree of violence, because it's not needed to maintain rigid rankings of domination.

No society is either a pure partnership or domination system. But the degree to which it affects everything: from the society's guiding system of values to the construction of all its institutions—from the family, education, and religion to politics and economics.

Economics and Caring

NORDIC NATIONS SUCH AS SWEDEN, NORWAY, AND FINLAND ARE THE CONTEMPORARY countries that have moved most closely to the partnership side of the partnership-domination continuum. They have more equality in both the family and the state; a higher status of women (approximately 40 percent of their national legislators are female); and concerted efforts to leave behind traditions of violence (they pioneered the first peace studies and the first laws prohibiting physical discipline of children in families, and have a strong men's movement to disentangle "masculinity" from its equation with domination and violence).

Supported by their more partnership-oriented social configuration, these nations developed economic policies that combine positive elements of socialism and capitalism—but go beyond both to an economics in which caring for people and nature is a top priority. These nations have government-supported child care, universal health care, stipends to help families care for children, elder care with dignity, and generous paid parental leave.

These more caring policies, in turn, made it possible for these nations to move from extreme poverty (famines in the early twentieth century) to societies with a generally high standard of living for all. Today these nations not only rank high in the United Nations annual Human Development Reports in measures of quality of life; they are also in the top tiers of the World Economic Forum's annual global competitiveness reports.

Nordic countries don't have the huge gaps between haves and have-nots characteristic of dominator-oriented nations. While they're not ideal societies, they have succeeded in providing a generally good living standard for all. They have low poverty and crime rates and high longevity rates. Their children score high on international tests. And studies show that workers in these nations are more satisfied and happier than people in countries such as the United States where the gross national product is higher.

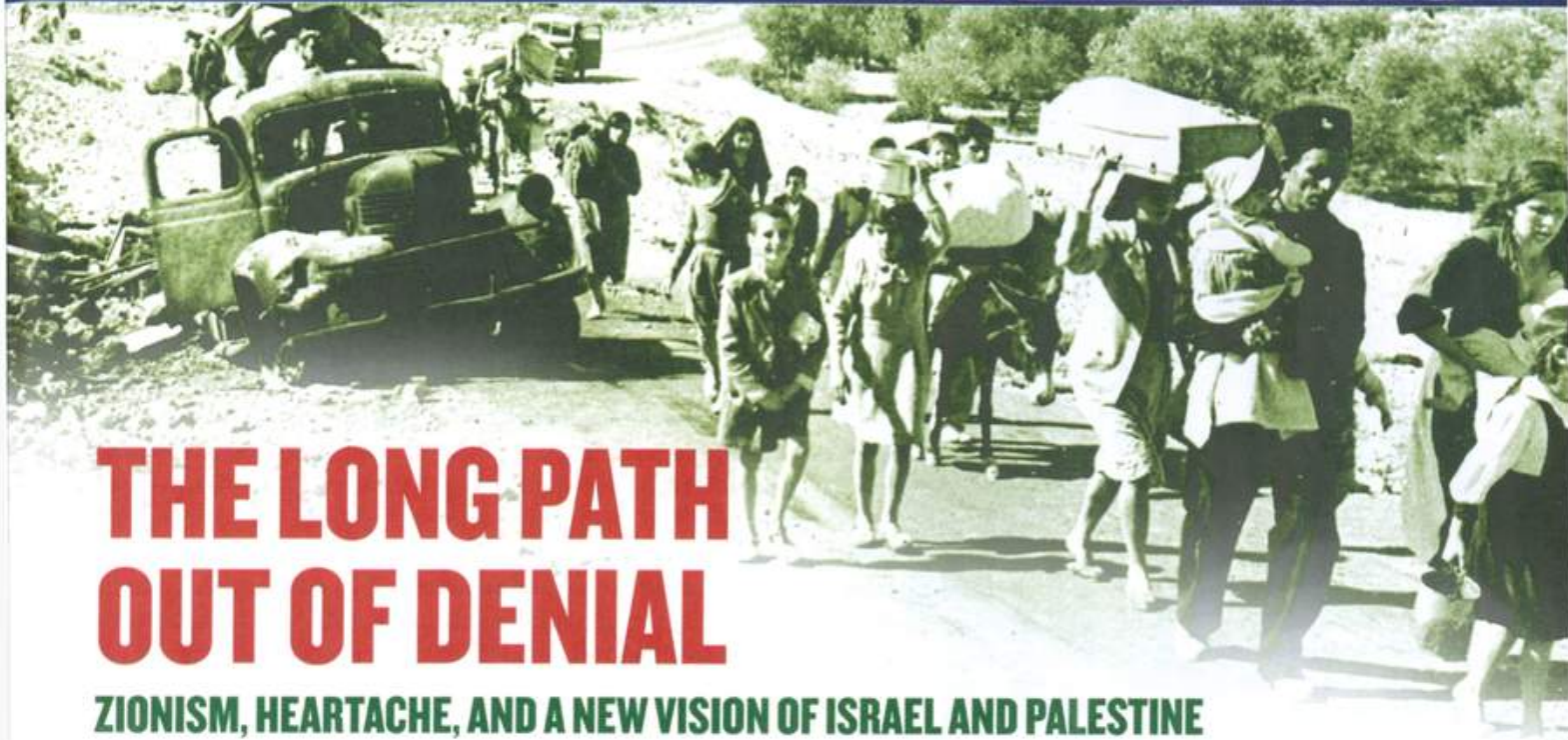
Nordic nations also pioneered environmentally sound industrial approaches such as the Swedish "Natural Step." And some of the first experiments in industrial democracy came from Sweden and Norway, as did studies showing that a more participatory structure, where workers play a part in deciding such basic matters as how to organize tasks and what hours to work, can be extremely effective.

Moreover, Nordic nations have a long history of business cooperatives, jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprises that have included, as one of their guiding principles, concern for the community in which they operate. Their cooperatives have also been heavily involved in renewable energy projects. For example, many Swedish housing cooperatives are switching to alternative energy sources to help meet Sweden's goal of oil independence by 2015.

The Nordic nations' success has sometimes been attributed to their relatively small and homogeneous populations. But in smaller, even more homogeneous societies such as some oil-rich Middle-Eastern nations where absolute conformity to one religious sect and one tribal or royal head is demanded, we find large gaps between haves and have-nots and other inequities characteristic of the domination system.

So we have to look at other factors to understand why the Nordic nations moved out of poverty to develop a prosperous, more caring and equitable economic system in a relatively short time. Once we do, we see that what made these nations successful was their move toward the partnership configuration, which made it possible for them to become what they sometimes call themselves: "caring societies."

The core components of this configuration are mutually supporting (*continued on page 69*)



THE LONG PATH OUT OF DENIAL

ZIONISM, HEARTACHE, AND A NEW VISION OF ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

by Kim Chernin

THE HARDEST WORK FOR ME, THE CHILD-ZIONIST, HAS BEEN THE STRUGGLE TO take in the Palestinian point of view. "Take in" has not meant agree with it, although it has involved questioning some cherished ideas about my people and our land.

I found this tough work—moral, ethical, intellectual, psychological, and spiritual, all at the same time. I passed through recurrent cycles of not caring to know what there was to know. I was always ready with Great Thoughts: the ancient roots of our exiled people, our suffering, the cherished dream that had held us together as a people in exile over thousands of years. These ideas still hold great power for me. But they are ideas I now regard as very dangerous; in their name one can justify just about anything.

No claim that came up from the Palestinian side could enter my consciousness until it forced its way through these barriers, over and again, and then again. When the Palestinian point of view finally arrived, exhausted and threadbare with this struggle to get in, it faced my own exhaustion and was held in suspension before I could take it up and use it for

Conflicting Narratives— Refugees

Top: After fifteen days at sea on the Haviva Reik, illegal Jewish immigrants crowded the rail of a single-masted ship as it docks at Haifa, Palestine, June 8, 1946, under the escort of a British destroyer. The refugees embarked from undisclosed ports of Europe. Bottom: Driven from their homes by Jewish attacks on Galilee, a group of Arab refugees carry their meager belongings from Jerusalem to Lebanon on November 9, 1948.

Kim Chernin, Ph.D., a feminist writer and psychotherapist who practices in Berkeley, has won acclaim for her numerous works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. This article is adapted from her new book, Everywhere a Guest, Nowhere at Home: A New Vision of Israel and Palestine.

POEMS BY KIM CHERNIN

Each poem below references a Jewish prophet and one of the 418 Palestinian villages destroyed in 1948.

Jeremiah

What shall I call you
who walk behind me
touching my shoulder
with your finger tips?

You move with the tread of mountains
rising from river beds
preserver of centuries
still here when the olive was
brought forth from the stone.

When joy and mirth depart
when cities grow desolate
the bones of prophets will arise
from their graves.
a pen of iron has set it down:

*"Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem,
Lest my soul depart from thee"*

Abil al-Qamh

High up from the high mountain
grief makes her way down.
Let the hills bow down
beneath this sorrow
The river valleys have run dry
Walk out with me into this morning
Do you dare to see what I see?

thinking. In this process I am still involved.

I am not implying that our Jewish ways of seeing things are wrong. Only that they made it hard for me to listen to the Palestinians.

I have come to no conclusions, as yet. How could I, with my Jewishness so long present in me and my listening-to-others so newly established?

One discovery I did make: it is not wise to confuse people and their leaders with the extremists among them, or with their representatives or the representations made by themselves or others.

Another discovery: the compassion and sympathy I had always felt for the Jewish people in dispersion, and by extension for exiles, refugees, and impoverished people living under difficult conditions, could now include the Palestinians. Everywhere a guest, nowhere at home: could I deny this description to them?

Six words that tell the story of two peoples.

A Naive Zionist

WHEN I FIRST WENT TO ISRAEL IN 1971 I WAS A NAIVE BUT ARDENT ZIONIST, INTENDING to spend my life on a kibbutz in the Galilee and to become an Israeli citizen.

A naive Zionist, such as I was, hears that there is a Jewish homeland. A place filled with Jews, a country that celebrates Jewish holidays, a homeland where all Jews from all over the world are welcome; a country with a kibbutz system that is a form of socialism and where you can work on the land. **I had been wanting to live in that place since I was eight years old.**

A naive Zionist off to spend her life in Israel. But once established on my kibbutz on the Lebanese border, I began to notice things that disrupted my complacency. We used to ride down to our orchards on kibbutz trucks with Arab workers from the neighborhood who occasionally invited us to visit them in their village. We liked sitting on a rug on a dirt floor, eating food cooked over an open fire, drinking water from the village well. Above all, we loved the kerosene lamps that were lit and set in a half circle around us as it grew dark. It was exotic and it was romantic, and walking home it occurred to me that our kibbutz had running water, electricity, modern stoves. Our neighbors were gracious, generous, and friendly, although I had learned by then that the land the kibbutz occupied had once been theirs or had been land they had worked, sometimes for generations, for absentee landlords. We Jews had been a people without a land, but the land we came to cultivate and develop had not been a land without a people.

The path from this troubled awakening to my later ability to be critical of Israel has been long and complex. Over the years I have spoken with other Jews who have traveled this same path, and to many more who haven't. In each of us I have detected the same mental obstacles that made it hard, sometimes impossible, to see what was there before our eyes.

How We Come to Perceive Selectively

WE KEEP A WATCHFUL EYE OUT, WE READ THE SIGNS, WE DETECT INNUENDO, WE SUMMON evidence, we become, as we imagine it, the ever-vigilant guardians of our people's survival. Endangered as we imagine ourselves to be, endangered as we insist we are, any negativity, criticism, or reproach, even from one of our own, takes on exaggerated dimensions—we come to perceive such criticism as a life-threatening attack.

Our proclivity for this perception is itself one of our unrecognized dangers. Bit by bit, as we gather evidence to establish our perilous position in the world, we are brought to a selective perception of that world. With our attention focused on ourselves as the endangered species, it seems to follow that we ourselves can do no harm. **We are so busy warding off danger, we become unaware that we endanger others.** As a people we fill up, we occupy, all the endangerment-space. When other people clamor for a portion, we believe they are trying to deny us our right to this ground. At its most vehement, our sense of ever-impending Jewish peril brings down on us an almost perfect blindness to the endangerment of others and to the role we might play in it.

When I lived in Israel I practiced selective perception. I was elated by our little kibbutz on the Lebanese border until I recognized that we were living on land that had been the



home of other people.

The fixed certainty of impending Jewish destruction: wherever we look, we see nothing but its confirmation, the same old story, always about to happen. In the grip of this persuasion, any other possibilities of meaning are swept away; we are unable to imagine things, even for a split second, from another's point of view. It took me years to overcome this blindness.

It seems that no victory on the Israeli side, no crushing of the perceived enemy, no destruction of their wells or dismantling of their infrastructure can change our fear that the enemy will rise up to defeat us. Nothing, no act or behavior by our now powerful homeland with the fourth-largest army in the world, can alter this perception of ever-present danger.

We will not let it happen again. But this claim, which seems to point exclusively into the future, is also yoked to our inability to accept the past. By keeping the past alive, by living it all over again, we attempt to alter it. Hidden within the militant "never again" is the anguished cry: "It did not happen. It will never have happened."

A Disturbing Calculus by which We Measure Violence

WE JEWS ARE AN OLD PEOPLE. THE PAST THAT COMES ALONG WITH us, thousands of years old, fills us with longing for our ancient homeland, for the idea of a homeland, for Jerusalem, for the Temple, and for what these places have meant to our people. We celebrate the fact that these shared memories, enacted in yearly rituals, have held us together in a long exile. We remember our bondage in Egypt and our expulsion from Spain and the forced flight of our people, hunted across continents. We are proud of our descent from King David—we recite his psalms. We read the prophets. We believe (many of us) that we were exiled from the Holy Land because of our sins. But there is a danger here: it is this past, and its suffering, and the scale of its suffering, which create a strange and troubling calculus that does its work just beyond our self-awareness as Jews. When we behave roughly to another people, we judge our behavior by what has been done to us. Is our behavior as bad as that? If not (and since very little is likely to match our two thousand years) **we have granted ourselves a frighteningly large range of permissible violence.** We have an enormous difficulty imagining Palestinian lives and the suffering involved in them. Are we whispering to ourselves: "But our suffering was much worse. We haven't driven them into concentration camps, smothered them in gas, burned them to cinders. If they have had to leave their homes behind, to live uncomfortably in other parts of the Arab world, how bad is that when placed alongside our thousands of years of persecution and exile?"

If we learn that no Arab state (apart from Jordan) has granted Palestinians citizenship during the last fifty years, our ghettos and exclusions over the last two thousand years rise up to diminish theirs. If our violence is not as bad as what was done to us, do we need to take our violence seriously? Do we even have the ability to conceive of it as violence?

There is a widespread assumption among our people that the vanished victims of the Holocaust would approve of what we do to make sure their fate cannot again befall the Jewish people. Is it fair, however, to assume that their suffering and death would make them approve of our recourse to violence and vengeance? How can we assume that they would want their suffering to legitimize anything "not as bad as what happened to them"?

There is a poster that shows a single Palestinian woman facing a massive Israeli bulldozer. Looking at this image one immediately understands what Primo Levi (a survivor of Auschwitz) meant when he claimed that the Palestinians are the Jews' Jews. He did not



Conflicting Narratives—Whose Land?

Top: Members of the first kibbutz rejoice in snow on the land where Kim Chernin as a young, naive Zionist joined the next generation of kibbutzim in 1971.

Bottom: Mohamed Ahmed Issa and his family of seven live in a cave, one of many which honeycomb the hillsides east of Bethlehem in 1955. Arab families were forced to leave their homes in the territory that became Israel in 1948.

Opposite page:
*"Breishit—in the beginning."
Print by Janeen Kobrinsky.*

Unknown Prophet

Have you taught the north wind
to speak for you?
and told the hills your names?
Make me your town-crier
I will pour myself out
we have forgotten the name brother
we have forgotten the name sister
people, my people, do you not see
how calamity has befallen us?
We are as red dust on the desert
rose and on the rose of Sharon
nettle in the mustard patch
sorrow in the shittah tree*
it will not thrive
it will grow no more among us.
Do you not see?

**Wood from which the Ark
of the Tabernacle was built.*

'Agir

The village thinks back
to an imperial age
but no one remembers now
to bake the famous bread
recorded by al-Maydis,
the 10th-century
Arab geographer.
Some years ago, after
the village had gone down
the old woman
dying
far from home,
is said to have cried out
'al-Nasuffiyya.'
She called to the old wadi
as if it were her last child
born in the Roman town of Accaron.

Zachariah

In the month of Sebat
in the second year of Darius
a vision:

A man on a red horse
among myrtle trees
Three red horses, speckled and white.
What are these?

They walk to and fro
to witness through the earth.
says the angel among the myrtle trees

I say: If the angel will not appear
among the myrtle trees
and the man with a measuring line
to measure Jerusalem
will not appear
who will command us to inhabit
Jerusalem without walls?

Bayt 'Itab

These bones at the interrupted grave:
a girl on her way to the carob tree.

have to complete this equation. Silently, it points an accusing finger at the people who are turning the Palestinians into Jews. Can we face the fact that we make use of the Holocaust as a way of diminishing, in our own eyes, the magnitude of our violence against another people?

It is not easy to encounter the idea that we are using the six million, hiding behind them, importing our own meanings into their suffering and death. It took me a long time to face this charge, to recognize that some part of my ever-increasing concern with Holocaust victims, Holocaust books, and first-person Holocaust accounts was serving as a cover-up, distracting my gaze from a living, contemporary struggle in which another people was engaged.

When Ideology Matters More to Us than Other People's Lives

THE ISRAELI ARMY THAT DEFENDS OUR HOMELAND FIRES UPON INNOCENT CIVILIANS. WHAT justifies the behavior of this army? When the Palestinian suicide bomber blows up a hotel full of Passover celebrants, we see clearly that this is an instance of unholy violence. When we attack a refugee camp of impoverished Palestinians in our search for terrorists, this, in our eyes, is a violence purified by our history and our destiny. We are puzzled that much of the world doesn't see our situation in the same way.

That boy over there with the black face mask and a rock—that is a terrorist. This boy over here with a submachine gun, firing on the boy with the rock, he is a soldier.

A trick of language? I was once persuaded to show up for rifle training when I lived on my kibbutz, although as an American citizen I wasn't required to attend. And whom did I imagine I would shoot? And kill? I, who cannot kill a moth? I never imagined it had to do with killing. Because of the language I used (*I lift this rifle in fulfillment of my pledge to reclaim my homeland*) the training became a pure act, necessary, not even in need of justification.

Shlomo Lavie, a well-known leader of the Israeli Labor Party, the Mapai, declared that the "transfer of Arabs out of the country in my eyes is one of the most just, moral, and correct things that can be done."

Another Mapai leader, Avraham Katznelson, felt that nothing was "more moral, from the viewpoint of universal human ethics, than the emptying of the Jewish state of the Arabs and their transfer elsewhere.... This requires ... force."

It may indeed have required force. But moral, ethical, universally sanctioned force? David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, shared these sentiments: "We must expel Arabs and take their places ... and if we have to use force ... to guarantee our own right to settle these places—then we have force at our disposal."

Another of our early founders was prepared to go further: "All moral enterprises are carried out through compulsion.... The transfer [of Palestinians] is a just, logical, moral, and humane program in all senses" (quoted, along with the three prior quotations, in Nur Masalha's *The Politics of Denial* of 2003).

It is not good enough that some moral enterprises might require compulsion. Now it is all such enterprises, every imaginable moral enterprise, that require force. Nor is it sufficient that under certain conditions the use of force might be justified. Now the expulsion of the Palestinians is the most moral imaginable act "from the viewpoint of universal human ethics." I suppose our early leaders may have been talking themselves into believing these words. But so much the worse if they believed them, and so much the worse for us if we do. We are excited by these grand thoughts; at their urging we fly up onto a higher plane where everything is certain, preordained, lawful, commanded. Suddenly, we are able to disregard the Jewish teachings that a single human life and the saving of it are more important than obeying the laws of the Sabbath. This is a bold and Jewish ethical idea and soundly rebukes our wish to believe in the sanctity of Jewish violence.

Taken together, the examination of these suppositions and convictions about perception,

calculus, and ideology promises to make us uneasy. That is my hope.

Some American Jews will soon set out to join settlements on the West Bank or to volunteer for the Israeli army. Others have gone to Ramallah to help the Palestinians, hoping that their presence there will make it harder for the Israeli army to smash through the city with tanks. Still others have been talking about a peace brigade that will be established along the still undefined and ever-expanding Israeli border, a human buffer zone between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Here is our Jewish identity, stretched out between these extremes. It's up to us; we are free to choose. Where shall we place ourselves?

When I Learned a New Word: *Nakba*

SOME YEARS LATER, BACK IN BERKELEY AGAIN, I WAS LISTENING TO TWO Palestinian women in conversation in a café. They were discussing the fact that both their mothers had been born in Palestine and had left after 1948. I heard the word "*nakba*." The two women leaned toward each other across the table, their heads almost touching. Some of their conversation was lost to me. After a time, I heard the word again and in its new context figured out that it meant something terrible. Something terrible had happened to both their mothers, and here were the daughters in a Berkeley café discussing it. I left the café without giving their conversation much thought, but I took away a new word and with it an opening into a very different point of view than I had before encountered. The new point of view was in the word itself, in the way the two women had leaned toward each other to speak it, in the fact that we were at adjacent tables in my regular café, where I had seen them before, had thought of them admiringly as two good friends and seen them as women like myself and not as Palestinians.

Nakba. Nakba. Nakba.

At that time I had a friend, a professor of political science, who had critical thoughts about Israel. Some weeks later, when I was having coffee with him, I asked him about the word. He knew it; he'd known it for some time but had hesitated, with good reason, to mention it to me. Back then I wasn't known for my calm and rational style of discourse; when facing disagreement, especially about Israel, I often flew into a rage, raised my voice, and interrupted my friend, trying as hard as I could to drown him out while trying as hard as I could not to. I had been known, on some occasions, to push back my chair and storm out of the café resolving to end the friendship or at least never to speak with that particular person about anything serious again. This time I listened.

Nakba meant "catastrophe." It was the way Palestinians referred to what had happened to them in 1948.

It is easy enough to forget a foreign word, not so easy to quell the apprehension it stirs up. I certainly forgot the word many times, while the history it carried, the version of events it held, the implications it brought, the difficult challenges it presented, seemed to be drawn to me and gathered in, magnetically. The faceless enemy, the dark threat from the other side of the border, had acquired a face and therefore could no longer be considered simply an enemy. There was another people there, there were people who had mothers and stories and homes and villages and orchards and families, each with their own unique sense of disaster. Voluntarily or not, they were people who had lost a homeland as we had acquired ours. What if they had fled in fear expecting to come home again? What if they hadn't fled voluntarily? What if they'd been driven out?

A struggle of this kind, set going within the self, will occasion sleepless nights. Once it starts up it will rage on for years. For every argument a counterargument, for every point of view another way to look at things, for every accusation a justification, for every assertion a



Conflicting Narratives – Terrorists

Top: On July 22, 1946, Zionist Irgun militants bombed the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, the central offices of the British authorities in Palestine. Ninety-one people were killed and forty-six were injured, some of them in the road and buildings outside the hotel.

Bottom: Israeli police and paramedics work at the scene of a suicide bombing in Jerusalem on April 12, 2002. A suicide bomber blew herself up at a bus stop in Jerusalem's crowded outdoor market Friday, killing six people and wounding at least eighty-four.



Conflicting Choices
Is joining the Israel Defense Force (above) the best way to express a commitment to one's Jewish heritage and identity, or does the ancient Jewish imperative to love the stranger require a different path (below)?

counterclaim. Facts? Establish the facts? I was trying to place the Palestinian version of events against the Zionist account of them, the old Zionist account against the work of more recent historians. I was fighting within myself to figure out what really happened, what happened first, what happened next—or who did what to whom and for what reason.

At times the obsession with Israel would die down. Months, sometimes a year or two would pass before, inevitably, it showed up again.

Where Facts End

I HAD RETURNED FROM ISRAEL IN 1972. I WAS still engaged in this debate during the 1980s and well into the 1990s. I remember a violent argument that broke out on New Year's Eve, as my preoccupation with Israel crossed over into the twenty-first century.

The more I learned, the more uncertain I became about the present. Whom was I to believe? The Palestinians did not agree with one another. Some called for armed struggle and the liberation of Palestine; others encouraged the peace accords; and some saw the peace accords as a stalling effort on the part of Israel as it continued to build settlements in occupied territory.

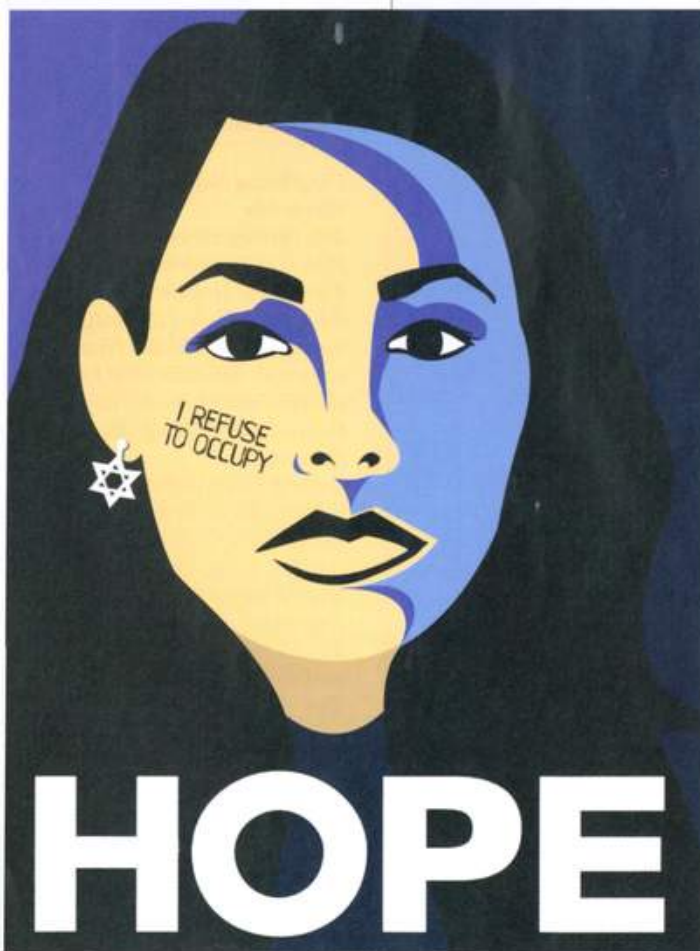
Israelis did not agree with one another, either. We Jews were old-style Zionists who believed in the Zionist version of events, or we were revisionist historians who rewrote the history of 1948. We were members of religious movements that believed God had promised us the land and therefore justified our violence against anyone who questioned our possession of it. Or we were men and women who had seen at first hand and with horror what had happened to the Palestinian population. "We came, shot, burned, blew up, repelled, pushed, and exiled. What the hell are we doing here?" demands the Israeli novelist S. Yizhar (as cited in Amos Elon's *The Israelis, Founders and Sons*).

Everyone agreed that a flight had taken place in 1948, but how many Palestinians had been involved, and why they had fled, remained contentious. Zionists claimed that the Palestinian refugees from 1948 represented a "population exchange" with the Jews who left the Arab world in the 1950s. Palestinian historians regarded this claim as "mendacious and misleading." Was it fair to compare the flight of Palestinians in 1948 with the voluntary exodus of Jews from hostile Arab nations? And how voluntary were these mass departures? Readers must take up the issue and resolve it, or not, for themselves.

This is the place where facts end. Zionist claim: 850,000 Sephardic Jews left Arab states to come to Israel. Palestinian claim: It was 600,000 Sephardic Jews. Zionist claim: 600,000 Palestinians left Israel during the troubles of 1948. Palestinian claim: It was 850,000 Palestinians. There was, depending on your numbers, an equal exchange of populations from Arab states to Israel, from Israel to Arab states. Or, depending on your numbers and your interpretation of them, there was not.

In talking about hundreds of thousands of people, does it matter if there is a disproportion in how many on either side have been unsettled by war and hostility? Perhaps it does matter; but in what way?

Point: There were more Jews than Arabs in Palestine at the time of the



partition. *Counterpoint:* The Arabs far outnumbered the Jews.

Assertion: The Arabs were not dispossessed of their land; the land they worked belonged to absentee landlords who had always exploited them. *Denial:* The Palestinians had worked the same land for generations, tended the same orchards, lived in the same villages; the land was theirs even if they did not own it.

Claim: The Jews descended from the ancient Hebrews and therefore had the prior claim to the land. *Counterclaim:* It was the Palestinians who descended from the indigenous Canaanites.

Appeal to memory: We Jews have always longed for Eretz Yisrael as our ancient homeland. Witness our liturgy. *Refutation:* The Jewish preoccupation with Palestine began with Zionism in the nineteenth century.

The Palestinians claimed the Jews were an occupying, colonial power, which could and would some day be driven out; we Jews, always part of this land, had nowhere else to go. We Jews knew we had behaved righteously in securing our homeland; the Palestinians knew they had been violently and illegally dispossessed of theirs. They knew they were the victims of our violent occupation; we knew at any moment we might be blown up and victimized by them.

The idea that I could find out what "really happened" became increasingly questionable, then doubtful, and finally absurd. My reading was an education in the infinite regress of reality from the facts assigned to represent it. A "fact" was nothing more than an assertion in an argument; it was used to establish rights, which presumably rested on principles upheld by international law, which might be suspended because of a people's history of suffering, which on the other hand might be irrelevant given that same people's subsequent exercise of violence. Inevitably, the question of rights disappeared into the realities of power, given that power and not rights would determine outcomes. Yet, both sides talked insistently about their rights.

If a people's need was great enough and desperate enough, need began to confer a right. The Holocaust, as Hitler's attempts to exterminate the Jews later became known, and the refusal of other nations to receive the Jewish refugees, gave us a claim to the land of Israel. The Palestinians derived their rights from the plain fact that they were already there.

Jewish Fear of Annihilation

I WAS TROUBLED BY HOW EASILY ONE AUTHOR, REFERRING TO THE WORK OF ANOTHER, CAN misrepresent another's point of view. David Hirst, in *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, claimed that Benny Morris had "made clear that the Jewish community had never been in danger of annihilation on the eve of the 1948 war, and that the Arab armies, poorly trained and equipped ... stood virtually no chance of defeating the new-born state."

In my reading of this book by Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, I had come across very different words:

Throughout, when examining what happened, the reader must also recall ... the intention of the Palestinian leadership and irregulars and, later, of most of the Arab states' leaders and armies in launching the hostilities in ... invading Palestine in May 1948, to destroy the Jewish state and, possibly, the Yishuv [the Jewish community in Palestine] itself; the fears of the Yishuv that the Palestinians and the Arab states, if given the chance, intended to re-enact a Middle Eastern version of the Holocaust; and the extremely small dimensions, geographical and numerical, of the Yishuv (pop. 650,000) in comparison with the Palestinian Arabs (1.25 million).



"Am I a Jew?" Oil painting by Erik Shutsky.

ASK THE AUTHOR!

**November 9:
Kim Chernin**

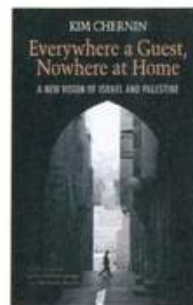
**6 p.m. Pacific Time
(9 p.m. Eastern)**

Monday, November 9

Call 1-888-346-3950 for free!

Then enter this code: 11978#

Info at: www.tikkun.org



This article is excerpted from Kim Chernin's new book (left).

Lamentation

Let lamentation walk
barefoot over this earth
her head covered in ashes
She will sit down
beneath the terebinth
and give her hair to the wind
The ways of mourning are old,
so old in this land
where the thorn and thistle
the wormwood and the spikenard thrive.
She will wear sackcloth
She will rend her garments in grief
she will lay her down
by the Hill of Moreh
and weep for father and son
in the place called Moriah.
Grab hold of her.
What does she know?
We will not let her rest
body, bone and dust
sprung from this earth.

Mi'ar

He is twelve
he stands well back from the field
where men in uniform
are bringing down the villagers
They are crouched down,
some have been kneeling
to bring in the crops
up above, the sun slips smoothly out of
sight
it might almost be a day like any other
the wind at work in the cypress tree
a girl springs up and up into the air
and comes apart

He is twelve
That was his sister

Shechinah Among the Ruins

Shechinah picking her way
among the ruins
She is sorrow older than earth.

How long since one of us
cried out her name?

Mother of grief, our comforter,
I no longer believe
that you will weep for us.

Morris made clear that by July of 1948 the leaders of the Yishuv were aware that Israel had won its war for survival. But this statement in no way undermined his earlier assertion (in the same paragraph) that the Yishuv, its people and its leaders, were alarmed. Some pages later, Morris returned unequivocally to this earlier idea: "The war between Israel and the Arab states was protracted and bloody (about 4,000 of the Yishuv's 6,000 dead were killed after 14 May) and the Yishuv's leaders recognized that they faced a mortal threat."

A Colonial Occupation ... by Powerless, Threatened People?

I SAW JEWS AS A PERSECUTED PEOPLE WHO HAD FLED TO PALESTINE FROM THE IMPOSSIBILITY of living in the Russian Pale. The first immigrants had arrived in 1881 after the assassination of Czar Alexander II and the pogroms that followed, in which hundreds of Jewish communities were attacked by mobs, hundreds of people were killed, and Jewish women were raped by their attackers. How could it be claimed (as it was, by Palestinian historians and by me arguing against myself) that these people represented a colonial occupation? They came in small groups, bought land, and founded settlements and colonies that often failed. They did not exploit the indigenous population in order to prosper; they too struggled for survival. According to historian Bernard Avishai in *The Tragedy of Zionism*: "Agricultural output of the Arab sector rose by 50 percent between 1922 and 1938. Citrus production in the Arab sector grew from 22,000 dunams in 1922 to 144,000 dunams in 1937, roughly the same expansion as in the Jewish sector."

Why "occupation"? Why "colonialism"? Because the Balfour Declaration had been issued by a colonial power? Because the British took the side of the Jews? But wasn't it clear that the English in Palestine during the Mandate period sometimes sided with the Jews, sometimes with the Arabs? The Jews had not been a nation or a state; they'd been a dispersed and scattered people. If you wanted to rise against them and kick them out, to what motherland would they return as citizens?

The debate is restless, evasive, unsettling. Palestinian historians argue that the type of settlements created by Israeli settlers corresponded in their basic structure to settlements created by colonial powers. There were "pure settlement colonies" and "ethnic plantation colonies," and there were attempts to claim all jobs in the land for Jewish laborers, who as a result became ardent nationalists hoping to establish a purely Jewish society.

I am impressed, I shift sides—but only for a moment. A group of Girl Scouts who bought land in the Mojave Desert, built settlements, and worked the land themselves or hired people to work it for them, even when they restricted their colonies to other members of the Girl Scouts, would not for any of those reasons become colonialists. The similar forms could not by themselves reproduce the power relations of a colonial nation to the indigenous people it exploited. The making of an exclusivist colony does not of itself make a colonialist.

Members of the Jewish underground, fighting against the British before the State of Israel had been declared, knew the British as a colonial force intent on crushing Jewish resistance. In her memoir, Geula Cohen, a young member of the Stern Gang, rebuts the claim that the colonial British consistently took the side of the Jews:

Adam's latest letter had been impatiently awaited, for one of the events that had taken place since his last communication was the Black Saturday of June 29, 1946. On that day the British had launched a general attack on the Jewish settlement in the hope of breaking the back of the Insurrectionary Front. A curfew was declared in all the major cities and house-to-house searches and confiscations of arms were carried out in dozens of rural co-operatives. The Jewish Agency building in Jerusalem was occupied by troops and the Agency's officials were placed under arrest. Mass arrests took place throughout the country, many of them accompanied by bloodshed.

(continued on page 66)

Free Speech or Fee Speech:

Progress in Latin America; Confusion in the United States

by Allen D. Kanner

IN AN UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGE TO CORPORATE DOMINATION OF THE airwaves, earlier this year Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez sent a bill to Congress that would allocate a third of broadcast frequencies to private companies, a third to state broadcasters, and a third to nonprofit organizations such as churches, community groups, and universities. In other words, the corporate media would lose control of two-thirds of Argentina's broadcasting. Imagine President Obama sending a similar bill to the U.S. Congress. Fernandez said, "press freedom cannot be confused with freedom for press owners."

When Fernandez refers to the confusion or conflict between freedom of speech and corporate ownership of the media, she is addressing a fundamental problem that lies at the heart of commercially driven media: Those with the most money have the most access to the media, and therefore get to "speak" the most. To be democratic, a media system has to be fully accessible to all segments of society and has to provide the financial, technological, and legal means for even the poorest and most disenfranchised to utilize that access. Commercially driven media, with their built-in bias toward the wealthy, cannot meet these criteria.

But even if Fernandez's bill passes, handing over a large chunk of the airwaves to the government and nonprofit sector will not secure a democratic media. The reduced for-profit sector will still be the most heavily funded, which will give it an advantage in producing, distributing, and marketing its materials. The government-controlled media may very well broadcast propaganda, repress alternative viewpoints, and be indirectly influenced by corporate lobbying. Even in the nonprofit sector, the challenge remains as to how to structure access in a fair and just manner. But wresting the majority of broadcasting frequencies away from the corporate world is a necessary and critical first step. Moreover, promising alternatives to commercial media are springing up throughout Latin America and tackling many of the above concerns.

Take, for example, the remarkable developments in Venezuela over the last decade. As a result of the Organic Telecommunications Law of 2000, which was aimed at stimulating and protecting community media, thirty-four licensed, locally controlled community television stations and 400 radio stations were broadcasting from barrios and neighborhoods across the country by 2008. To obtain a permit, community stations had to agree to the following rules: At least 70 percent of their daily programming must be produced from within the community. No single producer can take up more than 20 percent of the programming. The paid staff may only produce 15 percent of the programming, with the rest produced by unpaid volunteers.

Catia TVe, Venezuela's first legal community television station, takes grassroots media even further. Located in a working-class section of Caracas, the station is a collective that holds workshops for "teams" of four to seven local residents representing specific interest areas, such as students, workers, professionals, artists, or the sports community. The workshops help teams to



What if the corporate media lost control of two-thirds of U.S. broadcast frequencies? Cue in people like National Radio Project's Lisa Rudman and Tena Rubio, here working on Making Contact, a weekly radio program exploring issues such as immigration, prisons, environmental justice and the economy.

WWW.RADIOPROJECT.ORG

Allen D. Kanner, Ph.D., is a co-founder of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood (www.commercialfreechildhood.org); co-editor of Psychology and Consumer Culture and Ecopsychology; and a child, family, and adult psychologist in Berkeley, California.

Independent media that
INFORMS
INSPIRES

and **MOVES** people
to **TAKE ACTION...**

Making Contact

Produced by National Radio Project



identify and articulate their particular concerns and train them in audio-visual production. Materials arising from the teams are not subject to editorial approval from "above" at the station but rather are directly aired. Also, from 2–4 PM daily, the station broadcasts programs produced by children for children.

Venezuela's community television and radio stations are a major reason President Hugo Chavez is able to maintain strong support among the large population of the country's poor, even while the national corporate media relentlessly oppose him. The Chavez administration is strongly supportive of community media; for example, it recently donated sixty-nine sets of audio-visual equipment to community stations around the country. In time Venezuela and other nations could create constitutional mandates for their governments to sufficiently fund community stations so that the broadcasters need not rely on government largesse. Such support could go a long way toward guaranteeing community media's viability as a noncommercial entity and minimizing government interference.

Across Latin America, media activists have recognized the fatal flaws of a commercialized media and turned their efforts toward building noncommercial alternatives. But in the United States, the progressive community has been reluctant to unite behind the goal of transforming the nation's media from commercial to noncommercial. The same community, however, strongly endorses exactly this kind of transformation for health coverage, wanting to replace private insurance, a commercial system, with single-payer insurance, a noncommercial system. Why the glaring inconsistency? Many U.S. progressives believe that banning advertising (de-commercializing the public media) is a violation of corporate free speech (see my article in the July/August 2008 issue of *Tikkun*). Like it or not, they contend, progressives are obligated to protect corporate marketing.

But advertising is "free speech," not free speech, and is accessible only to those who can afford it. This arrangement is inherently undemocratic. As President Fernandez reminds us, when we allow large corporations to control the media because they are wealthy, we are confusing press freedom with freedom for press owners. It is time for the U.S. media movement to get past this confusion and join its Latin American colleagues. ■

The Awe-Based Challenge to Positive Psychology

by Kirk J. Schneider

THE SIGNS OF ITS INFLUENCE ARE LEGION. YOU CAN SEE THEM IN THE POPULAR press, in the burgeoning new lines of professional books by such organizations as the American Psychological Association, and on radio and television talk shows. Positive psychology or the "new science of happiness," as a 2005 *Time Magazine* cover story put it, has taken the public (and the psychological profession) by storm.

There are several sound reasons for this: the lack of traditional emphasis in psychology and the public on positive, that is, healthy, human experiences; the growing interest in spirituality; and the increasing desire for "solutions" to the stresses of modern life, such as the increased pace of technology, overwork, and the fragmentation of community.

Unfortunately, much of positive psychology, particularly as it has been trumpeted in the press, and even in quarters of professional psychology, is both simplistic and illusory. The

Kirk J. Schneider, Ph.D., is a leading spokesman for contemporary humanistic psychology. He is the current editor of The Journal of Humanistic Psychology, and author of Awakening to Awe. See kirkjschneider.com for more information.

great questions of life—the existential questions about who and what we are, how we live in the face of death, and what really matters to us—are barely touched by the palliatives of positive psychology. These palliatives focus mainly on techniques such as increasing one's ratio of positive to negative thoughts, redirecting one's pessimistic thoughts into those that are upbeat, and utilizing prayer and meditation to “program” positive experiences. Such techniques are now even being used with American soldiers to help them “adjust” to the war experience.

In short, despite the usefulness of positive techniques for some overt challenges, e.g., stress reduction, there are formidable problems with both the techniques and the issues they're designed to address.

For a psychology of happiness (or flourishing or vitality) to be optimal, it needs to be grounded in the blood and sweat details of everyday living, taking account of the ambiguities of life, including life's tragedies.

In my new book, *Awakening to Awe: Personal Stories of Profound Transformation*, I show that for many, substantive happiness requires “awe-based consciousness” or consciousness of the humility and wonder, chill and thrill of living. It is a consciousness that requires not only a positive outlook, but also a full and intensive encounter with life—in all its variegated shades. Such a consciousness is almost always precipitated by a crisis, at least in our culture. This is because in our routinized world, it almost invariably takes a jolt to shake us out of our complacency and open us to the great mysteries of life, the yawning possibilities.

All of the people I interview in the book have learned these lessons and, as a result, radically transformed their lives. Among them are a former gang leader who is now a beloved gang mediator and youth advocate; an ex-drug addict who became a communally conscious healer and case worker; and a sufferer of stage 3 cancer who evolved into a contemplative and spiritual seeker. Many other similar lives and stories are recorded in the book, and they all converge on one overarching point—awe-based happiness is achieved through an attunement to the bigger picture of life, and that picture is both humbling and grand.

To tap into awe-based consciousness, one must cultivate it at every opportunity and continually challenge the marrow-sapping forces, such as consumerism and dogmatism, that distract and divert it.

Given this situation, here are a few key steps we can take to cultivate an awe-based consciousness. In my research I've found the following “lenses” on experience (what others may call “spiritual practices”) to be essential:

The Lens of Transience

THIS LENS ENABLES ONE TO ATTUNE TO THE PASSING nature of time, the fragility of life, and its (relatively) rapid dissolution. The more we sensitize to transience, the more we can appreciate the preciousness of the moment and the mysterious background within which the moment is formed. I often peer through this lens when I'm witnessing my son at play or my family at a meal, but I can also experience it while walking a city street or attending a sporting event. Virtually any engagement can be perceived through this lens, because virtually any engagement can be understood in its fleeting and enigmatic character, its poignant character. It's not a far stretch, for example, to shift from the deeply moving observation of a loved one—or a beloved moment—to the deeply moving speculation about the rise and fall of creation itself. We're all a part of this drama, hurtling through the darkness, vanishing with the voids.

The Lens of Transience:

“It's not a far stretch to shift from the deeply moving observation of a loved one to the deeply moving speculation about the rise and fall of creation itself.”





CHANUKAH

CELEBRATING THE WORLD'S FIRST RECORDED NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE
evening of December 11 to December 19, 2009

The Ritual

Each night of Chanukah we light candles, starting with the *shamash* (used to light the others) and one candle, and then adding one additional candle each night for a total of eight nights. The tradition is to sing, dance, and rejoice in our liberation and our freedom.

THE TRADITIONAL BLESSINGS OVER THE CANDLES

•All nights•

1. Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu bemitzvotav, vetzivanu, lehadleek ner, shel chanukah. (*Blessed are you, the Force that rules all of existence, who sanctifies us by giving us a way of life directed by holy commandments and commanded us to light the lights of Chanukah.*)
2. Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech ha'olam, she'asah nisim la'avoteynu, bayamim hahem, bazman hazeh. (*Blessed are you, the Force that rules the universe, who made possible miracles for our ancestors, in those days, and also makes the same possible for us in our own times.*)

•Add on the first night•

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech ha'olam, she-hechyanu, vekee-imanu, veheeg-yanu, lazman hazeh. (*Blessed are you, the Force that rules the universe, who has kept us in life, made us flourish, and made it possible for us to reach this happy occasion.*)

The Story

(the nonmythologized version you may never have heard)

When King Cyrus of Persia allowed the remnants of the ancient tribes of Judah and Benjamin to return from the exile imposed upon them by Babylonian conquerors in the seventh century BCE, they formed the kingdom of Judea. As part of the Persian Empire, and later as part of the empire of Alexander the Great, Judea had relative autonomy to shape its own internal religious life.

When Alexander died at the end of the fourth century BCE, his empire split into three rival factions, and Judea was caught between two of them: the Seleucids, centered in Syria,

and the Ptolemies, centered in Egypt. For the next 150 years, these two kingdoms warred and each sought to incorporate Judea as part of its empire.

Although the battle was largely military, there was an important ideological dimension. Alexander had introduced the Jews to Hellenistic Greek culture—its philosophy, its literature, and its impressive technology and power. Forcibly dragged into the larger Mediterranean world, many Jews could see that “the real world” was dominated by wealth and power. Some Jews, primarily those who lived in and around the larger cities, saw an opportunity to join this larger world by becoming merchants and traders, or by establishing political and economic relationships with others in the Hellenistic empire. It was apparent to these Jews that their tribal religion would have little meaning to those who had conquered the world. The religion of their fathers seemed irrelevant in a world reshaped by the “modern” realities of science; they were drawn by the allure of a society that worshiped the body and saw reality in terms of what could be tasted, touched, and directly experienced by the senses.

These Jewish Hellenizers saw no point in resisting Greek rule. Their goal was to live in peace with the powers that ran the world. They could benefit from the connection to the expanding trade of the Hellenistic world. On the other hand, the vast majority of the Jewish people were small, independent farmers who lived on the land and brought its produce to Jerusalem three times each year to celebrate their hard-won freedom from slavery. They bore the brunt of the oppressive taxes imposed first by the Greeks, and then, alternately, by Seleucids and Ptolemies. These Jews resented foreign rule and detested the city-dwelling elites, who seemed to be culling favor with the Hellenistic conquerors, imitating their ways, abandoning the religion of the past, and becoming worshippers at the shrine of political and cultural “reality.”

Judea's plight worsened considerably in the early part of the second century with the ascendance to the throne of the Seleucid Antiochus IV. Claiming that he wanted to “protect” Judea from the Ptolemies, Antiochus invaded Judea and marched toward Egypt, where his armies were defeated. He turned back to Judea and attempted to impose Hellenistic culture by force. He ordered the Temple in Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Greek gods and forbade the practice of circumcision, *kashrut* (kosher laws), and observance of the Sabbath.

To the already assimilated elites of the city, the new rules were insensitive but did not constitute a major

crisis. Perhaps Antiochus was a boor, but the culture he represented was “happening,” while the Jewish religion he forbade was a remnant of the past.

Yet many of the people in the countryside, burdened by Seleucid taxes that expropriated much of their wealth, found the Hellenists' narcissistic fascination with their own power repugnant. The essence of their now-banned religion was its insistence that there was a single God governing the universe who made possible freedom from oppression. It was in the name of that God that they joined a rebellion against the Seleucids under the leadership of a country priest named Mattathias and his five sons (of whom Judah became the most famous, known as “the hammer” or Maccabee).

These Maccabees, as they came to be known, rejected the notion, shared by their contemporary Jewish establishment, that it would be pointless to fight, that one would do best by appeasing the ruling class, learning its language and ways, and accepting its system of oppression. The Maccabees understood Judaism as teaching that “the spirit of the people was greater than the man's technology,” or, in traditional Jewish terms, “not by power, and not by might, but by My spirit, says the Lord of Hosts.”

To fight against superior military force was totally illogical and unrealistic from the Hellenizers' standpoint. But the Maccabees rejected assessments of “realism” that derived from the framework imposed by the imperialists, and drew instead upon the Jewish religion and the stubborn spirit of a people who had come to believe that every human being was created in the divine image, hence had a right to be treated with respect and decency. These were people who could not submit to the rule of the imperialist, and whose religion taught them that they need not do so, because the central Power of the universe was a power that rejected the reality of oppression. Their Torah told the tale of their origins in a slave rebellion against another imperialist power thought to be invincible—Egypt of the Pharaohs.

Armed with these stories, the Maccabees and their followers used guerrilla tactics to win the first national liberation struggle in recorded history. In 165 BCE they retook Jerusalem, purified and rededicated the Temple (*chanukah* means dedication), and rekindled the eternal light that was to glow therein. The fighting continued many years more, but eventually the Maccabees and their descendants (called *Hashmonaim*) set up an independent Jewish state.

Unfortunately, that state degenerated as the



ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSS ANDO

Hashmona'im tried to become a nation like all other nations, adopting the same perversions of state power that other nations adopted and becoming "realistic" and hence spiritually and morally corrupt.

Depressed at the defeat of Jewish rebellions against Rome, and aware of the moral degeneration of the Hashmona'im, the rabbis who shaped rabbinic Judaism tried to downplay Chanukah's importance and reframe it into a minor "religious" event by focusing on a story about a miracle of a pot of oil that kept the Chanukah lights burning for eight nights. But the Jewish people intuitively recognized that something miraculous had happened. The miracle was this: a critical mass of people had come to recognize that there was a Force in the world that made possible the transformation of what is to what ought to be (the Force that we call God). That recognition, when it takes hold of large numbers of people, becomes a manifestation of God's presence, and in that presence "the power of the people," suffused with divine energy, becomes greater than all the technology and manipulations of the most sophisticated forms of oppression.

Some right-wing Zionists believe in military power as the primary way to create security for Israel, just as some American nationalists believe that we can achieve security without addressing the social injustices that our economic system has generated around the world. They believe that larger social transformations are "unrealistic" and think that our survival depends solely on our strength. Yet this way of thinking is Hellenism—the validation of that which is and the inability to commit to that which ought to be. We affirm a different vision of strength. Our survival and the survival of the entire planet depend on our ability to create a world of love and caring, a world of peace and justice, a world in which every human being is treated as an embodiment of the spirit of God. The possibility of building such a world was precisely what Hellenism denied and precisely what we affirm when we take God seriously.

Making It Real

In the contemporary world, Jews have turned Chanukah into a Christmas clone, trying to give their children and each other gifts to approximate the gift-giving frenzy that has been particularly promoted by the capitalist market. We need to find creative ways

to give of our talents, our love, and creativity—but if we can't resist the pressure of the market to equate love with buying material goods, we undermine the spiritual message of Chanukah: that the world as constituted, with all its distortions, and with all of its incredible power to shape our sense of need and desire, can nevertheless be fundamentally changed, healed, transformed, and rededicated to higher spiritual purpose.

What follows is a spiritual exercise that you can try with your family as a way to give this message more immediacy in your lives.

Try these exercises and you will see how Chanukah can have a focus other than a fixation on who has received the best presents.

Each evening, pick a theme that invites you to imagine how things could be if they were the way they ought to be. Then tell in detail what would have to happen in order for your vision to be made real, and how you might participate in some way in its actualization. Everyone in the family, *Tikkun* discussion group, circle of friends, or any other group observing the ritual will share his or her answer.

For example, imagine changes in:

1. Your world of work
2. Your relationship with your parents
3. Your Jewish community (or other religious community)
4. Your neighborhood and relationships with neighbors
5. Society
6. American politics
7. Social change movements
8. The larger world

Share your vision with others and listen, without criticizing, to theirs. Then rejoice and sing songs of celebration and of struggle—both Chanukah songs and songs from other liberation struggles around the world. ■

Please reproduce this and encourage friends to use it as a guide for constructing their own meaningful Chanukah observance. And urge them to subscribe to Tikkun magazine (go to www.tikkun.org and click "Subscribe/Renew" in the upper righthand corner). This text was written by Michael Lerner, editor of Tikkun, in memory of his beloved mother, Beatrice I. (Hirschman) Lerner.





KRISTINA BENETITE (WWW.KRISTINABENETITE.COM)

CHRISTMAS

Tikkun was started as and remains the voice of liberal and progressive Jews. But it has also evolved to become the voice of spiritual progressives of all sorts, including atheists and agnostics who agree with our "New Bottom Line," as well as spiritual progressives in the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and earth-based religious worlds. To make that inclusion real, we are creating an online collection at www.spiritualprogressives.org of readings and instructions on how people in each of the various spiritual and religious traditions could make their own holidays more spiritually alive and more reflective of their highest values. We welcome your contribution to this effort—send your submissions to RabbiLerner@Tikkun.org.

The November/December issue of *Tikkun* also reflects this widening of our interests by presenting how committed Christians could make Christmas a deeper spiritual experience. Needless to say, we are not advocating that people become Christian, nor do we endorse the reading of the Bible that claims that Jesus is "the fulfillment" of Jewish messianic hopes, any more than we have ever proselytized in the past for Judaism. If we proselytize for anything it is this: building a world based on love, caring, generosity, ethical and ecological sensitivity, awe, wonder, and radical amazement at the grandeur and mystery of All Being. We urge you all to infuse that consciousness in whatever spiritual, religious, or humanist practices you adopt in your life. Let's build that love-based world *now*, before the global capitalist ethos of materialism, selfishness, "me-first-ism," scarcity, and "Right Hand of God" consciousness—as well as the endless quest to accumulate and produce more—combine to destroy life on our planet.

— The Editors

A Note to Jewish Readers on How We Might Wait for Messiah Together

Advent is the season in which we who believe Jesus is Messiah prepare ourselves to celebrate his coming. Advent is traditionally observed during the four full weeks prior to Christmas. Christians celebrate Jesus's birth on December 25, not because we know this to be the date of our Lord's birth, but rather because that is when the Romans celebrated the winter solstice. As a minority movement in the first few centuries of the common era, our ancestors chose to celebrate our holidays in the gaps the empire afforded them. When Emperor Constantine offered the favors of Rome to Christians, a shift began toward a dominant form of "Christianity" that served as civil religion first to the Roman Empire, and then to Western civilization. Thus "Christmas" became America's favorite birthday party, inspiring people in the richest nation the world has ever known to spend \$400 billion a year at the beginning of the twenty-first century on gifts we don't need (and often don't want) while a third of the world's population lives and dies in slums.

Something is wrong. We who profess that Jesus came to bring "peace on earth and good will to all people" have lost our way and betrayed our Lord. Christendom, we must confess, has been bad news not only for Jews, Muslims, the Roma ("gypsies"), Native Americans, the Holy Land, and colonized people of the world; Christendom has been bad news for Christians also. We have forgotten the radical good news of Jesus's advent. We are in desperate need of friends to help us re-learn our tradition.

As Christians continue to detox from the lust for power we learned during Christendom, Jews from whom we stole much of our story can help us find our way. The twentieth-century German-Jewish literary critic Walter Benjamin wrote in *Illuminations*:

We know that the Jews were prohibited from investigating the future. The Torah and the prayers instruct them in remembrance, however. This stripped the future of its magic, to which all those succumb who turn to the soothsayers for enlightenment. This does not imply, however, that for the Jews the future turned into homogenous, empty time. For every second of time was the strait gate through which the Messiah might enter.

Advent is the season in which Christians are supposed to open wide the gates of our hearts and communities to welcome the Messiah. To the extent that we have worshiped the magic of money, security, and progress, we are unable to do this. But if we are willing to begin with repentance, we might remember with Jewish friends what it means to long for salvation in the face of Egypt and exile, pogroms and persecution. This workbook invites Christians, Jews, and people of all faiths to remember the suffering of humanity and the advent of Jesus in ways that open our imagination to see every second of time as the "strait gait" through which we must "seek peace and pursue it" (Psalms 34:14).

— Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

Advent 2009: The End of the World As We Know It

By Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

Advent begins the Sunday after Black Friday. As we watch the engines of our present economy gear up for the big event of Santa's world tour, we remember that Jesus's coming was not celebrated by the merchants of Bethlehem. When Jesus was born in Judea, all of ancient Palestine was under Roman occupation. Though "great with child," Mary traveled from the Galilee down to Bethlehem, her husband's ancestral home, because an emperor half a world away decided to impose a tax on his subjects. The resulting influx of internally displaced persons was good for the hospitality industry in Bethlehem. But it was bad news for Jesus, for there was no room in the inn.

This world's economy does not have room for the Jesus who was born in Bethlehem. Economic recovery is on our minds, and we are not looking to the child of a poor refugee for answers. We watch instead for the next move of the Federal Reserve and big corporations, focusing our expectant hope on the survival of this world's system. But the advent of Messiah is not about economic recovery. It is, instead, the end of the world as we know it. Jesus did not come to patch up a system in which there is no room in the inn for the third of the world's population

In an act of resistance against the culture of consumption that is ritually celebrated on Black Friday, the good folks at Adbusters magazine have declared November 27 "Buy Nothing Day." For more information about how you can host a "Credit Card Cut Up" or interrupt business as usual with a Zombie Walk, visit www.adbusters.org/campaigns/bnd.

that now lives and dies in slums. Jesus came, instead, to interrupt our broken system with the good news of God's Economy.

The economic assumptions of our world are clear: resources are limited, and there is only so much food, time, and money to go around. Survival demands that each of us get what we need first. Once we've done that, we may move on to think of others, calculating the best way to manage limited resources.

But Jesus defies this logic, assuming plenty rather than scarcity. Jesus proclaims abundance through seemingly reckless gift giving. Like the adolescent son of a rich man who thinks his daddy's money will never run out, Jesus lavishes his Father's love prodigally. Jesus knows something astounding: he draws his gifts of love from a wellspring that is endless. The table is wide enough for



November 29th—Dorothy Day

The church remembers saints on the days of their deaths, recalling that our Lord demonstrated the full extent of his love for us when he laid down his life for the whole world. On the first day of Advent this year, we remember Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, who called the church to remember its works of mercy in the midst of America's Great Depression. "We want no revolution; we want the brotherhood of men," wrote Day in 1937. "We want men to love one another. We want all men to have sufficient for their needs. But when we meet people who deny Christ in His poor, we feel, 'Here are the atheists.' They turned first from Christ crucified because He was a poor worker, buffeted and spat upon and beaten. And now—strange thought—the devil has so maneuvered that the people turn from Him because those who profess Him are clothed in soft raiment and sit at well-spread tables and deny the poor."

everyone, and everyone is invited. The table is an invitation to enter the relationship of the Triune God whose eternal dance of love scandalizes the assumptions of Wall Street and the White House.

This workbook is an invitation to welcome God's Economy in our lives and in our world this Advent season. It does not offer seven easy steps for economic recovery. It invites us, instead, to prepare ourselves for the new reality of God's kingdom right now, in the midst of this world's broken systems. While it is possible to do the study on your own, the life Jesus invites us to enjoy can only be lived in community. So you are encouraged to find a partner or small group for this study. If you are already part of a church community, the texts for each week are taken from the Revised Common Lectionary of the Christian churches. So if you hear a sermon on one of the texts you've studied, this is not a result of divine intervention. Whenever God's Economy breaks into this world, however, it is a miracle. Brace yourself for such surprises.

First Week of Advent (November 29–December 5)

Jeremiah 33:14–16

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days

Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Luke 21:25–36

"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. Where do you see the "distress among nations" that Jesus describes? Do the signs of the time suggest a fundamental instability to this world's systems?
2. How have you witnessed people responding to the distress of the global financial crisis? What has your response been?
3. Why does Jesus curse the fig tree in Luke's account?
4. How do you imagine a "righteous Branch" (Jer. 33:15) springing up to bring justice in our world?

ASK THE AUTHOR!

December 14:

Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

This is during Chanukah so we will talk about both Holidays.

6 p.m. Pacific Time (9 p.m. Eastern)

Monday, December 14

Call 1-888-346-3950 for free!

Then enter this code: 11978#

See full schedule at
www.tikkun.org



December 6—Feast Day of St. Nicholas

Born in 280 CE in Patara, Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), Nicholas is one of the most loved saints around the world. Dozens of stories of his life have been passed down, many emphasizing his generous nature. An often-depicted tale is that of a poor father with three daughters, for whom he could not provide a dowry. In that time, this meant the girls would be condemned to a life of slavery or prostitution. Young Nicholas wanted to give to this family, yet spare the father the embarrassment of charity. He threw bags of gold coins through an open window and they landed in socks hanging to dry by the fire, giving rise to our tradition of hanging stockings at Christmas. There were many other stories in which Nicholas intervened to save children's lives, making him the patron saint of children.

Once, Eustathius, the ruler of Myra, condemned three innocent men to death. When informed of this, Saint Nicholas hurried to stop the execution. He arrived just as the executioner's sword was raised to strike the young men. Nicholas grabbed the sword, threw it to the ground, and demanded that the men be released. Nicholas is the patron saint of many countries and peoples, yet perhaps he is best remembered as defender of those whose innocence and humanity were threatened.

December 18—Slavery Abolished in the United States

In nineteenth-century America, chattel slavery was a distinctive practice of the dominant economy. Almost everyone knew that something was wrong with this system. Many people spoke out, protesting the moral evil of slavery, but it was hard to imagine how it could be challenged.

A few slaves such as Frederick Douglass were able to get work on the side, save money, and eventually purchase their own freedom or even escape from their masters, but this was never going to topple the system. Other slaves such as Nat Turner tried to organize armed revolts against the oppressive system of white dominance, but their rebellions were crushed. It seemed as if the economic system based on chattel slavery would never end.

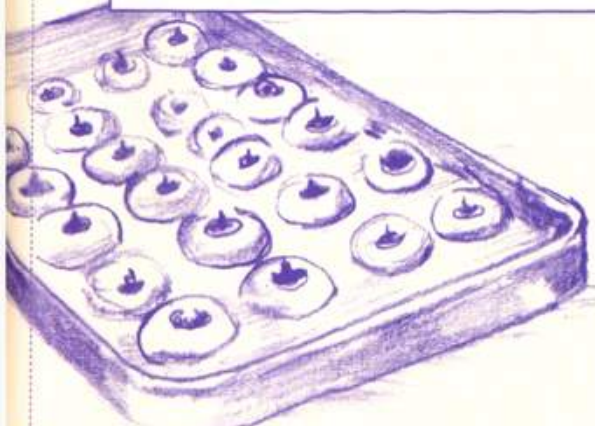
In the midst of all this, while debates went on about the injustice of this economic system and the moral imperative for abolition, a network of people who believed that another way was already possible began to work within, beneath, and against the system, and the Underground Railroad was born. Individuals, families, and churches, many of whom were also calling for abolition, went ahead and opened their doors, arranging for transport from one "station" to the next, often under the cover of night, so that fugitive slaves could escape from plantations in the South to freedom on the other side of the Ohio River. But all along the way, in the little spaces carved out for them by a new family, slaves were already free.

When slaves sang, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," their masters thought they were just pacifying themselves with the hope of a better home in heaven. But they were secretly announcing that a wagon would be passing through that night to pick up those who wanted to flee the plantation. Leaving the economy of their masters' homes, slaves were welcomed into the homes of people they'd never met before. Suddenly, slaves had family in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio—strangers who were willing to risk their lives for them. They were welcomed into a new economy along with white brothers and sisters.

But the new economy of the Underground Railroad also involved danger and risk for both black and white participants. In truth, they were receiving the freedom of their status as children of God. In the eyes of the dominant economy and the law of the land, though, they were criminals. At any point they could be beaten, imprisoned, or even killed. Like Jesus had said, they faced persecutions.

But the freedom these former slaves were experiencing hadn't been granted by the world, so the world couldn't take it away. Even if the defenders of a slave economy shot them dead, the former slaves served a God who could raise them to new life again. Far from pacifying the disgruntled masses, the promise of eternal life gave these subversive Christians courage to work for a new economy in the midst of the old. A hundred and fifty years later, it's easy to see that theirs was the truer economy.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SARINHA BASRAI



Second Week of Advent (December 6–12)

Malachi 3:1–4

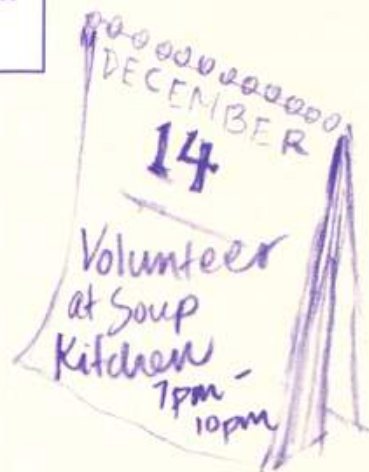
See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Luke 3:1–6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. Luke situates the ministry of John the Baptist in the time of emperors and governors. How do we name the time we are living in now? What defines this era in which we wait for Messiah?
2. What does it mean for us to "prepare the way of the Lord" in our world today?
3. Where do you see a deep need for the salvation of God to break into the world? How do you expect this salvation to come?



Advent Conspiracy

The story of Christ's birth is a story of promise, hope, and a revolutionary love. What if Christmas became a world-changing event again? The folks at Advent Conspiracy have been thinking about how to make this happen in large and small ways. Learn more about their ideas at www.adventconspiracy.org.

Third Week of Advent (December 13-19)

Isaiah 12:2-6

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Luke 3:7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What does it mean for us to "bear fruit worthy of repentance" in our world today?
2. St. Vincent DePaul said we know that if we have two coats we have stolen one from the poor. What sort of economic redistribution does John's sermon in the wilderness call us to?
3. Can we "shout aloud and sing for joy" even now? Where do you see signs of God's economy breaking into our world today?

Fourth Week of Advent (December 20-24)

Micah 5:2-5a

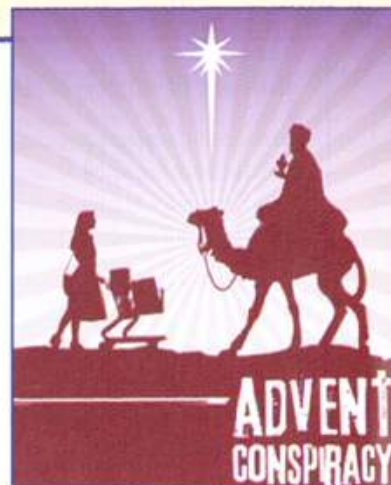
But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

Luke 1:46b-55

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What does it mean that the "one of peace" comes from "one of the little clans of Judah"? To what degree is our



"One congregation decided to do things a little differently one Christmas. They took out all of their fancy decorations and put manure on the floor of the sanctuary, so that when people came, some of them in their best attire, they had nowhere to sit but in a pile of poop. But people will never forget that Christmas. And they will never forget the Christmas story, the fact that our Savior was born into the stench of this world, born in a rank manger in the middle of a genocide."

(Excerpt from *Jesus for President* by Shane Claiborne and Chris Haw)

What Jesus actually said about money has been overlooked by much of the church for most of its history. To look at the prosperity preachers you see on TV, you wouldn't know that Jesus was born homeless and died a peasant. You might also miss the good news of the new economic order Jesus makes possible. For more on this, see *God's Economy: Redefining the Health and Wealth Gospel* (Zondervan, 2009). Excerpts and audio clips are available at www.jonathanwilsonhartgrove.com.

vision of peace bound up with the ways and means of our life in community?

2. Mary's song suggests that some are lifted up and some are brought down so that all people can enjoy life together in God's Economy. Is God lifting you up or bringing you down as you prepare for the advent of Messiah? What does this look like in your life?
3. What one thing will you commit to change in your life to prepare for the reign of peace? What one thing might this group do together?

December 25: Christmas Litany

Note: "One" can be a leader or participants taking leadership in turn.

One: O Lord, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we give thanks for the Light that has come into the world and given us hope. We give thanks for those in every age who have been witnesses to the Light.

All: **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

One: In the darkness of global climate change, we are thankful for the witness of courageous leaders throughout the world and dedicated scientists who strive to sustain God's creation. We give thanks for the witness of those who seek to live simply so others can simply live.

All: **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

One: In the darkness of hunger and homelessness in a world that has enough for all, we are thankful for the witness of those who feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, and clothe the naked, and who advocate for them in the halls of government and corporate boardrooms.

All: **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

One: In the darkness of the threat of nuclear war, we are thankful for the witness of those who, despite differences of nationality and creed, say, "It does not have to be."

All: **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

One: In the darkness from war-ravished countries to death row cells, we give thanks for the witness of those who remember that justice is not served by violence.

All: **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

One: In the darkness of greed that is the sickness of our souls, we give thanks for the witness of those who dispel the illusion that life consists in the accumulation of things.

All: **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

One: O God, forgive us when we are content to live in the shadows. This Christmas, strengthen our faith and renew our hope that we may be witnesses to the Light.

All: **Amen. ■**

*Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove is a speaker and author, most recently of the book *God's Economy* (jonathanwilsonhartgrove.com).*

Twelve Gifts in Hard Times

By Al Fritsch

St. Nicholas Day (December 6) is a perfect time to assemble the gifts we hope to give in the coming weeks, and yet we put off since there is still time and other matters are pressing. If you are so inclined, here are a few suggestions:

- A trinket for the tree, handmade by a youngster for someone that she or he likes very much;
- A homemade delight that is your specialty: jelly or cookies, or syrup, or chopped red and green hot peppers;
- An offering of a day of labor and toil for the good of

another, especially someone suffering from illness or old age;

- A creative gift such as a poem, a piece of art, a homemade card, or a hand carving. These take time to construct and reconstruct and are investments from our head, hands, and heart to help make a perfect and harmonious celebration;
- A donation for the benefit of a developing world community or to a nonprofit organization in the name of the gift recipient;
- A favorite previous gift now given so that your favor



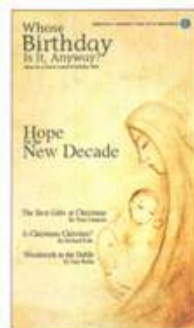
will be transmitted through the gift to them;

- An offer to assist with the local festivities in some fashion, whether within a choral group, as a cleaning assistant, as a decorator, or as a handyperson for whatever needs to be done;
- An invitation to take someone somewhere. Make the holiday season a special service time, with some extra work of mercy for the elderly, hospitalized, imprisoned, homeless, or hungry.
- A greeting card sent to those we neglect to communicate with during the year. Should we recycle last year's cards?
- A service that utilizes your special expertise: home repair and maintenance, cooking and baking, decorating, landscaping and lawn care, gardening and pruning, wood cutting, or insulating;
- A sharing of food that could go for the feast but works so much better if shared with some who are finding it difficult to make ends meet this Christmas season;
- If you must buy something, how about considering the Appalachia Science in the Public Interest (ASPI) Simple Lifestyle Calendar? Call 606-256-0077.

The True Meaning of Gifts

I distinctly remember one of my very early Christmases when stationed in the Northeast as a newly ordained priest. After the Midnight Mass I was invited by a local family for their gift-opening event, which was for them a traditional holiday affair. In the course of the evening I got a distinct feeling that members of this family were pretending to enjoy opening the many expensive gifts given to each other. These gifts did not seem to be deeply appreciated by the young members, even though the gifts were way beyond the price range I would have paid. I seemed powerless to reach out and touch their searching and lonely hearts. I came away with a bit of sadness, even though they had not neglected to give me a gift as well. A lingering feeling persists: gifts ought to symbolize acts of love, not the value of the materials in themselves.

With harder times this Christmas, many people are buying fewer material things and engaging in some soul



Joy to the world need not be an empty promise. *Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?* is an annual Christmas resource published by Alternatives for Simple Living, which encourages people of faith to examine and challenge our consumer society, and provides materials on voluntary simplicity, progressive spirituality, social justice, and peace. The 2009 edition includes articles by Richard Rohr, Tony Campolo, and Walter Brueggemann. Our thanks to Michael Mortvedt at Simple Living for the "Christmas Litany" on the previous page.

searching about how to teach their children and loved ones what the true meaning of Christmas is and what gifts of love mean. Christmas is meant to celebrate the most spiritual act of self-giving the world has ever known. Through recent times the feast has been replaced by a grand show of materialism; this is the utter defiance of God's gift of Self through the substitution of material things like electronic gimmicks, clothes, recreational equipment, and household wares. This year the pattern of past giving could be different. This is a perfect opportunity to tone down the material concerns of the past and to explain to youth that economic times call for something else. Besides, the lessons are the best of Christian education. How about gifts to others, especially the needy, in the name of the loved one? That's why I wrote "Twelve Gifts in Hard Times." Also consider pooling names and giving just one within a given group.

Special attention is given this year to the youth of our nation. Many of these have to experience the limits to giving. Even Christmas gift trees in parishes are arranged as a location for expensive purchased gifts to be distributed to those who have less. How about more essentials and less luxuries? Still the goal should be to give fewer material things and more spiritual gifts such as prayers and services. Address the charges of being stingy or uncooperative in a forthright manner. Help youth to become proud of refraining from expensive gifts, and to be willing to discuss these cutbacks with their friends. ■

Al Fritsch is a Jesuit priest and public interest advocate, a co-founder of the Center for Science in the Public Interest and ASPI, and a writer (see www.earthhealing.info), pastor, and prison chaplain.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SABINA BASMAI



Society as the Subject of Redemption: The Relevance of the Social Gospel

by Gary Dorrien

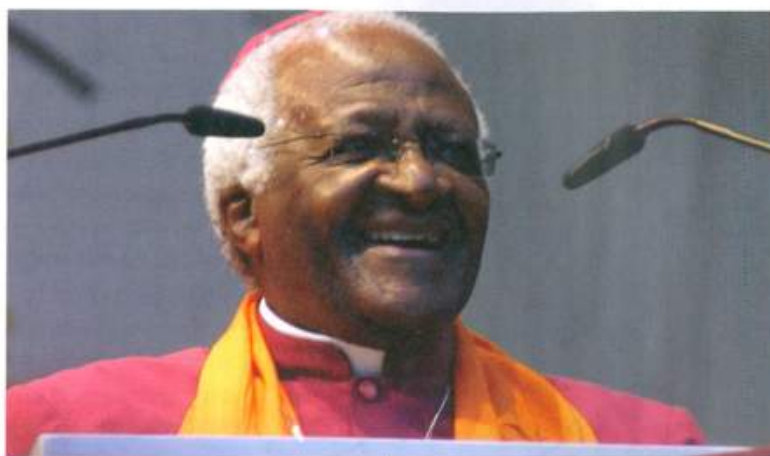
THE IDEA THAT BIBLICAL RELIGION HAS A REGENERATIVE social mission is as old as the biblical message of letting justice flow like a river, pouring yourself out for the poor and vulnerable, and attending to what Jesus called the “weightier matters of the law,” justice and mercy. A century ago, the Social Gospel movement put it in a novel way, calling Christians to transform the structures of society in the direction of social justice.

It was not a coincidence that the Social Gospel, sociology, social ethics, and Social Darwinism all arose at the same time, plus the ideas of social structure, social salvation, and social justice; also corporate capitalism and the trade unions. For the Social Gospel was essentially a North American version of the movements for Christian Socialism that arose in England, Germany, Switzerland, and elsewhere in the late nineteenth century. It was based on a doctrine of social salvation, which was based on the emerging sociological idea of social structure, which gave rise to the idea of social justice.

The novelty of the Social Gospel was not that it possessed a social ethic or got involved in politics, though it certainly did both. The difference was its focus on structural transformations for social justice. Early Christianity had a regenerative social ethic, but the early church was a marginalized eschatological community. The medieval church had a social ethic of the common good, but it was an ethic of authority and social control. The Reformed tradition had a covenantal social ethic with transformational potential, but it was turned into an apologetic for commercial society. The Anabaptist churches had a radical-conservative social ethic of (usually pacifist) dissent, but the Anabaptists were ascetic or apocalyptic or both. Evangelical pietism had a postmillennial social ethic that fought against slavery and alcohol, but it fixated on personal conversion.

Only with the rise of Christian Socialism and the Social Gospel did Christian communities seek to restructure society in the direction of freedom and equality. Society became the subject of redemption; social justice became intrinsic to salvation. If there was such a thing as social structure, redemption had to be reconceptualized to take account of it; salvation had to be personal and social to be saving.

The leading figures of the Social Gospel were Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch. For them, the Social Gospel was political without apology, with a progressive ideology, and vibrantly evangelical, in a theologically liberal fashion. Gladden stood in the movement's mainstream, advocating cooperative ownership and liberal internationalism, and he was never dangerous. He passionately opposed World War I right up to the moment that America intervened, whereupon he embraced the war to end all wars. Every Sunday morning he preached on personal religion, and every Sunday evening he preached about economics,



Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who chaired South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and who has been a tireless activist against AIDS, homophobia, poverty, and racism, says, "we can be human only ... in community, in koinonia, in peace." His Ubuntu or community theology is rooted in African culture and Christian social justice traditions, and is one of the present-day manifestations of the social gospel, broadly understood.

Gary Dorrien is the Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and professor of religion at Columbia University. An Episcopal priest and author of thirteen books, he has a long history of involvement in anti-imperialist and racial justice organizations.

militarism, and social religion. On the first Sunday of every year he preached a sermon on how America and the world had improved over the past year. Gladden tried to be realistic about the class struggle, but he could never say, with Rauschenbusch, that idealism was too weak and sentimental to effect any great social change.

Rauschenbusch said it in the movement's greatest work, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907), a book otherwise loaded with moral idealism, declaring that a great social truth can be won only when an oppressed class "makes that truth its own and fights for it." In the book's first part, Rauschenbusch described the purpose of prophetic biblical religion as the transformation of society into a divine commonwealth of freedom, equality, democracy, and community. The second part explained why the church had never carried out this mission. The third part urged that it was not too late for the church to follow Jesus.

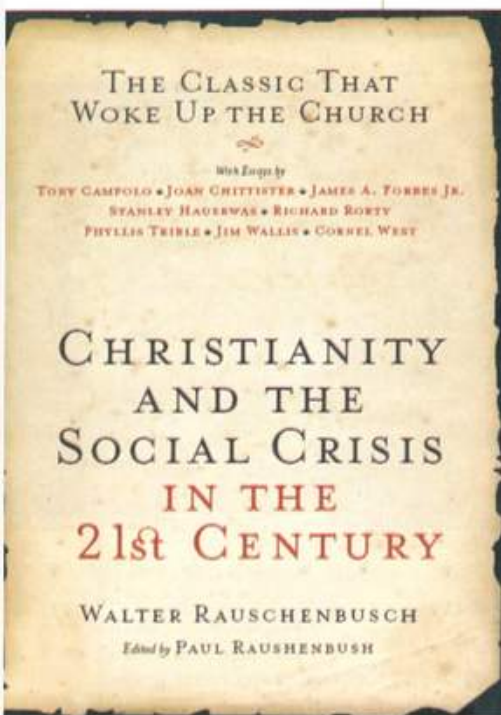
Rauschenbusch realized that the key to the book was the second part, but he feared that the third part would get him fired from his teaching position at Rochester Seminary. It had a blazing manifesto for democratic socialism in a closing eighty-page chapter titled, "What To Do." For his second-part analysis of what happened to Christianity, he argued that every chapter of church history could be titled, "How the Kingdom of God Was Misconstrued in This Era, or Replaced by Something Else." In his telling, prophetic religion was the "beating heart" of scripture, the prophetic spirit "rose from the dead" in Jesus and the early church, and Christianity was supposed to be a prophetic religion of the divine commonwealth.

Rauschenbusch argued that the rise of corporate capitalism marked a crisis for American civilization and an opportunity to recover the ideal of a radical democratic commonwealth. If production could be organized on a cooperative basis, if distribution could be organized by principles of justice, if workers could be treated as valuable ends and not as dispensable means to a commercial end, if parasitic wealth and predatory commerce could be abolished ... his fantasy of ifs went on for a half-page. If all these things could be accomplished, it might be possible "to live a really Christian life without retiring from the world."

Christianity and the Social Crisis went through thirteen printings in five years and had a huge impact on the ecumenical movement, which founded the Federal Council of Churches in 1908, which in turn became a vehicle for the transmission of Social Gospel ideas into the church and society. Most Social Gospel leaders opposed intervening in World War I until the United States did so, whereupon they ditched their opposition to war. After the war, appalled by the vengeance of the victors, they pledged never to do it again, which made it very difficult for them to face up to the necessity of doing so in the 1930s. Reinhold Niebuhr got to be famous by imploring his Social Gospel friends to choose the lesser evil of supporting another war, this time to prevent "the triumph of an intolerable tyranny."

The Social Gospel movement had many faults and limitations. Much of it was sentimental, moralistic, idealistic, and politically naive. Most of it preached a gospel of cultural optimism and a Jesus of middle-class idealism. It spoke the language of triumphal missionary religion, sometimes baptized the Anglo-Saxon ideology of Manifest Destiny, and usually claimed that American imperialism was not really imperialism because it had good intentions. The Social Gospel helped to build colleges and universities for African Americans, but only rarely did it summon the courage to demand justice for blacks. It supported suffrage for women, but that was the extent of its feminism. It created the ecumenical movement in the United States, but it had a strongly Protestant, anti-Catholic idea of ecumenism, and Rauschenbusch was especially harsh on this topic. The Social Gospel movement took for granted that Jews, Catholics, atheists, and all others that weren't mainline Protestants had to assimilate into mainline Protestant culture. And in the 1930s it was too traumatized by its memory of World War I to face up to the moral imperative of smashing Nazi fascism.

For decades the Social Gospel was ridiculed for many of these things, beginning with Reinhold Niebuhr's frosty proto-Marxist polemic of 1932, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. Two generations of seminarians learned about the Social Gospel by reading its Niebuhrian critics, not Rauschenbusch or Washington Gladden. Niebuhr taught, wrongly, that the Social Gospel had no doctrine of sin, and more justly, that it was too middle-class and idealistic to be a serious force in power politics. After Niebuhr's generation had passed, liberationists judged



First published in 1907, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* outsold every other religious volume for three years and became a classic, inspiring leaders such as Reinhold and Richard Niebuhr, Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Bishop Desmond Tutu. This 2007 edition included essays by Joan Chittister and Cornel West (co-chairs with Michael Lerner of the Network of Spiritual Progressives), as well as by Tony Campolo, Jim Wallis, and James A. Forbes Jr., all well known to readers of Tikkun.

that the Social Gospel and Christian realism were too middle-class, white, male-dominated, nationalistic, and socially privileged to be agents of liberation.

Yet the Social Gospel, for all its faults, had a greater progressive religious legacy than any other North American movement. Christian realism inspired no hymns and built no lasting institutions. It was not even a movement, but rather, a reaction to the Social Gospel centered on one person, Reinhold Niebuhr. The Social Gospel, by contrast, was a half-century movement and an enduring perspective that paved the way for modern ecumenism, social Christianity, the Civil Rights Movement, and the field of social ethics. It had a tradition in the black churches that was the wellspring of the Civil Rights Movement through the ministries of Reverdy Ransom, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Benjamin E. Mays, Mordecai Johnson, and Howard Thurman. It had anti-imperialist, socialist, and feminist advocates in addition to its liberal reformers. It created the ecumenical and social justice ministries that remain at the heart of American social Christianity. And it espoused a vision of economic democracy that is as relevant today as it was a hundred years ago.

To put it in contemporary terms, the Social Gospel was a response to the first historic wave of economic globalization, the clash between a burgeoning corporate capitalism and a rising labor movement. Social Gospel leaders urged that modernity surely had a stage beyond capitalism. If modernity was a good thing, which they did not doubt, it had to have a stage beyond capitalism.

Most social gospelers spoke a "third way" language of cooperatives and community ownership, following the lead of Gladden and Richard Ely. A more radical group, following Rauschenbusch, explicitly called economic democracy "socialist" while stressing decentralized forms of socialization. A third group advocated state socialism and state planning; it included George Herron and Vida Scudder.

In the 1930s, Reinhold Niebuhr blasted all these groups for their moralism and idealism. For radical state socialists like Niebuhr, economic democracy was serious only if it meant government control of the economy. Wrongly, radicals like Niebuhr equated decentralized forms of socialization with nationalization, rejected production for profit, claimed that state planners could replicate the pricing decisions of markets, and wanted government planners to organize an economy not linked by markets. In the 1940s, after Niebuhr gave up on all of this, he made his peace with the Democratic Party establishment and became a leading figure in it.

On these issues Rauschenbusch ended up looking better than the radicals that panned him for being too idealistic. He assumed that markets cannot be abolished in a free society and that we need to get as much as we can out of worker and community ownership. Political democracy without economic democracy is an "uncashed promissory note, a form without substance," he argued. Under capitalism, the capitalist class wrote its interests into the law; under a fully realized democracy, property laws would serve the interests of the public as a whole.

Rauschenbusch's concept of economic democracy was a patchwork of socialist and reformist themes that did not always fit together. He could be sloppy in failing to distinguish among direct workers' ownership, mixed forms of cooperative ownership, and public ownership of production. He adopted Marx's labor theory of value and asserted that prices in a just society would be based entirely on services rendered.

For all of his idealistic rhetoric and unassimilated borrowings from Marx, however, Rauschenbusch wisely urged that the mix of ownership modes in a democracy must always be a matter of contextual judgment. The blueprint dogmatism of the Marxist tradition was alien to him. He did not think of economic democracy as only one thing, either economically or politically, and he argued that culturally it would have to be at least as pluralistic as political democracy already was.

A century ago the newly founded Federal Council of Churches issued a historic pronouncement called the Social Creed of the Churches. The churches could not (continued on page 73)



Dr. Bob Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches (center) is surrounded by a show of hands from religious leaders who opposed the war in Iraq on April 30, 2003, in Chicago during the Interfaith Summit on Iraq.

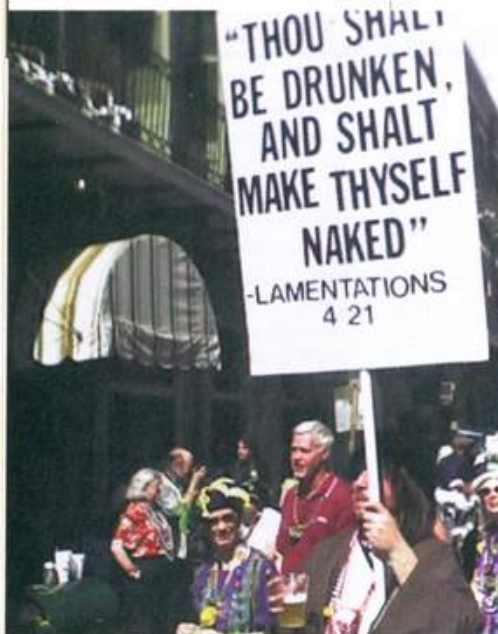
Subversive Bible Study

A Review of Reuven Kimelman's Audio Coursebook

by David Elcott



People all too often use texts to prove they are right, whether proselytizing for a sin-conscious Christianity (above) or for the sensual enjoyment of life (Mardi Gras in New Orleans, below)...



BIBLE STUDY IS AN OLD SPORT. IN FACT, THE BIBLE itself often reflects on earlier passages or ideas, playing off prior voices and events. It often feels that there is no "Ur" text, no one source from which everything biblical derives. And we can imagine thousands of years ago, people sitting around their table or bathhouse or courtyard, telling the stories and offering pious moral aphorisms. That learning process continues in the Jewish and Christian religious communities with rabbis and priests, pastors and yeshiva masters arguing about the meaning of the Bible, while Bible study groups and synagogue attendees hear the Bible read and try to fathom its meanings. Turn on the television or browse the Web and you will find no shortage of eloquent writers and passionate speakers holding the Bible high as they provide moral clarity. So the first question we should ask when introduced to yet another Bible study program is why and, if we are provided a good answer, then we follow with what and how.

Let me amplify the first question. The Bible, along with the sacred texts of other religious communities, has proven to be troublesome. One would have to be quite dogmatic to avoid questioning the role the Bible has played and, at this very moment, plays in sectarian violence and tragic conflicts. I imagine waves of pious religious followers waving the Bible high like Constantinian soldiers as they charge in some cosmic battle in the name of God. The Bible and biblical teachings seem all about answers—who is right and who is wrong, who is saved and who is damned, who owns the truth and who is a teacher or follower of hypocrisy and lies. While Norman Rockwell's portrait of good people gently praying makes a fine painting, the cultural wars that are tearing at the fabric of our society and around the world give pause. Do we need another Bible course?

Yes, I can claim, if the course comes to challenge our complacent sureties and pious convictions that we know what God wants. *The Moral Meaning of the Bible*, an audio coursebook published by Our Learning Company and developed by Reuven Kimelman, is a remarkably robust effort to undermine biblical faith. I apologize if that sounds damning, but I think it is an accurate description of Kimelman's thinking and his work. To explain. We have been convinced that the Bible is the answer, that it is the word of God—in whatever fashion we believe that—and that it clarifies all of the moral ambiguities we must face. Is the world a just place? Check chapter X. Are human beings fundamentally sinful? Check chapter Y. How should we treat homosexuals or people who reject our faith or women or children or anyone different? Check chapter Z. For traditional Jews and some Catholic traditions, the answers come as laws, canonical decisions. In other Christian traditions, what is right and wrong is extracted from the traditions we have inherited and presented as fundamental and singular reads. Such Bible teaching is not taking us to good places these days.

Dr. Kimelman teaches from a very different tradition, which recognizes moral ambiguity and the Bible as a deep struggle to wrestle not only with confused human beings but also with confusing and conflicting voices of God. *The Moral Meaning of the Bible* undermines complacency, allows for moral complexity, and demands high standards of personal struggle. That is

David Elcott is the Taub Professor of Practice in Public Service and Leadership at NYU's Wagner School of Public Service.

why it is so needed. The world cannot continue on its course of vying communities and leaders who proclaim absolute truths and thereby deny any veracity in other religious traditions. That, it seems to me, is the dangerous idolatry of the moment, to believe that you have a stranglehold on what God is and what is divine truth. A responsible pluralism is not a luxury of those who say "I'm OK, you're OK." It is the crucial foundation of human beings working together to heal a damaged world.

In one very rich and textured study on leadership, Kimelman places Abraham, Moses, and Elijah on the stand, challenging the character of their leadership. Immediately, we are confronted with a dilemma—these three men are biblical heroes who stand up against the complacencies of their times, who disagree with God when their own sense of justice is compromised, and who are very different from each other. There is no attempt in this analysis of leadership to claim a singular model of leadership, and certainly obedience to God and full faith are not the highlighted virtues of these characters. In fact, they are complicated folk who are often disappointed in God and show deep frailties and confusion. *The Moral Meaning of the Bible* allows us to move beyond the heroic models that are still a core standard of leadership and search for other qualities by which we can judge. Kimelman shows Elijah's weakness in that he does it all alone, unable to work in partnership with others. Moses, in contrast, displays the qualities of a servant leader, one who can delegate and create teams, a man who remains modest in understanding that he is part of the play, not the whole thing. This has a very contemporary ring that would make Jim Collins, Robert Greenleaf, and Stephen Covey—gurus of business leadership—very happy.

There is a quaintness sometimes in Kimelman's presentation. God is "He," and women have not been given full voice. The Bible is taught within a religious tradition that will become, I am sure, more expansive as the series grows. Yet his larger success is clear, as Kimelman is able to transcend the divide between religion and science. The potent and commanding voice of faith is able to offer a moral grounding in the world without compromising contemporary critical modes of analysis. Other than the gender issues, my quibble with Kimelman is never substantive—the psyches of his Eve and his Adam are on the couch; the psychosocial rivalries of brothers and spouses, parents and children, are confronted head-on; moral battles over ends and means erupt. All this happens within a framework of faith—or rather, faith expands to take in the dark sides of saints and the holiness of sinners. As I said, this is not the Sunday school Bible that has been the limit of most Americans' encounters with Scripture.

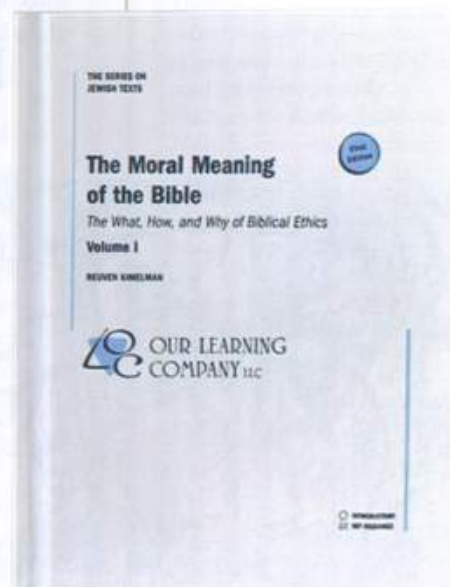
That answers the why for me—we need Bible teaching that is erudite, competing with the most illustrious scholars of Jewish and Christian traditions. We need Bible teaching that is pluralist at its core and that transcends the common, challenging us to find a deeper sacredness in our lives. *The Moral Meaning of the Bible* gives us that in rich surplus.

The what and how are dessert. This is a luxurious presentation and a wonderfully satisfying process. It is sensual—it engages my eyes, my ears, my lips. It prompts my fingers to play with the mindmaps and detailed study texts. This is no small task. Today we are besieged with multimedia events: television commercials are more sophisticated than the movies of ten years ago, while computer games place me in virtual worlds in distant dimensions. So a Bible course that does not entail my sitting in person with a charismatic teacher, one on one, needs to think through the various modes of learning that best engage today's learners. And this is especially hard if the goal is not to pontificate and provide those one-line answers, but to actually force me to rethink the texts and issues that are brought up. So Our Learning Company invests a great deal in providing us with high-quality materials to back up high-quality presentation. This is sophisticated learning that honors traditional learning from the past even as it successfully transcends denominational and sectarian boundaries.

The challenge here is, will people buy it? Will those who seek religious meaning be willing to be rattled? And will those who have walked away from trivial or hardened religion be enticed to try again? In this, I am not sure, but hopeful. Not meaning to give this a political bent—and not speaking of specific policies or platforms—I would like to note that America voted for a president who refused to offer the pat, simple responses while challenging us to think



... Instead we need to recognize the less comfortable truths taught by Reuven Kimelman in his new CD set (below), which reveals "the Bible as a deep struggle to wrestle not only with confused human beings but also with confusing and conflicting voices of God."



More information about *The Moral Meaning of the Bible*, including samples and additional materials, is available at www.MoralBible.com.

differently. We rejected those who tried to force us into the black or white mindset of the past. And the world seemed to applaud and engage with America in a different way. So perhaps imperialist religion will be challenged as well, and *The Moral Meaning of the Bible* will flourish in this new environment. I would be happier, by the way, if Kimelman's course would pluralize "meaning" to "meanings." "The Moral Meanings of the Bible" would better reflect what this master teacher and honored scholar has spent his life doing—not giving singular answers to the complexities of human beings and of God, but offering us a sophisticated and hopeful pathway to understand what God wants us to do as partners in healing the suffering and mending the brokenness of the world. ■

Abraham Joshua Heschel's Thesis on the Unity of Jewish Theology

by Reuven Kimelman



"Much of Heschel's work seeks to free Jewish theology from the constraints of Maimonides's philosophical concept of God as independent of humanity," the author argues. This portrait of Maimonides comes from Tom Block's *Shalom/Salaam* series of Jewish and Sufi mystics.

WHILE MUCH HAS BEEN SAID OF ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL'S RELIGIOUS genius and moral courage, more needs to be said about his intellectual audacity. He claims to have traced the continuum of Jewish religious consciousness from the Biblical and Rabbinic periods through the Kabbalistic and Hasidic ones. Heschel argued that these periods are unified by the theme of God's concern for humanity. The different expressions of Judaism are not mutually exclusive, but rather moments in the dialectic of humanity's encounter with God. Where others saw dichotomies, he saw polarities. Our inclination to understand Judaism or to approach the divine through only one of the poles leaves us, according to Heschel, with partial understandings of Judaism and fragmentary visions of the divine. In contrast, Heschel's theology offers a historical and conceptual framework for maintaining the dialectic without reducing one pole to the other.

In this regard, *Torah Min HaShamayim BeAsplaqariah Shel HaDorot* (abridged in English as *Heavenly Torah as Refracted through the Generations*) qualifies as Heschel's magnum opus. It guides the reader through the woof and warp of the classic texts that inform his writings on contemporary theology, *Man Is Not Alone* and *God In Search of Man*. These books—which made Heschel such an insightful writer for the Jewish audience and to a great extent for the Christian audience, as well—restate his historical-theological vision of Judaism. He first presented this vision in *The Prophets* and subsequently and more extensively in *Torah Min HaShamayim*. This vision, which involves tracing the thread of God's interest in man throughout the fabric of Judaism, is reflected in his contemporary writings.

So much of Heschel's work is of one cloth. *Man Is Not Alone* is subtitled *A Philosophy of Religion*, while *God In Search of Man* is subtitled *A Philosophy of Judaism*. By virtually beginning *God In Search of Man* with the statement "Religion is an answer to man's ultimate questions," Heschel underscores his thesis that the philosophy of Judaism is an answer to problems in the philosophy of religion, indeed its ultimate problems. Not only do these two

Reuven Kimelman teaches at Brandeis University. He is the author of *The Mystical Meaning of 'Lekhah Dodi'* and *'Kabbalat Shabbat'*, and the audio books *The Moral Meaning of the Bible* and *The Hidden Poetry of the Jewish Prayerbook*.

works on contemporary theology fit together, they also converge with his two major works of historical scholarship in his statement that pathos in *The Prophets* "is an explication of the idea of God in search of man."

Heschel followed a Nachmanidean, as opposed to a Maimonidean, reading of the tradition, one that underscores the continuity between Biblical-Rabbinic and Kabbalistic perspectives. In a transcript of a talk entitled "Jewish Theology," Heschel spelled out the implications of his reading: "The idea of God being in need of man is central to Judaism and pervades all the pages of the Bible and of Chazal (Rabbinic literature), and it is understandable in our own time.... In the light of this idea ... you have to entirely revise all the clichés that are used in religious language."

Much of Heschel's work seeks to free Jewish theology from the constraints of Maimonides's philosophical concept of God as independent of humanity. In contrast, he develops the idea of Divine pathos, which for Heschel means that God is in search of man, indeed in need of man. Note that this is a relational statement, not a substantive one. It focuses on the relationship of God to man and underscores the interdependency of the Divine and the human. This idea does not sit well with those that advocate absolute divine omnipotence. Its absence thus in Maimonides's list of dogmas is obvious. Heschel deals with this by stating:

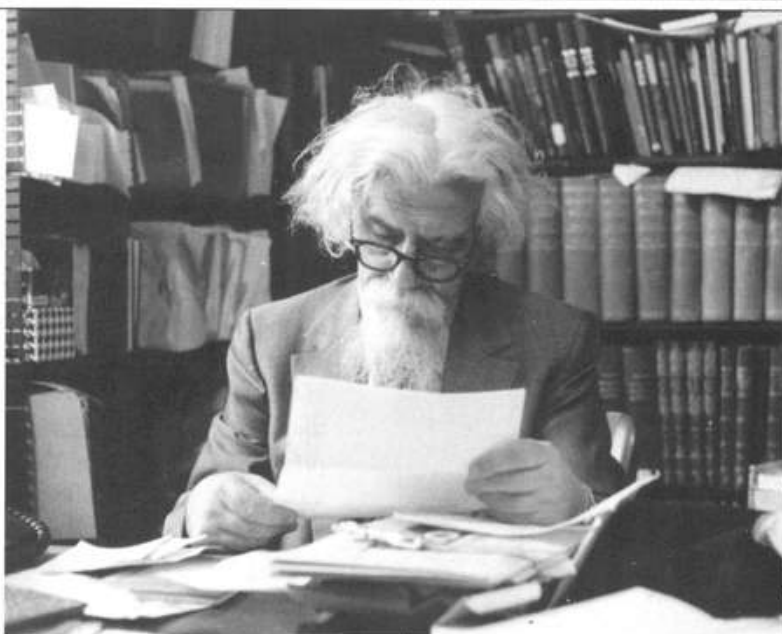
The whole conception of God's omnipotence, I suspect, was taken over from Islam. God is almighty and powerful. Man has nothing to say and nothing to do except to keep quiet and to accept. But, actually, God needs man's cooperation. There will be no redemption without the cooperation of man. Omnipotence as such will not work. God cannot function in the world without the help of man. And this is where *halacha*, *agada*, and *mitzvot* begin to assume their crucial role. But all this has to be seen in relation to God. In a very deep and strong sense God cannot be conceived by us in complete detachment from man. God and man have to be thought of together. I once suggested the definition of a prophet. A prophet is a man who holds God and man in one thought and at one time. He does not think of God without man and he does not think of man without God. In a Hellenized theology we witness a complete split. God is there, and man is here.

What Heschel found lacking in Maimonides, as in other medieval Jewish philosophers, was "the profound doctrine of the immanence of God emphatically taught by Rabbi Akiva and his disciples ... the doctrine of the Shekhinah found no echo."

Heschel challenged the tendency of modern scholarship to accentuate the chasm in concepts of God among Biblical, Rabbinic, philosophical, and Kabbalistic thinkers. No one took greater advantage of these differences to justify his own concept of God than Heschel's theological nemesis at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Mordecai Kaplan. Heschel contended that these modern arguments, while cogent, ultimately skewed the picture as a whole through their neglect of those strands held in common by thinkers from the Bible to the Kabbalah.

Heschel focused on the interdependency between the Divine and the human. He writes:

In the phrase "we need each other" is embedded the concept of Israel's power to diminish or enhance God's might. This opinion, which served as a cornerstone of Kabbalistic teaching, is already alluded to in a homily in Sifre (319): "You neglected the Rock that begot you" (Deut. 32:18). The word *teshi* ("neglected") can be understood in relation to the word *teshishut* ("feebleness"), whence the interpretation "You weaken the power of the One on high" ... This approach achieved its classic formulation in the mouth of Rabbi Judah b. Simon, an amora of the third to fourth generation of Eretz Israel: "As long as the righteous comply with the Divine will they augment the Power above, as it says 'And now, I pray Thee, let the strength of the Lord be enhanced' (Num. 14:17). But if not, then, as it were, 'You enfeebled the Rock that begot you' (Deut. 32:18)." Similarly: "As long as Israel complies with the Divine will they augment the Power above, as



With great intellectual audacity, Abraham Joshua Heschel saw the major periods of Jewish religious consciousness—from the Biblical and Rabbinic periods through the Kabbalistic and Hasidic ones—not as divided by conflicting approaches, but as unified by the theme of God's concern for humanity.

it says: 'In God we shall make [i.e., create] power' (Ps. 60:14); and if not, as it were, say, 'and they [i.e., Israel] are gone without strength before the pursuer' (Lam. 1:6). According to the *Zohar* (2:33a), this idea is intimated in the verse "Give power to God" (Ps. 68:35).

Both rabbi and kabbalist, contends Heschel, held that human compliance with the Divine will augments Divine power. One might think of the Divine-human relationship as analogous to that of a general and soldier, where the power lies with the general and the soldiers merely follow orders. In reality, every command implemented by the soldier extends the general's power. The growth of the power of the general thus corresponds to the increase in compliance by the soldiers and vice versa. An order that commands no compliance is a voice in the wilderness. Judaism is so commandment-oriented precisely because through the fulfillment of the commandments God's kingship is realized on earth. In fact, according to the Midrash, God gave Israel so many commandments because Israel had made God king first. Heschel hence titles a chapter in volume one with the Rabbinic expression "If My people does not enthrone Me on earth ..." To make this point with a different metaphor, Heschel would often cite the midrashic gloss to Isaiah 43:12, "So you are My witnesses—declares the Lord—and I am God," to wit: "When you are My witnesses, then I am God, but when you are not My witnesses, then I am, as it were, not God."

In sum, for Heschel the idea of divine-human interdependency is the thread that weaves its way through the Hebrew Bible, Rabbinic literature, and Kabbalah, creating the tapestry called Judaism.

Heschel's work on Rabbinic thought continues his work on Biblical thought, what Heschel called "God's anthropology." Both focus on the category of pathos in the divine-human relationship and how revelation results from the interaction of the Divine and human. Although the Biblical work is concerned with the prophetic understanding of the Divine and the Rabbinic work with the Rabbinic understanding of Torah and Shekhinah, especially as articulated in the school of Rabbi Akiva, the presentations overlap. This fits Heschel's overall thesis that as prophecy emerges from the encounter between prophet and God, so Judaism emerges from the encounter between sage and Torah.

Torah Min HaShamayim not only has an overarching thesis about Rabbinic Judaism, but differs from standard academic approaches also in its modality of presentation. Whereas Solomon Schechter and Ephraim Urbach in their books on Rabbinic thought summarize Rabbinic thinking, Heschel explores its inner dialectic and for that reason adopted the strategy of exegeting it from within by writing it in Rabbinic Hebrew, using religious categories native to it. The subsections of the treatise frequently are titled with Rabbinic quotations. All this reflects his understanding of the intersection between language and thought, holding that just as words and language inform thinking, so categories structure thought. By organizing his thinking according to rabbinical categories, the language and structure of the book project the reader into the minds of the sages. Once inside their minds, one finds that they were not of one mind. Indeed on most theological issues there are at least two resolutions, frequently at odds with each other, representing two schools of thought.

Heschel employs the rubrics of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael to illustrate these contrasting schools of thought. The heaven-bound school of Akiva, with its emphasis on *Shechinah*, is contrasted with the more earthbound school of Ishmael, with its emphasis on the more mundane. The Akivan perspective was more mystical, possibly apocalyptic, unbounded, and blatantly paradoxical. The Ishmaelite perspective was more critical, rationalistic, restrained, and pellucid. Together, according to Heschel, they form a dialectic, not just a dyad, in which the human encounter with the divine is played out. A case in point is Akiva's focus on the biblical instances of God's immanence and Ishmael's focus on those of God's transcendence. The point is not either-or but both-and; as Heschel says, "the dichotomy of transcendence and immanence is an oversimplification," for "God remains transcendent in His immanence, and related in His transcendence."

By contrasting the sides of an issue under the rubrics of Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiva, material is presented dialectically. Heschel entreats those who cannot rise to such dialectical heights to realize that half a loaf is not a full loaf, and no perspective exhausts reality. As he was wont to say, "There is always a polarity of two principles." Neither the practical, this-worldly pole represented by the school of Ishmael nor the mystical sense of God's need for man represented by the school of Akiva can be reduced to the other. Nor can they be totally integrated. It is the limitation of human vision that (continued on page 74)

Please note: an earlier version of this article appeared in *First Things*.

King's God: The Unknown Faith of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

by Robert James "Be" Scofield

YOU UNDOUBTEDLY KNOW THAT DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. was a progressive Christian and champion of civil rights and the social gospel. You may also know that he spoke out against the Vietnam War, harshly criticized U.S. foreign policy, and questioned the capitalist system that produced poverty. But do you know his theology?

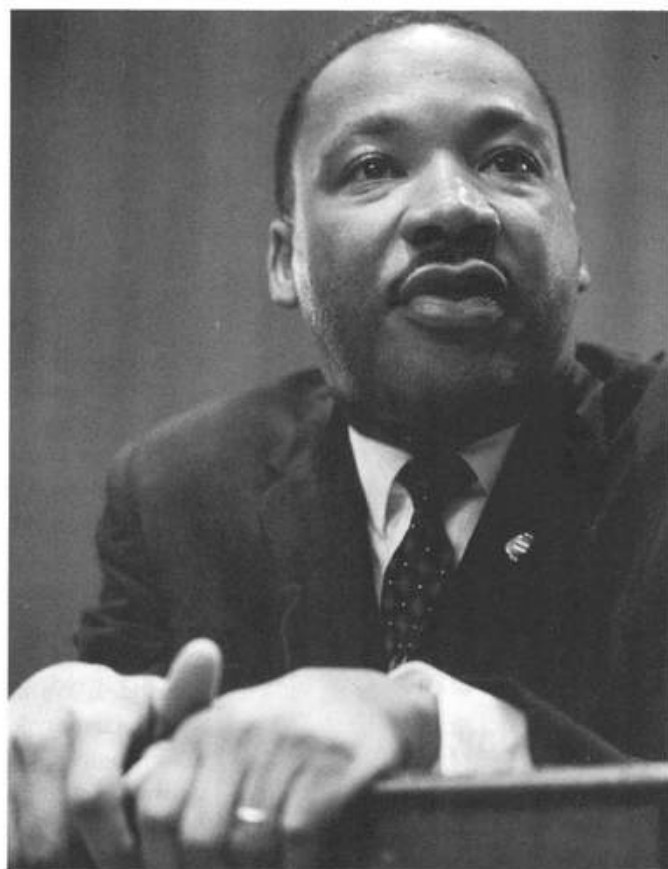
Right up until Dr. King's assassination in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had traveled to support striking sanitation workers, the civil rights leader worked—not as a secular activist but as a Baptist minister—to awaken the conscience of the nation. What was the meaning of Jesus for Dr. King? Did he see Jesus as divine? How did he interpret the Bible?

Biographies describe King as a liberal Protestant, but what does this mean? What was his understanding of Christian doctrines and why are they important to us? A number of academic papers written during his seminary years (1948–1951) provide an intimate look at the young King as he struggled to reconcile religion with a changing, dynamic, and modern world.

Prior to entering the liberal Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, King had developed only a tenuous relationship with Christianity. Despite being raised in a lineage of orthodox Baptist ministers, King at a young age demonstrated skepticism of the irrational claims of religion, and embarrassment at the emotionalism of his father's preaching. His entrance into Christianity at the age of six came from neither a genuine religious conviction nor a crisis moment; rather, he saw his sister make the altar call during a local religious revival and quickly followed suit. He claimed that during his baptism he had no idea what was occurring. Perhaps most striking was his denial of the bodily resurrection of Jesus during Sunday school at the age of thirteen. From this point he stated, "doubts began to spring forth unrelentingly."

King carried these suspicions with him when he entered Morehouse College in Atlanta at the age of fifteen. He had originally planned on being a doctor or lawyer. At Morehouse, under the guidance of President Benjamin E. Mays and professor George D. Kelsey, he began to believe that religion could be both "intellectually respectful and emotionally satisfying." Mays's weekly talks on the social gospel enchanted King, while Kelsey's Bible course taught him to see the Bible metaphorically, leading him to conclude the Bible has "many profound truths which one cannot escape."

While the "shackles of fundamentalism" broke off during these years at Morehouse, it was at Crozer that King discovered the insights and potential of liberal theology and began to articulate his opinions about Christianity. It was here that he found his calling, graduating first in his class and delivering the commencement address. He would go on to study the



As a young man, Martin Luther King Jr. rejected many of the orthodox views of Jesus's divinity, resurrection, and return. The author shows how King flatly rejected "a literal interpretation of biblical stories, claiming such a reading would be 'absurd' in a Copernican world." On these issues, Scofield argues, King did not change his mind in later years.

Robert James Scofield (aka "Be") is a spiritual activist and the founder of www.godblessthewhole-world.org. He is pursuing a Master of Divinity at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California. You can reach him at bjscofield@gmail.com.

twentieth-century giants of theology—Tillich, Wieman, Niebuhr, and Barth—while pursuing a Ph.D. in systematic theology from Boston University. But by the end of his seminary years at Crozer he had already laid out his understanding of the core doctrines of the Christian faith. And it is here that we now direct our focus.

How did Dr. King understand Jesus? Did he see him as the Son of God? In “The Humanity and Divinity of Jesus,” a paper written for a class called “Christian Theology Today,” King clearly lays out his view on the divinity of Jesus:

The orthodox attempt to explain the divinity of Jesus in terms of an inherent metaphysical substance within him seems to me quite inadequate. To say that the Christ, whose example of living we are bid to follow, is divine in an ontological sense is actually harmful and detrimental. To invest this Christ with such supernatural qualities makes the rejoinder: “Oh, well, he had a better chance for that kind of life than we can possibly have ...” So that the orthodox view of the divinity of Christ is in my mind quite readily denied. The significance of the divinity of Christ lies in the fact that his achievement is prophetic and promissory for every other true son of man who is willing to submit his will to the will and spirit of God. Christ was to be only the prototype of one among many brothers. The appearance of such a person, more divine and more human than any other, and in closest unity at once with God and man, is the most significant and hopeful event in human history. This divine quality or this unity with God was not something thrust upon Jesus from above, but it was a definite achievement through the process of moral struggle and self-abnegation.

The question King answered was not whether Jesus was divine but rather *how* he became divine. This approach allowed him to deal with the “insuperable difficulties” of the orthodox position while still explaining why Jesus was unique and different from other people.

In line with his metaphorical interpretation of Jesus, King searched for the deeper significance of the history and context in which the Christian doctrines were created. He suggests, “We should delve into the deeper meaning ... and somehow strip them of their literal interpretation,” and when we do this “we will find they are based on a profound foundation.”

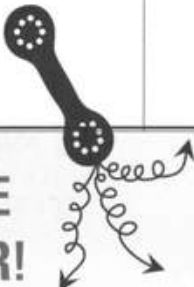
In a paper discussing the creation of orthodox beliefs, King argues that the virgin birth story represents a pre-scientific worldview: Christ’s followers believed that Jesus’s uniqueness could only be explained biologically. According to King, Jesus’s early disciples saw his “spiritual life so far beyond theirs” that any attempt to explain his existence as human was inadequate. He concludes, “We of this scientific age will not explain the birth of Jesus in such unscientific terms.” This same type of thinking led Christ’s followers to externalize their inner experience of his lasting power through the story of the bodily resurrection. Those who knew Jesus “had been captivated by the magnetic power of his personality,” King writes, which led them to believe that he “could never die.” The living and eternal presence they experienced was then transferred into the story of a bodily resurrection.

In “The Christian Pertinence of Eschatological Hope,” a paper King wrote for *Christian Theology Today*, he explores the core doctrines. The one he denounces most directly is that of the second coming, writing, “It is obvious that most twentieth century Christians must frankly and flatly reject any view of a physical return of Christ.” What were the early Christians trying to convey in predicting the return of Jesus? King states:

Actually we are celebrating the Second Advent every time we open our hearts to Jesus, every time we turn our backs to the low road and accept the high road, every time we say no to self that we may say yes to Jesus Christ, every time a man or wom[a]n turns from ugliness to beauty and is able to forgive even their enemies. Jesus stands at the door of our hearts if we are willing to admit him.... The final doctrine of the second coming is that whenever we turn our lives to the highest and best there for us is the Christ.

This is in effect the continual return of Jesus.

In addressing the orthodox notion of the Day of Judgment, King suggests that we “set aside



ASK THE AUTHOR!

**Monday,
November 16:
Robert “Be” Scofield**

We’ll interview Be for
20 minutes, and then he’ll
take questions from YOU.

**6 p.m. Pacific Time
(9 p.m. Eastern)**

**Monday, November 16
Call 1-888-346-3950 for free!**

Then enter this code: 11978#

See full schedule at
www.tikkun.org

the spectacular paraphernalia of the judgment scene and the literal throne." Jesus has already come to judge the world. When we judge ourselves against the life of Christ or experience closeness to him we are experiencing the Day of Judgment. King also denies the traditional notion that some are destined for eternal communion with God while others are destined for hell. In "The Christian Pertinence of Eschatological Hope," he writes, "A physical heaven and a physical hell are inconceivable in a Copernican world ... for us immortality will mean a spiritual existence." And in "Why Religion?" he says, "In reality I know nothing about heaven ... personally I don't believe in hell in the conventional sense." In the end King interprets the kingdom of God not as some cataclysmic end time or a theocratic kingdom that triumphs over "satanically inspired regimes." Rather he associates the kingdom of God with the eternal love of God on earth, writing, "When we see social relationships controlled everywhere by the principles which Jesus illustrated in life—trust, love, mercy, and altruism—then we shall know that the kingdom of God is here."

In a paper entitled "A View of the Cross Possessing Biblical and Spiritual Justification," King describes the various different views of the meaning of the cross throughout history and then concludes: "Any doctrine which finds the meaning of atonement in the triumph of Christ over such cosmic powers as sin, death and Satan is inadequate.... If Christ by his life and death paid the full penalty of sin, there is no valid ground for repentance or moral obedience as a condition of forgiveness. The debt is paid; the penalty exacted, and there is, consequently, nothing to forgive."

Dr. King's understanding of the Bible is quite simple: he believed it was written in a pre-scientific world and used language that was representative of its era. He flatly rejects a literal interpretation of biblical stories, claiming such a reading would be "absurd" in a Copernican world. The pre-scientific worldview that informed the authors of the Bible is clearly inadequate for modern Christians. Written by men trying to understand their social environment and place in the cosmos, the Bible is filled with "mankind's deepest devotional thoughts and aspirations." Readers who accept the Bible literally are faced with impossibilities and deep contradictions, but those who read it as myth encounter "many profound truths which one cannot escape."

For Dr. King, the value of biblical stories is not diminished by their mythological nature. Rather, the myth serves to take the reader beyond the idea or thought within the mind. In short, he accepts the standard methods for critically examining the Bible. In "How to Use the Bible in Modern Theological Construction," he explains that this modern method "sees the Bible not as a textbook written with divine hands, but as a portrayal of the experiences of men written in particular historical situations." Textual and literary criticism, archaeology, and history revealed to King the inadequacy of a literal biblical interpretation. He claimed that this critical approach to the Bible was "the best or at least the most logical system of theology in existence." He also believed that biblical criticism and biblical archaeology "will serve to justify the church in modern culture." However, King was keenly aware of liberal theologians' ability to get caught up in abstract theory. In "The Weaknesses of Liberal Theology," he expressed his understanding that his role as a religious leader was to reconcile theory with concrete meaning:

It is certainly justifiable to be as scientific as possible in proving that the Pentateuch was written by more than one author, that the whale did not swallow Jonah, that Jesus was not born a virgin, or that Jesus never met John the Baptist. But after all of this, what relevance do the scriptures have? What moral implications do we find growing out of the Bible? What relevance does Jesus have in 1948 A.D.? (continued on page 75)



"It should not be surprising then that while Dr. King served a Baptist church, his first choice of religion was Unitarian Christian (which later merged with Universalism)," the author writes. "Coretta Scott had been attending Unitarian churches for years before she met and married Martin, and they both attended Unitarian services while in Boston." Coretta Scott King stands with Martin in 1964, eleven years into their marriage.

A Note on Sources:

Most quotations in this article come from The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr., Volumes I and 6. A fully footnoted version of the article will be posted at www.tikkun.org on January 1, 2010. If you need a copy before that, please email dave@tikkun.org.

Prayer and Nonduality

by Jay Michaelson



IN THE LAST HALF-CENTURY, THEOLOGICAL DOCTRINES ONCE EXPLICITLY RESERVED FOR the elite have become widespread in the Jewish world. In earlier times, philosophers had their refined conception of God, mystics had theirs, and most people, at least according to the sparse evidence we possess, didn't have much truck with either. In large part, this is still true today; visit any mainline synagogue and you'll find traditional theological notions rarely mentioned in rabbinical schools: God punishing the wicked and rewarding the good, the specialness of Israel and the Torah, and the notion that God hears our prayers. No one in the non-Orthodox Jewish "academy" believes these things in a literal sense, but they have long been staples of mass religion.

Lately, however, the elite/popular division is showing signs of wear. In recent years, ideas about God once reserved for the elite have begun showing up in the mainstream. Perhaps God is just "the way things are" or "a transcendent moral imperative." Or perhaps, as I have described in a recent issue of *Tikkun*, God does not exist—but is Existence itself.

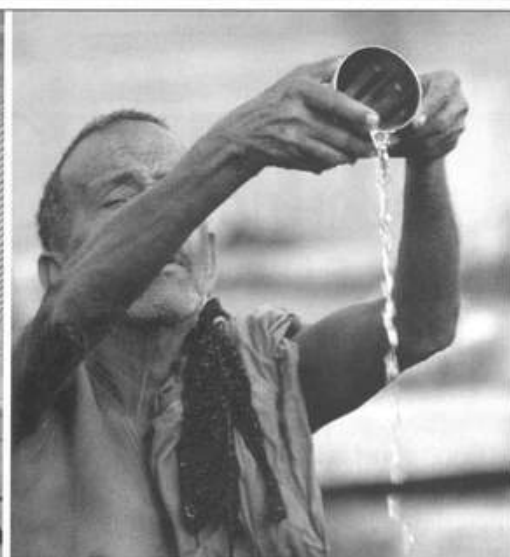
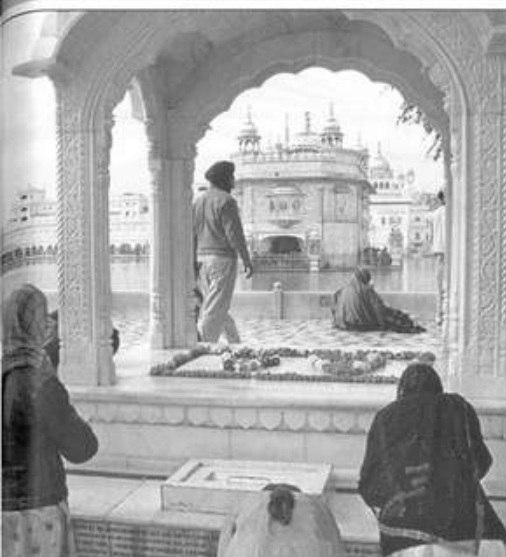
This view, known as nondualism ("not two"-ism), has been part of Jewish elite philosophy and mysticism for hundreds of years. It is also, of course, part of many "Eastern" religious traditions such as Vedanta Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism. Yet partly as a result of these latter systems of thought, nondualism has begun appearing in the American mainstream, not just among the elite. "All is one" may be a bit of a simplification, but it is at the bedrock of popular spiritual thought, in multiple faith traditions.

In this article, I will briefly sketch the contours of the nondual view and then explore the particular problems it poses for prayer. As evident in my last article, which discussed nondual messianism, my view is ultimately that nonduality provides the spiritual progressive with a serious alternative to fundamentalism on the one hand, and dry rationalism or vague spirituality on the other. Nonduality allows us to have our theological cake and pray to it too—and if progressive spirituality is ever to become more than an elite phenomenon, it has to take account of the reasons people are religious or spiritual in the first place. In America, prayer is one of those reasons.

As I have written before in *Tikkun*, nonduality may be understood in at least two ways. First, and traditionally, it proceeds from the theological tenet that God is infinite (*Ein Sof* in the Kabbalistic locution). Logically, if God is infinite, then every thing is God. "Do not look at a stone and say, 'that is a stone and not God,'" wrote the sixteenth-century rabbi Moses Cordovero, one of the greatest Kabbalists of all time, "for you have dualized—God forbid. Instead, know that the stone is a thing pervaded by Divinity."

Nonduality may also be understood from the bottom up (from our own experience), as well as from the top down (from the perspective of theology). The bottom-up inquiry proceeds not from a theological tenet but from a very close observation of our perceptions. Where, for example, is the "essence" (Platonic or otherwise) of the chair on which you are sitting? Take it apart mentally: is it in the wood? The legs? Its property of holding you up—which, if you inquire more closely, has nothing to do with the "chair" and everything to do with molecular properties, strong and weak nuclear forces, and all sorts of other things you and I do not understand? Really, "chair," and everything else, is an emergent property that usefully describes reality as we experience it, but doesn't really describe its actual truth. As Joseph Goldstein likes to say, it's like the Big Dipper—it

Jay Michaelson is the author of Everything is God: The Radical Path of Nondual Judaism, from which this article was adapted, and other books. He is also a columnist for the Forward, the Huffington Post, Zeek, and Reality Sandwich magazine, and director of Nehirim: GLBT Jewish Culture & Spirituality.



describes something about how things look from a particular perspective, but we all know there is no Big Dipper really, right?

It's possible, if the mind is quieted and slowed by meditation, to notice how thoughts pop in and out, how they are all conditioned by other things, and how the idea of the "self" in which all of us are so invested is, like the Big Dipper, just a useful label that describes how things seem from a particular perspective—not how they are. In actuality, to speak of chairs, selves, and other things as existing in their own right is useful but not entirely accurate.

But if there's no self, what is there?

That question is where pantheism and atheism shake hands, where nonduality in its specifically religious forms becomes quite interesting. God, we might say, is what is left when the self is subtracted from everything else. A Buddhist would say everything is an empty play of conditions: your decision whether or not to keep reading is due not to some homunculus inside your brain but to a myriad of causes, including genetics, what else you have to do today, how well I'm writing, learned behaviors, and so on. A nondual Jew or Christian uses the word "God" to refer to those conditions.

As these ideas have filtered beyond the elite into the mainstream, one regularly hears nondualistic language—talk of the God inside the soul, the God that fills and surrounds everything, and the need to overcome the false distinctions—in synagogues and churches around the country. Indeed, a kind of auditing of Jewish sacred text and liturgy has begun to weed out the dualistic language, replacing the second- or third-person God with the Wordsworthian "motion and spirit that impels all thinking things, and rolls through all things."

Yet this shift is not without its challenges, particularly in regard to prayer. Not just the language of prayer but its fundamental assumptions are rigorously personalistic and dualistic; it implies, and sometimes actually states, that "I" am here and you, God, are there, and that I am asking you to do things in the world. Jewish prayer assumes a relationship between God and the devotee, in which the latter speaks to God. Petitionary prayer even suggests, in a theologically problematic way, that God may or may not choose to exercise His/Her power in response to the petition. Yet even nonpetitionary prayer—thanksgiving and praise being the two other major Jewish types—seems to assume a gap between human and Divine, which prayer seeks to bridge through communication.

To be sure, there are ready nondualistic answers to the traditional theological problems of prayer. The first of these is to treat prayer as a contemplative or ecstatic meditation practice. In the contemplative mode, the words of prayer are meant not to address a distant deity, but to fill the mind with salutary reflections on beneficence and grace. Pre-prayer, I am thinking of my mortgage payments and to-do list. Post-prayer, when it works correctly, I am thinking of the miracle of my own digestion, my luck at being able to support myself, and the daily wonders of human life. Thus, prayer is less about whether God is listening than whether I am.

Prayer may also be an ecstatic practice, in which the letters and words of prayer, perhaps aided by song, vigorous movement, visualization, and heartrending devotion, become a technology for personal transformation. Here, the change is less from ignorant to grateful, than from ignorant of unity to knowing it—a "knowing" that is less an intellectual concept, as in the paragraphs above, than an Adam-knew-Eve, in-your-kishkes kind of knowing, the way you know the deepest truths, the way you know that you're seeing right now. Shifting the mind from looking at the details of life (and identifying with some of them) to becoming aware of its unity takes place, in ecstatic prayer, by burning away the self. It is this ecstasy, rather than the cooler practices of contemplative meditation, that is the primary spiritual practice of Hasidism. Even more than in contemplative prayer, however, whether God is listening is not the right question to ask, because God will appear if "you" drop out. The sentences of ecstatic prayer matter less than the words or even the letters, and the letters matter less than the excitation of the heart.

Understanding prayer as meditation, whether contemplative or ecstatic, does reconcile somewhat the theological contradiction of a nondual Godhead and dualistic prayer. It also has a long lineage in Jewish tradition—beginning with the very word for "pray," *hitpallel*, a reflexive verb that indicates that prayer is something one does to oneself. The oft-repeated notion that prayer is "the service of the heart" is actually a poor translation of *avodah sh'balev*, which really means "the service that is in the heart." In other words, prayer happens in the heart, not somewhere else. In fact, what's remarkable about Kabbalistic, philosophical, and other (continued on page 76)

Culture

BOOKS | FILM | MUSIC

[BOOKS]

Late Love

BLOOD HONEY
by Chana Bloch

Autumn House Press, 2009

Review by Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi

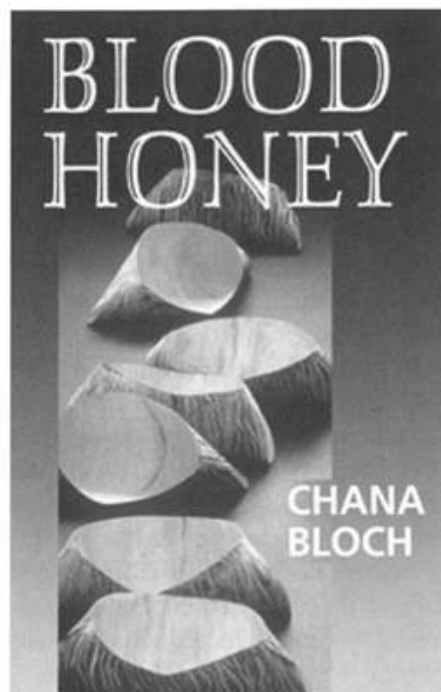
EVERYTHING WE EXPECT FROM the poet who tells our lives is here—and so much more. Documenting the decades, each of Chana Bloch's four volumes of poetry seems dedicated to another passage—the death of parents, the struggle with children, the breakdown of a spouse, and then of a marriage, and now, in our "Sixth Age" (if we should live so long and be so lucky) the grace and comedy of late love: "We were sitting on my sofa with his dead wife. / ... I was tired of the future already, and we hadn't / started yet. We hadn't even started." But wait! "Sex is a brisk new broom. Tough, efficient. / It knows all the corners. // And that's how, one autumn evening, we began / dropping this-and-that onto the drafty floor / —history with its pockets, ticket-stubs, torn seams, / husbands and wives ... Then that implacable broom swept us bare" ("The Naked Future").

Among the ticket stubs that get picked up and put back into deep pockets are—I hasten to add—old friends like me. In one form or another, Chana Bloch's voice has accompanied me along some of the major twists in my own road. But my impetus for writing comes not from my personal affection for the poet but from the poetic nature of our connection and the convergence of our two journeys at major crossroads on a trilingual Jewish map.

I met Chana Faerstein in Jerusalem in the 1960s. Although the language we were mastering was Hebrew and although Chana was to become an American poet, we met around a *tisch* at the home of the magnetic Yiddish writer, Leib Rochman. The walls of his house were covered with charcoal drawings of concentration camp figures by his adolescent daughter, who was to become the Hebrew poet and artist Rivka Miriam. But Leib's voice was warm and inviting, the atmosphere was joyous, and his eclectic community of American students searching for whatever-we-were-searching-for were inducted into the mysteries of Yiddish poetry and melodies that would haunt us for the rest of our lives.

Years passed and I lost track of Chana. Then one rainy day in the fall of 1989, while browsing through the library at Yaddo, where I had been granted a month's leave from my life, I came across a book of translations of Dahlia Ravikovitch's poems by someone named Chana Bloch. On a whim, I contacted the translator and asked if perchance she was aka Chana Faerstein. From that time on we have stayed in each other's sights, sharing a passion for Ravikovitch, for Yehuda Amichai, whom she translated with Stephen Mitchell and with Chana Kronfeld, and for the Song of Songs, which she and Ariel Bloch translated, annotated, and interpreted for contemporary readers. And all along, there was Chana Bloch's own voice, appearing in poems scattered throughout poetry journals and collected in *The Secrets of the Tribe* (1981), *The Past Keeps Changing* (1992), and *Mrs. Dumpty* (1998). And now she has given us *Blood Honey*.

The poems in these volumes are informed by an economy of texts and emotions. Like recombinant DNA, new couplings send jolts of surprise and



recognition that bind languages, continents, generations. In "Watching," an early poem from *The Secrets of the Tribe*, the poet addresses her dying father:

You and I used to talk about
Lear and his girls
(I read it in school,

you saw it on the Yiddish stage
where the audience yelled:
Don't believe them,

they're rotten) —
that Jewish father and his
suburban daughters.

Now I'm here with the rest,
smelling the silences,
watching you

disappear....

BLOOD HONEY

Apprehended and held without trial,
our friend was sentenced:
brain tumor, malignant.
Condemned each day to wake
and remember.

Overnight, a wall sprang up around him,
leaving the rest of us
outside.

Death passed over us this time.
We're still at large. We're free
to get out of bed, start the coffee,
open the blinds.
The first of the human freedoms.

If he's guilty
we must be guilty; we're all made of
the same cup of dust —

It's a blessing, isn't it? To be able,
days at a time,
to forget what we are.

*

These numbered days
have a concentrated sweetness
that's pressed from us,
the dying man most of all.

Today we eat brunch at Chester's,
poached egg on toast,
orange juice foaming in frosted glasses.

He remembers the summer he packed blood oranges,
stripped to the waist,
drinking the fresh-squeezed juice in the factory
straight from the tap.
He cups his left hand under his chin
as if to a faucet, laughing.

He is scooping sweetness from the belly of death
— honey from the lion's carcass.

We sit with our friend
and brood on the riddle he sets before us:
What is it, this blood honey?

*

A shadow is eating the sun.
It can blind you
but he's looking right at it,
he won't turn away.

Already his gaze is marked
by such hard looking,
though just now he asked,
plaintive as a child,
Why won't it go away?

Day after day breaks
and gives him
back to us
broken.

Soon the husk of his knowing
won't know even that.

*

A man lies alone in his body in a world
he can still desire.
Another slice of pie? he asks.

As long as he's hungry
he's still one of us.
Oh Lord, not yet.

He drums out a jazz beat on the bedrail
with his one good hand
when the words stumble.
See? he says. *I can trick the tumor.*

He can still taste and see.
The world is good.

He hauls himself up in bed,
squinting his one good eye at the kingdom
through a keyhole
that keeps getting smaller
and smaller.
It is good. It is very good.

in memory of Amichai Kronfeld

— Chana Bloch

Which of Lear's daughters is speaking these lines? After so many years of asking ourselves which daughter we would be, when we encounter the question on the interactive Yiddish stage or in hospital room echoes, it doesn't seem to matter anymore.

Watching one's father disappear hardly prepares us for our own disappearance or that of our peers, who are beginning to dissolve before our eyes, part by part—the "half-moon smile in a glass of water," the "hearing aid" down in "the ashtray" ("Salvage").

And even if "death passed over us this time," even if, after a dear friend's sentence of "*brain tumor, malignant*," "we're still at large," we know that "if he's guilty / we must be guilty." These lines come from "Blood Honey," which gives the book its title. The poem (see previous page) is dedicated to the memory of Amichai Kronfeld, whose life is encapsulated in five prosaic words at the end of the volume: "philosopher, jazz musician, peace activist." In the poem he is still and always alive, if barely, "scooping sweetness from the belly of death / —honey from the lion's carcass," holding on, like Samson after his haircut, to small memories and appetites: "He can still taste and see. / *The world is good*." "He drums out a jazz beat on the bedrail / with his one good hand / when the words stumble. / *See?* he says. *I can trick the tumor*."

Those stumbling words leave tracks throughout this volume, as the honey leaves its stickiness everywhere. In the battle between words and music, between language and color, between poetry and art, language seems always to lose. In "Wild Honey" the infant moves inexorably from color to language, his progress into *homo sapiens* a cosmic diminishment:

A puddle of sun on the wooden floor.
The infant crawls to it, licks it
dips a hand in and out,
letting the wild honey
trickle through his fingers.

Then that voice from on high—
Look at the pretty color!—
wipes up the glory with a rag of language.

Yet at "sixty o'clock," when aging reverses the process, dropping words "like cups and

saucers / from soapy hands," the "rag of language" is sorely missed. Like searching for one's glasses, "how will I see my way to anywhere / without my words? ... There must be words left / to go on searching for the ones I've lost." Still, words are "the poor man's colors" and the fickle mind that forgets words appreciates even more those dark colors as life gets pared down to its elemental shades and shapes:

Flash after flash across the horizon:
tourists trying to take the canyon
by night. They don't know
every last shot will turn out black.

It takes sixty years for Rothko
to make his way to the rim.
He goes there only after dark.
As he stands at the railing, his pupils open
like a camera shutter at the slowest speed.

He has to be patient. He has to lean
far over the railing to see
the colors of darkness.
Purple, numb brown, mud-red, mauve
—a treasury of bruises.
At first he can see only black-on-black.
"Something you don't want to look at," he says.

As he waits,
the waves of color vibrate in the canyon
like voices.

*Pilgrim, bring back something
from the brink
of nothing
to make us see.*

("The Grand Canyon")

Who has won? Rothko, clearly. The "colors of darkness" he has simulated paper over the failure of our cameras and our words. And yet. Who is the pilgrim who brings back "something" from the "brink of nothing"? Who indeed has helped us *into words* out of the speechless wonder we all feel in the presence of a Rothko square of color? "There's no way to change / without touching / the space at the center of everything," Bloch wrote in *The Past Keeps Changing*. Those lines seem as necessary to our own self-understanding, to our own speechless space at the center, as "nothing that is not there and the nothing that is" became after we first stumbled upon it in

graduate school. Stevens, Rothko, and our knowing entrails come together through the alchemy of Bloch's self-effacing and self-illuminating words. ■

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi is professor of comparative literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is author of Booking Passage and won a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2007 for her project on "Jerusalem and the Poetics of Return."

CHILDREN OF ISRAEL?

THE INVENTION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

by Shlomo Sand, translated by Yael Lotan

Verso, 2009

Review by Tzvi Marx

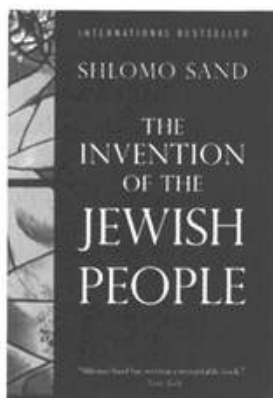
SHLOMO SAND'S *THE INVENTION* of the Jewish People is intended to debunk what Israeli historians and theologians have always known: "A Jew is a descendant of the nation that was exiled two thousand years ago."

Many of Israel's self-described "new historians" have set out to shake the structure of Israeli memory about how the State of Israel came into existence. Sand has a much broader goal: to question whether there was ever anything corresponding to the notion of "the Jewish people" before the nineteenth century. He argues that this concept was invented to justify the Zionist project to create a Jewish state in Palestine.

Sand seems to think that "should it become widely known that the settling Jewish masses [in Israel] were not the direct descendants of the 'Children of Israel'—such de-legitimization might lead to a broad challenge against the State of Israel's right to exist." According to Sand, the Jews are not a people, they have not been in exile, and they are therefore not "re-turning" to a land that is their patrimony. He asserts that the knowledge of the "actual" Jewish origins—origins he traces to mass conversions in Alexandria (in the pre-Christian era) and to the Khazar kingdom in the Caucasus (in the eighth and ninth centuries)—is silenced in Israeli historiography.

Jews, Sand believes, are the descendants of converts in Alexandria, of the Berbers of

North Africa, and of the Khazar kingdom of Eastern Europe. Zionists invented the myth of Jewish exile in order to justify the Jewish claim to Eretz Yisrael (the "Land of Israel") in the modern context of settling that "Land." It is this myth that sustains Israelis' claims to possession of the entirety of what the British called



Palestine, and thus becomes a major obstacle to peace with the Palestinians. Sand adopts the Hebrew University historian Israel Jacob Yuval's view that the renewed Jewish myth about the exile arose fairly late in Jewish history, as a response to the rise of a Christian mythology about the Jews being exiled in punishment for their rejection and crucifixion of Jesus. This mythology became embedded in the various non-Jewish definitions of the Jewish presence around the world.

Let us, for the sake of argument, concede the view that the Hebrew Bible is "full of imaginary tales" that are historically untrustworthy: these tales were imagined many years after the epochs in which they purportedly took place. And let us adopt the view of the Copenhagen/Sheffield school that the Bible is not a book but a grand library that was written, revised, and adapted over a long period of gestation, from the late sixth century BCE to the early second century CE, by authors seeking to create a "coherent religious community."

So what of it? Every nation has its own myths. This is how the group of Jews 2,500 years ago organized themselves around this myth: they construed themselves as a nation and not as a mere religious grouping. The Bible may not be "a reliable testimony to processes and events" in history, but it is surely an ethnic marker of how this group saw itself and organized its self-understanding. The Jews did not want to be a mere religious corporation like the Christian community of believers—the Jews wanted to be a people, a folk. Sand argues that the Jews wanted to be a group with a common imagined ethnic origin that was nevertheless open to those who primarily wanted to join the Jewish people as a nation and who would thus join the

religion second, as a byproduct of that national membership. In modern terms we call this naturalization; in religion we call it proselytism or conversion.

What is so instructive here—to get this point about Jewish self-understanding and self-perception—is that when someone wanted to become a member, he was

not asked what he believed, as would have been appropriate when joining a faith community, but rather, "What reason have you for desiring to become a proselyte; do you not know that [the people of] Israel at the present time are persecuted and oppressed, despised, harassed, and overcome by affliction?" And if he replied, "I know and yet am unworthy," he was "accepted forthwith, and ... given instruction in some of the minor and some of the major commandments" (Talmud Yebamot 47a).

While the Jewish nation was spread over the globe and mostly did not dwell in the land of Israel for most of its history of the last 2,500 years, Jews nevertheless saw themselves in all those diasporas as belonging to one nation—*am* in Hebrew—and not merely a religion. It is "not an act of self-commitment to Torah," as a religious conversion connotes in Christianity, "but an event of joining a community—the 'People of Israel,' according to Avi Sagi and Zvi Zohar of Bar Ilan University. Converting to Judaism 'had always been a matter of changing one's national identity,' Sagi and Zohar argue in their article 'Giyyur, Jewish Identity, and Modernization' (Modern Judaism, volume 15).

Sand invests much effort in claiming that the biblical sense of the family of terms including *le'om* and *umah* (nation) and *am* (people) has a different connotation than the modern one of nation. The ancient term "*am*" in the expression "*am Yisrael*"—people of Israel in the sense of nation—is a "very fluid term and difficult therefore to include in any meaningful discourse," he writes. The evidence that such terms were used in ancient mythical writings is therefore not proof of actual nationhood. Nevertheless, in the Jews' mythically constructed biblical tales, they conceived and spoke of

themselves in these very terms: "a holy nation [people], a kingdom of priests" (Exodus 19:6). In the myth of Rachel's twin birth, she is told that "two nations" (*goyim*) are wrestling within her womb, one of which is Jacob/Israel (Genesis 25:23). The same term "*goy*" is used by the prophet Isaiah to preach that "nation shall not raise sword against nation" (Isaiah 2:4). Strangely Sand does not mention that term in his review of the nomenclature.

It is easy to agree with Sand that in general "peoples, populations, native populaces, tribes, and religious communities are not nations, even though they are often spoken of as such." But why not also agree that sometimes when a group speaks of itself as a nation, the term can be valid if the group distinguishes itself with the essential signs of nationhood?

As early as 1861, John Stuart Mill, cited sympathetically by Sand, gives a good sense of this national glue that is relevant to the Jewish case:

A portion of mankind may be said to constitute a Nationality, if they are united among themselves by common sympathies, which do not exist between them and any others—which make them co-operate with each other more willingly than with other people, desire to be under the same government, and desire that it should be a government by themselves or a portion of themselves exclusively.

This seems to be eminently suitable to the Jewish case. Sand introduces very interesting historical information on the diasporas of Alexandria and of the Khazars—for this reason alone it is worth reading. Nevertheless his main thesis remains his own invention. ■

Y.U.-ordained Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Marx, author of Disability in Jewish Law (Routledge, 2002), is a publicist on Judaism in Holland and participates in interreligious activities internationally. He also edits Tenachon, a magazine on Jewish subjects.

PLUMBING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPTHS OF HUMANITY

THE MURMURING DEEP: REFLECTIONS ON THE
BIBLICAL UNCONSCIOUS

by Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg

Schocken Books, 2009

Review by David Shasha

BACK IN 1995, AVIVAH GOTTLIEB ZORNBERG'S first study of the Book of Genesis provided contemporary readers with a window into the often misunderstood genre of rabbinic midrash. The book, *The Beginning of Desire*, successfully fused traditional exegesis with postmodern ideas in a highly readable prose accessible to the average reader.

Now we are privileged to have *The Murmuring Deep*, another wonderful study from Zornberg on a number of biblical episodes from a midrashic (traditional rabbinic interpretive) perspective; this time her inquiry is organized under the rubric of psychological study.

The Murmuring Deep is set out in three parts: "Between God and Self"; "The Stranger Within"; and "Between Self and Other." These three sections enable the author to look at human reality from a number of different viewpoints. Enabling Jewish discourse to take part in the ongoing study of the human condition, each of the sections embraces the examination of the mind within the framework of the Divine revelation.

In the book's dense but deeply enlightening introduction, we read:

The community represented by God may be found, I suggest, precisely in the void between people. The abyss of otherness from which we reach out to translate and re-translate the world may be invisible, but it is not inaudible. Murmurings, whisperings, restless cracklings of life animate that space between us and within us. The other is other than me because he is other than himself.

In this luminous passage, we see Zornberg setting the table for her book. Her Bible readings maintain a deft and complex engagement with human reality seen in the light of the Divine. Her template is Religious Humanism: a liberal reading of our moral condition that cracks open the ancient texts by using the midrash as a heuristic device. She is not interested in critically examining the particular texts or asserting their historical provenance. She is intent on reading the texts in order to extract from them the meaning that is their primary significance.

Reclaiming the Relevance of Jewish Texts

BOTH OF ZORNBERG'S EARLIER WORKS, *The Beginning of Desire* and its 2002 companion volume, *The Particulars of Rapture*, were masterful readings of the books of Genesis and Exodus utilizing the midrashic framework. Not since the seminal studies of the great scholar Max Kadushin, whose name is barely known to non-specialists today, had we seen such a thorough attempt to make known the wisdom of rabbinic midrash to a general audience.

The Orthodox publisher ArtScroll has published many volumes of biblical and rabbinic texts that are used by Jews of all denominations. The classic ArtScroll style seeks to embed the midrashim into the very fabric of the literal meaning of the Bible. Using the fundamental scheme of Rashi, ArtScroll editors read the midrash literally as *peshat* (the surface meaning of the text). This modality will be familiar to those who have studied in an Orthodox Jewish Day School. Midrashic texts are often presented as the primary meaning of the Bible. When such midrashim strain credulity, the child is exhorted to see Jewish tradition in neo-magical terms.

After many years of having to deal with scholars who have drained Jewish texts of their meaning and relevance, we are now stuck with the deleterious ArtScroll-ization of Judaism. This literalization of the midrashim has subsequently led to a counter-tendency in the Jewish world.

Rather than digging deeper into the

midrashic tradition itself—midrash is a key rhetorical component in the rabbinic discourse—some "enlightened" Jews have thrown midrashim out like the baby with the proverbial bathwater.

Finding midrashic texts irrational and bordering on the unbelievable and the mythical, such Jews—echoing the beliefs of Protestant Christian tradition—seek a "pure" Bible without interpretive accretions. But—as the scholar Michael Fishbane has shown in his masterful study *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, using the idea that his teacher Nahum Sarna called "inner biblical exegesis"—the Bible itself is already a mediated document. There is no "original" Bible: it is a construct put together by the sages themselves who arranged the books of the Hebrew Bible as

we now have them in our Masoretic Text.

The new Jewish "Karaites"—an ancient but still existing Jewish movement that rejects rabbinic interpretation—sought to restore the nascent Protestantism of midrash hatred.

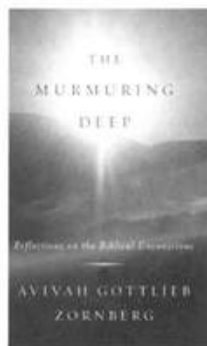
Zornberg's first two books formed a counterpoint to both ArtScroll hyperliteralism and the antirabbinic phobias of many Jewish intellectuals. Zornberg was able—outside the cozy and incestuous confines of academic Judaic studies—to bring Derrida, Barthes, and Lacan into dialogue with the Jewish tradition.

In Zornberg's brilliant new work, we have a heroic reconstruction of the rabbinic canon in ways that seek to make it relevant to contemporary readers, allowing them to use their education to incorporate Jewish texts into their actual lives.

There Is No Single Orthodox or Academic Truth

A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF ZORNBERG'S method can be found in *The Murmuring Deep's* chapter on the story of Joseph. I will cite three passages that display the book's methodology:

1. When, for instance, Joseph brings his sons, Ephraim and Menasseh, to his father for blessing, Jacob reacts with strange alienation: "Israel [Jacob] saw



Joseph's sons and asked 'Who are these?'" (Gen. 48:8). After seventeen years of living together in Egypt, he seems not to recognize his grandsons. Two verses later, his failing vision is offered as a possible explanation: "Israel's eyes were dim with age; he could not see." But if blindness is responsible for his question, the Torah should have *prefaced* the story by telling of his failing vision; instead it emphasizes that he *saw* Joseph's sons.

2. Rashi [one of the Ashkenazi rabbis most responsible for presenting the midrashic tradition in his own commentary] comments: He wished to bless them but the Divine Presence departed from him, because he saw that the wicked kings Jeroboam and Ahab would be descended from Ephraim, and Jehu and his sons from Menasseh (Tanchuma). "And he said, 'Who are these?'"—"Where do these come from who are unfit for blessing?"
3. Jacob experiences two things: a desire to bless his grandchildren and a mysterious blank, as God's presence suddenly withdraws. The reason for this loss of inspiration is given by Rashi: it is to be found in the future, in the wicked descendants of Ephraim and Menasseh. Something of those descendants is already implicit in his grandsons.

In section one, Zornberg presents the question that occasions the midrash: what is it that is "wrong" in the Biblical text?

For the Bible scholar there is the matter of authorship, transmission, and editing; for the midrashist there is an endless series of interpretive possibilities. In the ArtScroll world, the midrash's "answer" is definitive. But in a more careful reading of the midrashim we are able to see that they often elaborate on a point in multiple ways and frequently stand in opposition to one another.

To the Orthodox mind, such a possibility is not acknowledged, as there must ultimately be only one "correct" reading. But in Zornberg's mellifluous reconstruction of this tradition we come to learn that midrash is an exploration rather than a philosophy, a literary exercise rather than a fundamentalist epistemology.

The "question" of section one leads to a presentation in section two that would effectively answer it. Rashi argues that Jacob saw the children, but in the act of blessing them he "saw" something else in the future. Prophetically, Jacob saw that Ephraim and Menasseh would give birth to two of the most despicable kings in Jewish history. Therefore he hesitated giving them the blessing.

In section three Zornberg seeks to apply the meaning of this interpretation. History in this midrashic context is a complex dialectical process where one figure is seen in the light of future figures. History is understood as a human continuum where the character of the progenitor will be judged in light of his descendants.

This is a deeply complex unpacking of an opaque Biblical text. Where there was once confusion over Jacob's actions, the reader now has a more transparent understanding of the matter. In an Orthodox context, the midrashic interpretation becomes normative and serves to definitively shore up the loose ends of a puzzling text. For the scholars, the text is itself illegible and the midrash is mere sophistry that tells us nothing about the purview of the original document.

But in Zornberg's expert hands, the Bible is brought back to life. There are no certainties here, only the possibility of understanding the human condition in a deeper and more nuanced fashion. What the Orthodox Jew and the academic scholar have in common is the need to extract the *truth* from a text. But midrash, akin to post-modernism, seeks to multiply new and often contradictory meanings from a text. There is no one right way of seeing a text.

Why We Must Rewrite Our Stories

THE MURMURING DEEP RECORDS THE Abraham to Jacob cycle in its first two sections. Zornberg's reading of the Joseph saga is particularly striking as it brings to mind the uses to which the great novelist Thomas Mann put the tradition in his epochal but often forgotten novel *Joseph and His Brothers*. Joseph becomes the historical exemplar of the interpreter. Discussing the possibility of closure, of permanent endings and of final truths, Zornberg, citing Mann, states:

Here, precisely, is the problem with biblical closure. For Joseph, a character in the drama, to read so fully and unfailingly the meaning of his own narrative creates problems and tensions not only for his brothers, but for his readers as well. Thomas Mann puts it succinctly: "It is possible to be in a plot and not understand it." Joseph is in the troubling position of "always knowing far too well what was being played."

This is the hermeneutical model that marks the great significance of exegesis, and Zornberg expertly marks this narratology in socio-historical terms within a rabbinic framework. In her discussion of the exilic story of the Scroll of Esther, she allows us to see how interpretation gives human beings a way to live in a world without direct Divine messages:

In their comments on this moment of Esther's narrative, the Sages reflect on their own situation. Cut adrift from the biblical world of miracle, from the fictions of closure that redeem and organize time, Esther, as the last prophetess, must discover new meaning for prophecy. After her, the world of prophecy and miracles yields to the world of *chokhmah*, of wisdom, of hints and interpretations. Instead of the overwhelming revelations of Sinai—with its visual, perhaps blinding manifestations of God's presence—there is the world in which God and the human are separated and linked by a third force—by the text, the messenger, the transmission.

Zornberg's hermeneutics are in the end deeply reflexive, as in the following discussion relating to the Book of Ruth:

From this midrashic perspective, Ruth and Orpah represent these two modalities [narrative and closure]. Ruth has the capacity to generate a story. Precisely because of her vulnerability, her "outsider" status, as well as her mysterious desire to find her way in, she sets episodes in

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

THEOLOGY
& PRACTICE

CRITICAL. PUBLIC. CONCRETE.

Fellowships for
Ph.D. Studies

Fellows in Theology and Practice may pursue a Ph.D. in any area within theological and religious studies at Vanderbilt. Women, people from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, and people with experience in religious leadership are especially encouraged to apply.

To find out more, please contact Karen Eardley at (615) 343-3994 or theologyandpractice@vanderbilt.edu

www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/religion/te-p

motion. Lacking everything, she makes a decision to leave behind her the stability of family, nation, and religion, and to embark on a *narrative*: on a course that offers no visible fulfillment.

This is a brilliant encapsulation of the book's conceptual foundation and of the midrashic enterprise in general: Narratives allow us the ability to burrow into life and serve as a way to reflect on who we are as human beings.

Our stories, once constructed, are never truly finished—we are always writing and rewriting who we are and what we might become as people. It would be worthwhile here to recall the great comedian Danny Kaye's portrayal of Hans Christian Andersen in the 1952 film of the same name, where stories serve a therapeutic function for all those who hear them. The film establishes the resounding power of the tale and of the teller in human psychology. Gentle, generous, and kind-hearted, Andersen, like the sages, awakens the moral goodness and human compassion within all those who listen to his stories.

Zornberg's dazzling reading of the Book of Ruth brings *The Murmuring Deep* to a deeply satisfying caesura; after having explored feminist resonances in the tale of Rebecca, the author finds in the story of Ruth the capacity of human beings to adapt, to change, to transform themselves. In essence, that is the core of the book's teaching. It is what Zornberg calls "the murmuring deep."

How Do We Know Who We Are?

WE KNOW WHO WE ARE BY CONSTRUCTING new narratives, new readings of experience and of history—both the personal and the public.

Such knowledge is at the very foundation of the Jewish tradition and must not be obscured by the vain and arcane questions of the Orthodox and the scholars, both of whom seek a single, unwavering truth—the very "closure" that Zornberg inveighs against.

By opening up the midrashic traditions, Zornberg has given us the freedom to open up the book of our own psychological lives and to understand how the ancient

traditions illuminate who we are and what we can become.

Reading the story of the matriarch Rebecca, Zornberg opens the human mind to these new vistas of self-exploration. Parsing the meaning of the Hebrew phrase uttered in Genesis 25:22 by Rebecca—*Lamah zeh anokhi* (Why me?)—we see:

The message that Rebecca receives from God respects, in a similar way, the provisional nature of her *anokhi* [I am]. Her baffled questions had been addressed to the God who would respond in an evocative mode, without inundating her, without even referring to His Anokhi—as one inexpressible being speaking to another. Included in His address is Rebecca's unconscious life—as well as, perhaps, the relational unconscious that is created by God and human together. His words provoke further deepenings of the human mind, always elusive to itself, only partly known.

This form of analytical discourse expands the psychological frame of the biblical text in order to discover within it a deeper, richer, and ultimately more complex anatomy of who we are and what we may understand about ourselves.

In a startling explication of Ruth's relationship to Boaz, Zornberg explores a sexual dimension that is central to both the Bible and its rabbinic interpreters but is often lost in the false piety of Orthodox readings:

Naomi sends Ruth to the granary where Boaz lies during the night after the harvest, to uncover his feet and lie there. Ruth's preparations are to be those of a woman before sexual encounter: washing, scenting, dressing, and secrecy. Boaz's acts are precisely foreseen: he will eat and drink and lie down—and he will tell her what to do.

I cite this passage to show how distant Zornberg's discussion is from the cloistered Orthodox perspective. Her analysis is informed by a maturity that never degenerates into arcane scholarship. Rabbinic texts are deployed for their relevance to the theme of

psychological investigations. In *The Murmuring Deep*, Nahmanides brushes up against Sigmund Freud, Rashi against Julia Kristeva, the Hasidic masters with French theorists like Derrida, Laplanche, and Shoshana Felman. Sensitive literary readings engage masters like George Eliot, Franz Kafka, and Marcel Proust, bringing the rabbis into dialogue with some of the best-known purveyors of modern thought and classic literature.

Zornberg's method is a prime example of what I have called "Radical Traditionalism": it takes the Jewish heritage as its foundation and freely applies that tradition to cutting-edge contemporary approaches.

In the end, for Judaism to survive and thrive, it must engage the world. Competing Jewish groups ranging from Orthodoxy to academia have sought to cordon off Jewish tradition and place it in some hermetically sealed box, available only to experts and the already converted believers, inaccessible to the general reader, whose needs and concerns are seen as irrelevant.

Midrash provides a much-needed rhetorical structure through which we as human beings can come to terms with the vast complexity of experience and knowledge. In *The Murmuring Deep*, Avivah Zornberg expertly lays out the human condition in ways that will enrich Jews and non-Jews alike. In her masterful readings of the biblical episodes, she makes ample use of midrashic and kabbalistic traditions that have been wrongly occluded by a cadre of Jewish "experts" who have effectively blocked the way for the average reader.

If education is the very core value of Judaism, it is by reading books like *The Murmuring Deep* that we can fulfill the precept of Talmud Torah, Torah study. And by adumbrating the midrashic tradition, Avivah Zornberg has permitted us to witness the greatness of the Jewish sages, Hazal, in a freshly creative and intensely dynamic way. The path of such understanding is not simply to allow us to be more religious, but also to better assert our human ethicality and our place in this vast and complex universe. ■

David Shasha is the director of the Center for Sephardic Heritage in Brooklyn, New York. The center publishes an e-mail newsletter, Sephardic Heritage Update (groups.google.com/group/Davidshasha), and promotes cultural events.

HOW TO HEAL

BEYOND EVIDENCE-BASED PSYCHOTHERAPY

by George Rosenfeld

Routledge, 2008

Review by Robert L. Weisman

THE PSYCHOTHERAPY-CURIOUS and therapists at all levels of experience will appreciate a recently published treasure, George Rosenfeld's *Beyond Evidence-Based Psychotherapy: Fostering the Eight Sources of Change in Child and Adolescent Treatment*. The book describes therapeutic moments from individual treatment cases and offers overall conclusions the author has drawn from his 40,000 hours of psychotherapy sessions. Rosenfeld uses direct, plain English to explain what he does and relate his work to psychotherapy research and principles. In nontechnical language, he repairs souls. Experienced therapists will wish they had read this earlier in their careers and will particularly enjoy the brave descriptions of psychotherapy by a practitioner who frequently makes the interventions seem obvious or easy.

Descriptions of clinical work and its research-based rationales seem like they should be readily available, but in fact, this has not been a favored topic for publication. Rosenfeld's book represents a step forward in demystifying psychotherapy, because it has previously been quite difficult for practitioners who are outside of academia to be published by major professional publishers. Typically academics produce research that is harnessed by the nature of their methodology; to make their findings more reliable, they conduct tightly controlled research, which results in work that is less relevant to direct clinical practice. Often when practitioners do write about their treatment approaches, they describe treatments that can be idiosyncratic, are unsupported by research, and may not have general application. Rosenfeld has presented a clinically necessary integration of knowledge from research with knowledge from personal experience derived over a full career, an integration that the professional literature has generally avoided.

However, with the anticipated retirement of the huge wave of baby boomers struggling with Erikson's seventh stage of "Generativity versus Stagnation," we can expect this type of literature to flourish.

Fifty years ago it was shown that different psychotherapy approaches do not differ greatly in effectiveness. This realization that most forms of psychotherapy do about equally well is known as the "Dodo bird verdict," based on the Dodo bird's quote in *Alice in Wonderland* that "everybody has won so all shall have prizes." These research findings have led to the belief that the most powerful forces in treatment are not the unique aspects of the therapist's theoretical school or specific interventions (which actually account for less than 15 percent of the variance in the treatment outcome), but the factors that effective treatments have in common. The research indicates that 30 percent of outcome variance is accounted for by the therapeutic relationship; client characteristics and other extra-therapeutic elements contribute 40 percent of the outcome variance; and 15 percent is accounted for by placebo effects (the client's expectations). To recap, since different schools of psychotherapy are equally effective, their common factors probably account for most of their effectiveness.

Attention to these intriguing and disturbing findings has waxed and waned.

In adult psychotherapy there is increasingly a viewpoint that emphasizes the common factors in successful therapies—factors such as establishing a helping relationship, setting boundaries, instilling hope, and so on. These are necessary for positive results, whether or not a particular school of therapy emphasizes them. Therapy has frequently been a fractious endeavor, in part because therapists arguing over differences in method have not acknowledged that broader factors underlie various "methods." *Beyond Evidence-Based Psychotherapy* establishes a strong beginning for a common-factors outlook in the treatment of young adults and youth.

Within the health care field, there is an increasing interest in having factual, evidence-based information for choosing drugs and therapeutic treatments for particular clinical problems. "Evidence-based"

is a catchphrase of the moment, as well as a longtime aspiration. Whereas it can be relatively straightforward to design a trial for a newly proposed drug treatment, it is much more difficult to compare the suitability and effect of a variety of psychotherapeutic interventions for psychosocial problems. A lofty hope for psychotherapy is to be able to specify a treatment that can be clearly matched to person, personality, personal background, and current moment. This is *some* goal.

Rosenfeld's review of recent research concludes that aside from a strong finding that, overall, psychotherapy helps, more specific findings about the superiority of particular treatments of choice do not hold up well. For example, a re-examination of questionnaires used to support the superiority of cognitive-behavioral therapy for depression reveals that many have been constructed with language excessively favorable to cognitive-behavioral techniques. Furthermore, a day-to-day clinical practice presents patients with more severe and numerous problems than the healthier research subjects chosen to test the effectiveness of particular treatments. In examining another widely held belief, that the latest anti-depressant drugs effectively treat depression,

research actually suggests that placebo effects account for much of the client's improvement. Rosenfeld concludes that the generally assumed superiority of many therapies, medications, and psychotherapy techniques is not based on sound research, but is the result of political and economic forces.

Rosenfeld concludes that the psychotherapy research actually supports an integration of evidence-based treatments with a common-factors orientation. This challenges the trend of modern psychotherapy to idealize evidence-based treatments, which are predominantly cognitive-behavioral because of the ease with which they adapt to the research paradigm. This integration of two of the major theoretical approaches in psychotherapy characterizes healing as a process that is energized by the needs, strengths, and beliefs of the client and conducted within the context of the client's social, economic, and cultural networks. This approach respects the healing power of client characteristics and the client's social and cultural context, which have been marginalized in the evidence-based movement. Healing can depend on the client's capacities and motivation, as well as the skill of the therapist to engage

the client and his or her networks into a healing relationship, which research indicates is often based on mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual hope, and the client's theory of change. Rather than relying on the therapist's theory of change and the over-reliance on techniques supplied by the therapist, the core of healing is described as a unique journey in which a successful outcome lies in fostering at least one of the eight sources of change. There is not one treatment road. Therapy can be client directed, mutually constructed, or therapist directed. The therapeutic relationship or an evidence-based treatment can be sufficient or irrelevant in this process. Rosenfeld describes the process as akin to inventing a treatment or several treatments for each client. This model contrasts with the present medical model, in which contemporary political and economic forces have defined healing as a therapist-directed process in which treatment is supplied to an ideally compliant patient stripped of his or her uniqueness. ■

Robert Weisman practiced almost thirty years as a clinical psychologist in Northern California, primarily with UC Davis and Kaiser Permanente. From Adelphi University, his degree is Ph.D. in clinical psychology (1973).



CARING FOR OTHERS. MAKING A LIVING.

YOUR RIGHT LIVELIHOOD.

The world asks, Naropa University answers with a Master of Divinity degree that deepens your connection between inner wisdom and compassionate action. Discover your path as a pastoral counselor or chaplain in hospitals, hospices, prisons, the military and human resource departments. A Buddhist-based and multi-religious approach that readies you to take your work out into the world.

Because the more prepared you are, the more people you can help.

Naropa
UNIVERSITY

naropa.edu/tikkun 800.772.6951

POLITICAL PICTURES

THE INFORMANT! Warner Brothers, 2009

DISTRICT 9, TriStar Pictures, 2009

Review by David Sterritt

BEFORE GETTING TO A PAIR OF top-notch pictures that everyone should see—*The Informant!* and *District 9*—I want to return briefly to the fuss I recently made about Kathryn Bigelow's movie *The Hurt Locker*, which brilliantly depicts the moment-to-moment realities of the Iraq war without showing any interest in the politics *behind* the war. What bothered me was the yawning gap between the movie's excellence as cinema and its deficiency as history and commentary—a gap that takes on dismaying importance in a film about the most perfidious and disastrous geopolitical event so far this century. It wouldn't have been difficult for Bigelow and screenwriter Mark Boal to inject a few sequences where, say, soldiers candidly discuss the war or transmit their views to friends, relatives, or veterans groups back home. This would have added to the picture's realism, since soldiers naturally talk about such things. Without that dimension, the film is an exciting war drama but a sadly missed opportunity.

I bring this up again because some cynics take movies like *The Hurt Locker* as evidence that Hollywood is downright phobic about political issues. That idea would drive me out of the reviewing business if it were true, because we'd be stuck forever in the self-renewing loop of an apolitical society producing apolitical movies that influence the apolitical society that produces more apolitical movies ... and on and on. But popular films can be smart and political when they want to be, and lately they've wanted that on more than one occasion.

I'm particularly pleased with *The Informant!* because its director, Steven Soderbergh, disappointed me last year by falling short of the enormous potential he was presented with in *Che*, his two-part Che Guevara biopic. Although he doesn't always let it show, Soderbergh has canny political instincts—his 2000 pictures *Traffic* and

Erin Brockovich are good examples—and in *The Informant!* he parleys them into a funny and ingenious tale that's fact-based and intelligent to boot.

The Informant! is a tricky movie to discuss, however, because if you know its plot twists in advance (there are about a thousand of them) you'll miss the fun of being taken repeatedly by surprise. So don't worry, I won't be too much of an informant. Suffice it to say that Matt Damon plays a wheeler-dealer named Mark Whitacre who's climbing cheerfully up the ladder at Archer Daniels Midland, the giant agribusiness corporation. One day he approaches his boss with the information that there's a mole in their midst sabotaging part of their operation while feeding information to one of their competitors. Asked how he learned about this, Mark names an overseas contact who wants to blackmail the firm. Mark's boss alerts the FBI and an earnest-looking agent visits Mark's home to set up security measures before the extortionist calls again.

That's as much as I can say without giving away too much, even though we're only a few minutes into the film. I will add, though, that the cast is excellent: Damon gets steadily better as the years go by; Scott Bakula gives a flawless minimalist performance as the main FBI agent; Melanie Lynskey is perfect as Mark's perfect wife; and everyone else is splendid. Cinematically, the movie is crystal-clear vernacular filmmaking—there's not one showy or pretentious shot—and Soderbergh has savvy insights into how corrupt power brokers feed off one another's failings. Iraq isn't mentioned in *The Informant!* and there's no special reason why it should be, but the film's ultimate villain reminds me of the Iraqi defector code-named Curveball, who snookered the CIA by saying exactly what the self-serving agency wanted to hear. Soderbergh nails that dynamic harrowingly and hilariously, blowing his own whistle on capitalist greed, corporate price fixing, and the way all the stuff we eat nowadays seems to be made out of bioengineered corn. This is tragedy as farce, and a movie that's hard to forget.

Looking at the posters and publicity for *District 9*, I expected it to be a standard science-fiction epic, devoted more to

eye-dazzling action and eardrum-piercing noise than to old-fashioned values like psychology, intelligence, and atmosphere. I've run out of patience with movies so drenched in computerized effects that you wonder if any of this stuff actually *happened*, even on a Hollywood soundstage, or if an army of techies conjured up the whole spectacle with digitized gizmos. But this time the joke was on me. *District 9* has genuinely progressive things to say about injustice, inequality, and the spiritual escapism that allows majority populations to engage in the pursuit of happiness without addressing social evils that fester all around.

The story begins when a massive spaceship arrives over Johannesburg, South Africa, hovering in the air for months with no apparent purpose. Flying up to investigate, a human crew finds it crammed with malnourished aliens who can't get back home because their propulsion system has conked out. In typical earthling fashion, designated authorities rescue the aliens from their ship and give them living space in specially set-aside areas—which soon become ghettos, and then degenerate into slums, and then get condemned for destruction because they're so disheartening for humans to behold. In a nicely offbeat touch, the movie's main character is the bureaucrat in charge of getting the aliens off the public radar screen. He's an unsympathetic antihero, but he's definitely worth studying, since the likes of him have been at work for decades in South Africa, the Gaza Strip, the prison cells at Guantánamo and Bagram, and more other places than there's room to mention here.

District 9 was directed and co-written by South African filmmaker Neill Blomkamp, who skillfully mixes sci-fi adventure with racial allegory, mounting an all-out-attack on the oppression, repression, and inhumanity imposed on defenseless minorities around the world. The picture delivers plenty of roller-coaster action for fans of the genre, but it's the message that counts, and to Blomkamp's credit, that message is impossible to miss. ■

David Sterritt, Tikkun's film critic, is chairman of the National Society of Film Critics and professor emeritus at Long Island University. He was film critic of The Christian Science Monitor for decades. His latest books are Guiltless Pleasures and The B List.

THE LONG PATH OUT OF DENIAL

(continued from page 28)

Is It Possible to Hold Two Opposing Narratives at the Same Time?

THIS IS NOT AN EASY WORLD TO INHABIT. I understand why many readers are inclined to stick to the narrative of their side, without struggling to line up the arguments or move flexibly when reasoning from side to side. I certainly was not capable of this grace. Whenever the fuss died down, the dispute about colonialism left me sympathetic to the Zionist narrative. I tried, I tried again; I could not break away from this loyalty to my own side. What was the point of borrowing for Jewish-Arab relations a name that defined the behavior of powerful nations toward an exploited, indigenous people? I hated this argument. I hated this debate. No matter how many times I hurled myself back to the Palestinian side, the Jew in me always had the last word. I was far too biased to have the right to an opinion.

Did I believe Edward Said's assertion that since 1967 Palestinian leaders had been "jailed and deported by the Israeli occupation regime"? Yes, I did. That small businesses and farms had been "made unviable by confiscation and sheer destruction, students prevented from studying, universities closed"? I knew that. And I knew too what Said wrote in his book *From Oslo to Iraq and the Road Map*: "In the mid-1980s Palestinian universities on the West Bank were closed for four years";

no "Palestinian farmer or business [could] export to any Arab country directly"; and taxes were paid to Israel—collected by Yasir Arafat and his Palestinian Authority but delivered to Israel.

But I could not, or I would not, stand for any association of the Jewish homeland with colonialism. Because it made us, an abused and persecuted people, far more powerful than we had been? Because it erased our struggle for survival? Because it was a war over words conducted by people who did not engage in the struggle on the ground, to make up for their failure to be engaged? This charge could not be brought against the PLO in its effort to emulate the Algerians in evicting French settlers. But it was, inevitably, a charge I could bring against myself, against Palestinian and Israeli historians and intellectuals, and against all readers of books and anyone who tried to reason and think. Now the two sides got going with equal force in an effort to shame each other, cast aspersions, pronounce suspicions, back and forth, each side attacked and attacking, as the argument retreated further from relevance.

And then suddenly it would become relevant again. I recalled Israeli historians who, after the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, had used the word "colonialism" to describe their country's relationship to the Palestinians. At first, this seemed a concession to the long-standing Palestinian charge, and I fought against it. But then this idea would edge its

way toward a possibility even more disturbing. Colonialism, for all its evils, has had to hold its colonized people in sufficiently tolerable conditions to be able to exploit them. But was that what was happening in the territories? Did we even have a word to characterize the behavior of a conquering power that wants to rid itself of a conquered people without either transferring or openly destroying them—by making their lives so intolerable they will be driven out? Or be forced against their will to choose to leave?

A Chanukah Reflection

Nes Gadol Haya Sham. A Great Miracle Happened There. The words we repeat when we play dreidel on Chanukah. Each player spins the top; depending on how it falls, we get one nut or all the nuts or half of them, or we have to put some back into the pile. Whoever has collected the most nuts by the end of the game is free to squirrel them away or share them with the other players. Some say this game was invented to teach Jewish children the Hebrew alphabet when learning Hebrew was forbidden by the Romans. My learning of the Hebrew and Yiddish alphabet began with the dreidel.

Nes Gadol Haya Sham. Familiar and beloved words.

One day the words underwent a spontaneous, shocking transformation. *Nakba Gadol Haya Sham. A Great Catastrophe Happened There.* Could one say such a thing? Would grammar allow this intermixing of languages, this unexpected verbal miscegenation between Hebrew and Arabic? Here suddenly two incompatible ideas from two radically opposed people were yoked together, a ferocious wordplay, a gift from the unconscious.

What is the space between a catastrophe and a miracle? In this case it spans more than two thousand years between the revolt of the Maccabees and us. A revolt by an indigenous people, against the Greek-Seleucid dynasty that was depriving them of self-rule (in 175 BCE). The space shrinks. Is it in similar terms that the Palestinians view their struggle against Israel? To the Seleucids the Jews must have seemed a stiff-necked, stubborn people from an inferior civilization who

LEFT: AP PHOTO; JEROME DELAY. RIGHT: CREATIVE COMMONS; WOJCIECH KOZMINSKI; STATTLER



Conflicting Narratives—Freedom Fighters

Left: Palestinian youth engage Israeli forces from behind a makeshift barricade on the outskirts of the West Bank town of Ramallah on October 3, 2000. Right: Wojciech Stattler's "Machabeusze" ("The Maccabees"), 1844.

would not settle down and let themselves be governed. I've heard more than a few Israeli voices speak of the Palestinians in similar and far more derogatory terms.

An analogy presents itself through a slip of the tongue. How far can this analogy be taken? Judah and his brothers, avoiding direct encounters with the Seleucid army, became guerilla fighters. Did Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, the Seleucid ruler, think of them the way we think of armed Palestinian fighters?

I do not like these thoughts. I'd rather not think them; I am pushing them away almost as fast as they press in. Judah Maccabee, without question a great Jewish hero. In honor of him and his brothers we celebrate Chanukah with its miracle of light. He is ours, he fought in our name, he defeated a superior armed force that kept us from living according to our traditions. Is it such a stretch to imagine the Palestinian people might feel the same way about their struggle and their heroes?

Yes, it is a big stretch, an enormous stretch. It has been driving me to see things as another people might see them, and this is not comfortable. Perhaps the mistake I'd been making all these years was in the effort to determine a simple truth, a single truth, a set of facts that stayed settled as facts no matter who looked at them? A Palestinian village has been destroyed. Is it the same event if it happened as a hazard of war in protection of a young homeland? Or a vastly different event if it was done with the intention to eliminate an indigenous people from their native land? Is there a way to find some middle ground, to listen to both sides without coming to a conclusion about who was right? But here I encounter an ethical problem. The suffering of my own people is widely acknowledged; it has gained a worldwide recognition while the suffering of the Palestinians has been neglected for decades. In an effort to be fair I would have to raise up what has gone missing to give it adequate representation. What exactly has gone missing? A reviewer in the *New York Review of Books*, writing in 1974, twenty-five years after the state of Israel had been declared, twenty-five years after the Palestinian refugee problem had been created, described his visit to the Israeli Knesset.

He was "amazed to hear the members of parliament discuss the question of whether or not the Palestinian problem existed." When he challenged Shulamit Aloni, a government minister elected on a civil rights platform, about this, she told him what a great step forward it was for the Knesset simply to be debating the Palestinian problem. A debate of this kind had not been held since the time of Ben-Gurion. "It seemed to me ridiculous that it took Israelis twenty-five years and four wars to recognize the existence of a Palestinian problem," wrote the reviewer, Sana Hassan. "But then it took twenty-five years and four wars for the Arabs to come around to recognizing the existence of the state of Israel. Were I an Israeli, Arab deliberations over recognizing Israel would no doubt have seemed equally absurd."

Equally absurd but not exactly the same. The recognition of a state implies a recognition of its legitimacy. The recognition of a people simply acknowledges that you know it exists. If I were a Palestinian, I would not have been happy about a young woman going to live on a Kibbutz in 1971 with no awareness that there was a Palestinian people, or a problem.

Nes Gadol Haya Sham. Nakba Gadol Haya Sham.

At a Chanukah celebration I was spinning the dreidel with a group of kids, explaining to them the meaning of Chanukah and the Hebrew letters on the dreidel. I had to keep a close eye on myself. I didn't want any slips of the tongue to interfere with my lesson. But on the other hand, why not? Was it too early to let these children know that another people was fighting for its liberation the way our people had fought? To tell them this other people saw their protest as a liberation struggle and that their struggle was against us?

Wasn't Chanukah the perfect time to introduce this lesson? Plates of latkes were arriving from the kitchen, one of the younger kids wanted to light all the candles on the menorah, our hostess was telling about the miracle of lamps that had burned without oil for eight days and nights during the Maccabees' struggle. This was a celebration, and I was still uneasy with my own thoughts. I had trouble

staying present in our gathering. I was searching for a way to think and speak and write about these things without judgment, from a sense of compassion equally deserved by both peoples. When I achieved this, there would be time enough to share my thoughts. It was 1982; Israel had just invaded Lebanon in a war of choice. The kibbutz where I had lived so many years ago was on the Lebanese border. This effort to position myself fairly between the opposing sides was the most difficult conceptual task I had ever undertaken. Next morning I went home and started gathering up my books on Zionism, Palestine, Israel, the Middle East. They were numerous; they had spread out into different rooms. I put them in piles on the floor and sat down with them. This was the right approach.

Yosef Nahmani, director of the Jewish National Fund office in eastern Galilee between 1935 and 1965, recorded in his diary (November 6, 1948) this briefing from Israel's Minority Affairs Ministry. Members of the ministry were discussing "the cruel acts of our soldiers" in 1948:

In Safat, after ... the inhabitants had raised a white flag, the [soldiers] collected and separated the men and women, tied the hands of fifty-six *fellahin* [peasants] and shot and killed them and buried them in a pit. Also, they raped several women ... in Saliha ... they had killed about sixty-seven men and women. At Eilabun and Farradiya the soldiers had been greeted with white flags and rich food, and afterwards had ordered the villagers to leave, with their women and children. When the [villagers] had begun to argue ... [the soldiers] had opened fire and after some thirty people were killed, had begun to lead the rest [toward Lebanon] ... Where did they come by such a measure of cruelty, like Nazis? ... Is there no more humane way of expelling the inhabitants than such methods?

An Israeli minority affairs minister has compared the soldiers of the IDF to Nazis. Can I answer him by talking

about identification with the aggressor? The concept has always troubled me for the way it contains a measure of justification. Its explanation rests on the knowledge of prior victimization undergone by the current perpetrator. Behind his violence we are invited to remember the atrocities he has undergone. Surely the minister is not saying that the soldiers of the IDF were Nazis. No identity has been established; it is the cruelty of both groups that is being compared. Bad enough. The whole thing sets my teeth on edge. I am writing my thoughts as fast as I think them and they keep trying to get away. I'm not sure why the government official is called a minister of minority affairs; during the time he occupied his office it was the Jews, not the Arabs, who were in the minority. This is of course one of the number of disputes that erupt throughout the discussion. (How many villages, how many refugees, how many soldiers killed in the first months of the war? How many children beaten with sticks, how many Jews slain during the Arab Revolt?) In *The Case for Israel*, Alan Dershowitz speaks of the number of Jews and Arabs within the area the UN had assigned to Palestine. He eliminates from the population tally of Palestine the Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza and "what is now Jordan." Were there really more of them than there were of us? Not according to this way of doing the numbers.

Here we can see at work the way I use numbers to distract myself from what is really at stake. I am trying to entertain the idea of a comparison to the cruelty of Nazis. It is an effort of will to bring my mind back, to make myself ask the relevant questions. What accounts for this cruelty in a Jewish soldier? The government official who asks might have answered his own question.

Men come to acts of cruelty and brutality of this kind because they have learned to see their neighbors with contempt. It begins with a sense of superiority derived from birth and origins. The other is lesser, insignificant, uncivilized, not entitled to the rights we claim for ourselves. We despise these dark(er)-skinned neighbors not just in warfare, but daily, as we go about our lives. "It would have been better,

perhaps, if there were no Arab students. If they remained hewers of wood it would perhaps be easier to rule over them." This, from a Jewish man (see David Gilmour's *Dispossessed*).

A camp commander, quoted by Dov Yermiya in *My War Diary*, is speaking through a loudspeaker to his Palestinian captives: "You are a people of monkeys. You are terrorists and we will break you. You want a state? Build it on the moon. Whoever causes trouble here, will be shot." These men have not been tried or condemned. It's impossible to know if they are terrorists, but we know that they are not monkeys.

An Israeli officer of the military government in the West Bank drives up to a government building, blowing his horn and shouting at a guard. In *Strangers in the House*, Raja Shehadeh, a Palestinian lawyer, writer, and human rights activist, describes the following scene:

"How often must I tell you that I don't want anyone in the driveway? Let them stand on the side. It is not a parade here."

The officer's eye fell on a young well-built man leaning on a tree, smoking a cigarette. He didn't like his open and bold expression. "What are you standing there for?" he asked.

"I'm waiting to collect my ID," the man said without removing his cigarette.

"Take away your cigarette when you speak to me. What's your name?"

"Mahdi Hammad."

"I will remember your name and we'll see if you get your card today. You must learn manners first."

You must learn manners first? To whom does he think he's speaking? An insubordinate, a prisoner, a child, an animal in training? Mahdi Hammad is standing in line to comply with Israeli military orders. Because he is smoking a cigarette

he won't be able to get his ID. Not today, perhaps not tomorrow? Without his ID he can't get work; he can't pass through the Israeli checkpoints. Is this roughness and brutality the inevitable fate of an occupying army? I wish I could say yes and leave it at that. But the problem goes further back.

Shortly after the founding of Israel, at a state meeting, an Israeli minister speaks about Arabs. The minister's treatment of the Arab refugees is so shocking to a visiting British member of parliament that the discussion has been set down and can be found in the parliamentary record:

"Doctor Hachohen, I am profoundly shocked that you should speak of other human beings in terms similar to those in which Julius Streicher spoke of the Jews. Have you learned nothing?" I shall remember his reply to my dying day. He smote the table with both hands and said, "But they are not human beings, they are not people, they are Arabs." He was speaking of the Arab refugees.

It must weigh heavily on a Jewish reader to discover that this is not an isolated incident. In "The Jews' Jews," a 1993 article from the *New York Review of Books*, Amos Elon reports that "according to one of his biographers, David Ben-Gurion refused to accept his new Israeli ID card because it was printed also in Arabic—one of Israel's two official languages ... Golda Meir said ... whenever she heard an Arab member of the Knesset swear allegiance to the state she felt 'sick.'"

What is the unthinkable thought trying to make its way through? It slips and twists, it tries to get away, the usual tactics. This passage from Amos Elon's book *The Israelis: Founders and Sons* snags and holds on tight: "The tragic irony is deepened by a fatal parallel. There is a symmetry between the Israelis' traumatic memory of holocaust and the neurosis of shame and anger, humiliation and white rage, that has been generated among Arabs by Israel's recurrent successes."

I found this brave and daring when I came across it many years ago. Today, in

pursuit of what I dare not think, I am invited (as Amos Elon has been in later writing) to take it further. The “fatal parallel” that makes of the Palestinians what we once were has not arisen from Israel’s successes. It is our brutality that has brought it about. Catch this thought: *If we become like them, the people who wanted to exterminate us, to the degree that we become like them they have succeeded in destroying us.*

Why is the Israeli soldier kicking his Arab prisoner in the face? His prisoner is sitting on the ground, his hands tied behind him. Over and over again in the face. “His nose and face are covered in blood while the soldier continues to strike him,” Dov Yermiya writes in *My War Diary*. OK, yes: perhaps the thousands of years during which our people has endured persecution can help account for the way we have become brutal toward another people. Or perhaps the soldier cannot manage to see his prisoner as a suffering human being because he has been taught since childhood to see him as an animal. Daily, since childhood, he has been encouraged to see the Palestinians as thieves, snakes, cockroaches, and grasshoppers. Colloquial Hebrew, filled “with expressions reflecting the prevailing prejudice” reflects this alienation, Amos Elon writes. “‘Arab’ is synonymous with meanness, bad workmanship, and bad taste, as in ‘Don’t be an Arab,’ ‘Arab work,’ and ‘Arab taste.’”

I don’t want to believe that Jewish people think or talk like this, but the evidence is right here. And here too are my notes, written by me but almost illegible. I seem determined to hide from anyone else, and perhaps also from myself, what I have learned. My books have been stacked up, taken down, reassembled—as if the right arrangement could segregate the worst of what I am forced to know. And now, grabbing a book at random, opening it to a marked page, I find this: the messages sent to IDF soldiers by children born and raised in the settlements. The book is Raja Shehadeh’s *When the Birds Stopped Singing*. One child asks the soldiers “to kill as many Arabs as possible.” Another says: “For me, kill at least ten.” One child goes further: “Ignore the laws and spray them.” Their teacher thinks these are examples of “healthy hatred.”

Can I imagine, under any circumstances, wanting my Jewish daughter to have written a letter like this? ■

BEYOND CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

(continued from page 20)

and reinforcing. And one of its core components, in contrast to the domination system, is equality between the male and female halves of humanity. So women can, and do, occupy the highest political offices in the Nordic world. And this higher status of Nordic women has had important consequences for the values that guide Nordic policies.

In domination-oriented systems, men are socialized to distance themselves from women and anything stereotypically considered feminine. But in partnership-oriented cultures, men can give more value to caring, caregiving, nonviolence, and other traits and activities deemed inappropriate for men in dominator societies because they’re associated with “inferior” femininity. So, along with the higher status of Nordic women, many men and women back more caring policies—policies that give value and visibility to the work of caring for people and nature.

With the ascendancy of neoliberalism and the globalization of unregulated capitalism, over the last decades of the twentieth century Nordic nations too began to move somewhat toward more privatization. Nonetheless, they have been able to maintain most of their caring policies and hence their high rankings in international surveys of quality of life—ranging from infant mortality rates (where the United States by contrast fell behind every industrialized nation and even behind poor ones like Cuba) to human rights and environmental ratings.

The basic reason is that these nations continue their massive investment of resources in caring for people and nature. Indeed, these nations contribute a larger percentage of their gross domestic product than other developed nations to caring international programs: programs working for fair economic development, environmental protection, and human rights.

Making the Invisible Visible

ALL THIS TAKES US BACK TO WHERE WE started: the need to restructure economic systems in ways that go beyond the old capitalism vs. socialism debate. To

effectively address our growing economic, social, and environmental problems, we need a new economics. We need a system that leaves behind the dominator elements of capitalism and socialism, preserves their partnership elements, and is governed by economic structures, policies, and practices that give visibility and real value to caring for ourselves, others, and our Mother Earth.

A first step is recognizing that the exclusion of caring and caregiving from mainstream economic theory and practice has caused enormous, and unnecessary, human suffering. Indeed, the systemic devaluation of the activities that contribute the most to human welfare and development lies behind a kind of economic insanity that is reflected in, and perpetuated by, conventional indicators of productivity such as GDP (gross domestic product) and GNP (gross national product).

These measures of “economic health” actually place activities that *harm* life (like selling cigarettes) and the profits derived from those activities (like the medical and funeral costs that result from smoking-related illnesses and deaths) on the plus side. Yet they give absolutely no value to the life-sustaining activities of both the household economy and the natural economy. So an old stand of trees is included in GDP only when it’s cut down—whereas the fact that we need trees to breathe is ignored. Similarly, the caring and caregiving work performed in households is given no value whatsoever, and economists speak of parents who do not hold outside jobs as “economically inactive”—even though they often work from dawn to late at night.

Some people will say that this household work—without which there would be no workforce—cannot be quantified. But the reality is that it is already being quantified. Thanks to the activism of women’s organizations worldwide, many nations now have “satellite” accounts that quantify the value of the work of caring for people and keeping healthy home environments that has traditionally been considered “women’s work.” For instance, a Swiss government report shows that if the unpaid “caring” household work were included, it would make up 70 percent of the reported Swiss GDP! Yet none of this information is found in conventional economic treatises—be they

capitalist or socialist.

The devaluation of this work is further reflected in the fact that, in the market economy, professions that involve caregiving are paid far less than those that do not.

So in the United States, people think nothing of paying plumbers, the people to whom we entrust our pipes, \$50 to \$100 per hour. But child care workers, the people to whom we entrust our children, according to the U.S. Department of Labor are paid an average of \$10 an hour, with no benefits. And we demand that plumbers have some training, but not that all child care workers have training.

This is not logical. It's pathological. But to understand, and change, this distorted system of values—and to effectively address seemingly intractable problems such as poverty and hunger—we again have to look at matters that are only visible once we recognize the configurations of the partnership system and the domination system.

Economic Policy, Poverty, and the Hidden System of Gendered Values

MANY PEOPLE, INCLUDING POLITICIANS, think it's OK to have big government deficits to fund prisons, weapons, and wars—all stereotypically associated with men and "real masculinity." But when it comes to funding caring for people—for child care, health care, early childhood education, and other such expenditures—they say there's not enough money.

If we look back just a few hundred years, we see this devaluation of the "feminine" in stark relief. At that time, Western culture still looked like some of the most repressive societies do today. The norm was an authoritarian structure in both the family and the state. Wars and religious persecutions were chronic. And women and anything associated with them were so devalued that some theologians seriously doubted that women have immortal souls.

There has obviously, since then, been movement toward the partnership system—albeit against enormous resistance and periodic regressions. But the gendered system of valuations we inherited is still extremely resistant to change—so much so that when men embrace traits considered "soft" or "feminine" they are tarred with derisive terms such as "effeminate" and "sissy."

Another symptom of this devaluation of women and anything associated with them is that discrimination against the female half of humanity is still generally seen as "just a women's issue"—to be addressed after more important problems are solved.

So while politicians often say their goal is ending, or at least decreasing, poverty and hunger, they hardly ever mention a staggering statistic: women represent 70 percent of those in our world who live in absolute poverty, which means starvation or near starvation. Also ignored in conventional discussions of poverty is that globally, women earn an average of two-thirds to three-fourths as much as men for the same work in the market economy and that most of the work women do in families—including child care, health and elder care, housekeeping, cooking, collecting firewood, drawing and carrying water, and subsistence farming—is not remunerated.

This is by no means to say that only women suffer economically from our domination heritage. Men also suffer, and this is particularly true of the men at the bottom of the domination pyramid. Yet women are still the most oppressed, the "slaves of the slaves," as John Lennon wrote.

Even in the rich United States, woman-headed families are the lowest tier of the economic hierarchy. In addition, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the poverty rate of women over sixty-five is almost twice that of men over sixty-five.

The fact that worldwide poverty and hunger disproportionately affect women is neither accidental nor inevitable. It is the direct result of political and economic systems that still have a strong dominator stamp. For example, the fact that older women are so much more likely to live in poverty than older men, even in an affluent nation like the United States, is not only due to wage discrimination in the market economy; it is also largely due to the fact that these women are, or were for much of their lives, caregivers—and this work is neither paid nor later rewarded through social security or pensions.

Again, this is not to say that economic inequities based on gender are more important than those based on class, race, or other factors. These inequalities are all inherent in domination systems. But a basic

template for the division of humanity into "superiors" and "inferiors" that children in dominator families internalize early on is a male-superior/female-inferior model of our species. And this template can then be applied to ranking race over race, religion over religion, and so forth.

Economics through a New Lens

WHEN SOCIETIES MOVE TOWARD THE partnership side of the partnership-domination continuum (and it's always a matter of degree), women and the "feminine" are not devalued. And this benefits not only women but also men and children of both genders.

We have empirical evidence of this—although once again it is ignored in conventional economic and social analyses.

The study "Women, Men, and the Global Quality of Life," conducted by the Center for Partnership Studies, compared statistical measures on the status of women using measures of quality of life such as infant mortality, human rights ratings, and environmental ratings from eighty-nine nations. We found that in significant respects the status of women can be a better predictor of quality of life than can gross domestic product.

Other studies also verify this relationship between the status of women and a society's general quality of life. The World Values Survey is the largest international survey of attitudes and how they correlate with economic development and political structure. For the first time, in 2000 this survey focused attention on attitudes about gender. Based on data from 65 societies representing 80 percent of the world's population, it found a strong relationship between support for gender equality and a society's level of political rights, civil liberties, and quality of life.

There are many reasons for a correlation of the status of women with a higher or lower quality of life for all. One, of course, is that women make up half of any population. But the reasons go much deeper, to the still largely unrecognized and undiscussed dynamics of domination systems. Here are just two examples:

Dominator Male Preference:

In some world regions, the ranking of

males over females is so ingrained that parents (both mothers and fathers) not only deny girls access to education and give them less health care but also often feed girls less than boys. These practices obviously have extremely adverse consequences for girls and women. But giving less food to girls and women also adversely impacts the development of boys.

It is well known that children of malnourished women are often born with poor health and below-par brain development. So this gender-based nutritional and health care discrimination robs *all* children, male or female, of their birthright: their potential for optimal development. This in turn affects children's and later adults' abilities to adapt to new conditions, tolerance of frustration, and propensity to use violence—which in their turn impede solutions to chronic hunger, poverty, and armed conflict, and with this, chances for a more humane, prosperous, and peaceful world for all.

Dominator Intra-Household Resource Allocation:

The above is just one consequence of something else left out of conventional economic analyses: the patterns of intra-household resource allocation characteristic of domination systems.

There is empirical evidence across diverse cultures and income groups that women have a higher propensity than men to spend on goods that benefit children and enhance their capacities. How much higher this propensity is was shown by Duncan Thomas in his report "Intra-Household Resource Allocation." He found that in Brazil, \$1 in the hands of a Brazilian woman has the same effect on child survival as \$18 in the hands of a man. Similarly, Judith Bruce and Cynthia B. Lloyd found that in Guatemala an additional \$11.40 per month in a mother's hands would achieve the same weight gain in a young child as an additional \$166 earned by the father.

Of course, there are men even in rigidly male-dominated cultures who give primary importance to meeting their families' needs. Typically, however, men in these cultures are socialized to believe it's their prerogative to use their wages for non-family purposes, including drinking, smoking, and

gambling, and that when women complain, they are nagging and controlling. As Dr. Anugerah Pekerti, chair of World Vision, Indonesia, notes, many fathers seem to have no problem putting their immediate desires above the survival needs of their children.

Yet traditional economic theories, capitalist and socialist, are based on the assumption that the male head of household will expend the resources he controls for the benefit of all family members. Not only that, development aid programs still allocate enormous funds to large-scale projects in which women have little or no say—and from which poor women and children derive few if any benefits. Even microlending or "village loan" programs that largely target women generally provide only minimal amounts—often at exorbitant interest rates. And the bulk of large bank loans go to businesses owned by male elites or to male "heads of household."

Indeed, it is well known that much of the humanitarian government aid from developed to developing nations winds up in the hands of elites who deposit it in Swiss banks, build mansions, and otherwise line their pockets with it. Even when funds go directly to the poor, these too often end up in the pockets of men who use them for themselves rather than for their families. The effect of this on the general quality of life is not hard to see.

I want to again emphasize that what I'm reporting is not intended to blame men for our world's economic ills. We're dealing with a system in which both women and men are socialized to accept the notion that one half of our species is put on earth to be served and the other half to serve, and that mothers, but not fathers, must subordinate their needs and desires to those of their families.

This economic double standard, and with it the subordination of the stereotypically feminine to the stereotypically masculine, not only hurts women; it hurts us all. It hurts men in a myriad ways—from the psychological pain of having to disassociate themselves from the "feminine," including their own mothers, to the economic and political consequences of devaluing and subordinating women and anything associated with them.

Domination, Our Environment, and Technology

EVEN OUR ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS is largely a symptom of the distorted values inherent in domination systems. We're often told that the scientific-industrial revolution that began to gain momentum in the eighteenth century is to blame for the havoc we're wreaking on our natural life-support systems. But the "conquest of nature" worldview goes back much further.

We've inherited an economics based on the premise that man is entitled to control both woman's and nature's life-sustaining activities. In Genesis 1:28 we read that man is to "subdue" the earth and have "dominion ... over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." In Genesis 3:16 we read that man is to rule over woman, who is to be his subordinate.

I want to emphasize that this notion of male control over nature and woman was *not* introduced in the Bible. We already find it millennia earlier. For example, the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* tells us that the war god Marduk created the world by dismembering the body of the Mother Goddess Tiamat. This myth superceded earlier myths about a Great Mother who created nature and humans as part of nature through her life-giving powers with a story where the violence of a male deity brings forth the world. It not only signals the beginning of a period when female deities, along with women and anything associated with them, were subordinated; it also signals a shift to a domination system in which masculinity is equated with domination and conquest—be it of women or of nature.

Domination systems have always despoiled nature. This goes way back to a time of massive climate change when prehistoric herders created scarcities that, in turn, fostered relations based on domination.

Using a large computerized database correlating information on climate change over thousands of years with archaeological data, geographer James DeMeo mapped these changes in the great desert belt he calls Saharasia (extending roughly from North Africa through the Middle East into central Asia). He found that what was once a garden of plenty gradually became a barren, cruel land. But climate change was only part of the story. When the land grew drier,

farming became impossible, so herding became the primary technology. And, as vegetation became ever sparser, human agency itself became a cause of desertification.

Trees were felled to open up more grazing land. As trees and plants disappeared, there was even less rain, as happens when forests are decimated to our day. As herds overgrazed more pastures, soils became even more barren.

In this ever harsher environment, habits of domination and exploitation became routine. Some groups began to fight others for access to grassland and water, and as men increasingly relied on brute force for a livelihood, women lost status and power. Gradually, raiding and killing spread from deserts to more fertile areas. The nomadic tribes of the wastelands began to encroach on the more fertile areas, first in occasional incursions and later as conquerors who imposed their rule.

As cultural historian Brian Griffiths notes, everything was now geared to conquest and control—of women, “inferior” men, and the land. And this conquest mentality—of nature, women, and other men—continues to this day.

At our level of technological development, this ethos of domination threatens not just one region but our entire ecosystem. Already in 2005, the UN-sponsored *Millennium Ecosystems Assessment* reported that over the past fifty years human activity has depleted 60 percent of the world’s grasslands, forests, farmlands, rivers, and lakes. Emissions from cars and power plants are responsible for higher temperatures that are melting polar ice so fast that glaciers on Greenland are slipping into the ocean twice as fast as they were just five years ago. Polar bears are drowning. And scientists warn that rising seas may engulf coastal cities in just a few decades.

Almost every day another study details the insanity of our present course. But the plunder of nature, now aided by powerful technologies that cause terrible harm in a matter of years, or even months and days, continues unabated. Yet none of this is inevitable. It can be changed.

Endings and Beginnings

THE MIX OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY AND AN ethos of domination is not sustainable.

Therein lies the danger. But the upheavals and dislocations of our time also offer an opportunity for a fundamental social and economic shift.

It’s not only that the old economic models—both capitalist and socialist—came out of the industrial era and we’re rapidly moving into the postindustrial era. The current economic meltdown and the meltdown of the ice caps are not isolated events: both are symptoms of the domination system reaching its logical end.

We must build economic structures, rules, policies, and practices that support caring for ourselves, others, and nature in *both* the market and the nonmarket economic sectors. At the same time, we must accelerate the shift to partnership cultures and structures worldwide so that anything stereotypically considered “soft” or “feminine”—such as caring and caregiving—is no longer devalued.

Market rules—both locally and globally—must be changed to reward caring business practices and penalize uncaring ones. To make these changes we must show that this benefits not only people and nature but also business.

Hundreds of studies show the cost-effectiveness of supporting and rewarding caring in the market economy. To give just one example, companies that regularly appear on the *Working Mothers* or Fortune 500 lists of the best companies to work for—that is, companies with good health care, child care, flextime, parental leave, and other caring policies—have a higher return to investors.

On the national policy level, we already saw how in Nordic nations, caring policies played a major role in their move from dire poverty to a high quality of life for all. Other examples abound, such as reports of the enormous financial benefits that have come from investing in parenting education and assistance (as shown by the Canadian Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program) and investing in high-quality early childhood education (as shown by follow-up studies of the U.S. Abecedarian Project).

There are many ways of funding this investment in our world’s human infrastructure—which should be amortized over a period of years, as is done for investments in material infrastructure, such as machines

and buildings. One way is to shift funding from the heavy investment in weapons and wars characteristic of domination systems. Another is through the savings a society gains when it no longer has to pay the immense costs of *not* investing in caring and caregiving: the huge expenditures of taxpayer money on crime, courts, prisons, lost human potential, and environmental damage. Taxes on financial speculation and other harmful activities, such as making and selling junk food, can also fund investment in caring for people and our natural habitat.

Good care for children will ensure we have the flexible, innovative, and caring people needed for the postindustrial workforce. Both psychology and neuroscience show that whether these capacities develop largely hinges on the quality of care children receive.

Educating and remunerating people for caregiving will help close the “caring gap”—the worldwide lack of care for children, the elderly, and the sick and infirm. And it will eventually lead to a redefinition of “productivity” that gives visibility and value to what really makes us healthy and happy—and in the bargain leads to economic prosperity and ecological sustainability.

Economic systems are human creations. They can be changed. We must build a political movement to pressure policymakers to make these changes—or change the policymakers. We must see to it that our world’s governments make a massive investment in parenting education, paid parental leave, and innovative measures such as tax credits for caregivers and social security credit for the first years of caring for a child (as is already done in Norway).

We can all be leaders in building a social and economic system that really meets human needs—not only our material ones but also our emotional and spiritual ones. The sidebar next to this article describes the six foundations needed for a truly new economic system. If we join together, we can build these foundations and create a future in which all children can realize their great potentials for consciousness, empathy, caring, and creativity—the capacities that make us fully human. ■

Parts of this article have been adapted from Kirk Schneider's *Awakening to Awe: Personal Stories of Profound Transformation*. Jason Aronson, 2009.

The Lens of Unknowing

UNLIKE TRANSIENCE, WHICH FOCUSES CHIEFLY ON TIME, THE UNKNOWN EXTENDS TO ALL dimensions—time, space, mind, and heart. Unknowing eclipses all and tantalizes us with the source of all. It is the “worm at the core” but also the dazzle, grace, and hope at the core. Although the unknown may be the greatest factor in the kindling of fear, as Rod Serling, the creator of *Twilight Zone* intimated, it also may be the greatest factor in the fostering of fascination. Consider, for example, the role of unknowing in film, literature, and fine art. How mesmerized we are by suspense thrillers, tales of adventure, and enigmatic characters. How we stammer before sculpture, painting, and hymnals. Indeed, the whole of our natural world is a wonder, riddled with obscurities, both large and small. Scientists like Einstein stand rapt before this spectacle and fill with exhilarating curiosity. But so do—and can—many of us, the moment we stop to reflect.

The Lens of Surprise

A CHIEF COMPONENT OF UNKNOWNING IS SURPRISE. TO THE EXTENT ONE CAN OPEN TO surprise, one can also enable spontaneity, novelty, and reform. Being open to surprises means being open to one's memories, dreams, and past, as well as to future possibilities. Being open to the unpredictable, finally, is like seeing the world—at least for moments—like a child. It is “big mind” in Zen Buddhist literature. For a child, each day is a blank canvas holding untold secrets and delights. It is a waiting paintbrush, a colorful palette, and a beckoning story. To the extent that we can approach these sensibilities and seize upon the “blank canvas” of our day, we can lift ourselves—even partially—out of our entrenched lives. We can “get out of our way” and greet the unexpected along our path, and we can breathe a little freer, a little fuller, wherever we are.

The Lens of Vastness

HERE TOO, WE MEET THE COSMOLOGICAL, ALBEIT IN ITS MOST PRODIGIOUS DIMENSIONS. The lens of vastness opens out in infinite directions. The moment I walk outdoors, for example, I engage it. I perceive it in the distances and horizons, in parks, and in wildernesses, in the rolling hills, and amid the daunting bluffs. I connect with it while driving through urban sprawl and while peering into ocean sunsets. But beyond these physical settings, vastness embraces all that we perceive and intuit: it is the grand sweep of nature, the grand sweep of our lives.

Consider, for example, cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker's riff on the “causal chain” of human conception. When asked to discuss “where babies come from” he observed:

Since we don't know who we are, we don't know how we came here. You don't know where we came from—oh, I know, you say “the sperm and the egg.” Sperm and the egg! ... Idiot answer. It's not an answer at all, it's merely a description of a speck in a causal process that is a mystery. We don't know where babies come from. You get married, you're sitting at a table having breakfast—there are two of you—and a year later there's somebody else, sitting there. And if you're honest with yourself, you don't know where they came from. You've made contact with them at the hospital, but that was another step on the causal chain. They just came, literally, out of nowhere, and they keep growing in your environment. If you stop to think about [it], which you don't, because it's annoying, it's upsetting, then it's a total mystery.

And a fascinating one at that!

The Lens of Intricacy

IF THE LENS OF VASTNESS ORIENTS US TO THE MACRO AND GRAND, THE LENS OF INTRICACY situates us in the micro and hidden. For example, the lens of intricacy is what captivates many of us about meditation and psychotherapy. The themes that can come up can range from dizzying dreads to dazzling desires, and from meandering (continued on page 73)

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY (continued from page 32)

fantasies to timely practicalities. But the overarching effect is that the more that one is informed by such engagements, the greater one's potential for a full and diversified life—a life of depth but also vibrancy. This sensibility can be illustrated by the time that one takes with both people and things. It can be seen in one's attentiveness to one's friends, loved ones, or acquaintances; in one's sensitivity to art, beauty, and nature. When is the last time, for example, that you have attended to the markings on a leaf, or the brusqueness of an autumn wind, or the tenderness of a lover's skin? When have you paused to investigate ant colonies, or the loping grace of a running dog, or the aesthetics of a neighbor's home? How much time do you devote to digging beyond the requirements of a work assignment or exploring alternative thoughts, philosophies, or lifestyles? These and so much more are the potentialities inherent as the lenses of intricacy are polished.

The Lens of Sentiment

THE EXPERIENCES OF EMOTION AND OF being profoundly moved are the key features of this lens. Sentiment offers us a deepened sensibility, a refined feeling, toward both people and things; life and art. The question for this lens is to what extent can we “drop in” to it, as exemplified by our responses to love and to loss, to beauty and to repulsion, or to any momentary encounter. How and in what ways can we linger over those sensibilities, take them in, and allow them to shake us to our core? For example, to what extent can we stand before beauty and allow our breath to be taken away? Can we permit this on our walk outside on a spring day? Or in the face of a ravishing woman or man? Or how about in the presence of a haunting melody? Peggy Salkind, an accomplished teacher and pianist—as well as octogenarian—opines on the latter:

Music ... is a reservoir of feeling and contains the ultimate distillation of love. It is a refuge for all the most trenchant sensibilities of the human heart. Music can change a person's

consciousness without the use of drugs. It establishes an incontrovertible bond between psyche and soma. Music is a language without limits in that all who hear it can share in its wonders without possessing linguistic skills. Music subsumes sex and lasts longer. It endures for a lifetime and becomes a haven of peace and renewal for each individual who undertakes the task of exploring its mysteries. Human beings need to explore every possible avenue in an effort to cope with the beauty and terror of existence. Music is a viable means of engaging that exploration. After all ... language alone cannot express the sum total of any human being. Music is the true transubstantiation. Through it human essence is transformed into universal divinity.

The Lens of Solitude

THIS IS ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL YET LEAST celebrated lenses for awe. It may also be a prerequisite for the other lenses. To be sure, solitude is a state of aloneness; but it is also, as many in my book have testified, a state of aliveness, attentiveness, and absorption. Solitude can be isolating, but it is not generally alienating; to the contrary, it is frequently renewing, deepening, and strengthening. In this era of cell phones and instant messaging, solitude can clear a space for what really matters in one's life and for how to pursue what really matters. By encouraging us to step back, take a breath, and stay acutely present, solitude opens the way to multiple expressions of awe.

One can see the foundational value of solitude for virtually any relationship, be that with oneself, others, or the world about one. To the degree that one can stay present to and coexist with oneself, one is in a much improved position to stay present to and coexist with all that surrounds one—such as creation's transience, mystery, surprise, vastness, intricacy, poignancy, and in short, awe.

To the extent that we can tap these fuller ranges of ourselves—such as our humility, wonder, and awe before creation—we can live a more invigorated life. To the extent we shrink from them, we shrink from opportunities to soar.

One test of a psychological theory is its merit “in the trenches,” in the most dire circumstances imaginable. If awe-based psychology can hold up there, then it is reasonable to assume that it can hold up most anywhere. The following anecdote from Viktor Frankl's Holocaust classic *Man's Search for Meaning* underscores the way in which awe-based psychology indeed holds up in the trenches. Describing his journey on a transport train between Auschwitz and a Bavarian camp, Frankl writes:

If someone had seen our faces ... as we beheld the mountains of Salzburg with their summits glowing in the sunset, through the little barred windows of the prison carriage, he would never have believed that those were the faces of men who had given up all hope of life and liberty. Despite that factor—or maybe because of it—we were carried away by nature's beauty. ■

SOCIAL GOSPEL (continued from page 45)

agree on doctrine; thus there were thirty-two denominations in the Federal Council. But the Social Gospel leaders of the Federal Council reasoned that the churches should be able to agree about social justice and do something for it. So they issued a Social Creed, advocating “equal rights and complete justice for all men,” the abolition of child labor, a “living wage as a minimum in every industry,” social security, an equitable distribution of income and wealth, the abatement of poverty, and eight other planks focused mostly on economic justice.

A century later the National Council of Churches, representing thirty-three denominations, has a new Social Creed that is very much in line with the creeds of 1908 and 1932; I was on the team that wrote it. It calls for “full civil, political, and economic rights for women and men of all races.” It demands the “abolition of forced labor, human trafficking, and the exploitation of children.” It supports “employment for all, at a family-sustaining living wage, with equal pay for comparable work.” It stands up for the right of workers to organize, opposes the death

penalty, calls for the abatement of hunger and poverty, and endorses universal health care, social security, and progressive tax policies. It commends immigration policies that protect family unity and foster international cooperation. It stresses the necessity of adopting simpler lifestyles; living within our means; protecting the earth's environment; and investing in renewable energy. It supports equitable global trade that protects local economies, and advocates a foreign policy based on international law and multilateral diplomacy. It calls for nuclear disarmament, reductions in military spending, and the abolition of torture. And it calls for cooperation and dialogue among world religions.

Parts of the new Social Creed are virtually identical with the first one, reflecting elementary justice principles still unrealized. Other parts reflect the ecological, feminist, and multicultural concerns that distinguish our time from previous generations. Getting a statement like the new Social Creed through a large ecumenical organization is at least as difficult today as it was in the heyday of the Social Gospel, and the crisis of social justice organizing within religious communities today is acute. Twenty years ago every ecumenical denomination had stronger organizations dealing with peace and social justice issues than they do today. For all of us working in and through religious organizations on behalf of social justice causes, this is necessarily a time of retrenchment and rearguard battles. But it is also a time of bold faith and hope. Unlike the social gospellers, we have no illusions of being carried along by a tide of cultural progress. For us, history must be about struggle, not progress; or at least, as Frederick Douglass put it, "without struggle, there is no progress."

Rauschenbusch put it best. Stereotypes about him notwithstanding, he had a strong sense of personal and social structural evil, as his *Theology for the Social Gospel* (1917) made clear. Rauschenbusch topped off his six chapters on evil with a stunning description of the collective sum of evils that he called "the kingdom of evil." He argued that the ravages of human hatred, greed, and will to power negate any possibility of achieving a perfect democracy. Yet for all of that, he urged, we must seek to build a cooperative

commonwealth. At best there is only an "approximation" of a just social order: "The kingdom of God is always but coming. But every approximation to it is worthwhile." ■

HESCHEL'S THEOLOGY

(continued from page 50)

causes us to see God and the world in two different ways at different times. The goal of Heschel's presentation is to expand our horizons, keep alternatives open, and prevent premature closure by training us to theologize dialectically. The problem is that one who is strong in one pole of the dialectic may be disinclined to do full justice to the other. Each pole needs the other to correct itself. Only together do they embrace the full reality of the encounter with the divine.

Sometimes, a different perspective, yea a competing one, can supplement one's understanding of the truth. Since the fullness of the divine word cannot be contained in a single human perspective, a plurality of understandings is needed to fill out the human grasp of divine truth. The whole truth remains elusively human, exclusively divine. Accordingly, the Rabbis designated truth as God's signature, that is, a unique characteristic of divine cognition that exceeds the human grasp. In fact, since any human perspective is necessarily limited to part of the truth, the whole truth may not be humanly graspable without contradiction.

This underlying insight allowed Heschel to take issue with so many of the conventional truths of modern scholarship and to be so generous to alternative theological viewpoints. It was not so much that the various scholars were wrong in their analysis of Biblical, Rabbinic, Kabbalistic, or Hasidic theology; as that they saw only part of the picture. Whatever the cause of the scholars' impaired vision—cultural blinders, unconscious agenda, psychological makeup, or inability to theologize dialectically—Heschel did not fault them for it. Instead he enhanced their work by rounding out the total picture.

In this respect Heschel's way of doing theology has an inherent affinity for scholarly and theological collaborative pluralism. That perspective contributed to

his openness to Jewish-Christian dialogue. For a pluralism to be collaborative, however, the convergence of ends must exceed the divergence of means. Heschel's pluralism is firmly bounded by the dialectic within the classic Jewish texts. It is not simply that Heschel is bound to tradition, but that he understands tradition itself as an aspect of God's encounter with the people of Israel. His pluralism thus reflects both his understanding of the dialectic of the tradition and of the divine-human relationship. With nonfinality as his watchword, Heschel invites one to engage in the ongoing quest for the meaning of revelation and of God's involvement with humanity. This conclusion is as applicable to Heschel's three-volume work, which he titled in English *Theology of Ancient Judaism*, as it is to his entire oeuvre, historical scholarship, and contemporary theology. ■

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

Publication title: Tikkun. Publication Number: 0887-9982. Filing Date: 10/01/09. Issue Frequency: Bimonthly. Number of Issues Published Annually: 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$29. Complete mailing address of office of publication: 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Complete mailing address of office of publisher: The Vradenburg Foundation, 1350 I Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Publisher: Patricia and George Vradenburg, c/o The Vradenburg Foundation, 1350 I Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Editor: Michael Lerner, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Managing Editor: Dave Belden, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Owner: Institute for Labor and Mental Health, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Total Number of Copies (Net Print Run): yearly avg. 18,251; most recent 18,818. Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions: yearly avg. 7,313; most recent 7,961. Paid In-County Mail Subscriptions: yearly avg. 0; most recent 0. Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution: yearly avg. 6,140; most recent 7,133. Paid/Requested Circulation Other Classes Mailed through USPS: yearly avg. 25; most recent 20. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation: yearly avg. 13,479; most recent 15,114. Free Distribution by Mail Outside County: yearly avg. 674; most recent 1,147. Free Distribution by Mail Inside County: yearly avg. 0; most recent 0. Free Distribution by Mail/Other Classes Mailed through USPS: yearly avg. 0; most recent 0. Free Distribution Outside the Mail: yearly avg. 1,040; most recent 107. Total Free Distribution: yearly avg. 1,714; most recent 1,254. Total Distribution: yearly avg. 15,193; most recent 16,368. Copies Not Distributed: yearly avg. 3,058; most recent 2,450. Total: yearly avg. 18,251; most recent 18,818. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: yearly avg. 89 percent; most recent 92 percent.

KING'S GOD

(continued from page 53)

These are questions which the liberal theologian must of necessity answer if he expects to influence the average mind. Too often do we find many of the liberals dodging these vital questions.

King also wrote at this time that "to discuss Christianity without mentioning other religions would be like discussing the greatness of the Atlantic Ocean without the slightest mention of the many tributaries that keep it flowing." During his first semester at Crozer, writing on the Hebrew Bible, he compared the creation accounts, flood stories, and theologies of Babylonia, Egypt, and Sumer with those in the Bible and concluded that biblical stories are rooted in the surrounding cultures. He concluded that the Hebrew authors of the flood story were "producing from Babylonian mythology an almost verbatim story." While most Christians of his time would have seen both Judaism and Christianity as contradicting and rejecting pagan religion, King argued that they gave a more "profound and spiritual meaning" to the pagan views to which they must be indebted, adding that these traditions even prepared people "mentally and emotionally to understand the type of religion which Christianity represented." For King, the only reason Christianity triumphed was the particular historical and social circumstances. He even went on to suggest that Christianity might end up like those other cults, religions, and pagan practices that didn't survive. In *The Influence of Mystery Religions on Christianity*, he wrote: "The staggering question that now arises is, what will be the next stage of man's religious progress? Is Christianity the crowning achievement in the development of religious thought or will there be another religion more advanced?"

The purpose of the church for King is not to create dogma, theology, or creeds but rather "to produce living witnesses and testimonies to the power of God in human experience," and to commit to action. From a young age, King understood the importance of combining his religion with social justice. From this perspective King viewed

the church's role as promoting a way of life rather than a belief system, saying, "Jesus always recognized that there is a danger of having a high blood pressure of creeds and an anemia of deeds." He stated that Christ is more concerned with how we treat our neighbors, our attitudes toward racial justice, and living a high ethical life than he is with long processions, knowledge of creeds, or the beautiful architecture of a church. According to King, the church had strayed from Christ.

In "Is the Church the Hope of the World?" he asserted that "nothing has so persistently and effectively blocked the way of salvation as the church," due to the church's condoning of evils such as slavery and monopoly capitalism. He went on to say, "On the other hand, the church can become the hope of the world, but only when it returns to Christ."

By his senior year, King had developed a strong belief in the liberalism that defined the social gospel movement and progressive theology in his era. However, his encounter with Reinhold Niebuhr and the Neo-Orthodoxy movement led him to "recognize the illusions of a superficial optimism concerning human nature and the dangers of a false idealism." Thus, he sought a middle ground and rejected original sin as "preposterous" while acknowledging that sin is a real choice we make, albeit far too often.

Like the great mystics, King viewed God as an experience not limited to any religion or restricted by any creed, stating, "Of course the true seeker will realize that there is no one way to find God" and "No theology is needed to tell us that love is the law of life and to disobey it means to suffer the consequences; we see it everyday in human experience." King meditated for an hour a day, prayed, and discovered God through nature. It was through this sort of devotional life that he believed our souls can be united with God, bringing our will in line with his.

For King, God is always near. In "Mastering Our Evil Selves," he writes: "God is not a process projected somewhere in the lofty blue. God is not a divine hermit hiding himself in a cosmic cave. But God is forever present with us." Despite his liberal theology, he did, however, maintain the belief in a personal God that is both transcendent and immanent. In his dissertation King

compared and contrasted his particular theology of personalism with the theology of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman, two leading voices in the process theology movement, which viewed God as an impersonal force. King also viewed God as synonymous with justice. He believed God was right there with him and others during the civil rights movement: "The God that we worship is ... but an other-loving God who forever works through history for the establishment of His Kingdom."

On the issue of evolution and creation, King sought to reconcile the advances of science with his religious belief in God. He claims that the scientific origin of the beginning of the world "might be right in seeing the invalidity of the older view of a first creation." However, instead of denying any creation, he advocates the view of "emergent evolution," which suggests that God is "an intelligent conscious mind working out its purpose through the evolutionary process." According to King, it is "here that we find creation and evolution working together."

At this point a few important questions can be asked. Did King's views on the Christian doctrines while in seminary change later in his life? He was ordained as a Baptist minister. Would he not have chosen a different denomination if his views were so liberal? Dr. Clayborne Carson, a world-renowned King scholar and director of the King Papers Project at Stanford, told me that he had not seen any documentary evidence of a later shift in King's thinking from his early views on Christian doctrines. He also said King may have found creative ways to avoid expressing his unorthodox views, as he was trained in a liberal seminary but served a Baptist congregation.

King had numerous opportunities to express his understanding of Jesus, the Bible, and Christianity with his many sermons, books, interviews, and writings. If at any point he changed his views and became an orthodox Christian, he might have at least once claimed that Jesus was his savior; the Bible was the literal word of God, or non-Christians would go to hell. But there are no statements either during his educational career or in his work as a civil rights leader and preacher that would suggest he ever changed his liberal views of the doctrines.

King's metaphysical and philosophical understanding of God and human nature did grow and develop while at Boston University, though his approach to the Christian doctrines remained constant. It should not be surprising then that while Dr. King served a Baptist church, his first choice of religion was Unitarian Christian (which later merged with Universalism). Dr. King's liberal faith resonated with the dynamic Unitarian Christian tradition because of his acknowledgment of the truth in all religions, his view of Jesus as an exemplary teacher, and his rejection of biblical literalism. Coretta Scott had been attending Unitarian churches for years before she met and married Martin, and they both attended Unitarian services while in Boston. He ultimately faced the reality that he would probably not be able to play a role in the civil rights movement in this tradition and thus he became pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, shortly thereafter being elected to lead the Montgomery bus boycott.

God is bigger than any one religion, and King's theology is a pertinent reminder of this. King was able to express a vision of Christianity that was both meaningful and welcoming of others. In our present world, where fundamentalism is on the march, a look back at his reasoned and thoughtful approach to religion can serve the public well. And for the spiritual progressives working to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth, Dr. King's expression of faith offers a powerful synthesis of how justice, love, and peace can be manifest as paradise here and now. His theology is inclusive, tolerant, renewing, and life-sustaining—free from dogma and exclusionary views, which can lead to violence and separation. The history of religious intolerance within Christianity is, needless to say, troubling. A historical and metaphorical interpretation of Christianity is valid: it need not lack energy and conviction as some fear. Indeed, such an interpretation is held by many in today's vibrant "emergent church." Dr. King is a voice for this movement, as he promoted Christianity as a way of life based on an inner experience and rooted in a commitment to the social gospel. For those of us progressive Christians who have fought for a seat at the table, Dr. King politely pulls a chair out for us to sit on. ■

PRAYER AND NONDUALITY (continued from page 55)

"elite" theological reflections on prayer is how rarely ordinary conceptions of prayer arise within them. Some philosophers regard prayer as salutary reflection on one's life, others as a way of circumscribing the selfish inclination—but you won't find many who think prayer makes God feel better to be praised or warms Him up to fulfill our requests. Popular discourse is full of exclamations that prayer actually works, but in the elite literature, amid volumes describing the transformative power of prayer on the individual, there are few claims that it actually sways the mind of God.

Indeed, even those texts that do suggest that prayer actually works do so by means of theological-mystical doctrines such as the Kabbalistic understanding of theurgy. Some Kabbalists believe that prayer is effective because of the combination of letters, for example, while others hold that it works because of the symbolic correspondences of the words. But almost none say God hears prayer in the ordinary senses of those words; it fits neither theology (mystical or philosophical) nor the experience of a people persecuted for many centuries.

In my own work, I've tended to follow a similar line of thinking. In my book *God in Your Body*, for example, I talk at length about the modalities of kneeling (*barchu*), listening (*shema*), and standing (*amidah*), the three embodied "movements" of traditional Jewish prayer. I understand kneeling as kneeling-before: voluntarily subjugating the selfish desires to something which is greater than them. The other modalities involve listening to the truth and taking a stand for what we believe.

But all this seems to miss the point of why we pray in the first place. Transforming prayer into meditation or magic or self-reflection turns it into something other than prayer, which has to do with the yearnings of the heart. It takes only a moment's review of the Psalms, still the ur-text of Jewish prayer, to see that Jewish prayer is, at its core, devotionalistic in nature. Even Maimonides, the great rationalist, understood prayer as a time for the heart to open. And while the mind may know the oneness of philosophical reflection and nonduality,

the heart knows the two-ness of presence and absence. Devotion implies a devoted-to. It implies duality.

Moreover, who can really say that when the chips are down, they don't turn to a "primitive" theological idea of God? In the hospital, in the trenches—at such times theology goes out the window, and the heart cries in a language the mind can neither approve nor understand.

Devotion can be embarrassing for thoughtful people. Those of us who read literary magazines and have a stake in culture and art are trained to develop our minds, and we are rewarded, with money and degrees and plenty of approbation, for displaying the mental dexterities that show us to be successful and advanced human beings. Sure, there is talk these days of emotional intelligence, and elite culture is itself a concept increasingly under attack. But within the few remaining institutions of that culture—and perhaps increasingly so because of their self-awareness of being under a kind of attack from vulgarity on the one side and reactionary fundamentalism on the other—there persists not only the concept but also the system of rewards for certain kinds of rational behavior. I am not referring here only to universities and academies. The skill sets that advance one economically in the worlds of business and the professions are likewise those of the mind, not the heart.

So who wants to admit that we remain, on a primal level, in some need of primitive notions of prayer and supplication? Even less so because those who *do* admit to such a need are either weak-minded, or brutish, or both. Fundamentalists, New Agers, and the various potheads and dope fiends of religion and spirituality—these are the people who "need" to cry out to God. The only question for the thinking class is, which is worse: the nasty dogmatism of the evangelist or the fuzzy banality of the California-spiritual.

In this regard, nonduality—whether conceived mystically or philosophically—has more in common with the insecure skepticism of the slightly embarrassed religionist than with the zeal of the prophet. It agrees that traditional prayer is intellectually incoherent. If everything happens as it must, rather than as it should, then what is

the point of wishing really hard for it to be otherwise? Indeed, to do so increases delusion, craving, and the denial of What Is, which in nondual Judaism is our best translation for the Ineffable name. Even the idea of “how the world should be,” including as conceived by traditional monotheism, is counterproductive, if it is construed not as personal imperative but as judgment upon the way things actually are. As an aspirational ideal, “should” remains essential. But as a desire? Something for which we *pray*?

Ironically, when nondual contemplation actually succeeds—that is to say, when the truth of nonduality actually penetrates through the veils of ego and delusion—dualistic prayer language suddenly flows much freer than it did previously. In those precious moments at which nonduality is the truth and ego is the delusion, more than the illusion of separation drops away. So too do inhibition and the pretension of knowledge. A great “I don’t know” replaces the arrogant (and ridiculous, if we consider the limits of human knowledge relative to the size of the universe) claims to metaphysical certainty. This “I don’t know” is not the defeatism of one too lazy to think rigorously. It is the negative theology of the Cloud of Unknowing, the limits of reason according to Kant, the limits of language according to Wittgenstein, the mystery of Being according to Hegel and Heidegger. This “I don’t know” is the absurdity of Zen, the transrational of Ken Wilber, the transcendent *keter* of Kabbalah, the impossible unity of emptiness and form. It is that toward which art gestures, the mystery that is rendered banal by explaining, the poetry lost in translation.

From this un-knowing springs a kind of permission given by the mind to the heart. Of course, prayer is absurd. Its language is primitive, outmoded, and ridiculous—nearly as ridiculous as love itself. Nor is it strictly necessary. But to those of us who seek to be connoisseurs of the self and to know the intimations and stirrings of our souls, to go without the self-abnegation of prayer is like forgoing music or wine. Yes, life goes on. But without the heart being allowed to cry in the modality of prayer, some of its flavors are drained out, like the industrial foods that pass for produce today.

And so prayer flows from surrender—

chiefly the surrender of “I.” In the progressive Jewish world today, one often hears a language of wrestling: with problematic texts, with ideas, with that in which we don’t believe but struggle. But in the nondual view, the wrestling of Jacob with the angel is the wrestling of the One with the One. It is not a contest; it is an embrace, an act of love in which God is the only lover. It is a Divine role play, with the individual one moment taking on the submissive role, allowing, begging, being pressed to the ground, and the next assuming the dominant role, insisting, demanding, expressing the will. It is none other than the drama of prayer itself, once the demands of the intellect bend to the dance of the imagination.

This is nondual prayer, set loose from the repressive shames of the self and the preposterous fantasies of theology. It is the heart dancing, imagining, and, of course, projecting. Unlike naive prayer, it does not assume the existence of a separate Deity who will answer the petitions of the sufficiently pious. Unlike rationalized prayer, it does not masquerade as meditation or magic. And unlike the avoidance or hesitation of the overly uptight or sophisticated—the religious equivalent of hipsters too cool to dance to simple music—it does not submit the needs of the heart to the cynical auditing of the intellect.

To be sure, the edifying notes of chorus-sung hymns can elevate the refined soul to heights of aesthetic pleasure. So too can the dull responsive readings of American Judaism inculcate, in some, the ponderous ethical values of tradition. But give me the guts and tears and life-blood of a prayer unashamed of its nakedness, pleading and demanding, *shuckling* and clapping, or, at times at which the soul is in constriction, just going through the motions in the hope that something, somewhere, will loosen.

Is prayer preposterous? Is it susceptible to dangerous fanaticism and pathetic delusion? Is it, like other erotic acts, unsuitable for polite conversation? Of course. But I too am often preposterous, susceptible to danger and error, and impolite. I am also, often, trapped, running to and fro in the service of pointless demands that need to be forcibly interrupted. Nonduality may be the truth, but practice is needed to see it. And the practice varies with the need.

Sometimes, the mindful space of meditation quiets the nonsense that masquerades as sense, so that the sense that looks like nonsense can remind me of its truth. Sometimes, the body is the key. And sometimes, what’s needed is the courage to give the heart its due. Sometimes I need to pray even for that. ■

HEALTH REFORM

(continued from page 14)

However, what even the most progressive committees in Congress are proposing is something very different. Enrollment in this public plan will be restricted to the uninsured and the smallest employers. The plan must be self-sustaining, following the same rules as private insurers and receiving no federal subsidy. And, as the president himself has said, the best estimate is that barely 5 percent of the American people will join it. The 800-pound gorilla has been turned into a mouse!

Costs Will Keep Climbing

IN HIS *NEW YORK TIMES* OP-ED, OBAMA went on to claim that “reform will finally bring skyrocketing health care costs under control.” But nothing in the plan directly cuts costs. In fact, this plan will increase the overall cost of the health care system by hundreds of billions of dollars as millions of Americans who now have no insurance purchase policies from the insurance companies. The director of the Congressional Budget Office has said, “We do not see the sort of fundamental changes that would be necessary to reduce federal health spending by a significant amount.” Instead, the plan relies on reducing waste and inefficiency in Medicare and Medicaid, on competition among insurance companies, and on a series of innovations—computerization, chronic disease management, and new ways of providing and paying for medical services such as the “medical home”—that are certain to cost added billions for the next few years and may, or may not, eventually produce some savings.

Then how will the plan be paid for? In his September 9 speech to Congress, Obama said “most of this plan can be paid for by finding savings within the existing health care system.” Taxes on “Cadillac”

Health Reform: Where Obama Went Wrong

by Leonard Rodberg

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S HEALTH REFORM PLAN IS IN TROUBLE. PUBLIC SUPPORT for it is only lukewarm; both Left and Right oppose it. Pundits and editorial writers complain that Obama has turned the issue over to Congress, or that he hasn't explained the plan well enough. He and his staff have been working closely with many members of Congress from the very beginning, and he has described his plan repeatedly and in many forums—and no one questions that he is a superb communicator. And yet disquiet and confusion persist. What has gone wrong?

The President's Fateful Choice

SIXTY PERCENT OF ALL AMERICANS GET THEIR HEALTH INSURANCE FROM PRIVATE INSURERS, mostly through their employers, with some buying it directly from insurance companies. About half as many—87 million according to the latest report from the Census Bureau—are covered by Medicare (the federal program for the elderly and the disabled), Medicaid (the joint federal-state program for the poor), the VA, and other public programs.

However, when you look at who pays the bills, you find a very different picture: nearly half of all medical bills are paid by government, largely through Medicare and Medicaid, but also through support for community health centers, the VA, and so on. Private insurance accounts for barely a third of all health care spending. The reason is clear: government covers those who are most in need of medical care, the elderly and the poor, while private insurance covers the healthy part of the population, those who are working.

When Obama decided to tackle health care reform, he could have chosen to build it upon either the public or the private systems. He said he wanted to build on what works, and he could have proposed expanding the public programs we now have to cover everyone (or everyone who wanted that

But is it care for the patient, or even for the economy as a whole, that Obama's policies point to? Or is he instead taking far too much care not to rile the insurance companies, the for-profit health care industry, and the whole money-first ethos of Wall Street?

Leonard Rodberg is professor and chair of urban studies at Queens College, City University of New York, and research director of the NY Metro Chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program.





Health industry profiteers are most threatened by the idea that everyone might have an equal right to good health care. Here the "Healthcare Is A Human Right" campaign, coordinated by the Vermont Workers' Center, which is organizing a series of health care forums with local state legislators around Vermont, holds a rally at the State House in Montpelier.

kind of coverage). These programs work, and they work well. Instead, he chose to base his program on for-profit private insurance, the part of our health financing system that is most expensive and deficient. He chose the private path, and, as Robert Frost said, that has made all the difference. *No plan that rests on multiple, weakly regulated, for-profit insurance companies can possibly achieve the goals that Obama has set out and still hopes to achieve.*

The Obama Mandate Model

OBAMA HAS DECLARED MANY TIMES THAT HIS CHIEF GOAL IS TO CONTAIN THE ESCALATING COST OF health care. However, the president and the congressional committees that have followed his lead have chosen principally to focus on getting insurance for the uninsured. That seemed simpler to address so, as a result, they have adopted the "mandate model" as exemplified most recently by the plan passed in Massachusetts in 2006. Everyone will be required to have insurance, and at least the larger employers may be required to offer insurance or contribute to a public fund that will subsidize the purchase of insurance by their low-income employees and others. (An important exception: low-income individuals with incomes below 133 percent of the federal poverty level will be able to sign up for Medicaid.)

In an op-ed published in the *New York Times* on August 16, the president claimed that "if you don't have health insurance, you will have a choice of high-quality, affordable coverage for yourself and your family." However, as put forward in slightly differing versions by five congressional committees, nothing in his plan guarantees that the insurance offered by these private companies will be either "high-quality" or "affordable."

Currently, the average premium paid by employers for a family policy is \$13,375; by 2013, when this plan would go into effect, insurance is sure to be even more costly. Insurance plans will have to meet new requirements, including no exclusions for pre-existing medical conditions, no co-pays for preventive care, annual limits on cost-sharing (co-pays and deductibles) of \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for families, and no limits on lifetime coverage. All of these requirements, while desirable, will make insurance policies even more expensive. What many are beginning to realize, and to find objectionable, is that the plan does not regulate premiums, deductibles, or co-pays, so we will be required to buy insurance from companies that can charge us whatever they choose.

Employment-based insurance will be otherwise unchanged. Employers will still be able to change the coverage and the plan they offer their employees. Insurers can still change their provider networks, dropping or adding physicians and hospitals. Employees are still locked into their jobs if they want to keep their current plan. But now, employees must accept their employer's plan; the individual mandate requires it.

But won't the vaunted "public option" address some of these problems? The original "robust" plan would have provided real competition to the private insurers. It would have had open enrollment—anyone could have joined. Like Medicare, it would have been backed by the federal government, and, according to the best estimates, nearly 120 million people would have joined it. Such a large public program could have had an enormous impact in reducing costs and leading to an efficient restructuring of health care delivery. *(continued on page 77)*

cutting satire that was critical of the WTO, and realize it was fake. Some people never caught on and wrote us emails, and we responded in all kinds of crazy ways. [People who thought we were the genuine WTO] asked us to send the director general of the WTO to give the keynote at a conference. So we went. And that's it. That one is in our first movie, "The Yes Men."

You guys are great. Is there something more we can do than tell you that you are great?

Andy: That's the thing. The intention at the end of the film was to say, "get together, do something, change the world, fight, figure it out" ... and kind of throw it back on the viewer. Since finishing the film, we have started a couple of things in that vein. One is beyondtalk.net, which is a kind of a climate pledge of resistance, pledging to get arrested in the interests of climate change policy. Then there is this Challenge website (challenge.theyesmen.org) we have set up, which is a social network where people can do things like we do. We give away our secrets, basically, and we encourage people to get together and to try things.

Have you thought about putting something at the end of the movie saying, "here is how to connect with us," or "we want to hear from you"?

Andy: Well, in a way, we don't want to hear from "you": we want "you" to go off and do your own thing. There are millions of ways to do things, and we are just one way. We're not a hub. There is this giant movement going on, and you have to find your own way of supporting it. That's the message we are trying to give: "Two guys in cheap suits aren't gonna be able to do it; it will be done by millions of people." ■

ERRATA

In the September/October issue of *Tikkun*:

Page 31: Jim Hansen was described as the head of NASA. He instead heads the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City.

Page 40: Martin Kramer was identified as a "non-academic." He was in fact a tenured senior academic faculty member at Tel Aviv University, where he is now emeritus.

Page 86: The triple murder of civil rights workers in Neshoba County, Mississippi, was 1964, not 1967 as stated.

GOLDSTONE

(continued from page 12)

In short, while Goldstone recognizes that "the ongoing lack of justice is undermining any hope for a successful peace process and reinforcing an environment that fosters violence," the Obama administration's view is that holding human rights abusers accountable for their actions is somehow incompatible with working for peace.

Meanwhile on Capitol Hill, Democrats were echoing their Republican counterparts in denouncing Goldstone and his commission's report. Rep. Elliot Engel of New York and Rep. Shelley Berkley of Nevada, senior Democratic members of the House Middle East subcommittee, issued a joint statement claiming the Goldstone Commission report was "biased against Israel." Ignoring the detailed evidence to the contrary, they insisted that "Israel took every reasonable step to avoid civilian casualties" and that "it is ridiculous to claim that Israel did not take appropriate actions to protect civilian populations." Even though the UN report—like those of Amnesty International and others—challenged the myth that Hamas fighters had used Palestinian civilians as human shields, Engel and Berkley still insisted that the report ignored "the true root of this problem—Hamas terrorists who ... are willing to risk their own civilian populations—even their own children."

Rep. Gary Ackerman of New York, whom the Democrats have named the Middle East subcommittee chairman and vice-chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, misrepresented the report even more blatantly. He denounced it by claiming, "In the self-righteous fantasyland inhabited by the authors, there's no such thing as terrorism, there's no such thing as Hamas, [and] there's no such thing as legitimate self-defense." In reality, the report refers to "terrorism" (or "terror" or "terrorists") more than 100 times, mentions Hamas more than 400 times, and fails to challenge the dubious claim that Israel launched its war on Gaza in self-defense.

The real fantasyland, then, appears to

be among congressional Democratic leaders and members of the Obama administration who are willing to ignore empirical evidence if it reflects unfavorably against Israel or other U.S. allies.

The problem is not one of being too "pro-Israel," since it is just such war crimes and other gross and systematic human rights abuses by the Israeli government that have resulted in the rise of extremist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah in the first place. The problem is that the Democratic leaders in Washington, like their Republican predecessors, recognize that popular concern for human rights can be an impediment to their militaristic agenda in the Middle East. As a result, they have joined the Republicans in a campaign to, in effect, kill the messenger: attack the United Nations, Amnesty International, or anyone else—journalist, scholar, activist, or one of the world's most respected jurists—who puts forward credible evidence of human rights abuses by the United States or its allies. ■

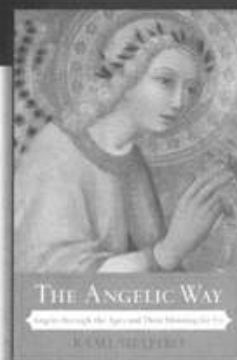
ASK THE AUTHOR! November 30: Stephen Zunes

6 p.m. Pacific Time (9 p.m. Eastern) Call 1-888-346-3950 for free!

Then enter this code: 11978#

See full schedule at www.tikkun.org

The New Book by Rabbi Rami Shapiro



Rabbi Rami Shapiro's new book, *The Angelic Way: Angels through the Ages and Their Meaning for Us*, illuminates the spiritual, philosophical, and psychological implications of angels, both heavenly and fallen, for readers and seekers of every faith or none.

"Shapiro's *The Angelic Way* delves into the many ways that angels have captivated human thought and helped us find ways to express our understanding of the divine."

— *The Los Angeles Times*

Available Now • 240 pp • Paper • \$15.95 • ISBN: 9781933346199

BlueBridge bluebridgebooks.com

Democrats' Attacks on Goldstone

THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION AND THE DEMOCRATIC leadership in Congress appear to be continuing the Bush administration policy of ignoring and denouncing those who have the temerity to report violations of international humanitarian law by the United States or its allies. The latest example can be seen in their reaction to the United Nations Human Rights Council's fact-finding mission on the Gaza conflict, which was headed by the renowned South African jurist Richard Goldstone.

Goldstone, who has had a longstanding reputation for fairness and objectivity and who previously led the war crimes prosecutions for Yugoslavia and Rwanda, is a Zionist Jew and a longtime supporter of Israel. **He rejected the original mandate of the UN Human Rights Council that the investigation focus solely upon violations of human rights by Israel and successfully demanded that the investigation be expanded to examine the conduct by both sides of the conflict.**

The Goldstone Commission report cited a number of violations of the laws of war by Hamas, including its rocket attacks on Israel, its torture of Palestinian opponents, and its continued holding of kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. **The report's criticism of Hamas would have likely been even longer and harsher had the Israeli government agreed to meet with the commission and allow its members to visit Israel.**

What upset Obama administration officials and congressional Democrats was that the report also concluded that Israel's military assault on Gaza was "a deliberately disproportionate attack designed to punish, humiliate, and terrorize a civilian population," citing deadly attacks against schools, mosques, private homes, and businesses nowhere near legitimate military targets. These conclusions echo detailed empirical reports released in recent months by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Crisis Group, and the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem, among others.

Rather than challenge the content of the meticulously documented 575-page report, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice responded to its release by noting that the United States had long had "very serious concerns" about the mandate the Human Rights Council gave to Goldstone, calling it "unbalanced, one-sided, and basically unacceptable," ignoring that the original mandate was superseded long ago by a balanced directive. Rice was particularly critical of the report's recommendation that those Palestinians and Israelis suspected of war crimes be tried before the International Criminal Court, arguing, "Our view is that we need to be focused on the future." Though Rice had argued just a few months earlier during a UN debate on Darfur that war crimes charges should never be sacrificed for



UN investigator Richard Goldstone visits the destroyed house where members of the Samouni family were killed in an artillery strike during Israel's offensive in January in Gaza City, June 3, 2009.

political reasons, she reinforced Assistant Secretary of State Phillip Crowley's insistence that the Goldstone Commission report "should not be used as a mechanism to add impediments to getting back to the peace process."

In late September, Michael Posner, the new U.S. assistant secretary of state for human rights, noted, "We disagree sharply with many of the report's assessments and its recommendations, and believe it to be deeply flawed."

Sixteen Democrats joined fourteen Republicans in writing a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton attacking what they called a "biased report." The letter insisted that Israeli human rights abuses must not be taken up in international fora but—despite the Israeli government's long history of covering up war crimes by its armed forces—the Israeli government must be trusted to handle the matter internally. The signatories praised what they called "the extraordinary measures taken by the Israel Defense Forces to minimize civilian casualties," praised the State Department for publicly raising its significant concerns about the report, and called upon the Obama administration to "denounce the unbalanced nature of this investigation." The letter was signed by such leading Democratic senators as Charles Schumer (D-NY), Carl Levin (D-MI), Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Russ Feingold (D-WI), and Daniel Inouye (D-HI).

The Palestinian delegation to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva proposed a resolution to have the UN Security Council endorse the report and its recommendations. However, the Obama administration made clear they would veto any such resolution and successfully pressured the Palestinian delegation in Geneva to drop its initiative. *(continued on page 79)*

Stephen Zunes (www.stephenzunes.org) is a professor of politics and chair of Middle Eastern studies at the University of San Francisco, a senior policy analyst for Foreign Policy in Focus, and a longtime contributing editor at Tikkun.

Dear Swami

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

BY SWAMI BEYONDANANDA

Dear Swami:

I have asked this question of many great masters, and none could answer it to my satisfaction. So I will ask you: how do you know you know?

Ashir Dropov

Brooklyn, New York

Dear Ashir:

As far as I know, there are Four Stages of Knowing:

1. You don't know.
2. You don't know you don't know.
3. You know you don't know.
4. You know "I don't know" is all you need to know.

Clearly, you have not achieved Stage Four because you still think you need to know if you know, and your desire to be aware of what you know and what you don't know has led you to a state of mental confusion. I understand this condition from my own experience, because I too was a know-aware man. But then in an instant of enlightenment, I went from know awareness to no awareness. As soon as I knew I didn't know, I knew. Y'know?

And you know what? In these uncertain times, what better way to face the unknown than by not knowing? You don't know? Great! You are prepared.

Dear Swami:

Since you seem to be an expert on humor, tell me this: what makes something funny?

Howard Datby

Lincoln, Nebraska

Dear Howard:

OK, I will give you an example. Three men—a swami, a rabbi, and a hedge fund manager—were traveling and needed a place to stop for the night. They stopped at a farmhouse, and the farmer told them he only had two spare beds and one of them would have to sleep in the barn. The swami, being a humble man, volunteered to sleep there. But in five minutes, there was a knock on the door. It was the swami. He apologized profusely and said that although cows

were sacred in his tradition, it was not appropriate to sleep near them. The rabbi said, "I have nothing against cows," and he volunteered to sleep in the barn. Five minutes later came another knock on the door. It was the rabbi. "There's a pig in the barn," he said. "Pigs aren't kosher, and it wouldn't be right for me, a rabbi, to sleep that close to them." At this point, the hedge fund manager jumped up. "Look, we need to get some sleep, so I'll sleep out there. I have no problem with cows or pigs." Out he went, and in five minutes there was another knock on the door. It was the cow and the pig.

So, to answer your question ... something is funny for the same reason it isn't funny.

Dear Swami:

I am one who believes that Universal Intelligence in the form of Nature is always sending us signals. For example, if I see an eagle, it is a reminder to let my higher nature soar. Or an armadillo tells me to be aware of my boundaries. I am usually able to figure out these messages pretty easily, but last week I was at a nearby lake, and I saw something I've never seen before. As I peered at the rocks along the shore, I saw a fish that looked like a cross between a catfish and a swordfish. A local fellow later told me it was a gar. Never having seen one before, I am at a total loss as to the special meaning of this unusual sighting. Swami, what does it mean to see gar?

Barber Q. Dribbs

Lampasas, Texas

Dear Barber:

Since no book I've ever seen has mentioned any symbolism for this critter, maybe we should just fall back on the words of Dr. Freud: "Sometimes a 'see gar' is just a 'see gar.'" ■

Swami Beyondananda is the comic alter ego of Steve Bhaerman and can be found online at www.wakeuplaughing.com. On the serious side, Steve recently coauthored Spontaneous Evolution: Our Positive Future and a Way to Get There From Here with cellular biologist Bruce Lipton.



Jewish American Food Culture

JONATHAN DEUTSCH AND RACHEL D. SAKS

\$17.95 paperback

AT TABLE SERIES

Good Neighbors, Bad Times

Echoes of My Father's German Village
Updated with discussion questions

MIMI SCHWARTZ

"Eloquent. . . Schwartz's tone is gentle, her prose brilliantly clear and her insights keen."

—Kirkus Reviews

\$16.95 paperback

Contemporary Jewish Writing in Brazil

An Anthology

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY NELSON H. VIEIRA

\$60.00 hardcover

JEWISH WRITING IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD SERIES

*For more information and to order, visit us online!

UNIVERSITY OF
NEBRASKA PRESS
www.nebraskapress.unl.edu • 1-800-848-6224

THE RELIGIOUS LEFT AND CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS

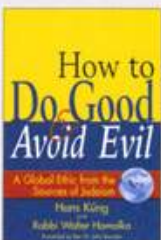
Steven H. Shiffrin
Princeton University Press, 2009



RELIGIOUS LIBERALS RECOGNIZE THAT ATTEMPTS TO STRENGTHEN THE ties of church to state are bad for religion—in a free society people turn away from religion that appears to be imposed by the state. But religious values and worldviews are not out of place in politics—what's wrong with the religious Right is not that it is sully the separation of church and state, but the content of its adherents' politics and their theology. In this study of the Establishment Clause and its concrete impact in contemporary America, Shiffrin, a professor of law at Cornell, argues that religious liberals are more likely to be effective against the religious Right than are secular liberals, and that religious perspectives are a necessary counterpoint to the corporate state and the instrumental and egoistic perspectives that back it up. He warns against secular liberals' resisting serious alliances with religious liberals.

HOW TO DO GOOD AND AVOID EVIL

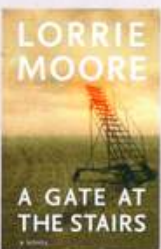
Hans Kung and Rabbi Walter Homolka
Rev. Dr. John Bowden, trans.
Skylight Paths Publishing, 2009



HANS KUNG IS A WIDELY RESPECTED CATHOLIC theologian and serves as president of the Global Ethic Foundation; Rabbi Homolka is rector of Abraham Geiger College for the training of rabbis and a professor at Potsdam University in Germany. Together they've put together a helpful handbook of resources for a global ethic drawn from the sources of Judaism in the past 2,500 years.

A GATE AT THE STAIRS

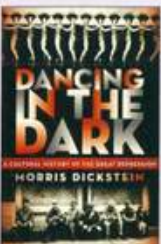
Lorrie Moore
Alfred A. Knopf, 2009



LORRIE MOORE IS SUCH A PLEASURE TO READ THAT we couldn't let the publication of her newest novel go by without using the moment to applaud her. The story of a Midwestern twenty-year-old farm woman whose entrance into college and into a family for whose apparently illegally adopted child she serves as "child care provider" enables Moore to reveal with stunning brilliance how badly our twenty-first-century life needs healing and transformation. Moore is not only one of the great wordsmiths of our time, but also a profound observer and analyst whose provocative ideas are often presented in an offhanded style that refrains from announcing their importance. Her writing awakens, inspires, challenges, delights, and sometimes depresses the reader, even as it reveals the world hidden in plain sight.

DANCING IN THE DARK: A CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Morris Dickstein
W.W. Norton & Co., 2009



MORRIS DICKSTEIN HAS DONE AN EXTRAORDINARY job, in this cultural history of the Great Depression, of weaving together his own acute appreciation of literature and movies with a sweeping understanding of the political and social realities of American life. Dickstein is as fluent in the language of the Popular Front and the rise of a leftist culture as he is with Hollywood, as sensitive to the realities in minority communities as to those in white middle and upper

class ones, and as deft an explicator of the hidden messages in the dancing of Fred Astaire as of those in the darker side of movies by Frank Capra. Often overturning accepted readings of American culture, Dickstein tells the story of a society moving from an initial sense of crisis and personal isolation, as the Depression shattered the illusions of capitalist expansion in the 1920s, to an emerging dream of community, a vision of interdependence that developed in both the political and cultural consciousness of the American majority. His richly detailed descriptions are sure to lure many to revisit the books and movies that make that era so relevant to our own.

FIRE AND INK: AN ANTHOLOGY OF SOCIAL ACTION WRITING

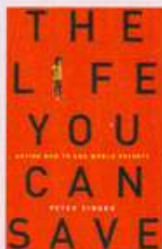
Frances Payne Adler, Debra Busman,
and Diana Garcia, eds.
University of Arizona Press, 2009



THIS ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY AND PROSE OFFERS A perspective on contemporary experience that is rarely reflected in the popular media or in public policy. You'll find here many names that are familiar—Adrienne Rich, Alice Walker, June Jordan, Audre Lorde, Robert Hass, Leonard Peltier, Mahmoud Darwish, Carolyn Forché, Arundhati Roy, Thich Nhat Hanh, Naomi Shihab Nye, David Barsamian—and also many new voices who illuminate the pain, the suffering, and the hope that has been emerging globally in the past decades. Equally exciting: the editors of this rich and important collection have been building a Creative Writing and Social Action Program at California State University at Monterey Bay, so we can look to their graduates for important work in the future!

THE LIFE YOU CAN SAVE

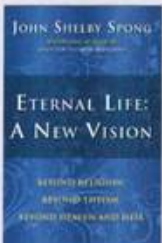
Peter Singer
Random House, 2009



ETHICIST PETER SINGER PROVIDES A POWERFUL argument as to why each of us in America (and by implication all other advanced industrial societies) should personally donate to aid agencies, when by doing so we can prevent suffering and death without giving up anything nearly as important. Americans have a vastly inflated sense of the amount their government gives in foreign aid (it's actually less than one-tenth of one percent of our federal budget). Certainly, none of us can solve the problem of global poverty, but we can make a difference. You can restore a person's sight for about \$50 or give a young woman with an obstetric fistula her life back for about \$450. Isn't that worth doing, even if you are the only person doing it? (And fortunately, you won't be.) So while working to pass the Global Marshall Plan, we should, Singer argues, give a higher percentage of our own incomes to private aid agencies—and he has set up a website to help you find the right place to give such donations: www.thelifeyoucansave.com.

ETERNAL LIFE: A NEW VISION

John Shelby Spong
HarperOne, 2009



FORMER EPISCOPAL BISHOP OF NEWARK, NEW Jersey, John Spong is one of the great truth-tellers of the Christian world, and in this remarkable, easy to read, and deeply profound book he shows how severely befuddled humanity has become by cleaving to religions that promise personal survival in a future heaven (or hell). Spong urges ridding religion of heaven and hell and, indeed, moving beyond all forms of organized religion. Yet he is a deeply religious thinker, and if the old formulations no longer work, the retired bishop is not afraid to pioneer new conceptions of eternal life, rooted in part in biblical faith yet consistent with the most advanced science. In a powerful epilogue he grapples with the ethical and spiritual issues that emerge as people begin to claim for themselves the right to die in dignity, without the suffering that so often comes from some degenerative diseases.

*Help us out in hard economic times—
use us for Christmas or Chanukah.*

The perfect **HOLIDAY GIFT...**
a subscription to *Tikkun* magazine



PHOTOS BY SABIHA BASRAI AND KATE SAWYER

or a gift membership in the **Network of Spiritual Progressives**
(with membership your gift recipient also gets a complimentary sub. to *Tikkun*).

Send us your gift list—and help keep *Tikkun* alive in the next year! Go to www.tikkun.org with your credit card, or send us a check (\$25 per sub or \$40 per membership) to 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, California, 94704.