(tē•kün) To mend, repair and transform the world.

TIKKUN

Misplaced in the U.S.
Wendy Orange

Editorials:
Psychotherapy vs. The Market
Quiz Show &
Natural Born Killers

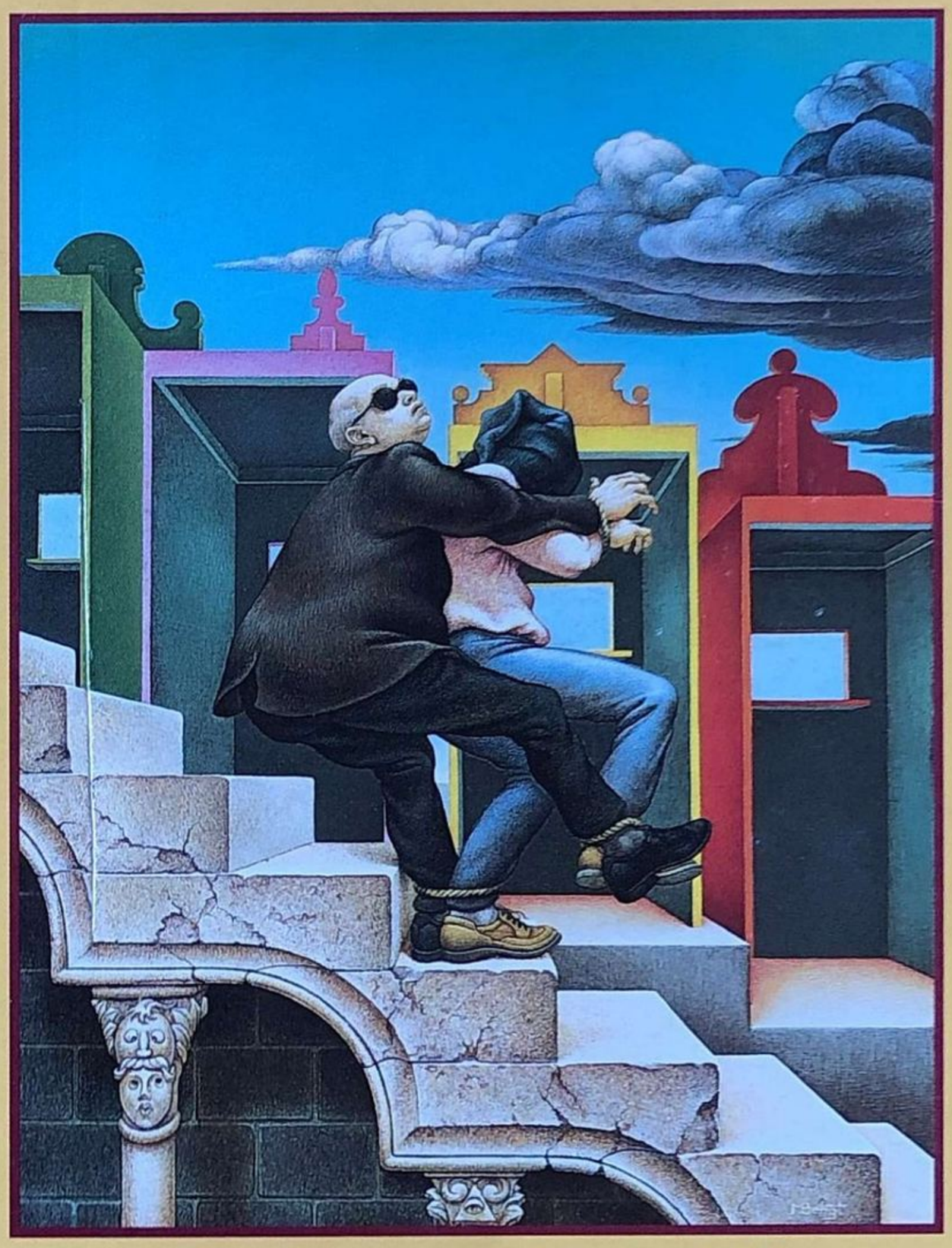
Chanukah Supplement

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1994 $6.00

Can Progressive Politics Survive?

After The Fall

Jay Rosen
Mary Edsall
Peter Gabel
Michael Lerner



Resistances to Spirituality
Michael J. Bader

The Meaning of Health
Barry Schwartz

Women Writing
Joan L. Bolker

Memory and Sexual Abuse
Ruth Wallen

Pentecostals
Harvey Cox

Shul and Spirit
Alice Chasan

Mark Stern on **Welfare Politics** • Michael S. Roth on **Politics and Memory**
Eleanor Boyle on **A Convert's Dilemma Facing Christmas**
David Hartman on **Yishayahu Leibowitz**

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Pavanne for a Dead Potato Pancake or Hymn to Low Cholesterol

Knishes
are so delicious.
A mound of chopped liver makes me quiver
in a way no salmon mousse will ever,
even though the way they mold the mousse in
the shape of a dead fish with an olive
for an eye is very clever,
but salmon was meant to be lox; that is why it
swims upstream:
to have a little sex and then lie quietly on a
bagel until supper's ready.

Although matzo is not so hot plain,
Moses took a couple boxes on his trek
through the desert,
and after forty years God finally spoke to
Moses. He said,
"Moses, if you want to try it, soak it first in
some eggs and then fry it
with some sauteed onions,"
and Moses did and saw that it was food and
called it "matzo brie,"
after the box of the same name.

Now a potato latke
may not be exactly your idea of haute cuisine,
but such a pancake could drive even a Julia
Child wild
if you lie it down next to a nice roast chicken
with its skin on, the way God
meant a chicken to be,
because if God had intended chickens to have
no skin
He would have invented naked chickens,
but what hath God wrought?
Fat chickens.

O I could write a hymn or psalm it
about tzimmes, that conglomerate of carrots,
prunes and meat,
all synergistically tzimmering as a treat for
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
strong men and brave who before they girded
up their loins
to go off and smite the Philistines or
whomever
didn't mind a little bupke before breakfast,
that sweet bread plump with raisins and
pockets of spice,

while those good wives, Leah, Sarah and
Rachel, spent their lives
in the kitchen frying blueberry blintzes with
cinnamon
that were fit for a King Saul or a Simeon,

fit even for a King David until he took up
with that hussy, Bathsheba, may his bupke
never rise again, and every day they all
thanked God
for not having invented high cholesterol yet.

My children, we must forget our gustatory
heritage
for the sake of longer longevity yet, and the
blessings of lettuce.
Let us sit and listen to the walls of our
arteries thinning
and also maybe it wouldn't hurt to renounce
our sinning:
for the sin of fondling matzo balls in
chicken soup, we are rueful;
we rue too coveting not only strudel, but
also noodle pudding and potato kugel;
and thighs, with the skin on.
Amen.

But God, could a little pastrami harm me?

Ruth Kramer Baden

Can you believe that this is your last copy of TIKKUN?

(Unless you renew your subscription soon)

Bill & Hillary Clinton, Al & Tipper Gore each read TIKKUN, each has quoted from it.

TIKKUN is going to play an important role in the next four years. There will be a spirited debate over which direction this Administration goes—and TIKKUN will be providing a way for those who want to jump over the normal dichotomies between "left" and "right" and find a whole new way of thinking about politics. That's why Clinton and Gore like TIKKUN, and why TIKKUN is so frequently quoted in the national media.

TIKKUN will help restrain the influence of those in the Jewish establishment who want the U.S. to side with the more hawkish elements in the Israeli government.

So this is a lousy time to stop getting the magazine

We need your support. The recession has hurt us. Just when we are in an important position to help influence the national debate, and to ensure a voice for liberal Jews, it is particularly important to give us your support. Resubscribing will help keep this voice alive.

Meanwhile, TIKKUN is at the heart of so many other discussions. When Henry Louis Gates, Jr., chair of African-American Studies at Harvard, recently attacked Black anti-Semitism publicly, he referred specifically to the article in TIKKUN that had shaped his thinking. People turn to TIKKUN for our discussions about the limits of scientific rationality, our ecological analysis, our understanding of nationalism and ethnic particularism, and our approach to contemporary culture. TIKKUN articles are constantly being reprinted in anthologies, reprinted for college courses, cited in the media.

And, of course, peace movement activists in Israel praise us for our role in helping to create the necessary support in the U.S. that assisted the victory of peace forces in Israel. TIKKUN takes tough blows from the Jewish establishment because it has been so outspoken in critiquing Israeli policy toward the Palestinians. Yet the June, 1992 election victory of the Labor Party—itself committed to a platform very similar to that which got TIKKUN in trouble with conservatives in the American Jewish world—has vindicated our position.

Each year our fiction and poetry win literary awards (we just won another O'Henry for fiction). Our articles on philosophy and psychology and literature are at the cutting edge of contemporary discussions.

Even if you don't always have time to read everything in TIKKUN, we deserve your support. You can renew, either because you love our articles or simply because you want to make a statement of moral support for a voice that needs to be heard.

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TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY — VOLUME 9 NUMBER 6

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Chanukah Supplement

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Letters

JEWISH RENEWAL

To the Editor:

Thank you for stating [in the selection from Michael Lerner's book *Jewish Renewal* reprinted in "Cruelty is Not Destiny," Sept/Oct 1994] that there is no divine sanction for cruelty, injustice, oppression, limitation. Change—freedom—is possible for everyone and for the community.

Abraham's courage in setting out to explore a spiritual wilderness with no sacred text, no tradition, no wise, experienced person, no model to guide him is astonishing. A "new" God suggests a new reality, and he had to work out for himself step by step, and day by day, the practical implications of his initial revelation. He was a human being who made mistakes and learned from them—wait, maybe there is something of the superhero in that. Abraham made it possible for us to understand God as not only a living, powerful Present, but also as loving Parent.

Julia Cole
Hoboken, New Jersey

To the Editor:

I've heard dozens of explanations of the Akedah, but yours was the first one that didn't seem to try to justify something that couldn't be justified. I picked up your book *Jewish Renewal* and was delighted to see that it too speaks in a clear way to my head and my heart.

Yet there is one thing I didn't understand. If God is only the abstract force in the universe that makes mutual recognition possible, why do we need to talk about God at all? Why not just talk about mutual recognition. Doesn't your position amount to a form of secular humanism dressed up as religion? I'm much attracted to your position, but I don't know if in being attracted

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I'm really being won away from Judaism.

Sandee Charman
Los Angeles, California

Editor responds:

As I explain in *Jewish Renewal,* there is a kabbalistic belief that God has many *partzufim,* or forms of appearance. The form that we need most to integrate into our consciousness is that of the God who is the force that makes for the possibility of transcendence, breaking the repetition compulsion that leads us to pass on cruelty and enabling us to feel compassion. As limited beings, we are only capable of getting a part of who God is, and every attempt to put into language the ineffable reality of God is necessarily partial. So, in my book, I also explain why we ought not to think of God only as an abstract force, but also as a Being with subjectivity whom we might address as "a Thou" (in Buber's terms). In short, this is not secular humanism, but neither is it constrained by the formulations about God that emerged from a patriarchal and hierarchical worldview that most moderns can no longer accept.

Blacks and Jews

To the Editor:

The Nation of Islam's *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews,* upon which most of its anti-Semitic rhetoric is based, is a work that exemplifies Amos Funkenstein's definition of counterhistory: "the systematic exploitation of the adversary's most trusted sources against their grain...Their aim is the distortion of the adversary's self-image, of his identity, through the deconstruction of his memory." (Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*).

Benjamin Chavis's alliance with the Nation of Islam implicates him, as well, in the destructive work of counterhistory. Though he has been ousted from the NAACP (but not for his alliance with an anti-Semitic organization), Chavis has developed a notoriety which I believe he will continue to use to further his own popularity and to strengthen his and his followers' bonds to the Nation of Islam.

After his dismissal, Chavis was

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• Michael Lerner's new book, *Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation*

At your local bookstores (or, if not, ask them to order from G.P. Putnam's Sons Publishers)

Tikkun Events in New York

Nov. 4-6 **Tikkun Conference** at Congregation Ansche Chesed (for info call 864-8253).

Thursday, November 24 **Thanksgiving Vegetarian Pot-Luck**, 1:30-4:00 at apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. RSVP by Nov. 21st: 864 8253.

December 4 (8th night) **Chanukah party** (bring latkes or dessert; free to subscribers, others $10). Sunday, 7:00 P.M. at 885 West End (corner 103rd). **(It's not too late to buy gift subscriptions to Tikkun for some of your friends! or a copy of** *Jewish Renewal*).

December 24 **Tikkun Salon**, Saturday night. Vegetarian pot-luck and Havdalah 6-7:30. Presentation by speaker: 7:30-9:00. Socializing 9:00-11:00. Free to subscribers; $10 others (but everyone should bring main course vegetarian dish for pot-luck, or dessert for later socializing). RSVP by Dec. 22 for location, 864-8253.

December 31 **New Year's Eve Salon**, Saturday. Presentation by speaker, 7:30-9:00. Socializing and bring dessert for pot-luck, 9:00-midnight. RSVP by Dec. 29 for location: 864-8253.

January 14 **Tikkun Salon** Saturday. 6-7:30 Vegetarian Pot-Luck and Havdalah. 7:30-9:00 Presentation by speaker and discussion. 9:30-11:30 Socializing and dessert pot-luck. RSVP for location 864-8253.

Interns Needed

Review incoming manuscripts, help develop our projects on **a.** Blacks and Jews, **b.** the Politics of Meaning and **c.** the rise of neo-Nazism; work on building our conferences; and assist us in running the NY office. Minimum commitment: 16 hours per week. To apply: write a self-revealing letter about yourself and what you like and dislike about Tikkun and *Jewish Renewal.* To: Tikkun Interns, 251 W. 100, N.Y., N.Y. 10025.

quoted as saying, "Now there's been a crucifixion, but today we celebrate the resurrection." Chavis's use of the imagery of Jesus to describe himself is a counterhistorical cooptation of the civil rights struggle's traditional use of biblical imagery. Here, his opponents are the NAACP and the "outside forces" that Chavis claims control the organization. Chavis employs this imagery in an anti-Semitic manner, to portray himself as the victim of the NAACP and its Jesus-crucifying allies.

How does one argue with counterhistory? I am afraid we may be so busy defending ourselves that we will forget to do the work of remembering and retelling our history as we know it—the real, complex, imperfect but far from evil story.

Rachel Eskin
Santa Barbara, California

CLINTON & MEANING

To the Editor:

Please support Bill Clinton. He has enough enemies. Please continue to show him how he could improve his image! We have the best four people in the White House we ever had—please show them the way. I'm eighty-five years old and wish I can live to see them re-elected in 1996. Amen.

Helene Blum
Larchmont, New York

To the Editor:

I can't believe how prophetic your editorials have turned out to be! It seems as if you almost predict exactly the mistakes Clinton is going to fall into, and he then does just what you tell him he shouldn't! You warn against abandoning a meaning framework, against leaving his ethical framework, against his politics of endless compromise, and when he fails to listen, he falls right on his face.

Since the start of TIKKUN, you've railed against the way the Carter administration failed to have a coherent vision of the good—so that they were beaten by the Right was no surprise. What an irony that Clinton now hitches up with Carter, and for the very purpose of undermining the moral clarity of going into Haiti, dismantling the army, and allowing real democracy! How could Clinton be so stupid? The answer: the same way he could abandon principle on health care, economic policy, and so many other areas. This guy has no bottom line.

One other thing I can't believe: that anybody is really reading TIKKUN in the White House. I know that they've told you they are, but if they were, would they really keep making these same dumb mistakes? Unless, as some people argue, knowing what is best to do is not sufficient when you are dealing with people with the kind of weakness of will that makes it impossible for them to act on their own understanding unless they are sure that everyone else will approve. The irony, of course, is that in seeking to go for everyone's approval, Clinton ends up with almost no one's.

B. Rodney Murrow, III
Baltimore, Maryland

To the Editor:

Like Lerner and Gabel, I have spent considerable time talking and working with union members and shop stewards in industrial plants, and I had once studied the history of the early formation of unions. While a number of radical orators and theoreticians from an ideological Left were highly visible in the original struggles in the 1920s and '30s, most of the stalwart leadership and followers were indigenous, workers who decided they had to stand against particular oppression by owners, and for decent working conditions and wages—specific intentions rather than long-range transformation of society. Labor's later success may have brought staffs and bureaucrats with available resources, but cultural issues never became important to them or the movement (except perhaps the ILGWU and IWW). Even the Reuther brothers, who grew up with a European socialist understanding of working-class needs, failed to leave an enduring heritage either to the officers or the rank and file of the UAW. Although their vision of a culturally oriented camp for workers and their families was finally (and handsomely) realized at Black Lake, Michigan, it failed to capture member involvement or build sustained Left class consciousness; I've heard that Solidarity House has been considering selling it as real estate.

Aspirations for unions to attend to workers' spiritual, psychological and/or cultural needs are still more remote from implementation in the far reaches of the AFL-CIO or the Teamsters, e.g., whose pragmatic business agents remain entrenched by hewing to contract agreements on meat-and-potatoes issues. Not all their fault, of course, and one might have sympathy with their dues-paying members, skilled and unskilled, who would prefer to take their kids fishing, work on the basement rec-room, or watch ball games on TV in the bar than spend their limited free hours in "values" meetings at the hall downtown.

And even if they were to turn up there to satisfy their [imputed] "hunger for meaning," who would they find in charge of the programming? Well, it wouldn't be Lerner and Gable, or Edsall and Drinan, but the same old gig-chasing crowd of consultants and Mill Valley-style presenters, convinced (as are so many professional social case workers) that they know what's best for their recalcitrant clients—and their own elite interests. As for intellectuals on the Left, my own long acquaintance with academic liberals would confirm the late Christopher Lasch's assessment of them as generally infected with disdain and distrust of ordinary working people, who they assume, from their comfortable enclaves, are low-brow gun nuts with rude manners, a waste of time to try to talk to.

A more modest, but still very difficult societal goal for TIKKUN and its audience would be the Communitarian one: balancing the national obsession about individual rights and entitlements with a deeper, active sense of responsibility, obligation, and duty toward rebuilding the fragile microstructure of civil society.

Thomas Fitzgerald
Ann Arbor, Michigan

To the Editor:

I was encouraged to read that some of your writers agree with me that "politics of meaning" is an atrocious term guaranteed to turn off many of the people who would embrace what it means if they understood what that is.

"Politics of meaning" sounds shrinkified. One expects it to be explicated in the language of psychobabble. Also, there is nothing in it that indicates what that meaning is. There are good meanings and bad meanings.

German National Socialism was a politics of meaning.

"Meaning" either means nothing or it means a wide variety of things, many of them bad. The Christian Right is pushing a politics of meaning too, and doing a better job of it than we are. Michael Lerner's lengthy explanations are wonderful; I haven't found anything in them to disagree with. But he's preaching to the converted. We need a term that indicates what kind of society, economy, and culture we want, not just that we want something.

At first, I thought "politics of community" could work. But the term has the same flaws TIKKUN'S writers have pointed out in Amitai Etzioni's communitarianism. It doesn't recognize the importance of individuality. Besides, it refers only to the external forms of our ideal society, not the changes in attitudes, relationships, and worldviews that would motivate and inform their design. The principle "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is not about institutional forms. It is about virtue. The practices that could lead to an economy and polity that recognizes values and nurtures both community and individuality would be a politics of virtue.

So why not call it that? I have already heard Hillary Clinton use the term "politics of virtue." I think it would make an enormous difference to the millions of Americans who already agree with Michael Lerner's analysis of what is wrong with our society and what should be done about it, but who will never know it if they have to get past the unfortunate "politics of meaning" phrase.

The word "virtue" has been coopted by the political right, along with "family values." I think we should take it back. "Virtue" is a word all Christians, right-wing or left, understand. "Meaning" is not.

Ginger Katz
New York, New York

Editor responds:

Mr. Murrow wonders if the Clintons are reading the magazine. We imagine, however, that the problem lies not in the Clintons' reading TIKKUN, but in their willingness to act by the principles to which they say they adhere.

Mr. Fitzgerald is certainly correct to say that it would be no easy task to transform the current culture of union life, and that it would be hard to find people inside the labor movement or among professionals who could provide the leadership for this. We at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health spent many years training union shop stewards, and found that they could play a very effective role in changing the culture of their unions. The problem is that top leadership felt threatened by this development, in part because they themselves believe that the only important function for the union movement is to provide benefits and struggle around grievances. Counter to Mr. Fitzgerald's speculations, we found working people in unions like the Teamsters to be very excited about meaning-oriented programming, though it took much careful strategizing and sensitive implementation to overcome the deep skepticism union members felt about their own unions doing anything more than grievances. They look for meaning elsewhere—often in right-wing religious communities. What Fitzgerald misses is that many working people do respond to communities of meaning, do not just hang out at home, but that the communities that are available to them are reactionary.

Ginger Katz should remember that the language of individual or human rights, or for that manner, any language, can be appropriated by the Right just as well as it can use the language of meaning. The Right can talk of our "right" to be free of interference by the state, to be free of excessive taxation, to be free to choose who our neighbors are going to be or where we send our children to school. Yet this is not a good argument for liberals abandoning the language of rights—but rather for contending for a different vision of what our rights should be. Similarly, the use of meaning language by the Right is inevitable—but the reason why it seems intrinsically right-wing language is because the progressive world has refused to recognize and take seriously the psychological, ethical, and spiritual needs of people, alternately dismissing them as "psychobabble" or as inappropriate for politics.

What certainly is not the case is that the politics of meaning has appealed only to "the converted" or that "we are speaking to ourselves." In fact, this phrase has entered the

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EXIT INTO HISTORY

A Journey Through the New Eastern Europe

EVA HOFFMAN

Award-winning author of *Lost in Translation*



Photograph: Charles Weckler/The Image Bank

"Observant, thoughtful, charming....[Hoffman] proves a wonderful listener, recording with sensitivity and wit how jolly censors, compromised dissidents, among others, seek to knit their complicated pasts to an uncertain future."

—THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

READ IT. IT'S A PENGUIN.

American political lexicon since it was invented by TIKKUN, and has reached to tens of millions of people with whom progressives have never been able to connect.

Still, the language is clumsy. We are still very open to new formulations that capture the same ideas. But one thing we like about "the politics of meaning" is precisely the way that it jars, forces people to stop and think, doesn't fit easily into a twenty-second sound bite, and associates quickly to a correct feeling that many people have that the deepest problems of this society are connected to the way that people feel that it undermines any connection to a higher or transcendent meaning beyond a narrow materialistic self-interest orientation.

Still, if we stick with the words "the politics of meaning," as seems likely for the moment, we are nevertheless very much in need of some phrase that describes those who are adherents. "Meaningists" or "meaningites" sounds rather inelegant, and the term one of our readers once suggested, "neo-compassionists," sounds too easily caricatured as a rerun of the alleged liberal tax-and-spend rhetoric. So we'd be delighted to hear a term that identified the politics of meaning movement or adherents. Let's hear your ideas.

HOMOSEXUALITY

To the Editor:

Rabbi Levado effectively demolishes every argument put forth by Rabbi Kimelman (July/August 1994). Rabbi Levado makes very good arguments for full and open acceptance of gay and lesbian Jews by the Jewish religious community. While I think the word "marriage" and the marriage ceremony should be reserved for the covenanted relationship between a man and a woman, I think that synagogue-based sanctifications or covenanting ceremonies for same-sex couples is a fine idea.

Wherever he is and whoever he is, Jacob Levado does the Jewish people great service by helping us think clearly about difficult issues.

Ron Friedman
Richmond, Virginia

To the Editor:

Reuven Kimelman states in his

(Continued on p. 80)

Psychotherapy vs. Managed Care

Psychotherapists are right to be incensed that managed care is prohibiting them from giving therapy that clients need, forcing them to spend inordinate energy justifying care they do give, and allowing financial managers to make critical decisions affecting individuals' mental health (in the process, potentially compromising therapist/client confidentiality). As market criteria increasingly dominate health-care delivery, healing and caring inevitably suffer.

Yet psychotherapists are unlikely to change this dynamic by fighting the issues only when they affect their profession's self-interest. When framed in those terms, insurance company managers can talk about wishing to restrict soaring health-care costs and the need to challenge endless therapy that enriches the practitioner and does little for the client.

For psychotherapists to get a serious hearing, they are going to have to challenge the bottom line, profit-oriented, self-interest-driven concept of how the society ought to run. If psychotherapists become part of a movement to shift the dominant discourse of American society from an ethos of selfishness to an ethos of caring, they could help create a societal framework within which they would be far more effective in challenging the cost-cutting measures imposed by HMOs and insurance companies whose decisions are profit-oriented. But if psychotherapists frame the issue in narrow terms of professional self-interest, they are unlikely to generate enough public support to offset the "what's in it for me" mentality that the competitive market has so thoroughly inculcated in many Americans.

This suggests a significant and necessary revision of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV*, the guidebook to contemporary pathologies. It leaves out the most significant pathology of contemporary life: MDS: market-driven selfishness. There are many subcategories of this pathology, including SR (Selfishness in Relationships), SFL (Selfishness in Family Life), IENO (Insensitivity to the Economic Needs of Others), and CPSC (Cynicism about the Possibility of Social Change).

But wouldn't thinking about the issues in this way politicize a previously neutral, medical field by introducing moral and political criteria?

No, it would not. There has never been nor could there ever be an ethically and politically neutral definition of mental health. When therapists argued that they were merely seeking to empower individuals so that they could make their own choices, they were already deeply enmeshed in the market-oriented way of viewing society, one that privileged individuals and imagined that they could be healthy without regard to the quality of human relations and social realities around them. In this way, the definition neatly replicated the logic of the competitive market itself, which saw human beings as isolated monads equally fit to compete against each other for societal goods. The job of the therapist was merely to fix up specific individuals who might have suffered personal psychological problems that limited their ability to compete effectively in this struggle of all against all for the economic and social goodies that were supposedly available.

Contrast this with a view of health that imagines human beings as fundamentally in need of each other, and the healthy human being as one who can see other human beings as fundamentally valuable (in Jewish religious language, created in the image of God) and who can feel others' needs for fulfillment and recognition as one's own need. The healthy human being, on this account, is one who cannot pursue his or her own personal agenda without regard to the consequences for others, a person who cannot feel fully happy and content while others are in pain. This kind of a definition of mental health, of course, would require different kinds of therapeutic interventions and a significant rethinking of some of the assumptions of the mental-health professions.

Mental health is not an objective reality that can be "discovered" through scientific investigation; it has always been a societal construct based on the dominant assumptions of the age about what behaviors and attitudes were to be valued or scorned.

There are many grounds on which to argue that the dominant ethos of selfishness and cynicism is destructive to the mental health and well-being of most people in the society. But when people thought that the alternative to cheering on the market system was a form of totalitarian communism, they were understandably reluctant to be seen as challenging the ethos of selfishness. In the post-Cold War 1990s, the limits of a society based on individualism are coming into sharper relief, and with that the limits of conceptions of mental health that privilege lone individuals and imagine their ability to pursue private goals as the sign of health. It may be that unless we can nurture human beings capable of feeling the pain of others, and capable of acting in a less cynical and selfish way, we will face societal catastrophe.

All this might have been said with the same validity a few decades ago. What's different today is that the chickens are coming home to roost for professionals who thought they could build an apolitical life free of these kinds of issues. Increasingly, they are discovering that unless they can build a politics of meaning to replace the limited and somewhat misguided liberal politics of the past, unless they can build a politics in which the ethical and spiritual and psychological needs of people assume a central place, they will themselves become victims of the market.

Ironically, then, it may be self-interest that finally pushes contemporary professionals to a politics that transcends narrow self-interest. Psychotherapists could become the vanguard of such a movement. Otherwise, they may find themselves spending most of their time jumping through the latest hoops set up by insurance company accountants and cost-cutting health-care bureaucrats.

Hollywood's Near Misses

Natural Born Killers and *Quiz Show*, two recently released films, have in common a willingness to tell some difficult truths—and an inability to confront the deepest problems.

Natural Born Killers is Oliver Stone's latest foray into the psychic underbelly of American society. Although the irrational violence of the movie's hero and heroine are shown as outgrowths of the abuse they experienced as children, and the criminal justice system's irrationality and violence is exposed, Stone's film is more interested in shocking us with the society's contradictions than with providing a means for understanding it. There's an adolescent feeling to the rebellion that Stone valorizes—as though the appropriate response to the irrationality of the world is the random violence that it almost romanticizes. Like the young surrealists of the early twentieth century, whose hatred of bourgeois



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institutions led them to a theory that rebellion itself was the highest form of life, and who ultimately were attracted to the fascists because they seemed to be the most serious revolutionary threat to established conventions, Stone's vision may provide fodder for an American-style neo-Nazi rebellion in years to come that sees itself as anti-Establishment but lacking any positive vision of the good.

Though cinematically less interesting, *Quiz Show* is a far more sophisticated rendition of American society, and particularly praiseworthy for its depiction of the subtleties of anti-Semitism that flourish in polite society. Jews in America are constantly remaking themselves to fit the genteel styles of a Christian culture that otherwise dismisses us as crude and rude and possibly suspect of communism, radicalism, or other social diseases. Yet barely hidden under the surface of WASP society that portrays itself as high-minded and culturally advanced is a ferocious hunger for profits and power that generates a distorted world. *Quiz Show* comes close to uncovering that hypocrisy, then quickly backs away from its own possibilities. The film gives those who have made mass entertainment into deceitful schlock the last word, and it is a restatement of the self-justification of the competitive and manipulative market: "We give people what they want. If we put schlock on TV, or violence, or quiz shows that are deceitful, or any other garbage, well, we wouldn't be selling it if the public didn't want it. We're in this for business, and business depends on profits, and profits depend on our ability to address the actual wants of the public."

The success of films such as *Schindler's List* or television programs such as "Roots" shows the fallacy of this argument. Serious films and TV scripts can garner huge audiences if they are done with sensitivity, seriousness, and adequate budgets. It is not the market but Hollywood's fixed conception of "what people want" that guarantees the debasing of American popular culture. One can almost hear the sensitive directors and producers of *Quiz Show* telling each other that they can't go any further in confronting the logic of the competitive market—that their film is "radical" enough. It is not. In fact, despite its attempt at exposé, and momentary challenge to the corporate sponsor of the quiz show, it simply recredits the basic self-justification of the schlock industry. □

Jordanian Peace; Hamas Violence

Congratulations to Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the peace treaty with Jordan, and to the Clinton administration for their behind-the-scenes work. The accord's innovative idea of granting sovereignty to Arabs over land that is then leased back to Israel, although dangerously provocative in conferring on Jordan authority over Jerusalem sites that should rightly go to the Palestinians, should provide a useful precedent for how the Palestinians might gain sovereignty over the West Bank and even Jerusalem. They could achieve their goal by agreeing to lease back to Israel land on which some Jewish settlements might continue (if the settlers demonstrate a willingness to live in peace and in accord with the laws of their Palestinian neighbors).

Yet the central issue remains: Until Palestinians have a demilitarized state of their own, the continuing Israeli occupation of the West Bank, and the military-imposed humiliations and injustices necessary to sustain it, plus the imprisonment (often without the benefit of Western due process) of hundreds of Palestinians activists, will provide fertile ground for Islamic fundamentalist extremists such as Hamas. Although Americans like to imagine that the Gaza/Jericho limited autonomy agreements should have reduced tensions, most of the Palestinians I spoke to on my recent visit to Israel told of increased harassment in the West Bank and at border crossings, and more desperate economic pressure as Israel frequently shuts its borders to Palestinians employed inside the Green Line.

The disgusting terrorism on Jerusalem and Tel Aviv streets, and the kidnapping and murder of Israeli soldier Nahshon Waxman, should not be rewarded by undermining the process of West Bank autonomy and Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation that these extremists hope to destroy. If a Jewish extremist like Baruch Goldstein who murdered twenty-nine Palestinians at prayer in Hebron last March, or Islamic fundamentalists like those who blew up a bus in Tel Aviv in October, succeed in their intentions of delaying or distracting from the peace process, violence will be rewarded, and Israel will become far less secure.

Shame on Likud's Binyamin Netanyahu and his American supporters for exploiting these incidents of violence as proof that the peace process isn't working. To the contrary, the flurry of terrorist acts testifies to Hamas's desperation in wishing to derail the process now that the peace accord with Jordan has given it another boost. What the latest terrorism does show is that holding on to the West Bank, Palestinian prisoners, and control of Jerusalem in no way ensures the safety of Israeli civilians.

The crazies in Hamas understand that the deeper and more serious the accords between Palestinians and Israelis become, the less popular support Hamas will have. Though domestic political pressures may force

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Special Focus– After the Fall:

The erosion of Democratic Party strength in Congress is the latest sign of growing despair and cynicism among those who supported Bill Clinton in 1992. In this section, we explore the meaning and consequences of this development.

EDITORIAL

Two More Years

Because of the publicity given to my own visits to the White House in 1993 and the nonsense in the *Wall Street Journal, San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Washington Post* about my being "the guru of the White House," many people have been under the impression that TIKKUN magazine has been an uncritical champion of the Clintons. Yet from the start of the Clinton administration, TIKKUN has been outspokenly critical of moves the President has taken which were at variance with his stated goals.

We continue to wish Bill Clinton well, and we are all too cognizant of the vicious racist, sexist, and homophobic forces that are likely to be the immediate beneficiaries of his political demise. The urgency of our critique reflects our caring and support for the part of Clinton that is deeply moral and spiritually sensitive.

But we've also been clear in warning Clinton that unless he consistently and articulately embraced a politics of meaning, he could be building the preconditions for a right-wing resurgency that would be far more vicious than anything we saw in the Reagan/Bush years. Starting in November 1992, even before Clinton took office, we published a series of "Memos to Clinton" that explained to him that the hopefulness he had awakened in America was very ephemeral, because the long history of disappointments and betrayals that the American public has faced at the hands of previous do-gooders has led many to be extremely skeptical and to be ready to shift quickly from support to apathy or opposition. So from the start we warned Clinton that unless he projected an unambiguous image as a principled reformer ready to lose some battles but ferociously committed to his principles, he might immediately lose his public support. The electoral route of 1994 confirms our fears.

Our point has been simple: A change-oriented president of the United States does not have the power to impose his agenda on a Congress that is largely subservient to the interests of America's elites of wealth and power.

What a president can do, however, and what Clinton might still be able to do to save his presidency and the liberal and progressive forces in the next two years, is to articulate a vision, a worldview, an ethical perspective, and legitimate a new form of discourse. And he can convince the American public that his specific proposals follow from and embody that worldview, so that to the extent that they accept his worldview they will also become supporters of his program. For this he doesn't need the approval of Congress. All he needs is courage.

A president must be prepared to fight for his worldview even when he thinks it will be unpopular. His goal must be to get the public to understand what that worldview would entail in their lives. But to do this, he can't make his first priority putting together the congressional coalitions necessary to pass a particular piece of legislation. If he does that, as Clinton did in his first two years, he cannot expect simultaneously to be projecting a clear message to Americans about the values and goals he supports, lest he antagonize the very people in Congress he needs to pass the legislation.

A conformist president doesn't have this worry. If his goal is merely to serve established interests, and to pander to the tastes and prejudices fostered by the corporate-controlled media, he doesn't have to worry about changing anybody's mind about anything—so he can focus solely on putting together legislative coalitions for specific pieces of legislation. And the media will use this capacity to pass legislation and stay within the existing consensus as proof that he is "responsible," "presidential," and "competent."

But if a change-oriented president stays within the consensus, how can he build or solidify a popular mandate for change? So he is forced to choose one of these directions.

And Clinton made it clear—when he abandoned gays in the military, cut loose his friend Lani Guinier, caved in on serious ecological challenges to the mining and agricultural interests in Western states, and made his priority reducing the budget deficit and passing NAFTA—that his priority would be to appear responsible.

Meanwhile, sectors of the American public that might be mobilized to transcend their narrow self-interest and become involved in the needs of the larger community found themselves facing a frightening prospect: that in their hopefulness they had been

The Democratic Party's 1994 Debacle



DAN HABIB-IMPACT VISUALS

manipulated, that Clinton's initial expressions of idealism were being abandoned by a politician more concerned about winning legislative battles than with creating a campaign for fundamental change.

"Be realistic," these people were told. "Clinton has to play the game the way it is played, watch out for his approval ratings, and deal with the real-world interests that control Washington. Otherwise he will be even more powerless to achieve what you hope he will achieve."

But the bottom line of this argument is: "Clinton had to watch out for himself and compromise on all of the idealism that originally generated hopefulness and enthusiasm." And, people reason, if this is what even the President of the United States "has to do" because of his recognition of "how the real world works," then why should they themselves not focus on their narrow self-interest.

This dynamic played out most dramatically in the health-care bill, which was flawed from the start because it sought to accommodate the profit interests of the insurance industry. So instead of a rational single-payer plan, or an even more radical look at eliminating profit from health care and making care the bottom line, Clinton produced a bureaucratic monstrosity that became an easy target. He followed with a series of compromises that reached their nadir when Clinton began to tout the plan as best because it fit "truly conservative" principles and argued that it could be trusted because it relied on the free market and not on government.

When people hear this kind of logic, they are encouraged to watch out for their individual well-being (precisely what Reagan tried to encourage when he asked people to ask themselves whether they as individuals were better off than they had been four years before when Carter's presidency began in 1977, rather than asking whether "we as a community" were better off). And within that frame of reference, people inevitably are attracted to candidates who advocate lower taxes and less government and less concern with the public sphere.

The irony, of course, is that as people withdraw into this privatistic worldview, they are less supportive of Clinton. They feel angry at themselves for having temporarily believed that things could be different, and they take this anger out on Clinton, feeling that he has abandoned them. So Clinton's strategy of accommodation and compromise and being "presidential" backfires.

Clinton's mistake, incidentally, is a mirror image of George Bush. He too sought to distance himself from ideology and to be practical, and he too managed to lose his base of support and project such a mushy

image that he was unable to mobilize those who had been attracted to his predecessor's ideological clarity. Bush, too, imagined that he was being practical and political. Both Clinton and Bush, like Carter before them, failed to recognize that what people want most is not what the Washington press corps or the elites of wealth and power want most.

What the people want and hunger for is a framework of meaning and purpose to make sense of their lives. They are willing to consider a wide variety of possible frameworks for a politics of meaning—we had hoped that Clinton would offer them a progressive politics of meaning. But without that, they will respond to a reactionary framework of meaning more quickly than to the mush that the Washington insiders usually feed them. And the electorate is angry at Clinton because while during the presidential campaign he seemed to understand their meaning needs, he abandoned that perspective to become a born-again "realist."

Since the administration's inception, the media have gleefully drawn all the wrong conclusions: that people were always far more conservative than Clinton had anticipated, that they didn't really want change, that we are facing "a conservative tide" because "the public distrusts anything Washington produces" (*The New Republic*, October 17, 1994). The pundits opine that if Clinton is going to "save" his presidency he must do so by becoming ever more accommodating and ever less challenging of the consensus that the media have defined as centrist. But far from saving his presidency, this direction will only ensure that Clinton becomes a one-term president.

We shall return to the issue of what Clinton can do in the remaining two years of his term in the January/February issue. But these remedial steps should be taken:

• He could declare that he understands that he made a deep mistake, and it's not the one the media is claiming he made. His mistake was not that he was too radical but that he was too accommodating to the special interests and to the ethos of selfishness, and that the goal of his next two years is not to pass any specific legislation, but to challenge the ethos of selfishness and replace it with an ethos of caring. Furthermore, he could insist that in saying this he is not suggesting that Americans are selfish and that he is coming to preach a "politics of virtue" aimed at raising their moral level. On the contrary, he knows that he himself has often made mistakes based on his own pursuit of personal gain, and that he is not putting himself forward as being on a higher moral plane. Rather, he is recognizing that the way the economic and political system is set up, everybody is pushed toward narrow self-interest and away from considering the common good, that he made too many such compromises in his first two years, and now intends to challenge that perspective. Moreover, he should insist that administration policies in the executive branch aim toward this same goal of supporting rather than undermining our common desire to live in a world based on caring and commitment to the common good. The goal here is not to make the public more moral, but to allow them to live the morality for which they hunger, which is constantly being undermined by the economic and political institutions of a society that only rewards selfishness and makes idealism difficult. "If it was so difficult for me, the President, I can only imagine how difficult it is for ordinary Americans." In this same spirit, he could convene a national summit on ethics whose goal would be to discuss how to create economic and political institutions that support our desire to live in an ethically and spiritually meaning-oriented community rather than in a community whose only shared goal is the maximization of the economic well-being of individuals.

• He could call for the creation of a national movement for a progressive politics of meaning, and ask for ten thousand young people to dedicate summer 1995 to door-to-door campaigning about the need to challenge the ethos of selfishness. Rather than waiting for a grass-roots organization to spring up to support him, or expecting that the Democratic Party can remake itself, he could use his bully pulpit to support the creation of a politics of meaning movement that sought to work with him to challenge the dominant cynicism, materialism, and despair in the media and in the society.

• He could send a letter to every taxpayer in America on April 16 thanking them on behalf of all those who benefit from federal programs and reminding them of how much good they are doing for others by paying their taxes.

Such a message will be scoffed at in some quarters as "political psychobabble." But millions of ordinary Americans will feel more deeply appreciated than they ever have. And it will be a concrete way to challenge the pervasive cynicism in the society.

• He could introduce a new health-care bill, based on a single-payer model but going much further, both in challenging the profit motive in medicine and in projecting a full vision of what spiritually and morally sensitive health care could be, as Barry Schwartz discusses in his article in this issue of TIKKUN . And he could campaign for that vision of health care without regard to its political viability in the Congress, but focused on building a public consensus on its behalf. That plan would become a central element in the

election of 1996—and it would be of immense value precisely because in a clear way it would show people the difference between thinking that is restricted by the alleged necessity to compromise with the profit motive and thinking that is guided by a politics of meaning-style commitment to the common good.

• He could implement a morally based foreign policy.

There was a moment last September when it appeared that Clinton was on the verge of doing just that in Haiti. Then, he backed away, called in former President Carter, the embodiment of the wishy-washy president, and allowed the United States to make a deal with the dictators. It was for many the last straw. "Wait," some people now object, "don't you see that he managed to get rid of the dictators anyway, through compromise. Why don't people appreciate this outcome?" Well, first, the outcome is completely ambiguous. The U.S. troops have not challenged the vast inequalities of wealth and power that necessitate a system of repression, so many fear that once U.S. attention wanes, these forces will return to their attempts to destabilize an Aristide government unless, as Clinton now expects, Aristide himself will so completely capitulate to the old order that he no longer upsets them. Second, the way it was done matters. By allowing an amnesty plan for those who legally overthrew an elected government, Clinton's plan could only encourage other military adventurers to try similar coups. Moreover, the appearance of giving temporary legitimacy and power to the ruling elites left a sour taste in the mouths of many Americans who might have rallied to a less ambiguous stance toward the butchers who had run Haiti in the past.

What Clinton still can do is to take some unambiguous actions elsewhere. For example, in Bosnia he might order U.S. special forces to capture and bring to trial some of the worst offenders against human rights. And he might also lift the arms embargo on the Bosnian Muslims.

Or Clinton might reverse his previous decision about China and impose trade restrictions if China does not adhere to universally recognized principles of human rights.

While Clinton and the Democrats in Congress have wasted two years mucking around in morally questionable compromises, mistakenly hoping that they could thereby win enough support for modest reform, the Right has been at work in the larger society, powerfully promoting its own sectarian perspective and convincing people that its worldview can help explain the problems they face in daily life.

The Rush Limbaughs and the Christian fundamentalists have gained new adherents because they are unafraid to present a coherent worldview that acknowledges people's pain and attempts to address it. While we should reject the racist, sexist, and homophobic elements in these visions, we should also understand that the people respond to these voices not because of the racism and sexism, but because they speak to two important dimensions:

• The self-doubts and feelings of worthlessness that are so prevalent among many Americans. In a market system that judges people's value by how much money and power they have accumulated, the vast majority of people end up feeling that they've failed with their lives, and these feelings are an incredible burden. Simultaneously, they feel that what is good about them has been undervalued and not really given a chance. These two feelings are in constant tension, and often coexist in the same person. The self-blaming is often unintentionally reenforced by liberals who seem to be saying, "You've had your chance to make it, and now it's time to focus all our energies on taking care of someone else, the people who have less privilege than you." Into this complicated psychological thicket enter Rush Limbaugh and other right-wing manipulators with a message of compassion for ordinary working people: "You deserve to be cared for, because you've worked hard and done your share. But instead the caring that you deserve is being taken from you and wasted on Blacks, gays, uppity women, or some other supposedly oppressed group. They are getting what you deserve, and the reason is because liberals are so screwed up they can't tell the difference between right or wrong, so they end up rewarding the people who really don't deserve anything." The power of the message can only be understood if you realize how under-recognized most Americans feel.

• The selfishness of the market generates a society full of self-centered people who are better at manipulating each other than caring for each other. Yet few people feel satisfied in this kind of a reality, and many reach for some framework of meaning and purpose that will transcend the selfishness and cynicism that dominate daily life. As we saw in earlier issues of TIKKUN, there are many people in our own camp who resist this hunger for meaning, ridiculing it, imagining that it is merely psychobabble, or believing that this will inevitably lead to right-wing politics. The result: Liberals fight to keep these concerns out of the public square, and the meaning needs are ceded to the Right, which conveniently attaches their meaning-oriented answers to a politics replete with various forms of demeaning the Other (gays, women, Blacks, Jews, etc.).

Nothing is going to change in America until we have

a president who can talk about all this, or a social movement that is willing to challenge these dynamics, both by confronting the Right's misuse of meaning and the Left's unwillingness to recognize the need for meaning.

Clinton promised to mount such a challenge, and for that reason we were optimistic. He tried to revive some of these themes in the last weeks before the fall election, and thus forestalled an even more devastating route. He still could make these themes central to his next two years in office. But at this point, nobody is going to take him seriously if he just makes a few speeches on the topic. He would have to engage in a full-scale campaign—and that he is unlikely to do. Yet without that, the next two years will witness a rise in the popularity of the Right and a growing (mistaken) consensus that Clinton's failures lie in having been "too idealistic."

That this kind of baloney could substitute for a serious analysis of the actual compromises and abandonment of principle that characterized Clinton's first two years is yet another testimony to the growing poverty of political thought in contemporary America. □

Special Focus – The Democrats' Debacle: A Roundtable

Peter Gabel, associate editor of TIKKUN, *is president of New College of California and president of the San Francisco Commission on National Service; Mary Edsall is the co-author with Thomas B. Edsall of* Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights and Taxes on American Politics *and of a forthcoming book on American men; Jay Rosen, media editor of* TIKKUN, *is associate professor of journalism at New York University and director of the Project on Public Life and the Press. Michael Lerner is* TIKKUN*'s editor.*

Lerner: Although we are holding this roundtable before the 1994 mid-term elections, if current projections hold, the Democrats are likely to face significant reverses. The media interpretations will attempt to lower our expectations about what we can achieve in the political realm and to convince us that we should be more realistic about what to expect in 1996. In this roundtable, I'd like to explore how our own analyses might differ from those of the mainstream media.

Gabel: A tremendous sense of hope was unleashed two years ago with Clinton's election, coupled with an upsurge of volunteer political activity in which people were willing to leave their private lives, to get beyond their cynicism and hope for the possibilities of creating a better world. They then found these hopes being deflated by the Clintons' failure to articulate his programs within a vision or a framework of meaning that could allow people to see the separate programmatic parts as connected to some larger purpose that could give them a place within some kind of collective spirit and shared ethical goal. If people were asked, "What was Ronald Reagan for?" they probably couldn't name a single program that Reagan stood for, but they could say that he was for individual freedom, for the family, for a sense of patriotism and a nation in which we could be connected to each other. That vision was understood, and it mobilized people.

By contrast, Bill Clinton and the Democratic Party had an array of specific programs—such as health care, National Service, gays in the military—but they did not project a vision of society or framework of which could link these programs together. Such a framework could have lifted people out of their isolation and made them feel part of something larger. Instead, we get a series of programs that have a progressive dimension to them, but the progressive dimension is never really articulated in a strong way. As a result, we are left with externalized programs without the conduit of connectedness that brings these programs to life through the nexus of spiritual meaning.

Edsall: Under the pressure of a political campaign, Clinton understood the need to control the Center in the electoral politics and to make it part of his coalition, without losing his Left. He projected messages that were disciplined and ambiguous enough to bridge what might have otherwise been an unbridgeable gulf. Once Clinton won, it was as if he were so elated that he let go, abandoning the discipline and the control he had imposed on the Democratic message throughout the '92 campaign. He didn't see winning as the first step in a demanding and perilous process of trying to integrate the Center with the Left, controling the kinds of issues his administration was going to be identified with.

TIKKUN may have a potential role to play in formulating a critique of the current state of a Democratic Party because the magazine has been making a concerted attempt for five years now to explore contested cultural and values terrain—to find ways for the progressive political community to seek out common ground with those traditionally lower and middle-income culturally conservative voters who are abandoning the Democratic Party. The issues of meaning, solidarity, and community are the kinds of

issues that TIKKUN has attempted to bring to the forefront of politics precisely to stem the frightening erosion of a Center/Left coalition, and to avoid the monopolization of those issues by the political Right.

Rosen: The most striking development of the current moment is not the faltering of Bill Clinton or an alleged move to the Right, but a far deeper problem: the system-wide loss of legitimacy, the surge of antipolitical sentiment, the loss of sovereignty itself as systems spiral out of control, the collapse of the entire Left/Right spectrum, the deepening and broadening of a cynicism which has become the permanent climate for politics, the discrediting of the political class (including not only politicians, but also journalists, lobbyists, and even people like ourselves who comment on politics), the turning away from the public sphere, the refusal to take politics seriously as an activity. The entire group of politicians, including both Clinton and Dole, both parties, the Washington press corps, the lobbyists and all the rest, are losing their legitimacy as it becomes clearer and clearer to people that politics as usual will continue until not a shred of faith remains in the system. Recently, David Boren, the U.S. senator from Oklahoma who is stepping down at the end of this term, noted the 14-percent approval rating that Congress gets now and asked his colleagues if they were going to wait until not a single soul in America trusts them.

This loss of legitimacy is so deep it almost has reached the point where it discredits the entire enterprise of politics. Thinking our way out of this will be far more difficult than thinking out a new strategy for Clinton or the Democrats.

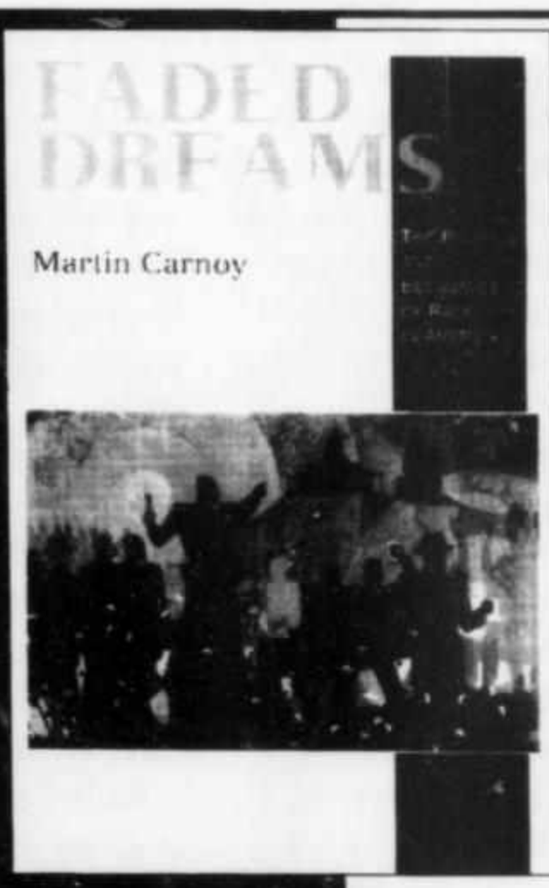
Yet this deeper issue is far more important, because when politics decays there is going to be nothing to counterpose to markets. And we are heading toward that disintegration of politics itself.

Part of our task must be to preserve some arena between government and markets, what in Europe they call "civil society." We need to help civil society to recover its traditions and its ability to be a counter-voice. We need to recover a civic attitude in our professions, in politics itself, and among young people. It is this civic turn, rather than focusing on the government and particularly on the figure of the president, that might help us navigate the present. We have to stop looking at this rather small figure of the president as the location for politics today.

Gabel: The question is whether it is possible to build in civic society any sense of group and individual recognition that can connect us up to each other in ways that develop a sense of mutual confidence. Are we going to respond to the collapse of the political sphere by just being left alone in our homes to read a book or watch TV, without any connection to a larger community?

As I get older, and sick of putting my faith in these chimeras of people seeking to control the center, I look for other networks of "us" that can participate, either in their own cities, or through phone lines and computer links, that can affirm our connection and assist us in providing each other with a vital form of mutual recognition. We need communities of meaning that are not found either in the market or in the existing political sphere of candidates, elections, pollsters, lobbyists, etc.

We are trying to do this at New College of California—trying to create a community based on mutual recognition and respect, caring for one another, informal ways of relating that are not bureaucratic; and I have a feeling that there are a great many others that are partially formed entities which, if we could find a means to unite them in some public way, would



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provide a tremendous relief from the manic/depressive cycle of Democratic party politics. Party politics is bad for our health—it is not anchored enough in the transcendent, the eternal, the desire for our connection to each other and to a location in history and to the realization of the human spirit, things that would not have been so embarrassing to argue for at an earlier time. Religions may also have a way to come out from their private sphere and assert themselves as a way of public life.

But all this won't work unless our activity outside the sphere of electoral politics becomes a public phenomenon. If it's not a third party, what is it that can connect up people so that we do not fall back into a new kind of privatism?

Rosen: Let me offer an image that might help clarify my position. You get excited about a new band or performer whom you experience initially in a privatized way, through the radio or a CD. You then notice that this performer is coming to town. People turn out in part to see who else will show up. A group of people who had previously been atomized and enjoyed their experience in isolation from each other becomes public, and suddenly begins to recognize each other.

When people enter public space, it's important to focus on what kind of spirit emerges, what is the quality of the space that is created, what kind of leadership is offered, and how people are brought together. Before we start thinking about new political parties and programs, we need to go back and rethink these primordial public experiences. The disintegration of mass communication and the emergence of other kinds of communications systems will take the momentum away from the kinds of mass politics that were central to the party system and the focus on national electoral politics.

There is a chance to reclaim public life now because the old system of enforcing a kind of privatized publicness is fading away.

Lerner: There may be a danger for Americans in too quickly abandoning the realm of explicitly political activity. Over the course of two centuries, many Americans have struggled to gain greater control over the political arena, precisely because it provided a way for people to unite to gain control over the economy. In the last many decades, as the conquest of political power from ruling elites seemed to be a real threat, the corporations began to move out—first from the city, then from Northern and Western states where the labor movement had become more powerful, and finally from the United States itself. These moves have somewhat frustrated the attempts of democratic forces to gain control over own lives. Yet the impetus to gain this control was rational.

Simultaneously, the corporations were able to pour tremendous funds into national elections to help elect a Congress that often blocked attempts to exercise greater community control over our economic lives.

It might be more rational for us to try to figure out how to regain that control and empower democratic movements internationally, rather than to abandon the political realm altogether as irrelevant or too frustrating. The disintegration of national political space may give us a sense of greater power on the local level, but if the major factors shaping our lives are increasingly located in multinational corporations and their ability to manipulate the political and media forces on the local level, the localization of our attention and the elimination of national strategies and organizational mechanisms to implement those strategies may result in a spreading powerlessness that does not serve our interests. Without the mechanisms of national political parties or organizations, people begin to narrow the focus of their struggles to those things which can be affected on the local level, and those are often narrowly construed (because the logic of the market system itself and its international operations seems overwhelming when viewed from the perspective of "What can I do here in this one city?"). In this context, people begin to shrink their visions and their sphere of attention.

Moreover, when people feel that there is no larger social movement—manifested through national organizations, national demonstrations, national media, and national political campaigns for the presidency—they begin to despair of maintaining their own hopefulness, begin to believe that the logic of the market is "reality," and so begin to abandon their own visions of possibility and to become "realistic," more selfish, and less interested in supporting serious political change even on the local level. So what people will fight for in civil society is in part a function of the degree to which they believe that there is a possibility for larger social transformation. Without that, the struggles for "public space" in civil society are more narrowly self-interest based.

Rather than taking the defeat of the Clinton energies as given and fixed, we might do better to pursue a politics of meaning strategy designed to shift the dominant discourse from selfishness to caring—a strategy that is not an electoral strategy, but which would have profound electoral consequences as well.

Rosen: I don't want to abandon national politics for our own backyards. But you can't start doing any na-


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tional work by focusing on a discredited political class and on a political stage that most people aren't turning to anyway for any sort of inspiration, hope, or common sense. If you try to win in a political arena that is gradually losing its sovereignty, legitimacy, and connection to the population at large, you are deeply mistaken.

Edsall: We need to engage people where they live and figure out what about those things has national significance. And we also need to acknowledge the parts of the liberatory and counter-cultural projects of the past thirty-five years that have alienated masses of Americans. The politics of meaning talks about this when it insists that the liberatory projects have not adequately addressed ethical and spiritual needs, or have addressed them in ways that run counter to the intuitions of most people. We have to acknowledge the ways in which some people have felt betrayed by the cultural leadership that was provided by the liberal and progressive forces of the past decades.

Gabel: What we are really seeking, and what the liberal and progressive forces that focused excessively on the liberal program of economic entitlements and individual rights missed, was the centrality of providing elementary units of recognition in public space.

It is this that is missing from so much of American politics today, but is available in other places, like the TIKKUN community. TIKKUN has been trying to constitute a community—it's not just another magazine with a politics, it is a cultural fabric, with rich connecting tissues (many of them supplied by Judaism) that give it a liveliness and vitality and ability to address deep shared needs.

We want the cultural fabric aspect of how we are connected to each other to become more central to any "political" project that we might be involved in. Otherwise each of us is stuck in the position of isolation person hoping Clinton will say something in his State of the Union or manifest his being in a way that might capture the hopes of the Left and the center. It could happen...JFK plus Elvis plus the civil rights movement and the emptiness of the kitchen culture of the '50s may have helped give birth to the '60s, and something like that might happen again.

But how many times can we go through this cycle of putting our hopes in a presidential candidate who says some of the right things, then gets elected and becomes "realistic" and abandons so much of what we had hoped he would fight for? In the absence of a real social movement and leaders who express its aspirations with integrity it seems like a dead end.

Lerner: The national focus can't be in the electoral arena, at least not exclusively. But there's another way to have a national focus: to create a national movement for a politics of meaning for all those who feel that politics must move beyond economic entitlements and political rights and to fight for a change in the dominant discourse from an ethos of selfishness to an ethos of caring. This is not something that the Left has tried before and failed—it's a new strategy, and one very different from those tried in the past.

Gabel: But that can only work if there is adequate connective tissue to make the feeling of this activity be different from the alienation people tend to experience in rooting for heroes in the electoral arena. When Clinton was elected, I ran and was elected to the Democratic Party Central Committee in San Francisco, I started that city's National Service Commission, and in other ways relied on this abstract aspiration that Clinton could provide legitimation and visible presence for our politics of meaning ideals. But that degenerated into a morass, because without Clinton articulating and fighting for a real politics of meaning vision, all these concrete activities connected to the political realm degenerated into a struggle between people for how to allocate government dollars. The vision that gave rise to the electoral victory ebbed, and here I am stuck in going to frustrating meetings that don't seem to connect to anything larger.

We need to find the experience, the elementary units of recognition at the rock concert, on the picket lines striking against the Mark Hopkins Hotel, or in some other arenas where the politics of meaning can have a concrete embodiment and not just an abstract quality as a good idea. It's building those connective tissues and real-life experiences of connection and mutual recognition that must be central to any continuing political project. That's why building the TIKKUN community, in the broadest sense, is so important, because people need to have more of the kinds of experiences that they now get at TIKKUN conferences and local salons and discussion groups—the sense of actually having people to hang out with who share their values and vision, and who want to try to embody it in actual practice in their daily lives.

Rosen: Jews have much to fear, and they carry the cultural memory of that fear when politics itself decays. As intellectuals, our role is to find an honorable way to stand up for the political realm. That means standing up in face of opposition from people on the Left who (in part by their unrelenting and uncritical support for the "rights" revolution and a rights-based liberalism) helped, along with everyone else, in discrediting politics.

Everyone must begin to realize their stake in a workable public sphere and that is a different sort of thing from trying to "win" in that sphere. Politics will always be about winning and losing, about who gets what, but if that is all it is, we'll never see the point of reviving public life. None of this points to a concrete political strategy. But sometimes, when you don't know exactly what to do, the best thing you can do is stop and think. Any "new" political idea today must include a new notion about where politics is, or might be found.

Lerner: I don't think the current despair about politics is so difficult to comprehend. People hoped Clinton would articulate and fight for a morally coherent vision of social change. Instead, he decided it was more important to win legislative battles, not realizing that he couldn't win them unless he had first succeeded in challenging the dominant ethos of selfishness. When people saw him abandon principles on so many issues, they felt disheartened and cynical about change—and that seemed to recredit a right-wing politics that is based on the notion that selfishness is all that there is, so why pay high taxes to back somebody else's selfishness. At this point, we not only need to help Clinton change directions and adopt a politics of meaning, we also need to undermine the cynicism he unintentionally fostered. And to do that, we need to have a powerful national presence so that people can come to believe that cynicism and selfishness are not the only possibilities.

What we don't need is more privatization and withdrawal into private life that tends to accompany the triumph of cynicism about the public realm.

Gabel: But given what has happened, and given the cynicism, we need to take steps to rebuild people's confidence in politics, not a full-scale charge into some grandiose national schemes. What we need are intermediate lenses of mutual visibility. Right now, so many of us around the country are involved in quasi-public efforts to create a more meaningful connected world that goes beyond the alienation of traditional politics, but now feel invisible. We go back and forth between thinking "this is really important" and "why bother, no one really knows about this or believes in it, and I'm not sure I even have that much confidence in it."

But if, say, a reporter from TIKKUN covered the effort of my college's Director's Committee to create a radical community instead of just being a traditional college with a progressive spin, I think we would feel more seen, more part of a new public politics. And if then the Director's Committee could look at a video of a Jewish Renewal High Holiday service and talk about how it's different form a typical Faculty Senate meeting, that would be really something. Then we would be beginning to build the kind of connective tissue that could liberate us from anxiously watching Clinton's press conference on TV to see if he is reflecting our ideas and if he can make us feel that what we are doing is part of something larger, and free us from the tendency to look in the newspapers to see if we exist.

Edsall: Perhaps TIKKUN readers could share with us through the pages of the magazine their own attempts at breaching the boundaries and building a democratic politics or extending our notions of the public realm. And we should probably be hearing from TIKKUN readers about how, in light of their thinking about politics from the standpoint of a politics of meaning or from the standpoint of extending the realm of politics into civil society, they have been dealing with and thinking about issues like family values, sexual privacy, the experience of betrayal, sexual tolerance, the difference between being the subject of your own autonomy and the object of someone else's autonomy—the conflict between autonomies—how do they experience these things and how do they think other people are experiencing these things. □

EDITORIAL

(Continued from p. 9)

Rabin to slow the process, doing so plays into the hands of the terrorists and ensures that popular frustration will generate further support for Hamas.

The PLO's recent cooperation with Israel, to the extent of providing Israel with information about where the kidnapped soldier was being held, and the PLO's speedy and unequivocal denunciation of the bus massacre in Tel Aviv, should be quickly and decisively rewarded by speeding up Israeli withdrawal and providing Palestinians with enough funding so that they can make their autonomy meaningful. As the bombing of New York's World Trade Center a few years ago demonstrates, a democratic society can never be guaranteed total security from the acts of extremists. But whether these are isolated acts or receive mass support and encouragement very much depends on the level of oppression in a society.

There's only one way to disarm Hamas: Allow the majority of Palestinians the self-determination that is the right of every human being on the planet. As decades of attempted iron rule have adequately demonstrated, to imagine that Israel can defeat terrorism any other way besides generosity of spirit and a true commitment to reconciliation is pure fantasy, belied by recent history. □

The Meaning of Health and The Health of Meaning

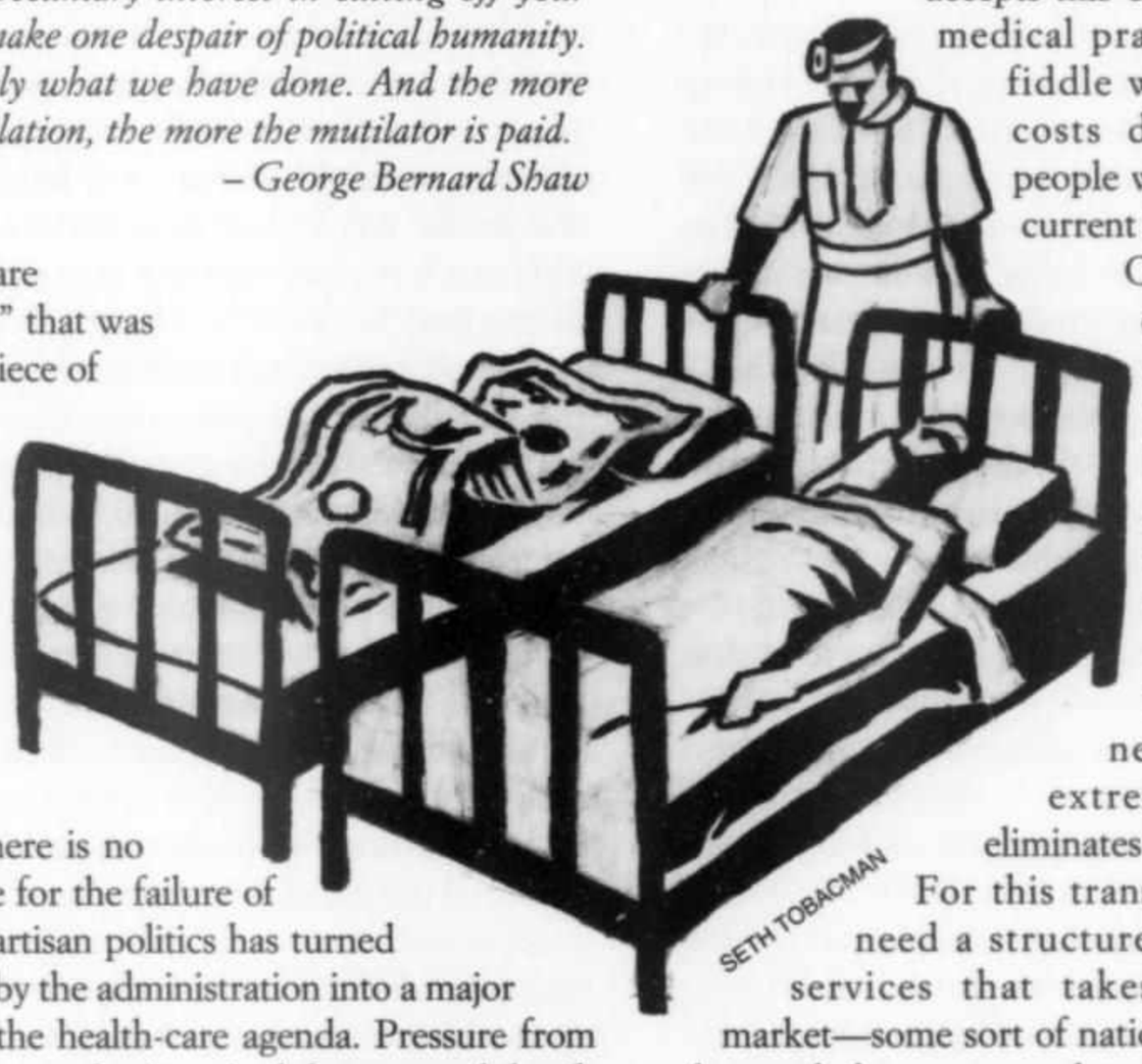
Barry Schwartz

Most of us believe we are parties to a social contract, not a business contract. We are not vendors, and we are not merely free economic agents in a free market.

–Arnold S. Relman, M.D.

That any sane nation, having observed that you could provide for the supply of bread by giving bakers a pecuniary interest in baking for you, should go on to give a surgeon a pecuniary interest in cutting off your leg, is enough to make one despair of political humanity. But that is precisely what we have done. And the more appalling the mutilation, the more the mutilator is paid.

– George Bernard Shaw



The health-care "revolution" that was the centerpiece of the Clinton administration's "politics of hope" has fizzled into a tinker. And it's a tinker that many sensible people believe will actually make things worse. There is no shortage of blame for the failure of the revolution. Partisan politics has turned every issue faced by the administration into a major distraction from the health-care agenda. Pressure from lobbyists has been unrelenting. And the proposal that finally issued forth from the administration, after months of work behind closed doors, was long, complex, almost incomprehensible, and easily susceptible to murder by sound bite.

And so it has been murdered. But in truth, I think it was a mercy killing. The Clinton proposal was doomed from the start. Even if it had passed intact, it wouldn't have worked, because it failed to address the most fundamental problem with modern medical care in the United States. That problem is that medicine, once a calling of high moral purpose, is now just a lucrative career; that medicine, once a valuable public service, is now an "industry." Any "revolution" that simply accepts this change in the character of medical practice and then tries to fiddle with incentives to keep costs down and serve more people will merely perpetuate our current ills.

Clinton's "managed competition" proposal, and all the competing plans that are described by their adherents as more moderate, are concerned with finding ways to reform and regulate the business of health care. What is really needed is much more extreme—a proposal that eliminates health care as a business. For this transformation to occur, we need a structure for providing medical services that takes health care off the market—some sort of national health insurance. And beyond that, we need patience. Just as it took a generation or so of socialization for medical professionals to be turned from caregivers into businesspeople, it will take a generation or so of socialization for the process to reverse. I think the Clintons—both Bill and Hillary—know this; it's pervasive in their rhetoric. But the gap between their rhetoric and their proposal is huge. The rhetoric is full of moral exhortation, but the market-based proposal virtually guarantees that the exhortation will fall on deaf ears.

Barry Schwartz is a professor of psychology at Swarthmore College. An expanded version of the arguments in this article, as applied to health care and other aspects of modern life, can be found in his new book, The Costs of Living: How Market Freedom Erodes the Best Things in Life *(W.W. Norton).*

What's wrong with health care as a business? Well, just imagine having the same attitude toward your doctor that you have toward used-car salesmen: "They're out to get us. They'll stop at nothing. We better defend ourselves." In the world of commerce, we expect, and guard against, the worst. Not so in the world of medicine, and in the professions more generally. "Profession" was originally used in a specifically religious sense, to describe the act of taking vows to consecrate oneself to religious service. Central to the notion of profession was the idea that the work of the professional was valuable, was in a sense holy work. In modern usage, the word has retained some of its moral tone, along with the notion that professionals are governed by objectives and standards that demand rigorous training, honesty, integrity, and commitment to excellence.

For almost everyone, medicine is what comes to mind as the best and clearest example of a profession. The practice of medicine requires extensive training, highly specialized knowledge, and continuing education. Doctors perform an incredibly valuable public service. They save lives, ease suffering, prevent disease, and help bring new life into the world. The performance of doctors is held up to very high technical standards, standards that are developed and enforced by professional organizations. And their performance must meet high ethical standards as well. For example, the International Code of the World Medical Organization states that, "a doctor must practice his profession uninfluenced by motives of profit." And the American Medical Association (AMA) has a set of ethical principles meant to govern the conduct of all doctors that includes the following:

- Doctors should show compassion and respect for human dignity.
- Doctors should deal with patients and colleagues honestly.
- Doctors should expose incompetence or dishonesty in their colleagues.
- Doctors should continue to study, and to make relevant information available to patients and to colleagues.
- Doctors should recognize a responsibility to participate in activities that contribute to improving the community.

Because doctors provide such a valuable service and have such high standards, we respect them. And it is largely because medicine is a profession with high standards and commitment to public service that so many talented young people choose to enter it. Because of their commitments to service and excellence, we don't begrudge doctors the opportunity they have to earn substantial incomes, for we believe that it's the service, and not the income, that draws them to their profession.

It's a very good thing that medicine is a profession with high technical and ethical standards, for almost none of us who rely on medical professionals have the expertise to evaluate them. Aside from occasional crude but dramatic evidence of success or failure (does the patient live or die?), we patients are at a loss when it comes to judging how well we are being cared for. We have little alternative but to trust in the integrity of the doctor, as well as in the institution that does the training and the organization that sets the professional standards. Trust—not only in a person's skill, but in his or her character—is absolutely essential.

Such trust is warranted so long as doctors and their professional organizations have as their principal mission the assurance of quality service to patients. But, of course, doctors and their organizations have another mission. In addition to seeing that society is well served by their profession, they try to assure that their profession is well served by society. So for doctors and their professional organizations to serve the public good, they must maintain an appropriate balance between serving the public and serving themselves.

A challenge to maintaining this balance is posed by the fact that at the same time that the professionalization of medicine created people of skill and dedication and certified them, it had another effect. It set itself up as a kind of gatekeeper, regulating public access to the profession and its products and services. At the same time that state licensing requirements assured a certain standard of expertise, they gave the medical profession the power to determine who became a doctor and how many doctors there would be. At the same time that the use of prescriptions regulated the distribution and use of powerful drugs, it determined that even the treatment of the most mundane diseases would require mediation by the doctor who would have to issue the prescription. And as the health-insurance industry grew up, the fact that insurance companies would only provide reimbursement for authorized procedures provided by authorized personnel, while protecting us from quacks, also forced us to get all medical care through professional medical channels. While each of these gatekeeping functions helped to ensure a high quality of medical care, it also offered the potential for abuse in the service of the doctors' economic interests.

That there was a tension between professional standards and commitments and economic incentives

was recognized very early by medical organizations: Professionalization violated the rules of the marketplace. People were not free to enter medicine as they pleased, nor to offer whatever kind of medical service they wanted for whatever price they wanted. It was not left up to consumers to judge between various "brands" of care by choosing freely in an open market. The medical community judged that people lacked the specialized knowledge to make intelligent choices. Left on their own, they could easily be deceived and exploited by unprincipled charlatans.

So the profession of medicine protected consumers by imposing and policing standards. This gave the profession a monopoly on medical care; it protected the profession from the discipline imposed by a competitive market. In asking for and getting monopoly power over their profession, doctors were in effect asking their patients for trust, trust that they would adhere to professional standards, that they would judge one another, that they would never allow their monopolistic position to foster greed or carelessness. In return for this trust, organizations such as the AMA developed specific guidelines to keep medicine professional—to prevent it from becoming a business. As the AMA put it, "where physicians become employees and permit their services to be peddled as commodities, the medical services usually deteriorate, and the public which purchases such services is injured."

But nothing lasts forever. The tension between commercial and professional interests has been persistent, and over time, the commercial side has worn down the professional side. Over the last twenty years or so, the profession of medicine has given itself over almost entirely to commerce. Trust has been replaced by suspicion, and respect replaced by disdain, as modern doctors have come increasingly to be seen as driven primarily if not exclusively by the pursuit of wealth.

It has come to pass that the compromise between professionalism and commerce has degenerated into the full-scale embrace of commerce. When private hospitals refuse Medicaid patients because the reimbursement rate provided by Medicaid is too low to make the treatment of these patients profitable, commerce has won. And when studies report that uninsured patients lucky enough to be admitted to private hospitals receive worse care than insured patients (largely because of staff choices not to perform tests and procedures that are not absolutely mandated by the patient's condition, since these tests will not be paid for), commerce has won. When doctors are involved in kickback schemes, admitting patients to particular hospitals in return for referral fees, commerce has won. When specialists start selling shares in their practices to non-participating, but potentially referring primary-care physicians, commerce has won. When the CEOs of hospitals (even non-profit hospitals) start thinking of themselves as the heads of struggling businesses whose primary responsibility is not to community service, but to the bottom line, commerce has won.

As examples like these accumulate, and get reported, as these were, in daily newspapers and popular magazines, the public attitude toward the medical profession deteriorates. It becomes increasingly difficult to show doctors the respect and admiration they may once have received and deserved. The doctors, in turn, may decide that if they're going to be treated like ordinary businesspeople, they may as well act the part. It may not gain them respect, but at least they can be consoled with wealth.

The AMA, which previously tried to prevent the commercialization of medical practice, has apparently given up. While once it regarded advertising and entrepreneurial activities by physicians as unethical, it now officially sanctions both, presumably in acknowledgement of the cold economic realities of modern medical practice. Indeed, the AMA may even have given in to the temptation to make a virtue of its failure to prevent the penetration of commercial concerns into professional practice when, in a recent statement, it opined, "ethical medical practice thrives best under free market conditions, when prospective patients have adequate information and opportunity to choose freely among competing physicians and alternative systems of medical care."

This claim about the virtues of the market for "ethical" medical practice may be nothing more than a rationalization for its real virtue—income generation. Nevertheless, so many people who have criticized truly significant health-care reform proposals have done so on the basis of arguments about the wonder of market competition that the claim must be examined seriously. Since Adam Smith, proponents of the market have described it as a social miracle. Without planning, concern, trust, or love on the part of anyone for anyone else—without, in short, any virtues of character whatsoever—the market, they claim, will get society what it needs and wants, more efficiently than any other imaginable social arrangement. All we need to make the miracle happen is economic freedom and competition. We all know the drill by now, and most of us—even "liberal" Democrats—believe it. But it isn't true. Freedom and competition aren't enough. We also need information. We have to know enough

about what's available and how to evaluate it if we are to use our economic freedom intelligently. Without information, we will be at the mercy of those who try to manipulate us into buying what they have to sell.

So what's the problem? The quote from the AMA that I just cited acknowledges the importance of "adequate information." We just have to make sure we go out and get it. But how feasible is this task? Forget for a moment about health-care decisions and think about something much more trivial and simple: your weekly trip to the supermarket. Choose a box of cereal from the hundreds on display. Should it be corn, rice, wheat, oats, bran, or mixed? Sweetened or not? With sugar or honey? "Natural" or not? And what about price? Now choose some laundry detergent. Liquid or powder? Scented or unscented? Cold water or warm water? With or without phosphates? Large, extra large, jumbo, super-colossal, or extra-super-jumbo-colossal economy size? Next pick a headache remedy. Aspirin, ibuprofin, or acetaminophen? Tablets, capsules, or caplets? 250, 350, or 500 milligrams? Buffered or plain? Store brand or national brand? You get the idea.

How much time would it take for you to gather all the information you need to make your weekly trip to the market the kind of informed activity that free-market enthusiasts celebrate? It's quite overwhelming, and for two reasons. First, there are too many options. Second, many of the things about which we have to choose are so complex that we couldn't possibly learn enough about them to make intelligent choices. Sure, we might devote ourselves to becoming expert about one or two things, but not all things. Instead, if we are to have any time in life actually to consume anything we buy, we have to rely on others to tell us what's good and what isn't. And this is in the supermarket!

When we shift our attention to high technology—stereos, VCRs, answering machines, faxes, computers, and the like—the problem gets worse. So we buy and study guides—consumer magazines—to tell us which stereo or laundry detergent to purchase, which movies to see, which restaurants to eat in. But when we use such guides, rather than doing without trust, we are relying on it. We have to trust in the people who write the guides. Why do we trust them? Because, we think (or hope), they, unlike the people who make and sell the products we buy, have no axe to grind. They, we think (or hope) have our interests at heart.

In a domain as complex as health care, where expertise takes years to acquire, we as "consumers" can't get "adequate information." We have no real alternative to trusting the people who provide the care. Thus, there is no way that a free market can be counted upon to provide us with what we need. As long as the providers have a significant commercial interest, as they obviously do in the current system, and will under any of the health-care proposals now getting serious consideration, expensive, often unnecessary, and sometimes inadequate treatment is virtually guaranteed to continue.

Since it is obvious that the goods and services we consume get more complex and varied all the time, market freedom grows ever more inadequate as a system for providing what people need. Not only is it true that most of us want to be able to trust our doctor. It's also true that most of us need to be able to trust our doctor. And only the kind of transformation suggested by Clinton's rhetoric, not his proposal, will start us moving on a path where eventually, such trust may be warranted. Since we can never do without trust, we should be focusing our energy and attention on what we must do to our system so that eventually our trust will be justified by the actions of the people on whom we bestow it.

Why have so many of us so willingly accepted the profit-based market system as the only possible framework for health-care reform? By doing so, we accede implicitly to the view that health care is a commodity. By doing so, we accede implicitly to the view that the profit motive is the engine for producing a just distribution of health-care services, surely an odd view in light of its failure to produce a just distribution of anything else. By doing so, we accede to the view that concern for the common good is for cocktail party discussion only—for rhetoric, not for social policy. Realism governs, and realists, in this worldview, are those people who assume that self-interest is the only genuine motive for action and that market freedom is the best structure for harnessing self-interest. So we accept the extraordinarily pinched possibilities for health-care reform that people in power lay before us, because to do otherwise is to brand oneself an idealist, a romantic, and a fool.

TIKKUN has been a forum for those thinkers and writers who refuse to accept the market-based limits to the health-care and other social-policy debates. It has instead spoken persistently and bravely about the "politics of meaning," and in so doing, it has taken the hit for the rest of us. Had it not been for Hillary Rodham Clinton's invocation of a politics of meaning in a speech she gave in April 1993, the "sophisticated" (read cynical) media would probably simply have ignored questions of meaning and morality no matter

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Shame and the Resistance to Jewish Renewal

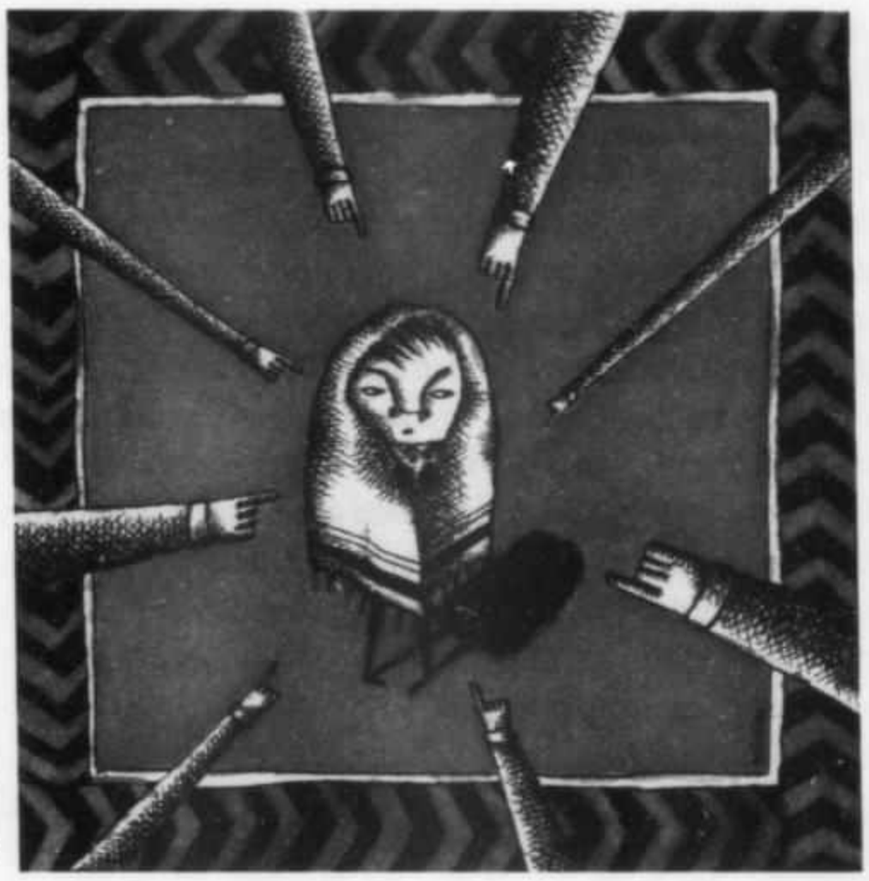
Michael J. Bader

A thirty-year-old man—I'll call him Robert—has been in psychotherapy with me for two years. Our work has been enormously productive: As a result of working through a number of conflicts, Robert has made profound changes in his life, including freeing up his professional ambitions and finally getting into a long-term and loving relationship with a woman. One of the unexpected by-products of Robert's therapeutic work was his decision to return to and renew his connection to Judaism. I therefore had a unique opportunity to observe how working through specific psychological conflicts seemed to allow Robert to seek out a deeper experience of Jewish spirituality.

Robert's conflicts primarily involved his intense feelings of shame and embarrassment when faced with or drawn to situations that seemed to invite an experience of awe, surrender, and love. Prayer and faith—even if defined within a progressive context—were just such situations. Relational configurations that invited Robert to open himself to love and be loved, to let go of his customary cynical caution and to surrender to a dyadic or group intimacy, tended to trigger intense feelings of shame that would invariably lead him to retreat.

The issues that Robert's idiosyncratic struggles with shame brought into bold relief resonated with conflicts of my own that emerged when I decided to convert to Judaism. Belonging to a group, ritualized devotion, the "God" word, openness to nonrational experience, recognizing the limits of human agency, all had personal meanings that both drew and repelled me. Although my formulations about Robert were highly case-specific, there were ways that his struggles felt familiar to me. Furthermore, as I talked with other Jews about our resistances to the spiritual aspects of Judaism, these shame-based reflexes seemed to emerge frequently. Thus, an analysis of Robert's unique ways of associating spiritual surrender, love, embarrassment, and cynicism can highlight a more generic problem many of us face in connecting with a spiritually meaningful Judaism.

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MAIRAV SALOMON

During the course of our work, Robert discovered the extent to which he had grown up highly sensitive and vulnerable to feelings of shame. One particular memory highlighted some of the central meanings of embarrassment in Robert's development. He remembered that when he was a young child, a neighboring family used to spend Sundays together, barbecuing, playing games, singing. Robert's father was openly contemptuous of these neighbors, frequently mocking them for being like "the Cleavers." Robert inferred that his father felt it was pathetic to be so insular, something shameful about their apparent "need" to "glom" onto each other. He felt embarrassed about and for them.

Years later, in talking to me about it, Robert realized that he came to view familial togetherness itself as weak, pathetic, and embarrassing, while idealizing its opposite—his own family's experience, which was one of isolation, alienation, and disconnection. His own parents were alcoholics, his father a cynical and stoic intellectual, a "loner." Robert idealized his father and, therefore, his father's model of relatedness in which love, tenderness, and dependence were implicitly

devalued and shameful. Because Robert, like all of us, continued to experience desires for affiliation and loving connection, he was always vulnerable to feeling embarrassed. If he loved someone too tenderly or openly, he fell victim to the same contempt from his conscience that he once experienced from and in his father.

How do love and shame come to feel connected? What is the structure of the inner experience of someone like Robert who feels—or fears feeling—this way? Perhaps if we could unpack this state and make it "talk," it might say something like this: "I openly declare that I love you and need you to love me. I experience you as rejecting or ignoring my declaration. At this hypothetical moment, I feel as I did as a child, that I'm not supposed to be loved or have my love accepted. It is not you who are impaired or sadistic and unable to enjoy giving and receiving love but it is I who am not offering or deserving good things. Rather than having just revealed to myself and you what is most wonderful about me, I have just disclosed something bad about me that accounts for your negative or absent response." The experience of involuntary exposure of something that is precious to me but bad or unimportant to you is what becomes internalized in the feeling of shame.

Feelings of shame and embarrassment can function to enforce our unconscious loyalty to our parents and, later, to an internalized authority who prohibits certain feeling states and demands compliance to other ones. Given our dependency on our parents, the latter have an awesome power to shape our core identities. As children, we experience what is—the affective realities of family—as indistinguishable from what is supposed to be. Reality is also morality. Since Robert's home tended to be cynical, isolated, and somewhat joyless, he acquired the sense that he—and the world—were fated to be cynical and joyless as well. To be cynical might be painful but it was familiar and "made sense." For instance, for Robert to have been optimistic, idealistic, and joyful would potentially pose various threats. He might have lost his connection to his family, or exposed himself to the ridicule of his father; he might have felt guilty for having a better life than his cynical father or alcoholic mother; he might have felt tormented by pity.

In an earlier article in these pages ("Helping the Patient Get Better," TIKKUN, May/June 1994) I discussed the work of psychoanalyst Joseph Weiss, who has termed the kinds of belief structures about love that Robert developed as "pathogenic beliefs." Weiss argues that, as children, we all continually construct theories about cause and effect, infer various rules that appear to govern relationships, and impute meanings about who we are from our affective exchanges with our caretakers and significant others. We are highly motivated to do so in order to maintain safe and gratifying connections to these caretakers. Robert's pathogenic belief was that tender love and familial intimacy were pathetic, that it was shameful and weak to desire these things, and that the ability to "go it alone" stoically and cynically was admirable and strong. This unconscious belief enabled Robert, via identification, to maintain a connection to his father, ward off his contempt, avoid guilt over having a better life than his father, and maintain the comforting illusion that his father was strong, not disappointingly and frighteningly weak (which, of course, the father actually was).

Over time, Robert came to see that his defensive idealization of his father's cynicism included the latter's defiant and contemptuous secularism. Robert's father had, himself, been raised in a politically conservative, Orthodox family. He rebelled against an autocratic father by moving away geographically (to the opposite coast), politically (becoming a leftist), and religiously (rejecting any religiosity). Robert's father spurned all of the spiritual trappings of his family's authoritarian Judaism, becoming a secular, hyper-intellectual, politically cynical adult. He allowed Robert to become a bar mitzvah because of his wife's insistence and some residual guilt toward his own parents, but strongly conveyed to his son his scorn and skepticism toward religious ritual and belief.

In his desperate attempts to maintain a connection to his father, Robert thus identified with the parent's hyper-rational and cynical secularism. Unconsciously, Robert associated a spiritual experience of Judaism with the other affects that seemed to make his father uncomfortable and critical. Robert unconsciously found security and the illusion of belonging by internalizing his father's character in all of its manifestations.

Unfortunately for Robert, these unconscious benefits were purchased at the cost, not only of a connection to Judaism, but of his ability to love and tolerate intimacy, states he associated with shame. When Robert would get too close to gratifying his longing to belong and experience a loving connection, he would begin to feel mildly embarrassed. He would then unconsciously begin to take evasive measures to nip this painful state in the bud. He would pull back, intellectualize, make a joke, become sarcastic and cynical. In order to further reinforce his defenses against being "seduced" down a slippery slope of intimacy, he would choose friends and partners who, themselves, were embarrassed about vulnerability or love.

Robert even found a way to collude with his first psychotherapist in his shame-based battle with feelings

of love, idealization, and surrender. The therapist frequently interpreted Robert's love for him in terms of transference, pointing out that Robert was idealizing him in order both to express and avoid certain childhood conflicts involving his disappointment, hostility, and competitiveness with his father. Although partially correct, by focusing only on the conflictual and infantile meanings of Robert's loving idealization, the therapist unwittingly confirmed the patient's view that there was something irrational and even unseemly about these feelings. Ironically, Robert was grateful for and relieved at the subtle push to distance himself from these embarrassing feelings, a push that unfortunately enabled him to avoid dealing with the conflicts that these feelings evoked.

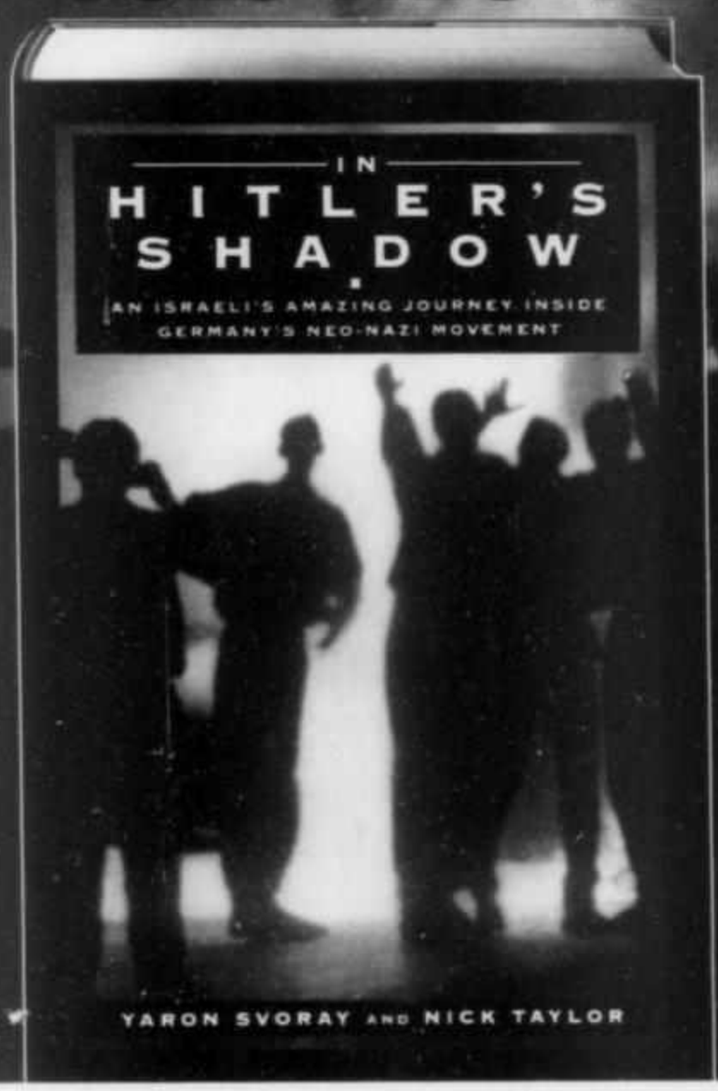
Robert's battle with shame was not limited to experiences of love. For instance, he remembered that when he was twelve years old, he bought a pair of iridescent pants that he hoped would boost his seventh-grade social life. On the first day of school, the prettiest girl in the class sarcastically commented, "Look at that … Robert thinks he's so cool with his new pants!" He died of embarrassment. This incident was the tip of an iceberg of shame over another set of feelings that also went back into Robert's earlier childhood. Showing off, being proud, feeling sexy, exuberant, and cocky formed a complex of affective states that Robert had inferred (à la Joseph Weiss) would elicit a negative response or rejection, cause harm, disrupt a connection, or, at least, not be mirrored. The sword of Damocles that hung over his head when he began to express these strivings was the traumatic experience of shame.

If one searches one's own past honestly, experiences of shame can often be found that have shaped one's personality. I remember experiences of being ridiculed, usually by peers, for being a "teacher's pet." I later understood that I had a desperate need to attach myself to a strong authority with whom I could have a "mutual admiration society." This need had to do with conflicts and deficiencies in my own family. I came to feel embarrassed about my (healthy, I now believe in retrospect) desire to find someone to idealize who would recognize and love me in return. It is easy to see how shame over being a "teacher's pet" might have extended to embarrassment over having any kind of special relationship to the divine.

As Robert and I analyzed these shame-based conflicts, he began to allow himself to experiment with more intimate and less cynical relationships. He found a partner who seemed unembarrassed about giving and receiving love. I was able to help him accept his love for me and understand that his need to see it as "transference" and not real was a compliance with his

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"Israeli journalist and ex-detective Yaron Svoray pulled off a stunning investigative coup by penetrating Germany's neo-Nazi movement in 1992-93....This extraordinary report...makes urgent reading....With assistance from the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, he exposed close links among various German neo-Nazi groups, as well as their ties to U.S. and European neo-fascists.... This chilling exposé is the basis for an HBO feature to air in 1995."
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NAN A. TALESE DOUBLEDAY

father's—and former therapist's—perceived inability to tolerate love.

In the course of Robert's growth, he became aware of desires to reconnect with Judaism, to "belong" to the Jewish community, and to explore its spiritual rituals and meanings with a more open mind. He sought out private and group teaching from both a Jewish-Renewal and a Conservative rabbi and attended services in a variety of congregations, looking for the right "fit." He began to observe Shabbat and sought to find ways to pray that he could intellectually accept.

Robert's spiritual renewal seemed to flow directly from his new-found freedom from the inhibitions that his shame had imposed. The threat of embarrassment had somehow functioned to help him cut off his positive feelings about Judaism, and he felt a resurgence of these feelings when he worked through some of his shame-based psychological conflicts. His deepening encounters with Judaism continually stirred up all of these prior conflicts, although now he could attempt to confront and work through them.

This process helped me understand how certain aspects of the spiritual experience have a quintessential power to evoke shame and a defensive resistance. I saw it clearly in Robert, in myself, and in some of my friends. I believe that we can generalize from Robert's experience to get a better understanding of why many Jews—whether they be converts like myself or secular Jews—might have difficulties embracing the spiritual dimension of their religion.

How did Robert's attempt to return to Judaism evoke signals or full-fledged experiences of embarrassment? The notion of God embarrassed him a little. He couldn't escape images of a paternalistic, reified God toward whom he felt pressure to irrationally submit, a relationship he found throughout the Siddur. It embarrassed him to express love and gratitude to this God. At first, the problem seemed "rational"—after all, Robert did have rational and healthy grounds for viewing this as a naive and hypocritical submission to an empty or hierarchical concept. So why not look for a different understanding of God? He had a hard time finding one that didn't seem too abstract or somehow "gimmicky." He became aware, however, that his discomfort stemmed from more than reasonable intellectual objections. Even when he found certain conceptualizations about God to be pleasing, he had a hard time praying, or even meditating, in any way that felt spiritual to him. There was something in the stance of worship itself that triggered shame-signals.

The Jewish Renewal minyans he explored were better than traditional synagogues in their approach to worship in some ways but worse in others. One of them, for instance, seemed to have a high level of creative spiritual energy, but Robert felt distracted and embarrassed by many of its New Age elements. For instance, one meditation exercise involved each member being greeted by the group chanting the *Sh'ma*, but replacing the word "Israel" with the individual's first name. On another occasion, the group was encouraged to pretend they were at Mount Sinai, or creatively visualize a conversation with Abraham.

Robert recognized the potential value of these exercises, aimed as they were at helping people develop their own personal and unique spiritual relationship to God, to prayer, and to the Jewish community. But he still felt uneasy, felt the familiar upsurge of embarrassment and cynicism. He had always felt cynical about "New Agey" techniques designed to foster greater self-awareness and intimacy, seeing them as artificial and intrusive. Robert sensed, however, that there was more to his current discomfort, since he knew that the people involved were actually quite sincere and respectful. In fact, he realized that it was the very absence of cynicism and intellectual distance in these groups that made him anxious and embarrassed, almost as if he were being asked to disrobe or open his heart. He was aware of reflex reactions of contempt, distancing himself from the group with rationalizations (partly true) about the problems of New Age psychology. Robert was familiar with these reflexes, having analyzed them extensively in relation to other interpersonal situations and thus understood that his principled objections to the "gimmicky" conventions of the Jewish Renewal minyans he visited were also fuelled by more personal and neurotic issues.

What are the particular meanings that are associated with spiritual experience that, for some people, evoke strong signals of embarrassment? One such meaning involves the quality of surrender and awe and its association with infantile dependence. The feeling of "awe" that often accompanies spiritual experience is a state of being that, in our culture, characterizes the child's worldview much more than the average adult's. It arises in the context of the child's experience of his or her relative smallness and helplessness in relation to powerful and idealized parents. Within the context of this asymmetrical relationship, the child's love for the parent is marked by a powerful experience of the parent's power and perfection and a wish to draw from this power through association, dependence, and identification. Idealization and the wish to surrender to and identify with the parents' perfection is normal and healthy in children and, despite the prevailing cultural

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Shul and Spirit

The Not Yet vs. the Never Again

Alice Chasan

Moving through the Days of Awe, it is *Neilah,* the closing service of Yom Kippur, that I love best, maybe because by then the assembled *daveners*, tired and a little off kilter from lack of food, have melded into a true bond, the consequence of all the hours of singing and swaying. Through the rhythms and the repetitions of melody and symbolism and breast-beating confession of sins, we've become a single organism, the embodiment of Émile Durkheim's "collective effervescence." As the sun goes down, as our voices rise, I resonate to the potent symbols: the closing of heaven's gates and of the Book of Life in which we yearn to be inscribed. Yet this year, before *Neilah*, before the gates of heaven and the Book of Life shut, I walked out of *shul*.

A walk-out, a protest, was the farthest thing from my mind when I headed toward the synagogue in the final hours of Yom Kippur. I'd come striving for *teshuvah,* but found that in order to return, I felt compelled to turn away from that place.

What drove me out was the Israel Bond appeal—a peculiar reversal of the New Testament story of Jesus driving the money-lenders out of the Temple. It wasn't simply that the abrupt change of tone and language—quite literally, from melodic Hebrew to the bald English of zero-coupon bonds and fixed interest rates—jarred my focus and withered my *kavanah* (spiritual intention, or intensity). The content of the message and the worldview of the messenger jolted me first from the sacred to the profane, and then from dismay to simmering anger.

As the rabbi finished leading us through the *Minha* service, a *macher* mounted the *bimah*. The congregation was forced to switch gears, from the intense involvement of many individuals joined in a community of public prayer to the sullen passivity of unwitting TV viewers coerced into watching a Jewish version of the Home Shopping Channel. Because the transition was so abrupt and extreme, it took me a few moments to absorb the sales pitch. But it was far from subtle or complex: We Jews may not be victims at the moment, but we are always victims *in potentia*. The Holocaust Museum...Hitler's Final Solution ... never again ... the world is an ever-more precarious place ... therefore, Jews must support Israel in case we again have to flee. The $1,000, zero-coupon bonds are a great deal, and the $25,000-bonds give an even better return.

If the stick is the Holocaust, status must be the carrot. And so the names of the buyers and the size of their purchases had to be announced, extending the ordeal for those of us who'd come there for prayer, hoping to sustain the incredibly fragile atmosphere of connectedness and holiness that can, under the right circumstances, percolate up from the concert of voices and longing and however-tentative soul-searching and envelop us during moments such as *Neilah,* turning an unremarkable brick building into sacred space.



MAIRAV SALOMON

I had to leave, so fully had any sense of prayerfulness been supplanted by a burning resentment that this man, because he had bought $18,000 worth of Israel Bonds, as he proudly declared to the congregation, had also purchased the right to enter the sanctuary and turn us toward an ossified, lachrymose, negative Jewishness, an Israel-worship grounded in fear and out of synch with the contemporary reality.

Yes, I know how these words might offend those who share Mr. Israel Bond's view of Jewishness. I can hear the indignation: How dare I question the connection between the Holocaust and Israel? Am I so

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ignorant as to fail to understand that *tzedaka,* charity and good deeds, are integral elements of what it means to be Jewish? Don't I know that without American Jewish dollars, Israel can't survive? What better time to entreat the congregation to invest than the one day a year that the *shul* draws a capacity crowd?

My response to that inevitable indignation is simple: The auction atmosphere, the crass attempt to sway Jews to spend in synagogue on Yom Kippur with appeals to our once and future oppression while the sounds of the martyrologies still reverberate in our heads, is antithetical to the Jewishness I wish to live. It is not the Jewishness I want to impart to my children, or to those non-Jews dear to me. There has got to be a better way to acknowledge the need of some Jews to hang on to this form of being Jewish than to accede to their negativity.

Yet a disturbing asymmetry emerges when we examine the way our communities function, an imbalance in our willingness to accept the ritualistic repetition of this perpetual anxiety and negative Jewishness. Despite the rabbi's intelligent and sensitive attempts to lead the congregation away from such negative formulations of Jewish identity, it often feels as if his mission is Sisyphean: Time after time, he maps out his vision of a more positive, searching, exploratory kind of Jewishness with an openness to spiritual growth. But it seems to me that in this congregation, as in so many others, the burden of proof is always upon those making the argument that it is indeed legitimate to strive for the positive and eschew the negative. Why is it so hard to institutionalize respect for the sensibilities of those who come to *shul* not for status, not out of fear, not out of obligation, but to find deeper connections between our lives and our Jewishness, to infuse the former more thoroughly with the latter?

The fault lines are myriad and manifest in our community. And it's not just a clear-cut division between the pray-ers and the *machers;* there are ways in which even prayer is used to compete, to achieve status, and to avoid contact with ourselves and those around us. For instance, there is the speed-*davener,* whose goal is to zip through every prayer loudest and first, then look around the room to see who else is "finished." And it's not just generational. If I am spurred to return to the texts and the prayers and the rituals of Judaism by the notion of the "Not yet," many Jews, young, old, and in the middle, are only moved as Jews by the "Never again." For every person who comes to *shul* to learn to pray, to try to mine real meaning this time out of words and rituals that have become rote or hollow, there are others who come to network, to establish their place in the synagogue hierarchy, to see and be seen.

Don't get me wrong: I'm not disdaining the human as a path to the spiritual. I'm no mystic, rejecting the collective for solitary communion with the divine. On the contrary, I guess you'd say I'm a dyed-in-the-wool Durkheimian, since I truly believe it is in the social bond that the religious experience is born, and that through the collective effervescence Durkheim described that religious vitality is rekindled. But there are forms of human interaction, whether in the *shul* or outside, that are nourishing to the soul, and those that are soul-withering.

Encounters of both kinds occurred, in rapid succession, on Yom Kippur. During the *Yizkor* memorial service, a woman who is a Shabbat regular and one of the first people I met when I was *shul*-hunting, came and stood beside me, telling me that she didn't want me to be alone. I understood: She'd comforted me before, last spring; it was my mother's *Yahrzeit,* the anniversary of her death, and I'd been overcome by emotion saying *Kaddish,* the memorial prayer. Nevertheless, I was surprised and deeply moved that she'd remembered and had come from her seat several rows away to offer me emotional support. We hugged, and her quiet succor shored me up in that painful time.

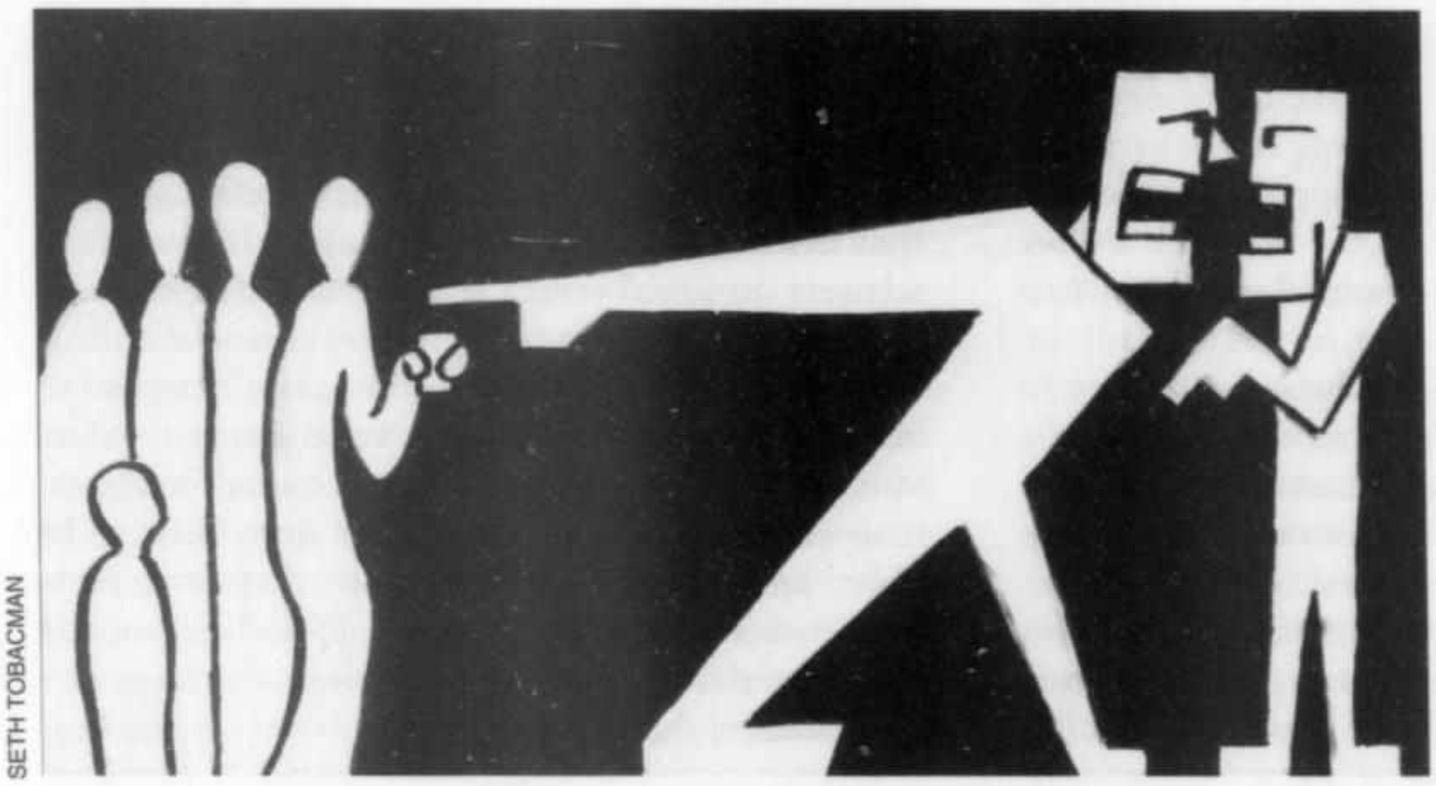
No sooner had *Yizkor* ended and this kind woman returned to her seat, when a person who had been sitting across from me in the synagogue's u-shaped configuration—an acquaintance with whom I have had many conversations and encounters—was by my side, leaning across me as if I were a piece of furniture, apparently oblivious both to my presence and to my emotional state, so that she could brightly wish the person to my right a Happy New Year. What kind of thinking precedes an act like that at a time of gravity, in the context of prayer? Probably no conscious thought at all. Interiority can be terrifying, depending on what's waiting inside to be examined. And maybe the breezy greeter found *Yizkor,* its focus on death and loss, too frightening to sustain its mood for even a moment longer than the service necessitated.

More intriguing still, as I thought later about the insensitivity of her act, is that this woman considers herself, and is considered by others, to be an observant Jew—in the parlance of congregational life, an "active" woman from a "good Jewish family," with the concomitant status those emblems accrue. The hollowness in the heartland of American Jewish life can't simply be laid, in self-righteous indignation, at the feet of congregants who don't see the inside of a *shul* from one fall to the next. In the year 5755, despite the fact that the materialism and spiritual morbidity of middle-class congregational Judaism has been well-documented in the social-science literature and chronicled memorably in American-Jewish fiction, we continue to elevate members of our community for the wrong reasons, thereby driving away untold numbers of the young of my generation, and now, I fear, the next, from a Judaism thus defined.

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What We Talk About When We Talk About Welfare

Mark J. Stern



SETH TOBACMAN

Look out. Here comes welfare reform. As the smoke begins to clear from the health-care reform debate, Congress and President Clinton are hungry for an issue that will give them a little moral sustenance. After the initial, idealistic appeal of a call for universal coverage, the health-care debate quickly fell into arcane discussions of the potential cost-benefit ratios of various plans and the seamy push-and-shove of interest group politics. In contrast, welfare reform promises our public servants a chance to strike a blow for hard work, good family life, and efficient government. Virtue, they might reason, has its rewards.

Unfortunately, the administration and Congress will still have to deal with the reality of the fourteen million Americans on welfare. The tension between the reality of these women and children and the public's desire for simple standards of virtue for work, family, and government will frame the coming debate over welfare reform. As politicians and policy analysts look for formulas that will appeal to Americans' sense of morality, they must also make sense of the millions of lives they will affect through their actions.

One way to do this, of course, is to simplify the reality. If welfare is not really about five million families with five million different stories, but about "the underclass" or "teen mothers," then the reality isn't so complex. Symbols like these help us take a manageable portion of reality and connect it to our vision of the moral order. Although people inevitably categorize and label to get a handle on complex social reality, when the symbols our elected officials and policy-makers use to frame public debate are too simplistic, the results may be distortive, and the consequences for policy-making can be disastrous.

Take the recently enacted crime bill. Americans really want to feel safer, but the symbols we've used to simplify the problem—whether the death penalty or gun control—don't affect the reality of our streets. Yet these symbols virtually dominated the congressional debate on the President's crime legislation. Allocations in the bill for preventive programs were derided as "pork," and the public was treated to the spectacle of New York Senator Alfonse D'Amato chanting nursery rhymes to his colleagues rather than a serious discussion of the causes of crime and possible solutions. When the gap between our symbols and our reality gets too great, we sow the seeds for widespread political alienation.

A Tale of Two Studies

The current welfare debate gives us a chance to watch how social reality and moral order mix in American politics. During the past decade, two

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divergent portraits of the reality of welfare emerged from the social science literature. The differences between these images and their impact on social policy show how those within the political process resolved the tension between morality and reality.

In the mid-1980s, sociologists Greg Duncan and James Morgan of the University of Michigan concluded that most poor people are not permanently poor; a lot of people live in poverty for several years and then move above the poverty line. Furthermore, a vast majority of welfare recipients collect benefits for only a year or two. The policy implications of their work was clear; poverty and welfare recipiency were not limited to a small group. Over the course of a decade, a very large slice of the population could find itself in need of help. Therefore, we needed a welfare system that was generous and helpful, not penurious and punitive.

Using the same data, David Ellwood and Mary Jo Bane, then public-policy professors at Harvard's Kennedy School, asserted that the small minority who stay on welfare for a long time are more likely to be African American, poorly educated, and unmarried. They were likely to stay on welfare much longer than the average recipient and consume a large proportion of welfare spending. Ellwood and Bane proposed a complex set of policies—a higher earned income tax credit, more job training and education, stricter child support, and a two-year limit on welfare—to deal with the complexity of factors leading to long-term welfare dependency. They hoped that by focusing on the problems of long-term recipients and by proposing solutions that were both compassionate and tough, they could get the federal government to enact a program that would benefit both the long- and short-term recipients.

Ellwood and Bane's work caught the attention of then-presidential candidate Bill Clinton. After pledging to "end welfare as we know it" during the campaign, the newly elected President brought Ellwood and Bane to Washington to craft his welfare-reform proposals. The administration proposal that was released in June preserves the scholars' proposals for a two-year time limit on welfare, but it has jettisoned many of their ideas for expanded services and support for recipients.

Ellwood and Bane had hoped that focusing on long-term recipients would bring a program that benefited short-term recipients as well, but they misjudged the role of symbols in the political process. As the welfare debate began to focus only on the long-term recipients, a population that purportedly needed the discipline of time limits and work requirements to behave properly, this image dominated the discussion. For rhetorical purposes, the other 75 percent of the welfare population that stay on welfare for a short time became invisible. After all, the symbol of the chronic welfare recipient is powerful; it simplifies and compresses reality and by doing so, it obliterates the reality of the majority. Thus, once that 75 percent had disappeared from the discussion—once the welfare problem was framed in terms of young, Black, single mothers who stay on welfare forever—the discussion of welfare "reform" turned more and more punitive. If liberals thought welfare recipients needed more discipline and a time limit on benefits, then conservatives felt free to propose eliminating welfare altogether and a holy war against illegitimacy.

It is discouraging—and extremely short-sighted—that neither the President nor any of his principal advisers on social policy seized the debate to focus national attention on the question essential to true welfare reform: What would a program designed to help the majority of people on welfare—the three-in-four women who stay on public assistance for a short time—look like? These people are more likely to be older and better educated than the long-term recipients. They are likely to have suffered a disruption of their work life due to unemployment or sickness or a breakdown of their marriage.

Women in this situation enter a kind of economic and emotional free-fall. They lose their homes, their social networks, and other resources until they hit bottom. They need support, both financial and emotional. They need the resources and the time to put their lives back together.

In fairness, it should be pointed out that the Clinton welfare-reform proposal includes some features that will help the majority. It calls for increases in the incentives for states to get poor women training and education. It provides more funding for child-support enforcement. Finally, it seeks to assure that recipients who find a job will keep their health care and child care while they make the transition to the labor force, something that the 1988 welfare reform promised but failed to deliver.

But the other features of the plan—those that have precipitated the most heated partisan debate and have generated most of the media attention—are intended to punish the 25 percent who are chronic welfare recipients. The plan includes the two-year cut-off, with those who fail to find work then moving into minimum-wage jobs. In addition, the proposals give states great latitude in adopting even harsher sanctions for women who have additional children while on welfare.

The reform proposals do nothing to raise the national minimum benefit for a family. In fact, the

adequacy of welfare has almost disappeared as an issue. Yet, because of the steep decline in the value of benefits over the past fifteen years, single mothers who work escape poverty less often today than they did in 1980. In the absence of benefit increases and labor-market reforms, the Clinton plan will trade poor women on welfare for poor women in the labor force.

Ironically, at the same time that the Clinton administration has urged Congress to embrace a national standard of adequate health care for all Americans, it has ignored the issue of adequate welfare benefits. The reasons that adequacy of benefits has vanished as an issue from the welfare debate are many and complex. As some writers in TIKKUN have suggested, liberals' ability to craft an assertive social agenda suffers from their inability to challenge conservatives' dominance of "values" issues.

At the same time, the neglect of the adequacy of benefits reflects a structural crisis of liberalism. The welfare reform efforts of the 1970s foundered on the shoals of low-wage work. If we were to preserve the principle that the lowest paid worker should earn more than welfare recipients, we either had to supplement the wages of the working poor or keep welfare benefits inadequate. Because Congress was unwilling to do what was necessary to raise the earnings of low-wage workers, reformers had to resign themselves to inadequate welfare payments.

The Clinton plan will only marginally change the lives of poor women and children. A few more women will receive job training and find jobs, a few more will be sanctioned for noncompliance, a few more will receive child support, and a few will get dropped from the welfare rolls. Whether they stay on the rolls, find a job, receive more child support, or reach their time limit, however, the Clinton plan will neither improve the odds of women getting back on their feet nor end welfare as we know it.

What We Talk About When We Talk About Welfare

So why should a set of relatively minor adjustments of the American way of poverty generate such emotions? Because the core of the debate about welfare touches most of us, whatever our economic position or political perspective. We have displaced a whole set of anxieties we have about the new world in which we live onto the welfare debate. We worry about the postindustrial transformation of the economy and its insecurities, and we talk about enforcing the work ethic for welfare recipients. We see our children become sexually active earlier and earlier, our

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neighbors get divorced, and friends discover they are gay, and we talk about resuscitating the traditional family. We live in neighborhoods that seem less safe, less secure, and less stable than they used to be, and we talk about the need for community development in the inner city.

These are all important topics that deserve our attention, but as a practical matter, we should not use the lives of poor women and children to work them out. There is a host of issues that can advance the discussion of the balance of responsibility, caring, and individualism. Health care, child care, and employers' responsibility toward workers and their families all provide opportunities for us to discuss these issues in concrete ways that touch ordinary people's lives. Welfare—clouded as it is with decades of race- and gender-baiting—somehow leads us toward myths and caricatures, not the difficult choices forced upon women and men. The poor have enough problems without serving as a stand-in for the anxieties of the middle class.

Just as important, although we may rail against the Clinton administration's pandering to conservatives, liberals' ambivalence about the unpredictable nature of family and community makes a common "progressive" position on welfare reform unattainable. The recent vogue for communitarian ideas among liberals speaks to a profound uneasiness about the instability that a stress on individual happiness and consensual relationships will inevitably breed.

I suspect that what Lillian Rubin concluded about the working-class in a recent issue of this magazine ("'People Don't Know Right From Wrong Anymore'," TIKKUN, January/February 1994) is true for other social strata as well: We are in a kind of cultural lag, unable to reconcile our values around family and community with the real choices about commitment and happiness that we make. And when we see the specter of the teen mother—stereotypically sexually promiscuous, hedonistic, and unashamed—many of us are uncomfortable with what may be the logical extrapolation of our own life decisions.

Americans have always overestimated the gap between the well-off and the poor. It is social context, not social values, that creates a chasm between the poor and the mainstream. Poor women, like women in other social classes, no longer accept unhappy marriages as their fate; they want to get out of them. But whereas the wife of a lawyer or computer technician will think twice about leaving because of the probable decline in her standard of living, poor women are less likely to face these consequences.

In fact, Black women's occupational revolution—not the myth of overgenerous welfare checks—has provided the greatest economic incentive for these women to get out of bad marriages, or not to marry at all. Three decades ago, Black women, who in most parts of the country could find work only as maids, needed a husband to make ends meet. Now that African-American women have more occupational choices, the wage gap between Black women and men has almost disappeared.

African Americans are the first group in the United States to experiment with economic equality in marriages. For poor couples who are committed to their relationships, the increased earnings of women have allowed most low-wage, dual-earner families to escape poverty. Among women in intolerable relationships, however, these new opportunities have removed the financial penalty they suffer from leaving a relationship, or not entering one in the first place.

Of course, these changes—especially the rises in the number of single-parent families and teen mothers—should worry us, but we need to see that there is more going on than "irresponsibility." Unless we are willing to turn back the clock on this occupational revolution, we are going to have to live with more family instability, no matter how uncomfortable it makes us.

One way of addressing this uneasiness is to take the position (one familiar to TIKKUN's readers) that the irresponsibility of some welfare recipients toward their families and communities is as unacceptable as that of corporations that turn their backs on their communities, or of the well-off who neglect their children's need for guidance and caring. Certainly, some early supporters of Clinton's welfare-reform effort, including Ellwood and Bane, hoped that if liberals accepted work requirements and time limits, we could demand that government and business hold up their responsibility to provide jobs, adequate training, and services. But after a year of conservative sniping and budget constraints, the plan puts few demands on those in power.

Perhaps most distressing of all its shortcomings, the Clinton proposal reinforces the myth that a huge gap separates welfare recipients from the mainstream. We can ask the poor to take any job offered them, make sure their children don't skip school, and limit their fertility, without raising questions about the well-being of families and communities in other social classes. But can we demand that the poor live by a standard of selflessness that we are not prepared to meet? To the extent that the Clinton welfare plan constructs a kind of moral apartheid—if you're not on welfare you can run your personal life as you want, but if you want

(Continued on p. 92)

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Christmas Presence

Eleanor Boyle

Shortly after I had converted to Judaism, a rabbi counseled me to stop visiting my parents on December 25. While it was acceptable to spend time with them sometime during their holiday season, it was best to stay away on Christmas Day. Although I trusted this rabbi's moral authority, I was painfully aware that my family would be hurt and mystified by my absence on what for them is a family occasion, not a religious one. I had clearly resolved that the Christian holidays would play no part in my personal or home life. But I did not want to sever my family ties, fragile enough in modern life, and often most robust on a few select holidays. I wanted nothing to do with Christmas, but everything to do with my mother and father, my siblings, and their children.



JULIE DELTON

So I equivocated. I asked other converts whether, and to what extent, they took part in the Christmas of their families of origin. Having been warned that December is a difficult time for Jewish converts who had been raised Christian, I wasn't surprised to hear a diversity of opinions, some very emotional. Meanwhile, I attended my family's Christmas celebrations—reluctantly, with an unsettling ambivalence.

But as I came to feel secure on my Jewish path, I increasingly questioned the notion that converts, or any Jews, should stay away from loved ones who happen to walk different spiritual paths. I didn't want my family to perceive Judaism as some kind of exclusionary cult that had isolated their child from them, but as a loving, tolerant, and respectful way of life.

Last December, after speaking to another convert who said she "wouldn't go near" her parents on December 25, and after reading a discussion in TIKKUN of the politics of meaning, I began to feel that the Christian holiday was a more disturbing and more symbolic issue than I had previously realized, intertwined with the larger theme of how Jews relate to non-Jews.

Having read the words of Jacob Neusner in these pages (TIKKUN July/August 1989), that "the single most urgent moral crisis facing Jewish communities today is Jews' hostility toward the other, the outsider," I had been reminded of the moving High Holy Day prayer, *Vidui,* in which we ask forgiveness for transgressions against God's law, including xenophobia. I was beginning to feel that family togetherness should triumph over fear and take precedence over human constructions such as holidays which should not be barriers to, but vehicles for, our engagement in important matters. Interestingly, I was coming to this position with the help of my Jewish friends, one of whom was appalled that any rabbi would counsel Jews-by-choice to shun their parents on Christmas. "Whatever happened," he asked angrily, "to 'Honor your father and mother'?"

Eleanor Boyle is a university and college instructor of psychology in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Wrestling with the complexities of the Christmas dilemma, I decided to conduct an informal survey of ten rabbis across the denominational spectrum in the Vancouver-Seattle area about their advice to converts on the subject. All took the unequivocal position that converts should never celebrate Christmas in their own homes. Then we got to the tough questions, the specifics over which most converts agonize: Is it okay to visit your parents on Christmas? If you visit, is it okay to sit around the Christmas tree with the extended family? How about exchanging gifts?

At one extreme, a rabbi said converts should never have contact of any kind with Christmas. At the other extreme, a rabbi said he saw nothing wrong with converts' enjoying Christmas with their parents. "I counsel converts to accept your families as they are," he said. "Don't make them feel they've done something wrong by not being Jewish!" Obviously, all the rabbis surveyed want to "do the right thing" toward both parents and Torah. But they differed wildly on how to achieve such ends.

Why do some rabbis counsel converts to stay away from their families on Christmas? I heard six reasons: 1. If you attend family Christmas celebrations, people might think you're insincere about Judaism; 2. Those who believe that conversion is illusory (that it is impossible to choose a religion) will use your presence as evidence; 3. Visiting their grandparents' home for Christmas, your children may become confused about their own religious identity; 4. Christians may feel compelled to mute the religious aspect of their holiday because of the presence of a Jew, which would be unfair to the Christians involved; 5. If you attend such functions, your family might try to convert you back to Christianity; 6. If you attend, you might be so moved by the pain of your parents, you'd relent and renounce your conversion.

I found none of these arguments convincing. First, I didn't convert to Judaism to impress my parents and siblings about my sincerity. If they regard my spending Christmas with them as evidence of my "insincerity," I'd consider their attitude not a personal attack, but an understandable defense mechanism.

Second, there are those who believe conversion is impossible—that you're only Jewish, or Muslim, or Protestant if you were born that way. There may be several senses in which it is true that, "once an X, always an X." If a person truly is Catholic, Buddhist, or Jewish through personal conviction and informed choice, then perhaps only one such commitment can be made in a lifetime. I never made this kind of conscious commitment to Catholicism. As soon as I began thinking critically about that religion, I began to understand that I wasn't Catholic and never had been. Furthermore, we are repositories of our experiences; I'll always have had a Catholic childhood. But such a fact does not determine my adult religious beliefs or spiritual path. Consistent with much of modern psychology, I take the more positive approach that we have the power to shape our selves through conscious choices in adult life. We assume some of the choices of our parents, but not others. And through it all we love them for who they are and for all they gave us.

Third, it is ludicrous to suggest that taking children to their grandparents' home for Christmas will confuse them. Children do not enter the world believing that extended families must be all of the same religion; if they experience their own family as strongly and joyously Jewish, but one set of grandparents as Christian, that will be normal to them. And if you establish a home that is clearly Jewish, your children will not be confused whether they visit other homes that are Muslim, Christian, or Buddhist.

Fourth, my presence at my parents' Christmas will never discourage the religious content, because there is none. Like many North Americans, we always celebrated Christmas as a family time, not a religious observance. Besides, just as observant Jews who invite non-Jews to a Seder don't forego the ritual, so it is unlikely that truly religious Christians would ever hide what they considered the most precious aspect of a holiday.

Fifth, if your family is going to try to reconvert you, this might happen at any time of year.

Sixth, the notion that Christian parents would have emotional breakdowns at Christmas in the presence of their Jewish child does not ring true for one raised Christian in North America. I repeat, for most celebrants, Christmas is a family time, and what would hurt the family most is for a child to refuse ever to attend again.

Uncompelling as they seem to me, the rabbis' arguments nevertheless convey a sincere sense of urgency, perhaps stemming from what Jack Wertheimer, in his 1993 book, *A People Divided*, calls "the Jewish preoccupation with survivalism." Certainly for many Jews in the Diaspora, Christmas is a symbol of potential cultural hegemony, and of the power of the dominant civilization. I have deep respect for those Jews who lived through the Holocaust horrors which fed survivalism, but I do not believe traditions are kept alive through isolation. Christmas is uncomfortable and annoying for many Jews who watch throughout December as this holiday takes over the social and economic landscape of North America. As was said so

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Memory Politics

The Implications of Healing From Sexual Abuse

Ruth Wallen

Over the last few years, I have made the harrowing journey common to many—remembering and speaking the truth about being sexually abused as a child. My vagina inexplicably burning, red, swollen, and itching. Nighttime seizures where my legs would part, my body curl and clench, and then begin to heave against my will. Suddenly understanding the lifelong mantra, "Don't touch me, don't touch me." Although I had often backpacked alone in the mountains, now I was too terrified to make art or write. Initially the panic was more palpable than any feelings of sadness or anger. I could work for a half-hour before I was reduced to a trembling child clutching at pillows, rocking, rocking, rocking.... My body was trying to remember.

As I learned to swim through the flood of memories, I wondered what else I'd forgotten or failed to notice. I never had illusions of an idyllic childhood and had always remembered some of my experience. Even so, I had often been so consumed in warding off my own pain, that I'd also chased away my dreams. Afraid of my own feelings, I had also shielded my heart from friends' grief and anger or used a distanced compassion to occlude the commonality of our feelings. As I learned to work with my panic, I felt tremendous energy, relief from no longer defending against a part of my experience. Less consumed with my own trauma, I remembered that outside my window there were mountains behind the dirty-brown southern California smog. I was not only interested in enriching forgotten corners of my private life, but also in sharing my understanding with others. I hoped that breaking the silence about the prevalence of sexual abuse would contribute to significant changes in society.

But my celebration of memory has been tempered by a recent shift in media coverage. Finally, I thought, people were daring to speak about the reality of sexual abuse. Almost every women's magazine covered sexual abuse, and Oprah Winfrey hosted a special on abuse of children on all three major networks. Yet instead of this coverage prompting further discussion about how to stop the frequent abuse of children, the existence of the problem itself is again the subject of debate.



CYN MAURICE

During the last year, accusations of false claims have dominated the news. As the story goes, bright, high-achieving white adults in their thirties or forties seek help for a minor life crisis, only to be convinced by an overzealous therapist that they've been horrifically abused in childhood. Or these same therapists, in cahoots with overly protective parents, con kids into thinking they're being molested. For example, a *Newsweek* cover last year displayed the headline, "CHILD ABUSE," stamped across the sepia-toned faces of grandparents who had been convicted of abuse. The subheading conjured up "witch hunts" and asked, "when does the fight to protect our kids go too far?"

Much of the media coverage questioning the

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accuracy of memories about abuse has been fueled by conferences and press releases sponsored by the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, a group of a few thousand parents who claim that they have been falsely accused. It is significant that one of the lengthiest discussions of arguments promulgated by this foundation, in *Family Therapy Networker* (September/October 1993), mentions that four out of the five women who had retracted their charges of abuse and have become star witnesses for the group, were in fact molested by someone. Despite this fact, when reporters cite these examples, they imply that charges of sexual abuse have been conjured up out of nowhere. Then the discussion typically focuses on supposed false accusations instead of the devastating fact of the abuse.

Stories of abuse have perhaps finally touched too close to home; maybe many middle-class Americans are not ready to believe that members of their communities could do such a thing to their own children. As if in reaction, public discussion has shifted to debate over the accuracy of memory. Whether intentional or reflexive, this backlash is reactionary in the worst sense, since it saps energy and attention from the question of how we can heal from the effects of abuse.

Healing from sexual abuse is profoundly empowering. But the process is slow, subtle, difficult, and unglamorous. In contrast, all of the recent articles that question the reality of sexual abuse focus on individual, sensational case histories rather than on the larger picture. Media coverage of this sort, while perhaps making for flashier headlines, encourages hysteria and a state of continued paralysis, effectively putting victims back in their place.

The bashing of self-help books, the readiness of many detractors to dismiss the challenge of healing, is another manifestation of the backlash. While the critics accuse the survivor movement of oversimplification and overstatement, their contentions tend to be much more reductive than the self-help manuals they malign. Instead of recognizing the gravity of the problem, offering constructive suggestions, or discussing the complexity of the issues, these writers opt for the easier route of trashing recovery movements per se.

For instance, an article last year in *The New York Times Book Review* by Carol Tavris warns, "Beware the Incest-Survivor Machine." The piece lambastes the "incest survivor recovery movement" for its insularity, pop psychology, and claims that understanding past victimization will solve all current problems. While Tavris's claims that too often the broader social connections fail to be made is well-founded, instead of developing this argument, the bulk of the article indulges in a facile dismissal of self-help books. Tavris discounts the importance of sharing memories, reclaiming self-esteem, and kindling the courage to experience deep rage and grief. Certainly we should all be aware of the pitfall of using newfound awareness as better armor, instead of as a path toward greater openness. But Tavris and her fellow detractors fail to recognize that social responsibility must begin with self-reckoning and self-healing.

Articles such as Tavris's decry what they disdain as the incest survivor bandwagon. They scorn manuals for incest survivors, such as *The Courage to Heal*, by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, for suggesting that one may be abused even if one has no specific memories, that if "you still have a feeling that something abusive happened to you, it probably did." But in the context in which this statement was written, it was meant to combat our cultural legacies of self-doubt and denial. Those who think they may have been abused and healing professionals must find a middle ground between believing that everyone who fits a generalized list of symptoms has been abused and, as in the past, repressing the very discussion of the abuse that these lists were meant to combat.

Undoubtedly, there are those who will grab at the latest explanation for all of life's woes. But detractors ought to recognize that for most survivors, acknowledging abuse is an extremely painful, disorienting, consuming experience that still carries with it great shame and trauma. It takes boundless compassion to learn to embrace a part of one's being that at first encounter feels so helpless, so wounded—and, from the therapist's perspective, to witness stories of intense suffering. It is extremely important, however, that the therapist, healer, or friend follow the survivor's lead during this process. If the survivor is in charge of the process he or she is more likely to end up feeling empowered rather than duped. Even Bass and Davis condemn the "excesses" of the recovery movement. The therapist must be extremely careful about presuming that abuse is an explanation for current symptoms, asking leading questions, and suggesting what might have happened. Requiring clients with no memories to watch films and read books about abuse and using powerful drugs to recover memory are poor therapies.

I take strong issue with Tavris's claim that "healing is defined as your realization that you were a victim of sexual abuse and that it explains everything wrong in your life." The process of healing is precisely the eschewal of the victim identity and the acknowledgement of the ways in which one was unable to

provide loving care for oneself and others. It cannot be repeated enough that, contrary to detractors' snide claims, genuine healing has nothing to do with justification of one's faults, or winning the badge of a survivor/victim. Healing involves an intense commitment to honesty with oneself, from the development of the strength to feel deep pain and rage, to learning to let go.

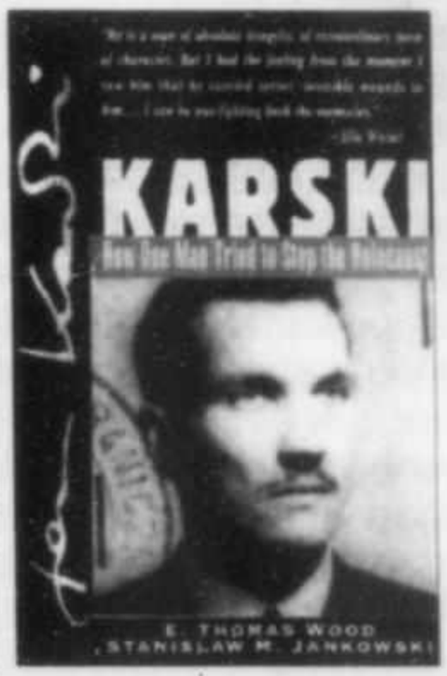
Healing also involves developing the capacity for greater intimacy. While Tavris suggests that the newly proclaimed victim soaks in a "love bath" from friends, the reality is more likely the opposite. The legacy of abuse, at least initially, is tremendous distrust of others. For me, flashbacks were like grenades exploding, shattering my insides. The physical contact I craved more than anything, the strong gentle hands to help me relax, breathe, and provide a safe space for the fragments to come together, was paradoxically also what I most feared. Long ago, I had made the choice to reject the voice in myself that wanted comforting before anyone else could, thereby maintaining control. Now, slowly, over and over, I had to learn that touch need not burn, and that I could acknowledge my desire for love and caring. And that was only the start. Only once I experienced some sense of wholeness, of safety, could I begin to access the depth of my emotions.

It is incumbent on those who have been touched by the reality of sexual abuse from survivors, their friends and lovers, therapists, teachers, and parents to work to change the course of public debate, to refocus the discussion on healing. If discussions in news media and magazines have something to contribute to the debate, it is in refining the healing process, cautioning against a quick fix or New-Age narcissism.

Remember Freud's legacy. Initially, he published two works on the etiology of hysteria in which he supported his patients' stories that they had been molested as children. But unwilling to deal with the implications of promulgating these frequent charges against prominent citizens, he withdrew his seduction hypothesis, and instead developed drive theory and the Oedipus complex to explain what he now labeled as "childhood fantasies." Therapists maligned in recent accounts appear to be sharing the fate Freud escaped when he withdrew his original hypothesis.

The most conservative figures suggest that sexual abuse is rampant. The lowest estimate cited in *Newsweek* suggests that since the 1940s, 10 to 12 percent of girls under fourteen, (unreasonably ignoring both boys and teenage abuse) have been sexually molested. Many writers estimate the figure is one girl in three and one boy in ten. Diana Russell's *The Secret Trauma* is

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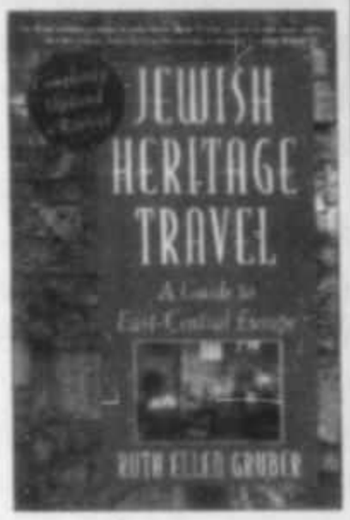
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the most frequently cited study. Analyzing interviews with 930 women in San Francisco, she found that 38 percent of women had been sexually abused (defined as "exploitive sexual contact or attempted contact") by the age of eighteen, 89 percent of these by relatives or family acquaintances. But even *Newsweek's* conservative estimate—one out of every nine or ten girls molested—is an outrageously unacceptable number.

Today, most of us know both victims and perpetrators. What is the impact on society of the tolerance of this behavior—an assault so intense, so intimate, that the victim can often only respond by amnesia, by splitting off from the wound? Alice Miller, a psychoanalyst and author of many books on child abuse, is the most eloquent spokesperson for the argument that until the victim can bear the truth, can release the secret held in the body, the trauma will be unconsciously reenacted, tormenting both self and others. Miller contends that children are especially vulnerable to abuse because they are frequently used to satisfy the narcissistic needs of their parents. The proliferation in our society of the means of destruction, from guns, to nuclear bombs, to environmental degradation, only escalates the urgency to turn our attention to ways to break the generational inheritance of violence.

At survivors' meetings I have attended, I have been most touched by hearing mothers grieve about having unwittingly passed on the cycle of abuse, of having been unable to nurture, love, or protect their children fully because they were too withdrawn, defended from their own pain. Breaking this cycle begins with the courage to be vulnerable, to move into the tightly held energy, the secret places, without any certainty about what will emerge. And if there are those who are unsure whether, or how, they were abused, but feel that they have these wounds to heal, fully undertaking this course of committed introspection can only lead to greater honesty, gentleness, and openness. The initial stages of healing involve introspection, not accusation. Thus, the healing process can serve as an inspiration to all who suffer from disassociative trauma.

The incest victim has mastered the art of disassociation, secrecy, and denial. Pain felt by the body has been called pleasure. Violation has been called love. When the body has actually felt pleasure, or the heart love, mind has felt betrayed, deeply ashamed for having failed to fully resist the encounter. Pummeled by the logic of double-speak, intellect has learned to resist any sensation, distrust all feelings. Mind has been split from body has been severed from heart. "Never tell" is the mantra. Over and over, this threat has been repeated: Something terrible will happen if the secret is revealed. Even worse than the distortion of the parental bond is the denial of intimacy with oneself. Honesty has been replaced with tremendous fear, distrust, and even loathing of one's secret, dark experience. And this secret festers, feeding on the ambiguity and silence, coiling inward as a dagger of self-deprecation.

It is not the abuse itself as much as the acceptance of the perpetrator's admonishment not to tell that is so crippling. In keeping the secret, one is forced to construct a rigid identity that insulates oneself from hidden pain. One perpetuates the abuse by rejecting a part of oneself. The constant struggle to repel pain becomes a habit hard to break, extending beyond the abusive trauma, to all direct experience.

Daring to touch the wound, embracing the "bad girl," is a radical move. After the initial shock, healing is a slow process of realignment of severed connections and reestablishment of circulation. As one's heart is cracked open by experiencing the depth of trauma, the confidence engendered by experiencing the emotion, releasing the energy, moves one beyond the sense of helpless victimization. Slowly, the prohibition against experiencing one's innermost secrets is dissolved. The release of the emotion at the core of the violation turns out not to be so terrifying, or painful, as the years of avoidance and resistance. Speaking the truth can be profoundly liberating. One is no longer at war with oneself. Pandora's box turns out to be a myth invented by the perpetrator, a terribly pernicious myth that preserves self-loathing and keeps one not only from remembering the past, but from fully experiencing the present. Developing the courage to cease censoring feelings and to name experience honestly, while a slow process, is tremendously empowering. And although the change may initially be unsettling for close friends and family, it ultimately serves as an invitation to all to examine and heal destructive relationships, as well as the secret, discarded aspects of ourselves.

If the public debate over the extent of sexual abuse of the last year has anything to contribute to our understanding, it is that the process of healing is complex and subtle. Since Freud, the therapist has been charged with curing the hysteric, described as someone in an overstimulated state, prone to disassociation and delusion, acting with no connection with his/her emotions. Although in the initial period of experiencing repressed memory, one may feel hysterical, healing involves the antithesis—calming down, slowing down, and developing a sense of safety so that severed connections can be reestablished and feelings experienced in manageable doses.

It is extremely plausible that in the hypercharged,

hysterical state in which many people enter therapy, a person could be quite suggestible to the amplification of existing memories. Many therapists would contend that an overstimulated state tends to be self-perpetuating—on a physiological level, the brain becomes accustomed to the rush of chemicals associated with stress; on an emotional level, it is easier to perpetuate the trauma than to respond to the anguish underneath. Indeed, I remember when my extremely agitated, overstimulated state felt "normal." I was in a tremendous rush to know "everything," regardless of whether I could integrate the emotions around what I was remembering. Many healers would agree with Judith Herman, author of *Trauma and Recovery* and associate clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, who argues that in the early stages of therapy when the client feels extremely raw, terribly overstimulated, and vulnerable to suggestion, it is most important to help him/her develop a sense of trust and safety. At this point, recalling additional memories will only give rise to further trauma.

To heal, the survivor must learn to overcome the tendency to disassociate. Disassociation, which leads to the repression of memories, comes from the inability of the abused to assimilate violent, contradictory experience. Thus, more than simply remembering, healing involves learning to be present, unravelling the traumatized language of double-speak. Healing also involves renegotiating the frozen immobility resulting from trauma. Psychologist Peter Levine, in an unpublished manuscript, notes that when animals are extremely traumatized they freeze and play dead. If the animal escapes attack, it slowly reorients itself, gradually gains its bearings, shakes from the trauma, and integrates waves of feeling. Levine argues that people frozen in the shock of trauma need to undergo a similar reorientation process. Judith Herman emphasizes making connections through the thorough retelling of the story of what occurred. Healing is about synthesis, reestablishing connections, and reintegrating feelings and experience.

The last year's debate over recovered memory has also suggested how little we know about how the brain stores and retrieves experience. The goal of recovering exact memory of events that have occurred in early childhood, before the brain has fully developed language, may be impossible. Virtually every media account discussing the nature of memory cites the work of psychologist and memory expert Elizabeth Loftus, who successfully induced a memory in both adults and adolescents of being lost in a shopping mall as a child. But every citation of Loftus's work should be balanced by discussion of the research of Linda Meyer Williams, who found that 38 percent of women who had been treated at hospitals for sexual abuse as children denied such experiences as adults. To stress the true complexity of the issue, such articles might also cite Judith Herman's assertion that 75 percent of her clients could "corroborate their memories with evidence from independent sources." One might also listen to accounts of those who have worked as social workers or child-care workers at shelters for children—a position I once held—where it is common for children to deny instances of physical or sexual abuse in homes from which they have been removed, even in the face of conclusive evidence.

I accept the general conclusion of researchers that memory is dynamic and to some extent continually reconstructed. But if memory is reinvented, or selectively recalled, we should focus on the social mechanisms that perpetuate belief systems which foster the telling of certain experiences and the suppression of others. Thus, instead of couching the public debate about sexual abuse in terms of superstition, satanic cults, and witch hunts, a much more fruitful approach would be to acknowledge the power struggle beneath the rhetoric—a battle to determine whose voices will be believed, and what constitutes appropriate behavior.

Furthermore, we must be aware of the temptation to project blame for current societal malaise on the teacher or child-care worker, the "Other" outside the home. In San Diego, a highly publicized trial on sexual abuse charges of Dale Akiki, a child-care worker, came to an end with his acquittal, a verdict I found, from a limited knowledge of the case, entirely plausible. A physically deformed, poorly educated man, Akiki was an easy target for demonization by an over-zealous, suspicious public. While abuse by child-care workers undoubtedly occurs, it is important to recognize the underlying assumptions in such cases: Although devastating, abuse outside the home is less threatening and easier to condemn than abuse within the family. It is totally reprehensible to use those outside the family as scapegoats for the even more pernicious abuse that clearly goes on all too frequently even in the most idealized settings of the middle or upper classes.

Despite the detractors' claims to the contrary, the healing process entails far more than the isolated individual's integration of memory. The best-selling self-help manual, *The Courage to Heal*, states, "you are investing all this time and energy in healing so you can move on to something else in life." Even in a culture that emphasizes individual experience, trauma has societal implications. Having spoken the truth and begun to heal, those who remember must keep asking ques-

tions, continually probe more deeply, and reach for the knowledge that lies hidden within and beyond personal experience.

The intensity of the rage associated with remembering demands explanations. What is the relationship between the violence and abuse in a nuclear family and the construction of that family in Western society? What circumstances in twentieth-century America, including perhaps the pressure for assimilation and rampant materialism, are spawning the current epidemic of sexual abuse? What are the mechanisms by which one's experiences have been so thoroughly written out of history that one has lost the faith of one's own memories? And what are the implications of this time in which so many have found the courage to remember and, however begrudgingly, are beginning to be heard?

Three years ago, an article in *Newsweek* on sexual abuse ended with the statement, "If survivors have their way there will be no more forgetting." If the editors of that magazine have lost their conviction two years later, this reader still recognizes the profound truth of their earlier statement. Because memory is selective, arguments over memory politics challenge everyone to examine the basis for his or her choices. For instance, despite the many protests and scholarly discussions generated by the quincentennial, few people consider the implications of living in a society founded in part on the genocide of Native Americans and the rape of African-American women. We need to examine in more detail the relationship between the mechanisms encouraging amnesia of personal and societal trauma, since denial and disassociation clearly function on a societal as well as a personal level.

Memory is the wellspring for re-envisioning the world. A recent article in *Common Boundary* (November/December 1993), while analyzing scientific debates about the locus of memory in the human brain, also wisely included a discussion of creativity. The author, Randi Henderson, recalls that the Greek goddess of memory, Mnemosyne, was also regarded as the mother of the Muses, the inspiration for all of the creative arts. When we bury our shameful secrets, we also run the risk of hiding, forgetting, or wrongfully casting aside a great deal of what is precious.

As one remembers, direct perception is no longer pushed away. Feelings of both vulnerability and strength are welcomed. One can begin to experience an expansive sense of self, beyond the bounds of ego or anthropocentrism, where one comprehends the sanctity of all living beings. As one learns to trust one's own experience, it becomes possible to feel the experience of others. As compassion toward one's wounded self replaces shame, this compassion can be expanded outward. As one fully accepts one's tenderness and need for love and caring, it is possible to nourish these needs in all beings.

Joanna Macy, in *World as Lover, World as Self,* discusses the importance of despair work, the ability to move beyond self-centered protectiveness and feel despair and grief about the devastation around us. Remember when a sign reading "homeless, need food" was a shocking sight? When the water from a mountain stream was safe to drink, or when the chirping of frogs at night was taken for granted? Those who remember know the truth of Macy's argument that the outrage we feel both for both personal and societal losses contains a seed of tremendous wisdom and power. Feeling means acknowledging the depths of our concern. Even in the face of hopelessness, the courage to feel brings the potential for change. The memory of the survivor is one of heart as well as mind.

At the current moment, many people are quick to dismiss the testimonials of sexual abuse as a passing fad, perhaps impelled by the urge to raise doubt before the victim's voices have had time to make connections or to recognize the patterns that go beyond their individual experience. I am slowly coming to the realization that however much I remember, I will never know every detail, never know exactly what happened. A part of me will always shudder in disbelief. But despite external pressures, I need not choose the powerlessness of self-doubt or victimhood. Together with other survivors, I can share my broken heart. Together, we can feel our grief and rage and not shy away from naming our experience. Contrary to what we have been told, something terrible will happen if the secret is not shared.

Once the memories have been spoken and the connections have been made, it will be hard to destroy the web of understanding. We can recall our own trauma. We can move from paralysis, shame, and self-deprecation to strength, self-love, and compassion. We can join with all who are concerned about the consequences of sexual abuse. We can utter the secrets others dare not speak. We can recognize the relationship between our own pain and that of those around us. We can give voice to *los desaparecidos*. We can remember the mountain behind the brown haze. We need not pass on the legacy of violence. We can demand that we begin to make changes that will heal ourselves, heal our communities, and heal the Earth. □

We Are What We Remember (and Forget)

Michael S. Roth

Memory has become a cultural obsession for Americans in our *fin de siècle*, much like it was for Europeans a century ago. From talk shows to university seminars, we pursue people whose all-too-powerful memories keep them stuck in the past, people whose shattered memories leave them in an empty present, and even people whose memories enable them to access past lives. Maladies of memory, from Alzheimer's disease to multiple personality disorder, have become cultural icons—material for stand-up comedians and the stuff of personal tragedies. On late-night cable television, we are enticed to buy the secrets for improving our memories with the latest (or the most ancient) mnemonic techniques, thereby faultlessly retaining the past and radically changing our lives.

There is much to discuss about memory because there is very little that is certain about it. Despite the enormous amount of ongoing research, our knowledge about the basic neurophysiology, about forgetting, and about the effects of trauma on memory formation remains rudimentary. Talk about memory has become the language through which we address some of our most pressing concerns. This is because in modernity memory is the key to personal and collective identity.

With the demise of religious notions of an essential soul as self, and with the decline in the powers of groups to prescribe communal missions or the identities of individual members, personal memory has come to define who we are. In contemporary society, memory is less a public, collective function than a private, psychological faculty. Since the eighteenth century, philosophers and doctors have conceived memory as internal, at the core of the psychological self. Because we are what we remember, forgetting (and sudden recall) arouses both anxiety and excitement.

But the psychologization of memory makes it extremely difficult for people to share the past, for them to have confidence that they have a collective connection to what has gone before. And when memory is a private affair, it is all but impossible for us to make use of the past to create political change in the present.

Memory seems to promise immediacy, a kind of certainty about the existence of particular events in the past. It also enables people to believe in the persistence of the past: As long as someone is remembered, they are, we are often told, still alive. In the recent book, *Telling the Truth about History*, Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob have gone so far as to base the possibility of historical knowledge on our existential dependence on memory: We know the past to be real because we feel it inside.

In recent years, however, we have encountered an extraordinary array of challenges to our notions of the stability of memory. (See Ruth Wallen's article, "Memory Politics," p.35 in this issue). The popular media delight in showing cases of recovered memories, false memories, and implanted memories. It is clear that memory can be manipulated, and that the persistence of the personal past is dependent on the needs of the person remembering in the present. So it would seem that memory, like history, is always constructed in, or is a response to, the present. And we have seen in recent years that any particular recounting of the past may well be a violation of someone else's connection to it.

One of the most important works in recent years on the relation of history and memory is Pierre Nora's monumental project, *Les lieux de mémoire*, parts of which will be published in English in the next year by Columbia University Press. Nora brought together more than forty of the most distinguished historians of France to examine the ways the French have imagined their past and constructed commemorations of it. Nora and his colleagues have shown how specific locations, genres of representation, and abstract concepts in France have been invested with the significance of the past; how a battlefield, a song, or an idea have become places meant to contain collective memory. In the nineteenth century, historians became aware of their own roles in the processes of commemoration—in an increasingly atomized and future-oriented society, these historians

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Michael S. Roth's most recent book is Rediscovering History: Culture, Politics, and the Psyche *(Stanford University Press, 1994). He is currently in residence with a group studying memory at the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.*

recognized, they were conservators of the collective memory they chronicled.

Here we see one of the most important tensions between history and memory. On the one hand, history-writing appears as the traditional forms for containing the past are disappearing. Once these forms are gone and collective memory has lost access to important aspects of the past, however, history-writing is one of the crucial vehicles for reconstructing or re-imagining a community's connection to its traditions. This is especially true for groups who have been excluded from the mainstream national histories which have dominated Western historiography, and who have suffered a weakening of group memory as part of their experience of modernity. These groups are not only rewriting their own pasts, but are challenging the dominant narratives that have been told about modernization and progress. For example, many minority groups have rejected the narratives that have long shaped our understanding of U.S. history, and historians are now recreating the American past in connection with our multicultural present. As a substitute for collective memory, history-writing since the nineteenth century has assumed the function of creating a past with which a group of people can live. But in our own time, the criteria for establishing the legitimacy of a particular history have become extremely unstable.

The greatest obstacle to creating such a useable past is the existence of personal or collective trauma. Trauma may give the greatest urgency to the task of creating a usable past, because it may seem that we cannot go on living without some way of "integrating" the traumatic moment with the rest of our lives.

Individual or collective trauma is a part of the past that seems to demand inclusion in any narrative of the development of the present, yet makes any narrative seem painfully inadequate. That paradox is the subject of Henry Rousso's much-acclaimed book, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (published in English by Harvard University Press in 1991). Rousso's study showed the different phases of the confrontation with Vichy in the decades following the war: from (incomplete) mourning, to myth-making, to repression, and finally, to the obsession with discovering the real, true, and often scandalous past. In this most recent phase, it is common for commentators (both French and non-French) to talk about overcoming an "amnesia" about the Vichy period. In a new book co-authored with Eric Conan, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas,* Rousso criticizes this contemporary obsession with the Vichy period that is legitimated in "the name of memory" and may amount to "a refusal of the future."

Conan and Rousso's book is sure to generate controversy, because they want to move beyond commemoration of the painful past to the creation of historical narratives that integrate it into French history as it continues to develop. But there is no agreement about when the demands of memory have been satisfied, nor about what it would take to develop acceptable historical narratives. The absence of agreement and of criteria for achieving it generate opposite reactions: both an ironic disengagement from the past that leans on relativism about historical representation generally; and an urgency to affect what representations will be made, since (whatever their empirical value) these will continue to have important effects on collective identity.

In the context of these difficulties in adjudicating claims about the discovery and portrayal of the past as it really was, historians now often write about memory and commemoration but take a post-modern distance from participation in these processes. Many historians have been challenged in recent years by critiques of objectivity and empiricism. Some have come to accept the idea that there is no unmediated access to the past as it really was, and that the best one can do is to analyze interpretations of it. Thus, historians have turned to memory, or practices of commemoration as objects of study which are already representations of the past.

As Patrick Hutton has suggested in his *History as an Art of Memory* (University of Vermont Press, 1993), this stems from the idea that the best one can do is to explore efforts that others have made to recover the past—the efforts are mirrors in which we can see their reflections. By concentrating on the ways the past was imagined, historians distance themselves from simple empiricism without disconnecting themselves entirely from the effort to remember.

Nora accepts with resignation that today's historians study places of memory because they no longer live in the traditional milieux that keep the past alive for the present. The past becomes something that other people longed for, fought over, strove to make vivid. In our present, knowing that these desires cannot be satisfied, we can watch with fascination (and sometimes ironic sophistication) as other people vainly act upon them.

The psychologization of memory and the doubts about the possibilities for objective history have combined to create an attitude that lets each person or group have an individual history. What may appear to be a benign pluralism or multiculturalism, however, can actually be another symptom of the continuing privatization (or ghettoization) of our relationship to the past. This form of social amnesia depends on a superficial relativism in which one has no investment in the past that one might share with another. Without such an investment, one has no real ties to other persons or groups, and no

(Continued on p. 91)

Pentecostalism and the Future of Christianity

Harvey Cox

In April of this year, I arrived for church one clear Sunday morning to find a small placard attached to the outdoor bulletin board where the sermon topic is usually announced. It notified all who passed by that the "Iglesia Pentecostal Arce de Noe," a Spanish-speaking pentecostal congregation named for Noah's ark, was now sharing our building. I was not particularly surprised. Just two months earlier I had noticed that a classic white frame Congregational church on Massachusetts Avenue two blocks from my home was now sharing its space with a Portuguese-speaking Brazilian pentecostal congregation called the "Assembliea de Deus-Monte Sion." Everywhere you go in American cities today the evidence of a radical change in the religious complexion of America is increasingly self-evident. The so-called "mainline" churches, most of which have been losing members steadily, are providing space in their own premises for vigorous new ethnic congregations, many of them pentecostal ones.

There is a sea change underway in American Christianity, a movement toward a more experiential, more emotionally expressive, organizationally less rigid form of spirituality. Pentecostalism is the generic name for this religious wave. But it is not restricted to immigrants or to North America. In fact, pentecostalism is the fastest growing religious movement in the world. From its obscure beginnings one hundred years ago in a tiny Black church on Azusa Street in Los Angeles it has expanded, especially in the past two decades, until it now claims 400 million people, one out of every four Christians. It is growing faster than radical Islam.

Pentecostalism's simple, spontaneous style of worship makes it especially attractive to the poor and marginalized people of the globe. Last year more than two hundred new pentecostal churches opened their doors in the city of Rio de Janiero, while only one new Catholic parish was founded. In Korea, pentecostals have grown from a tiny minority after the Korean War to about one-third of the population. The largest single Christian congregation in the world, the Yoido Full Gospel (Pentecostal) Church is in Seoul. Recently, pentecostalism has begun to grow rapidly in China and in the former Soviet Union, and in August 1994 reports reached the West of the assassination of several Iranian pentecostal leaders in response to the increased appeal the movement has for young Iranians.

With Catholicism impaled by a crisis of authority, mainline Protestantism stalled, Christian fundamentalism slowing from its recent growth, and Eastern Orthodoxy still showing few signs of the vitality it was expected to recover after the fall of communism, pentecostalism has become the most vital expression of Christianity in the world today. If present trends continue, by two decades into the next century well over half the Christians in the world could be pentecostals.

For the past few years I have been studying pentecostalism and trying to plumb the reasons for its remarkable appeal. I have recently completed a book, *Fire From Heaven*, which limns the history and theology of this remarkable movement and tries to discern what it may be telling the rest of us. The first thing I learned about pentecostalism is that it is a serious mistake to equate pentecostals with fundamentalists. They are not the same.

Fundamentalists vigorously opposed pentecostals when they first appeared, reviling them with such epithets as "the last vomit of Satan." And there is still opposition to pentecostalism among fundamentalists, whose obsessive attachment to the letter of the verbally inspired Scripture makes them deeply suspicious of the pentecostals' stress on the immediate experience of the Spirit of God. This should not be surprising. Text-oriented believers in any religion tend to be wary of mystics, and pentecostalism is a kind of popular, folk mysticism complete with visions, ecstatic utterance, healings, and the mystic's traditional suspicion of abstract theology.

Suspicion of formal theologies, however, does not mean that pentecostalism is devoid of a complex of religious ideas and insights. The difference is that while the beliefs of the fundamentalists, and of many other

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religious groups, are enshrined in formal theological systems, those of pentecostalism are imbedded in testimonies, ecstatic speech, and bodily movement. Pentecostalism indeed possesses a theology, a full-blown religious cosmos, a complex system of symbols that respond to the perennial questions of human meaning and value. But historically, pentecostals have felt more at home singing their theology than writing about it.

While I was writing *Fire From Heaven* I sang and prayed with pentecostals on four continents. I discovered that their worship constitutes a kind of compendium of patterns and practices from virtually every Christian tradition I had ever studied. While it looks to many like a narrow cult, pentecostalism is actually a kind of ecumenical movement, an original—and highly successful—synthesis of elements from a number of other sources, and not all of them Christian. In fact, its capacity to absorb pre-existing spiritual practices—shamanism in Korea, ancestor veneration in Africa, indigenous healing in Latin America—helps account for its astonishing growth.

Pentecostalism holds such appeal, I think, because it responds with great effectiveness to the profound changes transforming the nature of religions and religious experience in contemporary life. The causes for the changes are vast and complex, but they are linked to the massive urbanization of the world that has occurred in this century. The continued growth of megacities and the depletion of rural and small-town populations mean not only that there are more people than ever living in cities but that the majority came from somewhere else.

The massive dislocation and uprooting this seismic shift has entailed have cut the nerve of many expressions of traditional religion, which are often tied to specific geographical locations and cultural patterns. And the realities of city life, its atomization and impersonality, have taken most of the glamour out of the shiny vision of modernity that once lured people to the metropolis. Vast numbers of people around the world have had to make the harrowing trek to the big city. Even where they have not physically moved to cities, the city has moved out to them through television. The culture shock has pushed these urban pioneers into the search for new forms of community and new ways to make sense of life. It is precisely among these rootless pathfinders that pentecostalism is growing fastest.

By now, the results this massive change has produced are familiar to most of us. As the twentieth century progressed, large blocs of people became increasingly skeptical about inherited religious dogmas, and ecclesiastical institutions steadily lost their power to shape cultures or provide personal meaning. This is the part of the story many scholars expected, and I was once one of those who accepted their appraisal. Twenty-five years ago, Western societies' widespread and growing alienation from religious institutions gave the talk about secularization and the "death of God" a certain plausibility.

But simultaneously, something else was afoot in contemporary life, a phenomenon undetected by the scholars busy tracking religion's demise. A few years ago the British rock singer Sting had a hit song whose sentiments resonated with millions of young people. "You could say I lost my faith in science and progress," he sang, "you could say I lost my faith in holy church." The message of the song's first line was the one the scholars had missed. Not only were large numbers of people becoming alienated from traditional religion, they were also losing confidence in the bright promises of science and progress, which—despite their dazzling prowess in some matters—could not provide a source of values or significance.

What had developed was actually a double-barreled disillusionment, both with religion in its traditional institutional expression and with the pseudo-religions of technical advancement and rational enlightenment. Consequently, what large numbers of these newly urbanized masses did was to settle neither for secularization nor for the "old-time religion," but to strike out toward a third option. They felt a desperate need for credible values and a personal spiritual center. Intrigued by the shards and fragments of traditional religions, but deeply suspicious of ecclesial hierarchies, millions of young urban nomads began to construct new spiritual identities, using bits and pieces from the old faiths but without buying the whole package of a philosophy, a religion, or an ideology.

The jarring cultural changes had generated a radically new religious situation. Most churches and synagogues fumbled badly in their efforts to respond to it. Conservative Christians and Jews dug in and insisted that traditions were immutable and hierarchies indispensable. Liberal Christians and Reform Jews tried to adjust to contemporary sensibilities, but ended up absorbing so much of the culture of technical rationality they no longer had any spiritual appeal.

But the pentecostals, seemingly almost by accident, found a third way. They rebelled against creeds but retained the mystery. They abolished hierarchies but kept ecstasy. They rejected both scientism and traditionalism. They returned to the raw inner core of human spirituality and thus provided just the new kind of "religious space" many people needed. They have been able to speak to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching below the levels of creed and institution into the core of human religiousness, into what might be called "primal

spirituality," that largely unprocessed nucleus of the human psyche in which the unending struggle for a sense of meaning always goes on.

During the odyssey I traveled in order to answer my questions about the pentecostals, I came to admire them. I saw clearly in their religious practice something that I had always vaguely known: that the imagery and mood and tempo of a religious service are not just add-ons. They are not superfluous. Human beings are physical as well as mental creatures, and therefore these more tactile elements are part of the substance of worship. And since life itself is so full of conflict and craving, of wild hopes and dashed expectations, any religion that does not resonate with the full range of these experiences and provide ways of wrestling with them is not worth much. Whatever else I might say about pentecostalism, it imparts to its people not just an idiom replete with lakes of fire and a city without tears, but the jubilant gestures and heartrending wails to go with it.

Pentecostals also have a kind of utopian social vision. They take their name from a story recounted in chapter two of The Acts of the Apostles. The plot describes how the confused followers of the recently crucified rabbi they believed was the messiah gathered in Jerusalem to mark the Jewish holiday of "Pentecost" (which is the Greek term used for the Feast of Weeks) that occurs fifty days after Passover. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven "like the rush of a mighty wind." The Holy Spirit filled them, tongues "as of fire" rested on their heads, and to their amazement each began to understand what the other was saying even though they came from "every nation under heaven" and spoke many different languages. It seemed that the ancient curse of Babel—the confounding of languages—had been reversed and that God was creating a new inclusive human community in which "Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia" could all live together.

It is a powerful vision, and the early pentecostals really lived by it. They preached simplicity and rejected the blandishments of consumer culture. Their celebration of the reunification of divided peoples through the power of the Spirit made them suspicious of nationalism (and even today pentecostalism does not combine with nationalism as, for example, Islam often does).

The first decade of the twentieth century was a period of increasing racial separation. But at the early pentecostal gatherings, visitors were astonished to see Blacks and whites kneeling and praying together. Since God could speak through anyone regardless of education, race, or gender, women assumed positions of leadership. In the 1920s and 1930s, Aimee Semple McPherson, a pentecostal healer and teacher, became one of the best-known religious figures in America. When some of her male colleagues questioned her calling, she founded a new church, Angelus Temple in Los Angeles, and started her own denomination, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, which now has more than 25,000 churches and nearly two million members worldwide.

Elizabeth Brusco, an anthropologist who has studied pentecostals in Latin America, believes their rapid growth there could undermine the cult of machismo and replace it with a sense of partnership in marriage. I have also noticed that pentecostals are quite willing to make use of family-planning techniques, and this could eventually make an enormous difference in population curves in poor countries.

But I am also worried about the future of the pentecostal movement, especially the political alliances some of its members have recently entered into. I first

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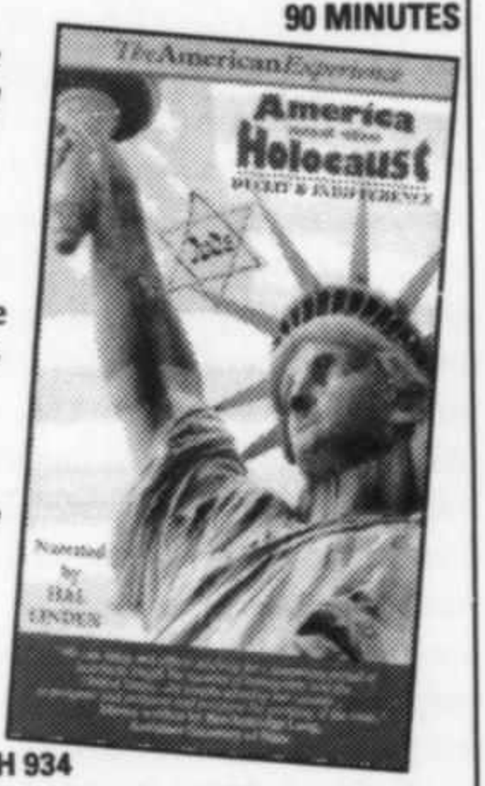
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became acquainted with pentecostals fifty years ago when I was a teenager and accompanied my high school girlfriend to her pentecostal church, a small stucco building on the edge of town. At that time, pentecostalism was little more than a sect, popularly known as "holy rollers." Lois was not allowed to go to the movies because they were "worldly." Today, at least in America, many pentecostals have become terribly comfortable with "this world." They started out as a faith that brought hope to society's losers and rejects. Today some of their most visible representatives have become ostentatiously rich, and some even preach a gospel of wealth.

Pentecostals also started out teaching that the "signs and wonders" that took place in their congregations were not some kind of spectral fireworks, but harbingers of God's new day. Yet today, some pentecostal preachers seem so obsessed with the techniques of rapture that they have forgotten the original message.

There have been other changes, not all of them good. Pentecostals started out as rebellious antagonists of the status quo, refusing to serve in the armies of this fallen age, but many have now become impassioned super-patriots, easy marks for the high rollers of the new religious Right. They started out as a radically inclusive spiritual fellowship in which race and gender discrimination virtually disappeared. That is hardly the case today, at least in the white pentecostal churches. In short, as I came to know the pentecostal movement in its present incarnation I discovered that the pentecostals themselves are facing a dilemma they may not survive, at least not without betraying their original vision.

But there are also signs of hope. A special experience with the "Holy Spirit" or the "Spirit of God" was the crux of the early pentecostal movement. But this was not just any spirit. Pentecostals believed it was the Spirit of the same God who had created the world, had called the people of Israel forth, spoken through the prophets, and whose love had walked the Earth in Jesus Christ and—most important—the same God who had begun to fulfill all His promises by creating a new heaven and a new Earth where justice and compassion would reign. The early pentecostals saw themselves positioned "between the already and the not-yet," witnesses to the first fruits of the kingdom but not yet to its fullness, living in the light that precedes the dawn. In other words, the Spirit they testified to had a purpose for history and was calling people to be part of that purpose. That purpose, for the unemployed janitors and domestic servants who gathered at Azusa Street, was no less than the coming of the kingdom of God as it had been taught by the prophets and demonstrated by Jesus. And when it came, the poor would be lifted up, the hungry fed, and the brokenhearted comforted; while the mighty would be brought low and the rich sent away empty. It is hard to imagine a more radical vision of the future than the one this life-changing experience of the Spirit awakened in them.

As I got to know pentecostal people in America and elsewhere, I was pleased to find among the younger generation of their ministers a serious effort to retrieve this original pentecostal vision. These same young pentecostal leaders also realize that the fact that their movement started out among the disowned and dispossessed is not merely a historical artifact but a decisive key to what the Spirit wants them to be and to do today. A "pentecostal liberation theology" is beginning to emerge. The Puerto Rican theologian Eldin Villafane, a pentecostal himself, believes that the genius of the movement is the experience of the power of the "liberating Spirit," and he argues that this Spirit has a "project" that is being worked out within human history.

Villafane's vision of a pentecostal liberation theology is an exciting prospect. Sociologist Cecilia Maritz, who studies the Catholic "base communities" in Brazil, the groups from which liberation theology arose, has suggested that in some places they function very much like pentecostal communities. Father Pablo Richard, a Costa Rican Catholic who teaches the lay leaders of these base communities all over Latin America, claims that the difference between them and pentecostal congregations is diminishing rapidly. If these two powerful movements were somehow to combine their strengths in the coming decades, the result would be extraordinarily potent. If the pentecostals, following Villafane's lead, absorb something of the social vision of liberation theology, and the base communities shed the residual elements of vertical authority they still sometimes retain, the offspring could be more powerful than either of its parents.

Whether pentecostalism will come down on the side of the religious Right or on the side of liberation theology is an open question. There are vigorous forces pulling both ways. But, whatever happens, given the nature of the pentecostal impulse, I doubt that it will be settled through theological debate.

One thing I have learned from the many hours I have spent with pentecostals is that one should look for pentecostal theology not in books, but in the viscera of pentecostal spirituality. It is emotional, corporate, narrational, hopeful, and radically embodied.

Consequently, the future direction of the movement will appear first in the lives of its hundreds of thousands of congregations. Answers to questions about what the Spirit is doing in history and how human beings should respond will not appear in scholarly journals, but in the way these little outposts of the Kingdom of God live in a world that is both hostile and hungry. I wish them well. □

Placed, and Misplaced

Wendy Orange

Certain moments stand out, imprinted on our memories, however innocuous they seemed at the time. One of mine: It's a Sunday morning in 1990, and I'm walking down a side street in Cambridge, Massachusetts, walking also into a familiar mood of alienation.

The first signs of winter were coming on, the remaining multi-colored autumn leaves dropping under the grey November sky, leaves which had always vaguely depressed, now actively repelled me. Despairing of rising above this mysterious, ever-painful mood of exile, of being in the wrong place, I looked down, concentrating on a particular stretch of grayish white sidewalk, its broken corners, its repetitive cracks.

Pushing myself to go deeper into what I felt, it came to me—starkly—that I was homesick. In the suburbs of New York where I grew up, there were similar sidewalks, single-family homes, the same maple trees, autumn colors, hushed quiet. The "action," there as here, resided in that so-American agora of everyday life: the mall, or in my childhood, the shopping district in the center of town. Yet, as I kept walking, I realized that this mood of ontological disconnection had been present even in my hometown. The notion that I was homesick for a place where I'd been equally homesick filled me with numb wonder.

Not that I had always felt misplaced; another moment so vital I can recall it any time at will happened the day I enrolled at Barnard College in New York City. My parents drove me away from the suburbs of Long Island where I'd grown up increasingly disconsolate and at war with my surroundings. Especially during my adolescent years, I complained endlessly about Woodmere, Long Island and its "shallow materialism," even though on some level I'm sure I believed it wasn't really the town, but my self that was maimed.

What I'd felt so estranged from in that Jewish suburb was no mystery: the collective obsession with appearances, the ways clothes, homes, cars, and possessions, even for young children, were operative in ways I'd always found chilling. Take Wallace Ransberg, who in third grade owned fourteen different-colored pairs of Papagallo shoes. After showing me her closet, Wallace confided that the reason she skipped school so often was that her mother agreed she shouldn't go on days when her hair frizzed.

Maybe she was an odd child, but looking back, I think she embodied that town's worldview. There was a line running from her bedroom closet through my mother's fierce insistence that we always look her version of our best, through my fourth-grade teacher punishing me for writing "creative" stories, to those ever-awkward shopping excursions to find the right outfits, especially before the High Holidays, where inevitably I felt dwarfed by the parade of perfectly coiffed, perfectly dressed women who checked everyone out and over as we entered the synagogue. Inside, I'd try to concentrate on the Hebrew text, rising and sitting as directed, yet conscious mainly of my clothes and bodily discomfort, never able to find in that atmosphere any connection to God.

The physical ambiance of that flat suburb, the space between houses, the seasons, trees, sidewalks, street lights, the way the traffic moved slowly, the L-shaped industrial buildings and drab schools came to signify all those values I intuited would not be central to my life, and I was right.

For these chronic emotions of being profoundly misplaced were upturned in an hour, that day my parents drove me to Barnard. Before settling into my apartment on the Upper West Side, or registering for classes, I went for coffee at the Chock Full O'Nuts on the corner of Broadway and 116th Street. Now arrived that wonderful moment: sitting at a red leather stool along the snaking counter, looking about at the diverse cast of characters in the shop, I saw people from every social class, Blacks and Asians, old and young, the chaos and excitement of Manhattan. In the midst of this anonymity, I felt, for the first time in my

Wendy Orange, a journalist, is a frequent contributor to TIKKUN. *She welcomes hearing from parents of dyslexic children interested in forming a school in Jerusalem.*

remembered life, an enchanted feeling of being rightly placed.

That feeling of belonging in New York City never deserted me either at college, or for years after, when I continued to live on the Upper West Side. I found a lot of company in my "bohemian" vision: love of literature, the joys of sex and sin, adventures in intimacy, the passions and protests of our whole youthful Sixties counterculture, a life of the mind which became inseparable from city life, its multiplicity, towering buildings, churning traffic, huge river parks, those contact highs with strangers as I wandered happily among the crowds on Broadway.



KARL BADEN

Cambridge, Mass.

Yet Manhattan turned out to be a relatively brief respite in a long ordeal: By my late twenties, as the Sixties were winding down and out, I moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts and, like stepping off a generator into a sudden void, I was stalked by a strange feeling that nothing was going on, that the streets were empty of life, that what I assumed was my teeming imagination, a political-poetic-musical finale to my childhood imprisonment, was really only New York City at that particularly charged time.

I'd come to Boston for a prestigious internship in psychology at Beth Israel Hospital—a position that made returning to New York impossible for over a decade, yet that sense of place I had revelled in departed as suddenly as it had arrived. In Cambridge, Allston, Brookline, and the surrounding small towns, I felt as bereft as in Manhattan I felt blessed. It was no help that at the hospital where I was practicing depth psychology the supervisors seemed married to surfaces. In between sessions, these professionals (many among them suburban Jews) seemed more interested in their swimming pools, cars, and mortgages than with navigating any depth of soul. (God only knows what interested them during their sessions.)

Allston felt bleak, Brookline nondescript, Central Square only a grim, squat version of Manhattan's 96th Street, Harvard Square too perennially collegiate, too 1940s for my taste. Everywhere on the surrounding side streets and in the indistinguishable towns nearby, where almost everyone lived by the academic calendar, I felt trapped back in my childhood, although Boston and Woodmere were, in many ways, radically dissimilar.

Since no one else I knew was displeased with the Boston area, in fact my friends all liked it, I tried to ignore my feelings, deciding that my obsession with the soul emissions and memory flashbacks the physiognomy of place evokes was my particular craziness, something I'd be very wise not to dwell on. Yet despite my work (which I loved), and my circle of friends (whom I loved), despite falling madly in love, feeling misplaced was a substratum of emotional malaise with which I never made peace. Being in the "wrong" place gave rise to that nagging, often suffocating, inner displacement I later learned was similar to realizing you've married the "wrong" man.

In my late thirties, I married a man who felt most at home working and living in Jamaica, West Indies. Since I was finally able to leave my private practice to rework my doctoral dissertation into a book, we decided to try life in Jamaica. But I found that the beaches, reggae culture, and "bush" life that so energized him, enervated me.

So when I got an offer to teach at a college in Vermont, we grabbed it, moving to Burlington, a beautiful place. Although for years our home life, friendships, work, and social activism all seemed "good enough," after my initial rush of awe at the grandeur of nature, I entered a new round of estrangement, often subject to an intense Sunday ennui (which could spread, low-grade, out over a whole week)—a recurring feeling that I'd been only arbitrarily or randomly placed. Walking around Burlington, I couldn't feel any collective conversational flow; felt somehow that I wasn't essentially American, like other Vermonters, but quintessentially Jewish. In those moods, I felt, as Jay Neugeboren described in the last issue of TIKKUN, that I "seemed to be living nowhere," or that I lived "anywhere and not somewhere" ("Where Do We Live Now?" TIKKUN September/October 1994).

By the time my marriage ended in Burlington, I had a baby daughter. Now I felt too old for Vermont, too cerebral for Jamaica, too hooked on natural beauty for Manhattan, too eccentric for Cambridge, and so I spent a few whirlwind years (about which the I.R.S. is

still interrogating me) taking my daughter from one of these places to another, knowing that time (and money) were running out, that soon she'd be old enough to realize that not everyone lives on planes, trains, and cars.

By now I was an expert at seeing how the "self" is context-bound and shifts, depending on the particular place where you live. I was becoming ever more alert to the way the physiognomy, culture, and values of each place directly effect our bodily sense, our fantasies of what's possible and impossible, the degree to which we accept ourselves, the shape of our souls. In Jamaica, the views were gorgeous, but the conversation was hell. There is so little mental energy on that island that often when I sat to write, the heat and illiterate culture (not a single bookstore or movie theater in Montego Bay) seemed so antithetical to thought that I'd end up, after fruitless hours at my desk, writing such pithy phrases as: "It's hot," or "I'm feeling weird."

In New York, I had other problems: fears for my kid, sensitivity to the darkness in the shadows of the towering buildings, insufficient access to outer or inner light, not to mention how expensive New York had become, and that insistent way big cities seem to cry: "buy me, buy me, I'll make you happy," as we navigate their store-filled streets. The crowds and anonymity that in my early twenties seemed joyful now felt exhausting. Mainly, I couldn't imagine raising my daughter there. Back in Northern Vermont, I felt equally stymied by the cold, and not just the cold of winter but the cold between people, all those fences above which (now that I wasn't working twelve-hour days, and had become a stay-at-home mom) I couldn't find the proverbial neighbors.

So back we returned to "settle down"—the injunction anyone who knew me for more than ten minutes emphatically advised—in Cambridge, a kid-friendly, academic town where I still had close friends and an intact professional identity, a sensible decision all agreed. Yet, five months into my determination to call this place home came that poignant, homesick moment on the sidewalk. One Sunday afternoon, I truly couldn't "decode" a parade of clowns, balloons, magicians, and face-painting artists that drew crowds in Harvard Square—couldn't fathom why this "festival" would make anyone feel festive. I know this sounds odd; believe me, it felt odd. What I was homesick for was the opposite: a place whose "story," festivities, even tragedies, would motivate me to participate in a direct, essential way. And at forty-six years old, of that I despaired.

And then, through a series of seemingly accidental events, I found myself—only seven months after this vivid moment on the sidewalks of Cambridge—visiting Jerusalem just after the Gulf War ended, and every feeling of not belonging to any place that had so dogged me for much of my life literally disappeared, not over weeks or months, but within hours after boarding the El Al flight from New York to Tel Aviv.

I'd long known that in the air I was thrust into a fear of such overwhelming proportions that nothing could calm me down except the safe landing I believed impossible while airborne. In my thirty-odd years of frequent flying, never did I find a way to get through one single flight without the panicky certainty that this one was doomed to crash. I tried everything from strong liquor to hypnotists to fear-of-flying workshops to mangling the arm of any stranger unfortunate to be sitting next to me—yet my reaction of total panic seemed immune to all remedies.

And yet from the moment I boarded the El Al jet, bracing myself for the barrage of horrible images (the wing is falling off; that spot on the roof is about to cave in), not only did I fail to conjure images of destruction, on the contrary, I felt extraordinarily well. The longer the plane hummed along, the more surprised I was at the feeling of well-being that grew with each hour. The voice of Jewish pilots over the loudspeakers making announcements in Hebrew and English, the prayers of



JIM HOLLANDER

Jerusalem, Israel

religious Jews in the back of the huge 747, the no-nonsense Israeli flight attendants, the non-stop up-and-down-the-aisle conversations: all thrust me into a meditative calm in which images of my long-dead parents and grandparents surrounded me, an angelic (almost psychedelic) accompaniment en route to Israel that astounded me. I'd gone to Israel, my first visit, for a ten-day conference. But after touring the country, wandering through Jerusalem's ancient, sunny

courtyards, talking to Israelis who seemed to take for granted an ontological connection to the land and the country; walking the twisting streets lined with palm and pine, lemon and orange, fig and fir trees among Jews in *peyus* and Arabs wearing *keffiyas;* feeling the kinetic vitality, hearing Hebrew and Arabic everywhere, in a country where there was *no Sunday ennui because Sunday is a weekday*, I felt placed in such a perfect physical and narrative space that I couldn't imagine leaving.

Having no observant religious life, knowing little Hebrew, limited in my understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict, I couldn't logically convey the necessity of my move to others. That my alienation from place, with its inevitable dimension of self-loathing, finally dissolved like a lump of sugar in hot tea, was so liberating that I returned to the States only long enough to gather up my five-year-old daughter, ten boxes of clothes, toys, and books (mostly on Judaica and on the politics and history of the Mideast) to relocate our lives halfway around the world.

Like those men who've known since childhood that they are really female and undergo multiple surgeries so their bodies can achieve an outer resemblance to their essential inner truth, I had to transplant myself to Israel. Hard as I knew this transition was bound to be, I felt that it was there I belonged, that it was Israeli life I had always been longing for.

By ordinary standards, my life in Israel wasn't easy. Yet I persevered because that feeling of rightness never dissipated, but grew over time. I found a community of meaning, a family of friends, a fertile environment for writing, an intense engagement with others in a shared world, and a vitality I'd never embodied before.

I felt healed by the spirit of the place, swept up by the manic energy that won't put life on hold, enthralled by the collective conversation: Holocaust survival stories, Zionist birth-of-a-nation stories, and, in time, also by the anti-Zionist tales of displacement, disappointment, and rage that I listened to and imbibed from Palestinians in the territories.

For me, life in Israel has a mythic flow: Images from Israeli literature and the myriad political and religious schisms color the landscape and the cityscape, giving time (as well as place) an entirely different dimension than anywhere else I had lived. Instead of alienation, what I felt was its opposite: an intimacy with my surroundings, both human and non-human. The sensual environment outside Jerusalem felt dream-like, the experience of neighborhood life in Jerusalem felt nurturing, as did the social space and status given to kids, and—despite the occasional terrorist acts—the basic safety.

The casual living, the Mediterranean physicality and sexiness, the way family life (on both sides of the Green Line) still thrives, the way my friends and acquaintances in Israel seem basically happier than friends and acquaintances in the States (because life in the Mideast is more richly textured than life in the States, where for all the seeming material abundance, there's a thinner thread of meaning). All this drew me out of myself, deeper into a world that is in many ways cruel, certainly chaotic, but full of fascinations.

Yet for all these attributes, there remains a mystery as to why Israeli life speaks to me so deeply. Only lately I've begun to sense that there was a connection between my early life in Woodmere and the power of ancestral ties I felt surrounding me in Jerusalem. I had lived, during elementary school, in a small house with the Long Island Railroad tracks literally in our backyard. The commuter trains shook our furniture, rattled our photographs, deafening all conversation each time they passed.

Inside my postage stamp of a bedroom, I spent much of my childhood reading, often immersed in Holocaust literature, so that, for an obvious example, Anne Frank's entrapment seemed more vivid than my own. Later in life, the death trains of Eastern Europe always seemed far more connected to my true origins than the commuter trains that had passed my house. Perhaps this imagined "other" childhood of mine in Eastern Europe of the 1940s explains why the Israeli myth so readily affected me as if it were my own.

"It happens to one in a thousand," observes Hillel Halkin, an Israeli writer, seeing that like himself, I'm that one in a thousand who needs to be in Israel. "One in a thousand comes here, without religious discipline, intellectuals like ourselves, and that feeling of belonging is so powerful, we can't and don't leave. And you can never predict who it will be."

"I only wish I had come earlier," I reply. "Me too," he says sadly. "But how long have you been here?" I ask. "Twenty-five years," he answers, as if he's missed more than he can bear. "Don't be greedy," I snap. "I've only had three." Yet I feel deeply seen by his observation.

That one accidental plane ride solved so much sounds at best flaky, at worst untrue. I had, in fact, solved many of my problems before moving there: I knew how to work, how to make friends, how to enjoy solitude, how to participate in peace activities.

(Continued on p. 94)

A Room of One's Own Is Not Enough

Joan L. Bolker

In 1929, in *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf proposed a solution for the paucity of women writers: a room of one's own, and five hundred pounds sterling a year. In 1941, Woolf, who had both of those and had produced some of the most exquisite writing of the twentieth century, committed suicide. I am neither Virginia Woolf nor suicidal, but I have come to understand her life and its ending.

In January 1981, I wrote this entry in my journal as part of an early draft of this essay: "I've said, 'A room by itself, even with 500 pounds a year, is not quite enough,' and that's come as a shock and a disappointment to me." What did I mean by not quite enough? That rooms can close you in at least as easily as they can empower you; that the women's movement worries about the outside (and that's fine, and necessary), but that what's really held me back is the inside, and no legislation is going to change that.

I have hardly ever been discriminated against in such a way as to be able to file suit, yet there has been a pervasive and deep discrimination in my life, in which I have cooperated, in the hope of being loved, and of not causing pain. The way to repair the sort of damage this does is not so much by wider opportunities (which make me even more conscious of my inability to meet them, and of my complicity) but by deeper ones—by relationships that carry different values and different pay-offs. I need, we all need, people who will applaud our strengths and forgive us (but not too readily) our weaknesses—most of my childhood it was the other way around. We learn to conform, to mask, to speak softly when we are depressed by our own rage, to assent, and to lie. Such learning kills our voices, and ultimately our selves. One can stay in hiding only so long, unnourished, without starving to death. And feeding the false self is of no use.

How does a woman grow a voice?

Fifteen years ago, when I published "Teaching Griselda to Write," I was still an optimist. In that 1978 essay, Chaucer's character Griselda, the epitome of the docile, voiceless, and abused woman, was the archetype for my story. I wrote about my attempts to teach young women who were the good, smart girls of their cohort how to produce writing that embodied their own distinctive voices; I thought this was possible. I still think so, but have a harsher view of the complicated significance of my students' struggle, and of its connection to the concurrent struggles of other women. I've come to believe that the difficulty women have writing embodies for them the life and death significance of voicelessness.

What is "voicelessness"? It is the inability to write or speak our central concerns. Or, to write, but as disembodied *personae* who bear no relation to our inherent voices: We say only what we think we're expected to say, and end up telling lies or half-truths. Voicelessness is also feeling powerless to speak and sensing that there is no one out there who speaks for us.

Over the past thirty years I've spent first as a teacher and, more recently, as a clinical psychologist, I've observed an epidemic of voicelessness among women. This epidemic is perhaps one cause of, and certainly concurrent with, the others that have struck them. Some of these—violence against women, political powerlessness, sexual abuse, disrespect and frustration in the world of work—have always existed, but are just beginning to be named and talked about; some are even beginning to look as though they might change. But others, particularly violence against women, are not only being publicized more, but seem to be getting worse.

Voicelessness is worth describing both for its own sake and because of its centrality to these other epidemics. I will focus on women writing because the issues of silence and voice are clear here, and because writing is not only a metaphor for the problem, but also the thing itself: women's inability to write their concerns out into the public realm both increases their powerlessness and arises from it. That is, we may be unable to speak or write because we are, or feel,

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powerless; we may be powerless in part because we cannot speak or write. Voicelessness is inextricably connected to the lack of power.

Although I write here of the privileged women graduate students with whom I work, and of my own experience, what I have to say is far more generally true, and far more important than the proportion of Ph.D.s in the female population would indicate. If those among us who have had the most advantages have this much difficulty overcoming silence, what hope can there be for the woman who has never known that she is entitled to any power in the world, for the woman who is regularly beaten up, or violated by the men who are supposed to protect her, for the woman whose major concern is where to find her children's or her own next meals? Voicelessness is something that women share across class, race, and the many other categories that divide us, as we share the



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prevalence of sexual abuse and the fear of being raped. Women's silence is ubiquitous, and must be broken at every level.

Since the late 1970s, I have worked with several unusually bright and articulate women graduate students who were having trouble finishing their doctoral dissertations; simultaneously, I labored at my own writing. Most of the time we succeeded, more or less: nearly all have completed their degrees, and I wrote some satisfying things of my own. But finishing those dissertations required enormous effort to overcome the self-disparagement and self-doubt that appear nearly reflexive in my women students and patients. Even after becoming Ph.D.s, many have gone on to wrestle with the same or similar demons when they turned to the next piece of writing that they had to or wanted to produce. My own writing has been successful, by some accounts: The few finished, published pieces have been well received, their clarity of voice and polish noted. But I am aware of how much they cost me and, more important, of the many unfinished poems and essays (and the one full-length book manuscript) that sit in my desk drawer. So I am simultaneously a writer and one of the silent ones; I am a therapist, primarily for women who have trouble speaking their own truths.

I am seen as someone who says what she thinks, yet I, too, often feel silenced or, more painfully, just silent. I grew up in a family that was not the worst, and yet I often heard from my father, "What do you know?" and from my mother, "When I was your age I wanted to set the world on fire too."

I am outraged at the number of women whose voices and talents have been lost to themselves and to society, at the extent to which women are metaphorically and actually beaten up, often unable to protect themselves by speaking up and out and being heard. I am tired of hearing expressions of deep disgust and self-loathing from stunningly talented young women as they strive to produce words and make meaning. It is painful to listen to their assumptions that they are damaged, that each of them is unique in her silence and her labor. I am surprised by how hard it has been for me, truth-teller to a fault that I am in some ways, to speak openly about the ongoing struggle it continues to be for me, and for many of the women with whom I work, to give voice to ourselves.

Why is it so very hard, still, for women to write? Let us begin here: Writing is dangerous for anyone, but particularly for women. We are presented with dreadful exhibits of what happens to those of us who

try to write: at the most benign, they become squirrely old maids, like Emily Dickinson; at the worst—and here there is an abundance of examples—they write wonderful stuff and then kill themselves. The fascination with the lives of Woolf, Anne Sexton, and Sylvia Plath, rather than with the lives of those who've actually managed to have love and work, writing and longevity, is disquieting. A more recent, better role model, the poet Alicia Ostriker, observes, "Just because I'm a woman and a poet and a mother doesn't mean I have to stick my head in the oven." We may also confront another sort of danger, a much more disappointing one, from those women who ascend the ranks of honored speaker-writers and then step on our fingers as we follow them up the ladder.

Or, we may assume that what holds us back are circumstances: obligations to our families or our friends, our children's needs, work schedules (I used to think it was having to tend to my kids and to my fixed work schedule that made it hard for me to write; these days, my kids live 8,000 miles away, and I design my own work schedule, and it's still hard to write). If we do this, we are saying: if only the external trappings of our lives would change, we could write with impunity. But this hasn't turned out to be true. Some fortunate women writers don't seem to be slowed down by circumstances: Maxine Kumin won the Pulitzer Prize even though she had children, lots of animals to take care of, and difficult friends; Anne Tyler has described how she writes, in the midst of visits to the vet and the pediatrician, and other domestic vicissitudes.

The rest of us are left with the inner-stances of our lives—some tied to phenomena outside ourselves, some not, but all of them complicated. Writing, which inhabits the boundary between the inner and the outer world, is particularly dangerous psychically for women, because it threatens connectedness and engages some of our specific vulnerabilities. In *Dancing at the Edge of the World*, Ursula Le Guin suggests what one might be when she describes the "mother tongue" and the "father tongue":

> The dialect of the father tongue that you and I learned best in college is a written one...many believe this dialect—the expository and particularly the scientific discourse—is the highest form of language, the true language, of which all other uses of words are primitive vestiges. ... It is the language of thought that seeks objectivity. I do not say it is the language of rational thought. Reason is a faculty far larger than mere objective thought.
>
> When it claims a privileged relationship to reality, [the father tongue] becomes dangerous and potentially destructive.

The mother tongue, on the other hand,

> is the other...It's...the vulgar tongue, common, ... spoken or written.... It is conversation, a word the root of which means "turning together." The mother tongue is language not as mere communication but as relation, relationship. It connects.

And, says Le Guin, men and women have very different relationships with these disparate languages:

> People crave objectivity because to be subjective is to be embodied, to be a body, vulnerable, violable. Men especially aren't used to that; they're trained not to offer but to attack.

Profound difficulties result from women's stronger need to use that subjective mode of discourse: choosing to use the mother tongue, which is not our society's dominant language, how does one speak in and to that society? Or, turning to the father tongue, how can we avoid feeling, to borrow Eva Hoffman's phrase, "lost in translation," out of touch with the words that make up our affective core? We are at home with our voices nowhere, involuntary subversives.

But writing begins at home, and any writer, as a prerequisite to serious writing, may have to write the story that needs to be told before anything else can be told. When that story, that "embodiment," is one of incest, or rape, or other similar traumas, the task may feel too large even to begin. In *The Secret Trauma,* Diana Russell has documented the shockingly high percentage of women who have experienced sexual abuse. Many of them suffer from ongoing cases of post-traumatic stress syndrome; many aspects of their lives are powerfully colored by these experiences. And, not surprisingly, so are their writing and speaking, actions that involve the whole self.

Writing is an act that hopes for connection. If I'm to do it, I must believe that connection is possible, that someone will hear me. This explains why letters are easier to write—they are written to people with whom we already have connections. I've often given Gail Godwin's short essay, "The Watcher at the Gates," to my writing clients and asked them to write about their "watcher," the internal critic. Yet when I do the exercise myself, I can't picture a watcher or a listener. My fear is that there's no one there. A childhood or an education that fails to provide us with the sense that we have truly been heard makes it nearly impossible to write.

When we write we listen to ourselves, but we are in two places at once: inside, in the private place, one

version of the room of one's own, writing just to ourselves, but also outside, as our own audience, listening to hear if this makes sense "out there." If we weren't in both places, we'd write in code and ellipses and not bother with the explanations we already know—or not write at all. In order to imagine myself as the external audience, I need to have experienced being listened to, being heard.

Writing is also solitary: When we write, especially when we write what we really think, we are very much alone, our own advocates, responsible for ourselves, protected only by ourselves. And while this separateness is a fact in many facets of our lives, we still like to pretend that it isn't. In order to write we have to believe someone is listening, even if it's only ourselves. Women are so often not attended to as we grow up—a phenomenon amply documented in a recent study by the American Association of University Women, *How Schools Shortchange Girls*—that we stop listening to ourselves, let alone believing anyone else might be interested in what we have to say.

Being a writer is an assertion that I believe I have something worth transmitting, that I'm willing to stand behind and have stand for me. It is an act that takes power for granted, and as women we are not very used to assuming power. Once we do, we open ourselves to criticism, hostility, abuse, and, perhaps worst, indifference. We also open ourselves to our own feelings, not all of them easy or pleasant.

Among them is our uneasiness, as we realize that our professional success may hinge on our collusion in our own honorary boyhood. Rather than identifying with our mothers, whose powerlessness and muteness in the larger world we saw close up, we have accepted membership in a very odd club. The rules go something like this: If we don't call attention to our femaleness, if we play by the boys' rules, if we don't plead the cases of our mothers, or sisters, if we don't fuss when men harass us or tell sexist jokes, or pass us by for promotion, if we're content with what we're given, keep our own struggles quiet, don't talk about how hard it is not to speak in our own language of our own concerns, and never say the "F" word out loud ("post-Feminism" is O.K.,) then we may be rewarded, in which case we are expected to be promptly and graciously grateful. Some of us have finally figured out that this is an expensive club to join, one whose bills come due much later, when we recognize the dissembling of our public voices.

Other powerful feelings may emerge at the writer's desk, and here, too, we may note a difference between men and women: Men are usually freer to express anger as aggression, while women are more prone to turn it against themselves, to transform it into depression. But when a woman attempts to write freely, she may discover more than she bargained for: her own feelings.

I don't like writing angry. It feels ill-tempered and ill-mannered. And it isn't a place I'd like to remain. But when I look back at some of the essays I wrote ten, fifteen, and twenty years ago, I'm struck by their Pollyannaish quality and so their failure to be truthful to my experience, let alone to anyone else's. At the very best, they are misleading. For example, an essay I wrote on being Jewish at Harvard in the 1950s ends, "But if my experience has any general validity, then it is possible to come through Harvard, to live in comfort in one's own skin, as one of one's own people, and come back to meet those wildly disparate classmates and find out how much more we share than we once suspected."

This passage is revealing: simultaneously hesitant, so as not to invite disagreement, yet distinctly in the language of the honorary boys' club. And it isn't true, although it's the way I'd like the story to have turned out. My sentence has not one, but several lies in it: I didn't go to Harvard, I went to Radcliffe, and there was a big difference. What I claimed is possible really isn't—it's been much harder for me to live comfortably in my own skin as a Jew, particularly in Harvard-Radcliffe settings, than I've said, and I still don't share very much with most of my classmates. I'm still separated from them for many of the same reasons of religion and class that mattered when I was an undergraduate.

These are an awful lot of untruths for one admittedly long sentence. But my disingenuousness worked: After rejections from a few magazines, my essay appeared in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and was then reprinted in a Harvard University Press catalogue of an exhibition called "The Jewish Experience at Harvard and Radcliffe." I didn't feel like I'd sold my soul to make that happen; I'd just unconsciously written what I knew people wanted to hear. And what they don't want to hear is anger, particularly women's anger.

Take the poem that follows, for example: I sent it to *Harvard Magazine* to see how long it would take for the editor to reject it; it took two weeks. The poem is a much more accurate sketch of my feelings about Harvard than the essay I've quoted above:

The Story
begins in the middle, not with
the childhood no worse than others,
nor with the fine degree, a good marriage,

two children anyone would be proud of,
two houses, two dogs, two cats,
but on the day something snapped.

No one could understand it,
how that well-educated,
well-brought-up,
middle-aged lady
could suddenly pick up
a baseball bat,
barge into the Harvard Club
through the front door,
wearing jeans
and a dirty t-shirt,
and start swinging.

Trophies, portraits of smug alums,
newspapers, books
and bookshelves,
furled umbrellas,
briefcases,
all of them hurled, or smashed,
or thrown off the roof—

The club members, horrified,
slid deeper in their leather chairs,
and covered their faces with The Times.
But one, pitying, said,
"Remember how old she is—
must be the menopause—
we should forgive her,
she is a sea
of raging hormones."

The story
goes on.

One of the most important prerequisites of the creative process for a woman is the assurance that her work will not rupture the important connections of her life. Women are exquisitely sensitive to the possibility of such losses. And, while men are applauded for their creativity, women are often looked at askance, or asked if they've managed to write, or paint, or compose without harming someone else. We have to be quite tough to resist that sort of guilt.

The worry that the creative act of writing, or speaking out, will rupture connectedness is not a fantasy. From the inside we know that our own strong feelings may do just that. We worry that our "selfishness" will be met with hostility from those we care about: the husband who feels abandoned, the male reviewer who feels challenged, the child whose lunch may not have been made by mother, the friend whom we can't meet for lunch if we're going to meet our deadlines. In her essay, "The Fisherwoman's Daughter," Ursula Le Guin describes a particularly disturbing reality:

> That is the killer: the killing grudge, the envy, the jealousy, the spite that so often a man is allowed to hold, trained to hold, against anything a woman does that's not done in his service, for him, to feed his body, his comfort, his kids. A woman who tries to work against that grudge finds the blessing turned into a curse: she must rebel and go it alone, or fall silent in despair...no artist can work well against daily, personal, vengeful resistance. And that's exactly what many women artists get from the people they love and live with…

We know that some of the truths we need to tell—particularly about unfair gender arrangements, harassment, or outright abuse—are not going to make us popular, that we can realistically expect to be met with disapproval at the least. Le Guin reminds us, "There is no more subversive act than the act of writing from a woman's experience of life using a woman's judgment."

We live with this dilemma: Angry because we have not been heard, we are also afraid of being heard, because then someone will know how angry we are and break the connection with us. Or, perhaps most important, we will realize the extent and appropriateness of our own anger and break the connection ourselves. This may explain why it is that I, and many of the women writers I know, have an ongoing compulsion to "take care of things" before we allow ourselves to sit down at our desks: to water the plants, comfort the cat, plan the dinner menu, pick up the dust elephants...whereas most men I know, including some quite conscientious ones, seem oblivious to those things.

I think men don't worry that putting aside life's tasks for the time being will make someone disapproving or angry, nor do they worry that bonds will rupture or love will disappear if they sit down at their desks in the midst of their messy studies. In college, I had a classmate who used to describe how her father, a Nobel laureate, could work at the dining-room table while she and her siblings ran around it. Somewhere there may be a woman who can do this, but I haven't met her yet. Most women I know, including those with fancy letters after their names, are still very distractible by the needs of their worlds (perhaps the successful writers, like Anne Tyler, are

those who are better able to remember where they were when they were interrupted). Our preoccupation with what seem like external circumstances is really our concern with connections to others: We perform domestic rituals to appease those potentially wronged, to sustain our connections to them.

So a powerful confluence of factors works against our writing: active discouragement, if not active abuse; the lack of viable role models; the discomfort of speaking in a second language; the fear of vulnerability; the fear of being judged; and, most important, the fear that we may risk severing those attachments that we value even more than we value our own speech. We can say about our voicelessness: It has been done to us, but we have also done it to ourselves. It is both the result of external circumstances and the ways that we live as women in our bodies and the world, even if we've had happy childhoods. Many of us have been victimized, and some of us discriminate against women, and some of us act like wimps. But we ought not have to choose between relationships and work, between caring for others and caring for ourselves, between the larger world and the self.

Women who cannot put their voices forward feel miserable and constantly try to negotiate an honorable balance between their own needs and those of others. Jessica Bolker writes, "...I think women who can 'put their voices forward' also engage in this constant negotiation—maybe all women do. (Maybe all people should!)" We must begin to explore seriously what we can do to help with this juggling act, thinking hard and empathically about the place from which we speak, or fail to, in the world.

The epidemic I have described is an overdetermined one. If one of its causes is the structure of the patriarchy, we cannot wait for that to change. If another is women's propensity to be more distractible than men and more sensitive to issues of connectedness, we must take these features as givens, since women act as if they are. While it clearly matters what portion of the causes of voicelessness are external, the result of discrimination, abuse, or neglect, and what part internal, the result of our inherent characteristics, we need to invent strategies that will improve the chances for women to write and speak out in the world we currently inhabit. Many years ago, teaching a class called "Writing Scared," I began by saying, "I'm not proposing to unscare you—I'm proposing to teach you to write even though you're scared." We need to find ways to write, despite neglect and abuse, despite our powerful inclinations to tend to others before we tend to our own central needs—we need to do this as we support, and are supported by, each other.

The last verse of Marge Piercy's poem, "For Strong Women," articulates this vision:

> What comforts her is others loving
> her equally for the strength and for the weakness
> from which it issues, lightning from a cloud.
> Lightning stuns. In rain, the clouds disperse.
> Only water of connection remains,
> flowing through us. Strong is what we make
> each other. Until we are all strong together,
> a strong woman is a woman strongly afraid...

My purpose here has been to tell the truth about how very difficult it is for us as women to claim our voices in this world, and to point us toward new ways of succeeding in that struggle. My hope is to put myself out of business eventually, so that my women patients and clients can do their work out in the world, and not have to think of themselves as damaged goods.

I want to make it possible for them to do this within structures and settings that support their efforts and applaud their industry and their successes, and allow them to strengthen connections. We cannot stop sexual abuse or bring down the patriarchy tomorrow; we cannot convince women nor, I believe, should we, that work ought to be more important to them than relationships. But we can make clear the extent of women's voicelessness, so we are not blinded by our self-denigrating use of individualistic explanations for our troubles. And we can begin to create structures and resources that will enable women to develop, strengthen, and use their voices.

I do not have a five-point program for addressing the problem of women's voicelessness. That will take the collaboration and suggestions of interested people of good will. But there are already structures in place, both large and small, that can, with a bit of retooling, help us to pick up and finish the projects laid down, like half-knit sweaters, the projects imagined, like the book on how to write a dissertation that I plan to work on as soon as I finish writing this paper.

On the simplest level, following the work of such fine journalists as Nina Totenberg, Sylvia Poggioli, and Susan Stamberg does as much for my hopefulness as a writer as any number of personal vows to write more. To encourage connections and networks we can build on, for example, such structures as the e-mail network, for those of us who have access to it (as we work for wider access for those who don't), or the thousands of

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Reflections on Yishayahu Leibowitz

An Interview With David Hartman

Yishayahu Leibowitz, who died last summer, was modern Israel's most famous philosopher and contemporary prophet. Having achieved renown as a scientist and engineer, in the last two decades he became a powerful critic of Israeli policy toward the Palestinians. An Orthodox Jew, Leibowitz developed a unique approach to Jewish theology that rejected any attempt to derive moral principles from Judaism or to justify Jewish observance on the basis of such principles. The Jew, according to Leibowitz, should submit to *mitzvot* (commandments) because they are the will of God, and should reject any attempt to substitute our own will for God's will. He was outraged at religious Zionists who were using religious categories to justify the actions of the Israeli government.



A.J. GARCES

In a letter he wrote to TIKKUN in 1990, Leibowitz summed up his view of Israeli behavior during the Intifada this way:

> In the last two years, the Army of Israel, equipped with the best modern American weapons, heroically fought and killed one hundred-fifty Arab children, aged three months to fourteen years. No explanation, no evasion, no subterfuge, can absolve the State of Israel from the curse of the prophet: 'I will bring on you everlasting disgrace and everlasting shame which never will be forgotten' (Jeremiah: XXIII: 40).

With this uncompromising tone, Leibowitz broke through the morass of Jewish Community Federation-style equivocations and cut to the heart. No wonder, then, that American Jews didn't want to know about him, and that Israeli liberals found him an embarrassment. Yet for many of us at TIKKUN he was an inspiration, despite the fact that his particular theological perspective ran directly counter to the variety of interpretations of Judaism that have been developed in these pages.

In September, TIKKUN asked David Hartman, director of the Shalom Hartman Institute and professor of Jewish philosophy at the Hebrew University, who has engaged Leibowitz extensively in his books, *A Living Covenant* and *Conflicting Visions*, to reflect on Leibowitz's legacy.

TIKKUN: What do you think is important to remember about Yishayahu Leibowitz?

Hartman: Leibowitz was a passionate nationalist who fought in the Israeli War of Independence. He had a profound skepticism about all theologies of history and all attempts to see Judaism as a redemptive drama. He believed that authentic Judaism is embodied in the total sacrifice of the self to the will of God in the presence of God. For him, the *Akeda* (the story of Abraham's binding of his son, Isaac, for sacrifice) is the paradigm for understanding Judaism. It represents how we are to serve God without any hope for redemption in history. We must not forget that, in the Bible, Isaac represents the promise for the future. In being willing to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham was giving up a future.

This conception of Judaism differs greatly from the Western humanistic approach. For Western ethics, human beings are the center of value. But for Leibowitz, the only value is God. "You should love your neighbor as yourself—I am the Lord," says Torah, and Leibowitz read this to mean that the love of

neighbor flows from your obligation to God, not your obligation to your neighbor, and not because of any commitment to moral principles. Here was the paradox: a deeply moral human being who did not believe in the centrality of moral principles for understanding Judaism.

To save Judaism from its appropriation for the sake of nationalism, it would appear that Leibowitz emptied Judaism of any functional value for human beings, individual or community.

Leibowitz was a passionate religious Jew and a passionate Zionist. He understood the necessity for power. Because he was such a great nationalist and lover of his people, his pain at Israel's choices was great. Leibowitz was a loving critic who never for a moment separated himself from the national community; he never put on the mantle of the isolated prophet looking with disdain on the masses of people and seeking to develop an elitist, esoteric community. He considered every human being worthy of his attention and participation in discourse; he would speak to any group—students, army people, the elderly—and he loved to teach and discuss his views with any human being who was prepared to enquire. If people stopped him on the street with a theological question he would invite them to his home and talk to them for hours. For many years, in his Saturday night classes, open to anyone, he offered his unique interpretations of Jewish texts and Jewish thought.

Leibowitz despaired that there was no longer any Jewish content defining the Jewish people. He feared that the heritage of Torah was being lost by the masses of Jews, and he doubted if the Jewish people could survive on what was nurturing them now.

He had a deep disgust for religious Zionist political parties who, for him, were the well-kept whores of the government. When he called for the unilateral withdrawal from the territories, he suspected that that might mean that we'd have to fight a war again—but that was less a problem for him than to have a Jewish state living as an occupying power and ruling people who did not want to be ruled by it. He saw the occupation as depleting the country's moral content. His deep love for Israel led him to his outrage.

TIKKUN: If Judaism is not about morality, but only about *mitzvot,* and there is no *mitzvah* about whether or not we can occupy another's land, then what is the source of Leibowitz's moral outrage over the Israeli Occupation?

Hartman: It came from his humanism. Leibowitz lived in two realms of discourse. His critique of Israeli society grew from his total solidarity with the destiny of Israel. He didn't go around screaming about all the moral injustices of the world; he was not a universal prophet. He was concerned about what his nation was doing and becoming as a result of the Occupation.

TIKKUN: So his critique of the Occupation was in no way religiously grounded?

Hartman: No. His was a moral critique, but it did not grow out of prophetic morality. It derived from human decency.

TIKKUN: Rightists don't reject that principle.

Hartman: He believed that the rightists were propelled by a hunger for power. He was sensitive to the misuses of power by which human beings could be seduced. He had a heightened sense of compassion for human beings and he didn't want to support policies that might abuse other people.

TIKKUN: You also are sensitive and compassionate, and don't favor abusing others, yet Leibowitz was far more antagonistic to the Occupation than you were. He was unequivocal in his critique of Likud policies and did not hesitate to make them in political quarters, identifying himself with the religious peace movement Oz ve Shalom over the years.

Hartman: Our differences were only about how to end the Occupation. Leibowitz supported a unilateral Israeli withdrawal, knowing that such an action might lead to a new war. Had the Arabs attacked again, he would have advocated defending ourselves and wiping out our enemies. He was not a pacifist.

I thought this was not the right way to go, because unilateral withdrawal would not create foundations for reconciliation. But he was more concerned about the content of Israeliness. I insist, however, that the Palestinians have to create the conditions for mutual trust. It is they who must bring about their own liberation; it cannot happen through unilateral Israeli withdrawal, which will only lead to further bloodshed and destruction. I therefore advocated a slow process of disengagement, which would create a confidence and satisfy the Israeli need for security.

Leibowitz will be remembered not for the stand he took on the Six Day War, but for his critique of the Jewish people and the way religion is practiced in the twentieth century, and his ability to offer innovative approaches to theology: He neutralized metaphysical claims about God. He tried to move God talk away

from inquiries about the essence of God and divinity and focus on the act of human beings committing themselves to how to live. Gershom Scholem once said that Leibowitz makes a God out of *mitzvot,* but that's not a fair description. Leibowitz was nurtured by the radical negative theology of Maimonides: There is ultimately no language that allows you to talk about God in a coherent way. The religious life, for Leibowitz, is about action. The ultimate goal of life is acceptance of the Kingdom of Heaven *(Malchut Shamaim).* Every human institution and act is valuable only to the extent it serves God. The central task, then, is to repudiate idolatry, to bear witness against all the false idols and the false "isms" that define history. So when he saw halakhic Jews being controlled by the State, this was for him the quintessence of selling out Judaism. Leibowitz felt that a religious community should be a radical alternative to secular nationalism. He hoped for a *Kulturkampf* between a serious religiosity and secular nationalism, hoping for a religious community to embody a radically different alternative for human existence. But for this reason he was deeply opposed to the joining of religion and state, which he saw as an idolatrous union.

Leibowitz wanted to live in a halakhic community, though he also wanted Halakha to change to meet the challenges of living in a contemporary society. He did not want to make those changes dependent on finding a comment in Gemara (part of the Talmud) or in some eighteenth-century *Posek* (rabbinic authority)—he thought we were living in a new historical reality, and he wanted a religious community to take responsibility for creating Halakha appropriate to the new situation, based on their desire to serve God. To Leibowitz, dedication to serving God was the crucial motivation for the community. Thus, changes in Halakha could not simply stem from what suited the community, but had to be based on a decision about how best to serve God's will. If changes grow out of the integrity of wanting to serve God, they make sense, he argued, even if they are not validated by authority figures such as a respected interpreter of Jewish law, a *Posek,* or by a halakhic precedent. But this only works if the community really is committed to serving God.

TIKKUN: What if a group of women were interested in serving God in this way—did Leibowitz adhere to the Orthodox line, rejecting this religious claim?

Hartman: On *Tefillin* (the binding of phylacteries on the head and arm) and other specific commands to men, he felt that women had no obligation to fulfill them. But when it came to public tasks for the entire community, for example, women serving as witnesses and judges, he felt very strongly that the community should change and be fully equal. He pressed me, for example, on how many women we would have in our *bet midrash* program, and he thought that excluding women from studying Torah was like excluding them from Judaism as a living culture.

TIKKUN: If people have a serious commitment to building a community serving God, then they need not adhere to an Orthodox interpretation of Halakha?

Hartman: There is nothing about his writing that would define the limits of Halakha. The living religious community that takes Torah seriously and really wants to accept the kingdom of God and that really feels deeply committed to *mitzvot* has the responsibility for deciding how to concretize these ideas in daily life.

He never wanted to talk about the reasons for *mitzvot,* or make them part of some larger social scheme, because to do so was to allow them to be used, in the way that they were being used by some sectors of religious Zionism, to serve national ends rather than to serve God. He didn't want Judaism to be an instrument for national survival. Because many Israelis, both religious and secular, were instrumentalizing Judaism for the sake of national identity, Leibowitz totally deinstrumentalized it and said that its significance was only in the decision to worship God.

But his vision was so radical that it scared many people who need authority and precedents—those who wondered where his vision would lead. And he had no theory of how to make a community such as he sought actually come into being. He had no process to get to where he wanted the community to go.

When you have a strong national community, living a collective life, people need strong collective symbols—so they appropriated Judaism for that purpose. Leibowitz saw the emergence of a civic religion that took Judaism for its own national purposes. The civic religion saw the Land of Israel as holy, but for Leibowitz only God was holy, not land. He thus felt that Israel itself was making Judaism into an idolatrous force.

Leibowitz did not talk of his personal relationship to God. This was not his path. For him, the relationship was defined by getting up each morning, as he did, and going to shul. It was in the doing of the *mitzvot* that he could show that he was rejecting anything personal as ultimate and absolute—that service to God came first.

TIKKUN: What did Leibowitz say to the religious person davening next to him who then goes out and kills people

at Hebron? From the standpoint of Judaism, did Leibowitz believe there was anything to say?

Hartman: A person who has no fundamental ethical intuition can't be part of the human community. We don't need a Jewish interpretation of music and we don't need a specifically Jewish insight to know that this is morally wrong. The act of ruling over a people who don't want to be ruled over is one such morally wrong act. There should be a *menschlichkeit* that is independent of, though intertwined with, the discourse of Judaism.

But the purpose of religion is not to provide a foundation for ethics. Leibowitz fought against making God an instrument for ethics, but he was not opposed to having the tradition sensitize you to ethical concerns.

TIKKUN: What did you find most appealing about his theology?

Hartman: He had a non-mythic understanding of the Jewish people. I deeply respect his courage as a person of faith. I appreciate his love for the Jewish people and his refusal to romanticize that people or sentimentalize about a schmaltzy Jewish *neshamah* (soul). Similarly, he refused to romanticize Jewish history, or to believe that somehow God would make everything work out, or that in some mysterious way the Jewish people was acting out God's will. And I am moved by his insistence that what Jewish faith is really about is doing *mitzvot*—that faith is not only an inner state, but a commitment to living a way of life based on mitzvot.

TIKKUN: And if we decide, based on our reading of Torah, that we must be involved in healing and repairing the world, *tikkun olam*, then he would say we were missing the point, which is merely to do *mitzvot*?

Hartman: Not at all. The key is why you are doing what you are doing. If you are doing *tikkun olam* because you see it as service to God, then you are doing it as part of the mitzvah narrative, and this is totally legitimate Jewishly. It is not the feelings you have for your neighbor, but your sense that you are serving God, that must be basis for your doing the commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. I have taken strong issue with Leibowitz's separation of ethics from Halakha and from any human experiential content or significance, but this is for another discussion. He was for me a great spirit and a blessing for the Jewish people. It was a privilege to live in a country that enabled a Leibowitz to flourish. □

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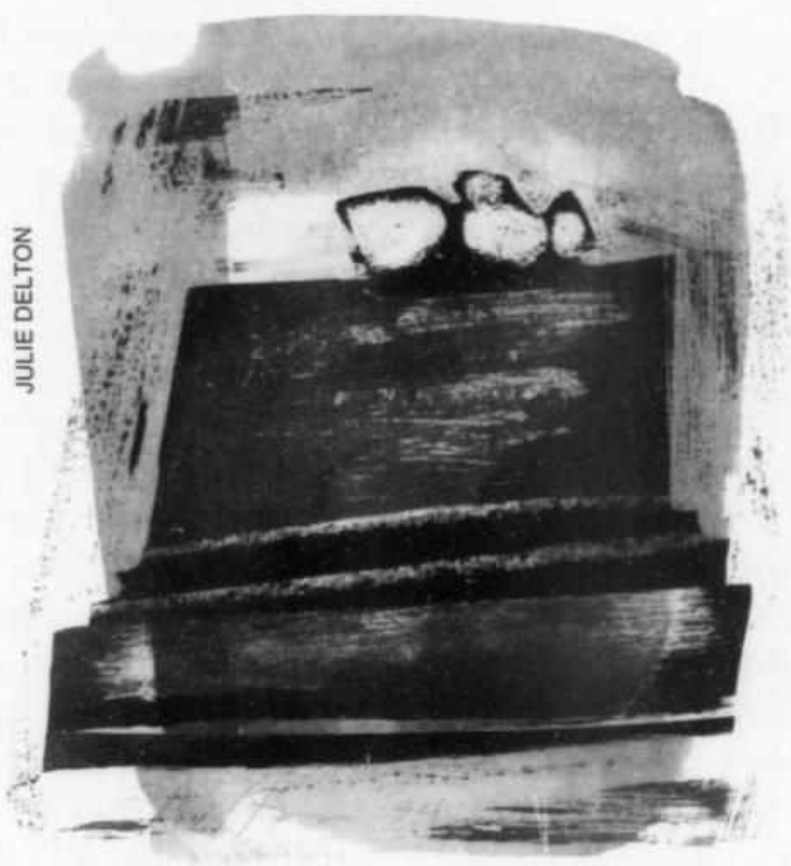
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FICTION

Days of Awe

Jack Pulaski


JULIE DELTON

Air conditioning hadn't been invented yet, childhood had—my existence privileged beyond my father's. I could go to The Rainbow for sixteen cents, sit in the dark, and watch the smoking cone of light shape shadows into shipwrecks, and cowboys, galloping, mounted on horses too noble to sweat. Like something with gills, I knew how to breathe through those summers. I brooded at the window. The street boiled beneath me. I wanted my father to take me to the park, or the ball game, like other kids. But my old man took me on tours of where the Hoovervilles used to be. "Here, yeah, was the soup kitchen," he would say, and stamp his feet on the pavement, and see a line of bundled, shivering men. My old man's teeth chattered. I wiped the sweat from my smarting eyes, licked the salt from under my nose. "A chicken in every pot—you son of a bitch, you should live so long," he hollered.

I told the guy who had stopped and stared, "He ain't talking to you." The man was wearing a sweat-drenched, lightweight summer suit. He hugged a briefcase to his chest. He had stumbled and regained his footing. For a moment I was sure that the man saw what Father was seeing: the gray men in their ragged steaming coats, bunched together in the long bread line strung out all along the ice-white street, the line of men stretching past the thoroughfare, beyond sight in the falling and falling snow. "Here's a laugh," my old man gasped, "Pros-per-ity"... he doubled over, gagged on the word. The men on the bread line stamped their feet, shrugged snow from their shoulders. Father laughed his wacko laugh. The haggard men laughed, snorting little wreath clouds. My old man coughed, straightened up, flailed one arm in the direction of the horizon. "We been told," he sputtered, "prosperity is just around the corner."

The man with the briefcase ran in that direction. For an instant I wanted to follow. My head hurt—a whole life lived in outrage—how to get away?

Father shifted his stance, backed up and moved in a circle, circumlocuting toward summer. "Gus's joint we should go," he said. So as usual, after the tour, it was Gus's Cafeteria.

I retraced Father's words all the way back to Union Square and there the pavement replayed how the cop on horseback had opened up his head. "The first time," he said, "my skull was still practically a virgin, boy did the blood run." He said he was embarrassed. The policeman on horseback was singing. The cop had a beautiful voice; the lilt of it gave Father pause. He hesitated. He had grabbed at the cop, would have dragged him down. But the beauty of the man's voice seemed a dirty joke—and Father's momentary enthrallment the butt of the joke.

Despite the ambrosial steam of the cafeteria, the chimes of spoons, the great gong of the machine that dispensed the tickets to entering patrons, tickets with numbers on them, each number redeemable for brisket of beef, barley soup, melon, or fish, my nose in the mist rising from my meat loaf, I noted that the tour of the Hoovervilles was not just Father's way of stoking his appetite. He had to return, again and again, to the place of his greatest fear. I knew. I had something to compare it to.

In autumn, after the Days of Awe, I had gone with

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Father to the cemetery in Jersey, where Grandmother was buried.

I was following my Father's words, thinking we were lost. We had walked for a long time. I was tired. Hiking a labyrinth of endless headstones, smaller stones piled on the headstones to commemorate the visits of the living, we passed one of the cemetery's presences—maybe a man—nearly invisible, but I was not yet thirteen and I could still see him. Kissed by Yahweh, doused by several drops of stinking eternity, this was a face gentiles could love. His flesh had suffered the proof of the relation between mind and spirit. Father walked right through him. My skin crawled.

I could have explained that father had just been given a death sentence. Doctor Schacter had said, "I'll give you six months to live." Father was insulted. "Doctor," he said, "I'll piss on your grave." It occurred to me that maybe that's why we had come. This business of six months to live was to go on for ten years. But it was autumn, the high holy days had just passed, and my grandmother was buried here.

Father made a deal with one of the more enterprising ghosts. This one smelled human, and my old man hired the specter to facilitate his catharsis. The scrawny, bent-over ancient might have been taken for a crone if it were not for his unruly beard, which appeared to breathe on its own. He wore a black gabardine frock coat that had been threadbare when Lithuania was a prairie. The yarmulke hovered an inch over the old man's bald head and was clamped with a butterfly barrette to the one remaining tuft of wiry gray hair, sticking up out of a dent on his radiant skull.

Before prayer they bargained. I only blushed. When I was seven, I had been mortified. They exchanged accusations, "You take the bread out of the mouths of my children," for openers; and denunciations, pleadings, self-condemnation that calibrated the value of pity in the fallen world. They mimicked renunciation, throwing up their hands, wept for the fact of the price of the word. "From your mouth to God's ear," the old guy hissed. Bent over, in the most eloquent staggering I had ever seen, the old man, flogged by the clouds in heaven, shuffled a circle of dust around Father. High-octane spleen fueled the blue rage in Father's eyes. To be hustled in God's name, at the foot of his mother's grave, this last most combustible offense lit something in Father's face. I turned away. The old ghost glimpsed it, and considered retirement. The birds in the trees shut up. Father found his human voice; he quoted Odets, the only author he had ever trusted, to the extent that any scribe was to be trusted: "Life shouldn't be printed on dollar bills." And "This was a way to make a living?" he asked the ghost in high Yiddish. "This is an honorable vocation?" Looking toward the beyond to beseech somebody who probably wasn't home anyway. Father identified himself as one of the cadre who was going to bring heaven to earth by annihilating all such rackets, after they kicked the asses of the landlords and bosses.

Fat, human tolerance oiled the old ghosts' eyes. "Yeah, yeah," he whispered with an inexhaustible exhaustion, "waiting for the Messiah doesn't pay very much, but it's steady work, and," he asked, "your mother's name?"

Father's chest heaved, torrents of water Father didn't know were in him, quantities of briny snot, all this stuff ran out of his nose, mouth, eyes, the great barrel of his chest shuddered, thumped by something beyond, truly beyond. Father uttered his mother's name, and experienced again, once a year, every year, the genesis of what is everlasting. Momma, the giver of hereafter and hereafter.

The old man asked my name and my father's. He reached inside his gabardine and withdrew two yarmulkes shaped like cakes. Father and I covered our heads. The old man began to rock; his Adam's apple shimmied in his gaunt throat. He coughed, greasing his larynx. His rocking gathered momentum and he gave out a shriek entreating heaven with our names.

Shivering, Father managed to show his teeth. "For a fee he'll mention me to God," he said, loud enough so that the other half-dozen ghosts who inhabited the cemetery and were similarly employed, heard him. Pop's intermediary rocked, faster and faster; he put in my father's mouth the language that had been old when the Romans were nailing rabbis upside down. Pop and the old man rocked furiously. They wailed. Oh how they wailed. I felt naked. They exchanged riffs, the most heart rending wails, sobs, piercing screams—a harmony with a life of its own. Throbbing and rocking they seemed engaged in a contest to see who would make the stones weep first.

At Gus's Cafeteria, I watched my old man, hunched over his meat loaf, arms on the table, surrounding his plate. His eyes rose for a quick, desperate reconnoiter of the room. He eats, I thought, as though he were about to be arrested any minute; and no amount of work will absolve him of his eating. His large fist hides his mouth. He will pay for the meat loaf with work provided by the whimsy of the people who own the numbers; nothing can be earned. Over the one revolving door, which is the entrance and exit, is a sign that reads, "In case of fire, yell fire!"

But at the cemetery, after prayer, he was surfeited,

(Continued on p. 91)

BOOK REVIEW

Spirituality and Transformational Politics

Jeff Fishel and Ian McNett

Spiritual Politics: Changing the World from the Inside Out, by Corrine McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson, Ballantine Books, 1994, 432 pp. $12.95

I was offered a God who in pure love cannot determine outcomes or falsify consequences.

—A contemporary Quaker

America needs an alternative to politics as usual, a theory and practice that attend to the needs of the whole, rather than the fears, desires, and addictions of individuals, groups, and special interests.

In their new book, *Spiritual Politics*, Corrine McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson champion this position and address it head-on: "The Law of Supply and Need says that resources should flow to help people provide for their own basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, education, and health care—and that these needs must be met within the entire system before resources are devoted to less fundamental human needs, otherwise known as desires." Using a perspective that embraces the material, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of human existence, they go on to contrast "desires" with non-material needs, so that the "Law of Supply and Need" is not limited to basic material requirements.

McLaughlin and Davidson have long been active in spiritually informed social-change activities. Their previous book, *Builders of the Dawn,* is a standard source on modern (post-1960s) alternative communities. Accordingly, they bring impressive intellectual resources and practical experience to the larger topic of spiritual politics.

While containing much that is original and significant, *Spiritual Politics* is sometimes overwhelmed by the mass of material the authors draw from what they call the "Ageless Wisdom." Their description of what constitutes Ageless Wisdom is highly inclusive, embracing everything from spiritual rays to astrology. Applied to politics, however, this "wisdom" can be used to negate virtually any historical catastrophe; their basic argument is that humanity is constantly evolving toward a "higher and deeper consciousness," no matter how destructive humans have been throughout history.

For example, what is one to make of an analysis of the U. S. decision to use atomic weapons on Japan that concludes: "From the perspective of the Ageless Wisdom, the use of the [atomic] bomb twice on Japan disrupted the etheric web in those locations and let in a flood of new energy by shattering the veil between dimensions and thus allowed rebuilding to take place on somewhat new lines."

The United States and Western Europe have been awash in this type of thinking during the past thirty years, a consequence of the proliferation of New Age spiritual groups whose ideas have been disseminated throughout the popular culture. Our contemporary milieu has been enriched, or further impoverished, depending on one's viewpoint, by the diffusion of Eastern religions, Earth spirituality, and numerous philosophies based on received wisdom channeled during trances and goddess worship.

McLaughlin and Davidson mine many of these sources, but their main vein is the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth-century occult traditions—particularly the writings of Alice Bailey, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, and Nicholas and Helena Roerich. They also tap more ancient sources such as Paracelsus, Hermes, and Trismegistus, among others. All emphasize the inevitability of progress, the unfolding of a "Divine Plan" that will eventually (time unspecified) replace the suffering in this world. For those who share this conviction, and have an interest in how esoteric spirituality can be applied to political and historical events, *Spiritual Politics* is far-ranging and creative, filled with interpretations and examples, some compelling, others bizarre.

But the United States, indeed the world, lacks a politics that is both spiritual and transformational. Many tender and a few hardy shoots exist, however, and *Spiritual Politics* describes a substantial number of them. In highlighting the groups attempting a politics of transformation and their approaches (win/win solutions, syntheses of seemingly intractable ideological positions), it is a useful book.

In the end, however, *Spiritual Politics* fails to offer a realistic vision of what a late-twentieth-century spiritual politics might look like; because of the authors' sanguine faith in the inevitability of progress, they do not deal adequately with the problem of evil. They sometimes write as if the Holocaust, two world wars and a host of regional ones, ongoing genocide in various countries, nuclear proliferation, a relentless assault on the natural world, and grinding Third-World misery never occurred.

How might we develop a philosophy of individual and political transformation that embraces some of what McLaughlin and Davidson champion, yet incorporates a better understanding of the darker sides of human behavior? The challenge of creating a spiritual-transformational politics for the twenty-first century can be distilled down to and examined through the prism of three propositions:

(1)We are all guilty, we are all innocent.

(2)The ankle bone's connected to

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the shin bone.

(3)In the words of Lao Tse, the wise person is one who knows when enough is enough.

We Are All Guilty...

Politics begins with how individuals deal with their own capacity for good and evil. Few are adept at accepting and working with their "shadow" side—that repository of characteristics and behaviors we find uncomfortable, unflattering, and sometimes brutally destructive—despite a century of Freud and his many acolytes and revisionists. We prefer instead to present a false face to the world, as if our souls contained no hatred, greed, envy, cruelty, vengefulness. We cloak our dark side in a smiling or gloomy mask, rationalize our behavior and thoughts, and project our evil onto others: spouse; children; employer; coworker; another race or religion; politicians; bureaucrats; drug dealers; right-wing fundamentalists.

Collectives also have shadows. Political parties, religions, labor unions, corporations, and nations all tend to blame others and excuse themselves for the evil and misery caused by human beings. Carl Jung, who developed the concept of shadow and applied it to politics in *The Undiscovered Self*, warned that the failure to deal with the shadow side ultimately leads to individual and collective catastrophe.

How does the shadow work? The fundamentalist preachers who engage in sexual practices they damn are one obvious example. Collectively, the Cold War's reciprocal demonizing of East and West is another. When we fail to account for the shadow, we help produce the very effects we condemn and/or fear. Unless we deal with the shadow's intentions and behaviors, much of which is subconscious or unconscious, the practice of transformational politics will be problematic.

As carriers of culture, our "practice," both spiritual and everyday, becomes very important. Spiritual practice has to do with how we relate to the sacred. It may involve prayer, meditation, ritual, and worship and should include some kind of inner work to deal with our own potential and actual evil.

Everyday practice has to do with how we deal with the potentially sacred in the everyday world—in our relationships to a spouse, bus driver, homeless panhandler, or the natural world. This is not a particularly mystical concept. By putting God outside of nature and human beings, we turn creation into mere stuff, so that we may exploit or rationalize at whim. If those who would practice a politics of spirit, transformation, or meaning do not accord respect to their colleagues, adversaries, and environment, their politics won't fly. McLaughlin and Davidson understand and emphasize this; indeed, they are so relentlessly decent in dealing with antiprogressive viewpoints, that they sometimes end up in a morass of political/spiritual Jell-o.

But a major flaw of *Spiritual Politics* is that the authors, while recognizing the shadow as an important factor in politics, do not look for it in their own point of view. Nor do they examine or even discuss the shadow of New Age or transformational groups, or the "Enlightened Ones" of their own spiritual heritage. One might speculate that this shadow is in part composed of a naiveté akin to the old nineteenth-century cliché, "upward ever, backward never."

Ankle Bone's Connected...

McLaughlin and Davidson devote considerable effort to arguing for the necessity of systemic thinking—linking seemingly disparate elements to larger wholes. Ironically, they fail to consider the problems and crises of the contemporary world as systemic, endemic to modern economic-political systems and their correlative psychological and spiritual malaise. Poverty, hunger, pollution, racism, war, crime and violence, the destruction of the rain forest are as integral to modern civilization (capitalist and communist) as the information superhighway, Cheerios, Madonna, and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Yet decision-makers in modern society generally do not act as if anything is related to anything else; when rivers run amok, we may not consider that our destruction of forests and wetlands contribute to the devastation.

If I require bypass surgery at age forty-five, it probably means I've abused my system with one or more of the following: poor diet, alcohol, tobacco, compulsive overwork, and a sedentary lifestyle. My failing heart is a symptom of an underlying disease of self-indulgence. Further, beneath self-indulgence may reside a host of factors depending on my experience in the economic structure and culture, or my family history, genetic makeup, and so forth. Bypass surgery, if I can afford it, is the result of a variety of complex, interdependent variables.

Any spiritual politics that is meaningful should embrace a philosophy that illuminates the relationships between individual behavior, structural forms, and the existential mystery of a God that "...in pure love cannot determine outcomes or falsify consequences." Contending with this as partly knowable and partly as a mystery—not, as McLaughlin and Davidson have it, a "universe [that is] unfolding in perfect timing, [with a] Divine Plan for human evolution [that] promises a beneficent, even glorious outcome..."—is far more challenging, and sobering. "Progress" and "regress" are human inventions and human responsibilities, whatever their relationship might be to the sacred.

Enough is Enough...

Much of what's amiss in the modern world stems from a relentless quest for profit, status, and power at the expense of other values. The benefits accrue only to the few, however, leaving the Earth and many of its inhabitants increasingly impoverished. Further, the mania for profit, status, and power leads to an ever-increasing subjugation to technology.

To flourish in an increasingly technocratic, bureaucratized society we must subvert our spiritual, emotional, and even physical needs to the demands of technocracy. But our faith that machines will liberate has proved illusory; at best, technology has proved to be a double-edged sword. For some it has eliminated dehumanizing routine and drudgery; for others it has displaced them from meaningful and productive employment—and made the rich richer.

Within this technocratic milieu, conventional politics concerns itself with mediating among competing interests in a system that is mostly about

CHANUKAH

TIKKUN's guide to celebrating the world's first recorded national liberation struggle.

• *The Ritual* •

Each night of Chanukah we light candles, starting with the *shamas* (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, shehechiyanu, Vekee-imanu, veheeg-iyanu, 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.)

Next, tell the story and do the "Making It Real" exercise described below.

• *The Story* •

(The non-mythologized 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 before the common era (B.C.E.), 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 B.C.E., 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 hundred and fifty 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, 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 worshipers at the shrine of political and cultural "reality."

Judea's plight worsened considerably in the early part of the second century with the ascendence 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, 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 more 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 Mattathais 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 their language and ways, and accepting their 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, 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 B.C.E. 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 Hashmona'im) set up an independent Jewish state.

Unfortunately, that state degenerated as the 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. (Some right-wing Zionists made Chanukah their central observance precisely because they thought Jews could only be secure if they became as ruthless and immoral as everyone else. They did not realize that the whole point is that the victory was made possible because the Jews would *not* accept the logic of everyone else, otherwise they could just assimilate into the Hellenistic would, as so many other peoples did.)

The Rabbis who shaped rabbinic Judaism, themselves depressed at the defeat of Jewish rebellions against Rome and, aware of the moral degeneration of the Hashmona'im, tried, by focusing on a story about a miracle of a pot of oil that kept the Chanukah lights burning for eight nights, to downplay Chanukah's importance and reframe it into a minor "religious" event. 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). This is what Torah is about and this is why the Jews have been witnesses to God's potential presence in the world. 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.

• *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. While there's nothing wrong with gift giving (the kids in the TIKKUN community made the point that they also like this focus), it can become a substitute for confronting the holiday's rich spiritual message: *what is* does not define *what can be*. So don't get discouraged if the craziness and evil in the world seems overwhelming at times, because it can be changed through our activity as partners with God.

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

Each evening, pick a theme (like one of those suggested below) in which you allow yourself 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 actually be made real, and how you might participate in some way in its actualization. Everyone in the family, TIKKUN discussion group or salon, circle of friends, or any other group observing the ritual will share his or her answer to the question for the evening.

The First Night: Imagine your life free of the need to accommodate to people with more power than you. How would your life be different?

The Second Night: Imagine your life if in the world of work (for children: the world of school) you could fully use your talents and creativity, your desire to cooperate with others, your sense of humor, and your playfulness.

The Third Night: Imagine your relationship to your parents if it could be the way that you really would want it to be.

The Fourth Night: Imagine the kind of Jewish community you'd like to have, if the Jews were to pray together, do acts of charity and struggle for social justice together, and if in every other way the community supported your highest spiritual, ethical, aesthetic ideals, and did so in a way that was fun and emotionally nourishing.

The Fifth Night: Imagine what your neighborhood would be like if people really connected with each other as caring neighbors. Now imagine what you'd have to do to get others in your neighborhood to talk about what they'd want, and how they'd go about getting it, so that everyone would live in a friendlier and less-alienated neighborhood.

The Sixth Night: Imagine the kind of social-change movement you'd like to be part of.

The Seventh Night: Imagine the kind of America you'd like to live in. Now imagine that there was a president whose agenda was still evolving. Imagine what you could do, together with others, to help influence the direction being taken, and to strengthen the voice of those who seemed to be pushing in the same direction and sharing parts of your vision.

The Eighth Night: Imagine what the world might look like if it were to embody the principles that you'd like to see actualized in the world.

Each night: Share your vision with others and listen (without criticizing) to theirs. Then rejoice and sing songs of celebration and of struggle.

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

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, so that we get the support we need to continue to develop ideas for how to deepen Jewish observance. To subscribe: send $31 to TIKKUN, 255 West 100th St., Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10025. Written by Michael Lerner, editor of TIKKUN, in memory of his beloved mother, Beatrice I. Hirschman Lerner.

grabbing, or protecting, resources. A spiritual and transformational politics would address itself to the needs of the whole polity, to what used to be called the common weal. And it would do this by emphasizing the connections among individual, communal, national, global, and sacred domains, while maintaining respect for differences at each level of analysis. The needs of the many—and the real needs of the affluent few—cannot be addressed unless the latter act with more responsibility, restraint, and compassion toward fellow human beings and the Earth.

To do this requires a recognition that solutions to today's problems do not begin with policies, programs, and technical fixes. Transformational politics, like the politics of meaning, is first of all about consciousness, not struggles over policies. This means we must penetrate deeper, in ourselves and our society, than the obvious "causes" of poverty, crime, racism, pollution, and other problems. The root cause is a spiritual vacuum in which little is valued unless it can be consumed and/or shown off.

Therefore, we must ultimately deal with values: what our priorities should and should not be. Values do not flow from obedience to a set of rules, but from a heart and consciousness that truly experiences the impact of our actions. To forgo evil because we fear punishment is not morality, but submission. To downplay evil because we fear it undermines hope leads to denial, not real hope.

McLaughlin and Davidson note many times that a shift in consciousness is central to the task of political transformation: The authors, like many others now writing, want to engage the social-change values of the 1960s with a deeper understanding of the importance of spirituality in human affairs. Unfortunately, their commitment to a politics of hope and positive alignment with our higher selves—admirable in an age of doubt and pessimism—is flawed by an excessive reliance on the older "spiritual science" of mystics such as Alice Bailey or Madame Blavatsky. A spirituality that is less concerned with the occult, and more attuned to the pressing needs of this world, would better serve us as we take on the continuing challenge of reconstructing and healing, self and society. □

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BOOK REVIEW

A Political Analyst

John Beebe

The Political Psyche, by Andrew Samuels. Routledge, 1993, 380 pp. $49.95, cloth; $16.95, paper.

Should a psychoanalyst talk politics with the patient in the consulting room? Is it appropriate for a psychotherapist working with a patient's dream to bring up the political implications of its imagery? These are questions that have rarely been posed in relation to clinical practice; that we now hear them from a Jungian analyst doubles the surprise of *The Political Psyche.*

Andrew Samuels, whose *Jung and the Post-Jungians* put Jungian analysis on the psychoanalytic map nearly ten years ago, convincing many clinicians of the relevance of Jung's analytical psychology to present-day clinical practice, this time lays out an impressive array of paradigmatic examples to persuade us that a Jungian hermeneutics has just as much to offer to political consciousness. An activist with deep socialist roots in his native England and many ties to present-day feminist thought, Samuels is entirely persuaded that to practice monitoring one's psychological life by keeping track of one's feelings, fantasies, and dreams is to get very close to a self that wants to live a more committed and socially useful life in the world. He thinks that those engaged in political action should be learning from psychotherapists how to enter political discourse with the participant sensitivity that belongs to the dialectic of therapy, but he sees no hope of this occurring unless therapists are first willing to open themselves up to the political dimension of being human.

To those who have already grasped that Jung's project is at heart a demand to respect private imagery because it provides the energy for greater integrity in dealings with the world, *The Political Psyche* will confirm what has most moved them about this sort of analysis. In the face of escalating demands to "realize soul in the world," Samuels articulates, more clearly than any previous Jungian writer, how the connection between soul and world may be practically accomplished. It is this latter feature of the book that may attract the reader who has neither needed nor heretofore been particularly interested in therapeutic analysis, because it smells too much of the isolated consulting room.

Samuels has explored his interest in the political habits of psychological practice in his travels throughout the world, including the self-renewing nations of Eastern Europe. He is on to the fact that not only individual analysts but also schools of analytic thought evince political attitudes, and it is these attitudes that he wants to expose to us—what has been wise and what unfortunate in the cumulative social legacy of a century of depth psychological practice. It is remarkable how few clinical analysts, considering this long history, have recognized that a therapeutic analysis is likely to be a primary catalyst for what Samuels calls "The Political Development of the Person." For as he demonstrates, analysis has always had this potential, and it can serve as a model for how political development might occur outside of the consulting room as well.

Not the least of Samuels's virtues as political analyst is his ability to describe what goes on in depth psychotherapy in a way that speaks to the political imagination. In a central section on "the political development of the person," Samuels gives the example of an Italian patient who dreamt of a beautiful lake with clear, deep water. The patient told Samuels this represented his soul "and then immediately associated to the pollution on the Italian Adriatic Coast." To Samuels, the "image of the lake, and the association to coastal pollution, suggested in the form of one symbol, the patient's unconscious capacity for depth and his present state of which he was all too conscious—a state of being clogged up by algae, like the coastal waters of the Adriatic." For this patient, the dream offered the possibility that there could be a "solution" to the "clogging up of his lake-soul potential," and "he made a choice to return to Italy, to tell his father that he was homosexual and, in his words, to 'get more involved'—perhaps in environmental politics."

Samuels's sensitive discussion makes clear that this young man's dream addressed not just his fate on a personal, individual level, but also his collective, cultural, and political responsibility to what was going on along the Adriatic. The patient's associations develop a sensitivity that reaches beyond the boundaries of a purely private at-homeness with himself.

As a working analyst, what I find most refreshing in this report is the sense of the dialogue that is taking place between patient and analyst. Here is how Samuels describes his clinical stance:

> The images of the dream can be approached via their individual presence, or via their political presence, or via the movement and tension between the two. In the dream of the lake, the tension between the individual and the political presences of the image was prominent and insistent; after all the patient was Italian. What, the patient and I asked together, is the role of pollution in the soul, or even in the world? What is the role of pollution in the achievement of psychological depth? Can the soul remain deep and clear while there is pollution in the world, in one's home waters? Did the lake, with intimations of mystery and isolation, clash with the popular, extraverted tourism of the Adriatic? Eventually, the patient's concern moved onto the social level: Who owned the lake? Who should have access to such

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a scarce resource? Who would protect the lake from pollution? These were his associations. From wholly personal issues, such as the way his problems interfered with the flowering of his potential, we moved to political issues, such as the pollution of natural beauty, not only by industry but also by the mass extraversion of tourism. And we also moved back again from the political level to the personal level, including transference analysis. I do not mean to foreclose on other interpretations, but to add in a more 'political' one so that the patient's unconsciously taken up political commitments can become clearer.

It is particularly interesting to read this description of a contemporary Jungian analysis because it seems to understand so many things at once that are not ordinarily associated with Jungian practice. Once recognized, they grant that practice an authority in dealing with the political we might not have anticipated.

This vignette demonstrates that even the most compelling and archetypal vision of the possibilities of an individual nature (here, everything that the Italian lake conveyed to the dreamer) is not accepted as an authentic image of integrity until it is put into its political context.

Even though this snippet of case history underscores what Jung would also have emphasized, the importance of the patient's discovery of that source of his identity that can only be found by connecting to his native, ethnic taproot—what Samuels, echoing Jung, calls his "Italian-ness"—the patient is allowed to make this discovery, in the dialogue recorded here, without separating the part of his identity that goes with the territory of being Italian from everything in him that is capable of making conscious choices in relation to that identity. In conversation with his patient, Samuels does not split the national part of the patient's identity from everything else about the patient that is political, such as his sexual nature and environmental stance, both of which must be explicitly included in any dealings he will undertake with the "Italian" part of his world, including his father. Unlike Jung, whose unconsciously political psychologizing of national differences led him into pitfalls

(Continued on p. 78)

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This Land's Not Your Land

Gary Gerstle



TEIT HORNBACK--IMPACT VISUALS

Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism by Michael Ignatieff. Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1994, 263 pages. $21.

Already it is hard to recall the astonishment and jubilation many of us felt five years ago when communism collapsed, the Berlin Wall fell, and the long-suffering peoples of Central and Eastern Europe seemed poised to enter a new age of freedom and democracy. If a new age of freedom is unfolding—and the signs from, at least, the Baltic Republics, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and a reunited Germany are often encouraging—it is doing so through a tortuous path of violence, anarchy, and ethnic chauvinism. The Bosnian crisis, of course, is the Damoclean sword that hangs over hopes for a new Europe, threatening at any moment to plunge the continent into darkness. The collective rage that has taken hold of the Serbs, Croatians, and Bosnian Muslims has set down roots elsewhere in the Balkans, in many of the new states emerging from the Soviet empire's collapse, and even in patches of Western Europe.

Michael Ignatieff views this ethnic rage as part of an epochal development in world history, a turn away from what he calls "civic" nationalism and toward "ethnic" nationalism. Civic nationalism, Ignatieff writes, envisions the nation "as a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values." Such a national community is open to all those who reside in the nation's territory, irrespective of their ethnicity, race, or religion. It is "necessarily democratic, since it vests sovereignty in all of the people." Born in eighteenth-century England, civic nationalism triumphed in the American and French revolutions and became a rallying cry for liberals and radicals the world over. It is a nationalism that Ignatieff, himself a liberal-leftist, admires and whose passing he bemoans.

Its place is being taken by a nationalism rooted not in democratic ideals but in ethnicity. Ethnic nationalists may speak a language of democracy and rights, but they rarely treat all inhabitants of their land as equal, rights-bearing citizens. Members of their tribe are given rights or granted privileges denied to other cultural groups.

This kind of nationalism is hardly new. It originated in the Romantic movement that swept through Germany in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and it proved particularly popular among intellectuals who wished to challenge both the cold rationality of the French Enlightenment and the harsh reality of French military and cultural domination. These thinkers conceived of German nationality as being rooted in the special genius of the German *Volk,* and they hoped to build an independent nation that would allow this genius to flourish. That opportunity came with the unification of Germany in 1871 and its subsequent rise to world power. Numerous other European peoples seeking their freedom from the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian empires quickly embraced the Romantics' argument that cultural uniqueness entitled them to nation-states of their own.

Ignatieff implies that World War II was the climactic battle between the two nationalisms. Germany and Japan, with their dreams of expansive and racially pure nation-states, stood on one side while Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union, all formally committed to one version of civic nationalism or another, mobilized on the other. Seen in this way, the crushing defeat of Germany and Japan and the political reconstructions to which they were subjected by the victorious Allies spelled the ruination of ethnic nationalism. The conquest had not been easy—more than 50 million soldiers and civilians had perished during the war—but few doubted that civic nationalism had prevailed.

This was the world Ignatieff was born into in 1947. He grew up thinking that ethnicity was on the wane and that nations committed to the principle of ethnic purity had been swept into the dustbin of history. These feel-

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ings intensified as he gravitated, in his youth, to a Left politics that characteristically underestimated the power of tribal appeals. He thought of himself as a cosmopolitan who delighted in the creative, even promiscuous, mixing of people and ideas that occurred in the world's great cities. Hence the nightmare of his present: Montreal, the city of his childhood, choking from the grip of Québecois nationalism; Britain, the land he now calls home, unable to stop the terror in Northern Ireland; Sarajevo, the exotic cosmopolitan city he visited as a boy, lying in ruins. Ignatieff has organized his book as a travelogue through six places where the claims of blood and belonging are particularly vexing: warring Serbia and Croatia, reunited Germany, newly independent Ukraine, secessionist-minded Quebec, stateless Kurdistan, and bloodied Northern Ireland. His is a courageous journey, taking him through dangerous war zones and bringing him face to face with neo-Nazis and crazed gunmen. Psychologically the trip is difficult, too, as he struggles to understand cultural forces for which he has little sympathy. He proves to be a remarkable reporter, inspecting each area he visits with rare intelligence and insight, teasing meaning out of seemingly mundane details, bringing a considerable store of historical knowledge to bear on the events he observes, respecting the complexity of situations. He never tries to hide his distaste for ethnic nationalism, or his anger, nausea, and incomprehension at some of what he observes. But he rarely allows his feelings and views to interfere with his explorations, or cloud his search for understanding. Anyone seeking a penetrating look at the world's ethnic furies would do well to start with this book.

But they will have a more difficult time discerning Ignatieff's views on why, at this moment of history, civic nationalism is in retreat and ethnic nationalism is surging. Asserting that "there is only so much that can be said about nationalism in general," Ignatieff is reluctant to assemble what he has learned from his case studies into an overarching interpretation. His reticence is regrettable, especially given his talents as a historian. Still, it is possible to use his material to suggest ways of thinking about the historical transformation we are experiencing. His examination of the roots of the Balkan crisis is the place to begin.

Ignatieff rejects two of the more popular explanations for the Balkan crisis—one that stresses the "ancient tribal hatreds" that have been convulsing this allegedly primitive region for hundreds of years; the other that demonizes the Serbs as an inexplicably cruel, vicious, and fanatical people. In fact, ethnic strife between the Croatians and Serbs only emerged in the 1920s, soon after the victorious Allies had fashioned an independent Yugoslavia from fragments of the disintegrating Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. This discord, Ignatieff argues, owed far more to Romantic notions of ethnic purity imported from Germany (and, one might add, to calls for self-determination issued by Woodrow Wilson, the West's leading civic nationalist) than to native Serbian or Croatian traditions.

The conflict mushroomed into a full-scale civil war in the 1940s, as the Croatians declared themselves independent and Serbs and others struggled to keep Yugoslavia whole. The ethnic character of that war was obscured at the time and for many years after by the alliance of new Croatian state with Nazi Germany. This allowed the Serb-dominated, pro-Yugoslav forces, led by the communist Tito (a Croatian), to depict their struggle as a war for national liberation from fascist tyranny. But just as many Serbs were placed in Croatian concentration camps (along with Jews, Gypsies, and Croatian communists) because of their "racial inferiority," so, too, many Croatians were slaughtered by Tito's partisans for reasons of political and ethnic difference.

Ethnic animosity lay buried beneath the rhetoric of "brotherhood and unity" that marked post-war Yugoslavia, reunited and communist. Although Tito did permit Yugoslavia's six major ethnic groups to express their cultural identities to some extent, he did not try to resolve the deep ethnic grievances the war had engendered, or to encourage the kind of democratic polity—free political parties, civic associations, and open political debate—that might have encouraged Yugoslav citizens to work out these issues on their own. Under the best of circumstances, Tito's formula for national unity was a fragile one. And the 1970s and 1980s were not the best of times for Yugoslavia: The nation's economy weakened, and the prestige of its ruling communist ideology declined.

At this moment, cynical communist elites looking for ways to preserve their power began playing on unresolved fears of ethnic vulnerability. One of Tito's strategies for maintaining ethnic balance had been to reduce Serb influence in Belgrade while expanding it in the provinces. When, in the 1980s, Croatians once again began to talk about independence and to raise the old flag of the fascist Croatian state of the 1940s, it was rather easy for party bosses such as Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic to arouse fears



ROBIN GAUBARD--IMPACT VISUALS

that Serbs living in Croatia would be annihilated. The different ethnic groups began pulling apart, seeking security in their *Volk* and depicting each other as mortal enemies. As Ignatieff makes clear, the resurgence of a murderous ethnic nationalism in the Balkans was rooted in unresolved issues from World War II. Amid deepening economic problems, the fall of communism, and the collapse of international order, they sprang to the fore.

Unfortunately, this type of analysis doesn't help Ignatieff much when he shifts his focus to Quebec. Although no civil war has broken out in Canada (nor is any likely to), a large number of Québecois fear that remaining in Canada will result in their cultural extinction. The Quebecers, like the Serbs and Croatians, harbor anger about past injustices; in their case, the grievances are relatively ancient, dating back to the English conquest of French Canada in 1763. And, indeed, the French were treated as second-class citizens through a two-hundred-year-long period of British and then English-Canadian rule.

But Ignatieff thinks the Québecois should stop complaining, for today they suffer none of the hardships of Croatians or Serbs. Their province is one of the most prosperous regions in North America. Their people do not live in any kind of mortal fear. Quebec's boundaries are secure and its streets are safe—safer, arguably, than anywhere in the United States. Falling within the umbrella of North American defense provided by the United States, Quebec need not worry about foreign invasion. Canada's vigorous democracy has allowed civic life to flourish in Quebec, and Quebecers have developed the political power these last thirty years to achieve a substantial degree of economic and cultural autonomy within the Canadian federation. Today, all children of French-speaking parents must attend French-language schools; no storekeeper may post an English-language sign in his or her window. Why, in these circumstances, asks Ignatieff, don't the Quebecers relax and give up their demands for independence?

The author's interview with Claude Béland, ardent nationalist and director of a $40-billion investment fund (the Complexe Desjardins) gives us a clue. Béland declares that Quebec no longer needs Canada in order to prosper. With its abundance of natural resources, its skilled work force, and the impressive success of the growing number of publicly owned companies, Quebec is more than ready to go it alone. Indeed, Béland believes independence would improve Quebec's position in the hemispheric and global economy.

Ignatieff might have pondered these comments more, for they pose a serious challenge to the rationale for the civic, or liberal, nationalism that he so admires. In the nineteenth century, the popularity of liberal nationalism depended not just on political arguments for civic equality but also on the promise of prosperity. Building a nation meant building a national economy. That entailed establishing a uniform set of laws for all economic transactions within a nation's borders, removing internal barriers to free trade, building an infrastructure of railroads, roads, and schools, and protecting domestic producers against foreign competition. The full productive energies of a people would only be released, however, if the national territory was large, the population numerous, and the resources abundant. Hence, the model nations of the nineteenth century—Britain, France, the United States, Germany, Italy, Canada—were all large political units that had brought sprawling territories and diverse groups of people under the economic regulation of a strong central government.

The great nationalist conflicts of that era were wars of unification in which the most economically advanced regions of existing or would-be nations—Prussia, northern Italy, and the northern United States—secured their control over backward but resource- and population-rich hinterlands. Following unification, economic elites worked hand in hand with central governments to accelerate national growth. As capitalist development proved to be a chaotic affair, these same governments undertook regulatory functions to stabilize their economies and to insure a minimum level of social welfare for their less fortunate citizens. Through these and other measures, large nation-states seemed to justify the faith that nineteenth-century civic nationalists had placed in them.

By 1920, Woodrow Wilson's notion that all peoples of the world, regardless of their numbers or power, possessed the right to national self-determination challenged these nineteenth-century notions. But it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that the case for large nation-states lost its invincibility. Huge, multinational corporations and banks began shedding their national loyalties and their alliances with particular national governments. The rapid flows of cash, stocks, and goods across national boundaries increasingly exceeded the regulatory reach of even the strongest governments. As a consequence, these governments lost much of their ability to control business cycles, maintain full employment, and distribute adequate levels of social welfare. The failure of Western European governments to reduce chronically high levels of unemployment is a prime example of declining state power.

In these circumstances, the prestige of the large nation-states began to erode while that of other kinds of states increased. City-states such as Singapore and Hong Kong have been able to achieve affluence by their clever positioning in the world economy, and the would-be "province-states" of Quebec, northern Italy, and Catalonia seem poised to follow their example. Both city- and province-states can be described as smaller, more homogeneous political units whose very size and cultural cohesion seem to increase their economic flexibility and adaptability—prerequisites for success in a highly competitive and rapidly changing global economy. From this perspective, tiny Israel, where enthusiasm for stock exchanges, international trade, and consumerism appears to have overwhelmed older socialist commitments, may well be a prototype of this new kind of nation, especially as the unfolding Middle-Eastern peace process allows it to become a full-fledged player in the global marketplace. These historic developments help us to understand Claude Béland's confidence in his own Quebec.

One other feature of the large nation-states, especially of the ones most committed to civic nationalism, may also be contributing to their relative decline. In their formative years, they were intent on increasing their territorial reach and population size; so each brought into the nation a variety of cultural groups. Civic nationalists responded to this expansion not simply, as Ignatieff suggests, by welcom-

ing members of all the diverse populations into the democratic polity and granting them equal rights. Civic nationalists have always identified certain types of residents as unprepared for the rights and duties of citizenship. The latter had to earn their rights, and that often meant discarding their old, inherited traditions and embracing the new patriotic identity offered by the republic. Peasants would be turned into Frenchmen, Welsh into British, immigrants into Americans, Serbs and Croatians into Yugoslavs, and Ukrainians, Georgians, and Latvians into Soviet citizens.

Civic nationalists did not view this transformation in punitive terms; to the contrary, they imbedded discussion of it in a narrative of emancipation. Through the process of transformation, the civic nationalists argued, individuals would free themselves from superstition, from habits of submission to improperly constituted authority (monarchical, religious, capitalist), from poverty, and from powerlessness. They would gain rationality, independence, economic opportunity, and political sovereignty. This was the revolutionary promise of the French and American revolutions, a promise powerfully reiterated by the Russian Revolution in 1917.



LOREN SANTOW-- IMPACT VISUALS

From the late eighteenth until the mid-twentieth century, this dream of emancipation through transformation was as strong as any in the world. And, then, first in the communist nations of Eastern Europe, later in the capitalist societies of the West, and finally in the decolonized societies of Africa and Asia, it began to lose its appeal. The eclipse is a phenomenon about which we still know too little. The diminished ability of the nation-state to insure national prosperity and social welfare contributed to the waning, as did the failure to realize the promise of emancipation itself.

In the Soviet Union and its Eastern bloc allies, the new citizenship brought nothing but counterfeit rights. In the United States, the slow, torturous process through which equal rights were extended to African Americans compromised the civic nationalist ideal in the minds of many Americans, Black and white. In Britain and France, the ideal corroded during the long period in which Europeans all but ignored the inconsistency between the practice of civic nationalism at home and the imposition of imperialist nationalism abroad. But only during the ideologically intense era of the Cold War—at a moment when many viewed the world in Manichaean terms—did the contradictions in the civic nationalist dream begin to seem intolerable; only then, in the 1960s, did they become the subjects of mass protest and denunciation.

Growing numbers of individuals on both the Left and Right began to question the entire project of civic nationalism. They began to wonder whether a civic identity alone, even in a society that had rid itself of the contradictions noted above, was enough to sustain a quest for individual meaning and satisfaction. They began to look with renewed interest at older religious, ethnic, and cultural traditions and to ask why the adoption of a civic identity demanded that they be jettisoned.

This search has intensified since the collapse of communism. The rapidity with which it fell has raised doubts about all creeds—liberal and radical—that preached emancipation through civic transformation. Communism's debacle may well mark the end of a 200-year period in which this belief dominated world politics. In its place has emerged a "politics of restoration," a politics committed to rehabilitating ancient attachments, religions, and traditions. Ignatieff encountered this politics at every stop along his journey.

A good deal of this new regard for tradition is healthy. TIKKUN, after all, is an expression of dissatisfaction with the excessive assimilation, impoverished civic life, and hollowed-out religious practices that dominated large stretches of the American Jewish community of the 1950s and 1960s. Multiculturalism, at its best, seeks to develop a more balanced relationship between ethnic particularism and national identity than what prevailed during the heyday of civic nationalism.

But in places where people lack the most elemental forms of personal and economic security, where the state cannot govern, where the practice of democracy has not taken root, the politics of restoration can have murderous consequences. Ignatieff saw a great deal of violence triggered by this kind of politics, and it prompted him to end his sobering book with a lamentation: "I began the journey as a liberal, and I end as one, but I cannot help thinking that liberal civilization—the rule of laws, not men, of argument in the place of force, of compromise in place of violence—runs deeply against the human grain and is achieved and sustained only by the most unremitting struggle against human nature." In an age in which every day seems to bring news of yet another outbreak of inter-ethnic violence, it is easy to understand his pessimism. □

BOOK REVIEW

Freedom's Not Enough

David L. Kirp

School Choice: The Struggle for the Soul of American Education by Peter W. Cookson, Jr. Yale University Press, 1994. 174 pp., $20.
Miracle in East Harlem: The Fight for Choice in Public Education by Seymour Fliegel with James MacGuire. Times Books, 1993. 243 pp., $23.
Rethinking School Choice: Limits of the Market Metaphor by Jeffrey R. Henig. Princeton University Press, 1994. 277 pp., $24.95.
Time to Choose: America at the Crossroads of School Choice Policy by Amy Stuart Wells. Hill and Wang, 1993. 225 pp., $25.

In Bay Shore, forty miles east of New York City, where I went to school in the 1950s and early '60s, Fourth Avenue Elementary was acknowledged as the best. The teachers weren't the reason. They had been installed about the same time the cornerstone was laid, at the end of the last century, and each classroom was presided over by a Miss, or occasionally Mrs., So-and-So, dowagers with surnames like Sears or Page or Kelly whose given names were never said aloud.

The curriculum at Fourth Avenue had changed little since our parents' schooldays—since the days of McGuffey's Readers, really. There were multiplication and division tables, spelling bees, penmanship drills, compositions about beloved pets and summertime fun, accounts of how the Indians of New York State welcomed the white settlers. There was an annual class mural ("Beneath the Ocean" was our project) and a pageant where we chorused "By the Beautiful Sea." As a treat, Miss Kelly would repeatedly describe her one great adventure, sailing the Panama Canal. No one ever took us outside to show us the Little Dipper or had us raise a hamster or encouraged us to read stuff that wasn't pabulum.

Things weren't so different, pedagogically speaking, at the other local grade schools. Yet the graduates of Fourth Avenue—children who came from families with all the advantages, who lived in big houses invisible behind tall hedges in lily-white neighborhoods—became the brightest stars in the high school firmament. We dominated the honor roll, ran the student government and the school paper, then went away to college and a prosperous life. The banalities of our sixth-grade graduation song came true: "We're from Fourth Avenue, best school in the land; we're firmly marching to the top where firmly we shall stand." Meanwhile, most of the wrong-side-of-the-tracks kids who went elsewhere became housewives and mothers, fishermen or salesmen, cops and robbers.

This much sociology about power elites was intuitively understood—indeed, it explains why Fourth Avenue was so highly regarded. Families living outside the school's attendance boundaries produced fake addresses, threatened and pleaded to get their children in, mostly to no avail. In that era—and not just in my hometown but in cities and suburbs everywhere—one's address, with all the status that attached to it, was destiny. The idea that people should have a choice among schools was simply unheard of. If pressed, a school official might have explained how Fourth Avenue Elementary was part of a system of common public schools, not recognizing that the common school of American myth had long since disappeared from the social landscape.

Now, as this recent spate of books attests, the idea of school choice is everywhere. Seymour Fliegel's *Miracle in East Harlem* chronicles a wrecked New York City district which, as an administrator, he had a hand in turning around. It is a paean to choice which is best read, like most other books with "miracle" in the title, as an inspirational rather than substantive text. The other accounts—Peter Cookson's *School Choice*, Amy Wells's *Time to Choose,* and, most elegantly and instructively, Jeffrey Henig's *Rethinking School Choice*—all critique a national movement that is as nebulous as it is ubiquitous.

No pedagogue ever dreamed up school choice; it is a concept that comes straight from the pages of political economy. From John Stuart Mill's nineteenth-century lambasting of state-run schools in *On Liberty,* through Milton Friedman's voucher proposal floated in *Capitalism and Freedom* (1964) to John Chubb and Terry Moe's ballyhooed 1990 book *Politics, Markets and America's Schools*, choice has been the brainstorm of political and economic theorists who couldn't tell Montessori from Mantovani. The advocacy isn't based on a conception of how teaching and learning happen but on a faith in how the market is supposed to work. The images that advocates of choice conjure are telling: They insist that families deserve as much say over the schools their children attend as over the car they drive or the deodorant they spritz.

One nice thing about political economists is that they are usually pretty harmless. The educational nostrums of Milton Friedman, for instance, went precisely nowhere when his essay was first published. Then, the emphasis of policy was on boosting equity across race and social class lines—on turning all those Fourth Avenue elementary schools into genuine common schools. But as *Rethinking School Choice* and *School Choice* both show, political economy offered a rationale that was useful to others, better situated politically, who appeared with their own agendas. Beginning in the early 1970s, a decid-

David L. Kirp, professor of public policy at the University of California-Berkeley, has written a number of books about educational policy, including Learning by Heart: AIDS and Schoolchildren in America's Communities; Just Schools: The Idea of Racial Equality in American Education; Managing Educational Excellence; *and* Educational Policy and the Law.

edly odd pro-choice coalition came together. On the Left were the free-schoolers who inveighed against any kind of compulsion as coerced belief, who saw choice as a way of promoting home instruction or little Summerhills. A smattering of liberals such as policy intellectual Christopher Jencks, disillusioned by hyper-bureaucratized public school systems, embraced choice as the royal road to equity. Those who favored religious education, mainly Catholics and evangelical Christians, saw choice as a way to subsidize sectarianism. Books and articles fairly flew from typewriters; conferences were held; the federal government was pressed into action, funding an experiment with choice in the California school district of Alum Rock—but still nothing much happened.

Only when opinion polls started registering unhappiness with public education—as excellence became the buzzword, supplanting equity—did choice really take off. Presidents Reagan and Bush blessed it, and substantial federal dollars flowed. More academics joined the fray, notably political scientists Chubb and Moe, who deployed controversial statistical techniques to "prove" that bureaucracy and politics stifle educational potential and that school choice is truly a "panacea." School districts started to build options into student integration plans: It seemed wiser to increase racial mixing through open enrollment or magnet schools, rather than insisting on endless bus rides. During the 1980s, Massachusetts, Milwaukee, and Minnesota (among other places) started experimenting with variations on this theme.

In 1992, Californians were asked to vote on a statewide school choice system; had it passed, it would have entirely rewritten the text for public education. Had the voucherites been more modest in their ambitions, they might have carried the day. But the initiative they crafted was as hard-core as these schemes get. Students could use their vouchers at any school, public or private, and private education remained essentially unregulated; schools had almost absolute authority over whom to admit and whom to kick out; there were no "truth in advertising" rules to help parents decide; families already sending their children to private schools got a windfall, but nothing was done to help poor families or handicapped children.

Still, the initiative might have passed but for the timely emergence of a witches' coven (this is California) which pledged to start its own schools with voucher dollars. Nothing in the law would have stopped such kinder-covens—or KKK schools or Louis Farrakhan schools—from collecting state aid. And that prospect proved too much for California voters, who decisively turned down the measure. But this is not the end of the story—in 1996, there will be at least one voucher proposal on the California state ballot. The idea of school choice shows no signs of going away, which is why these books are so timely.

Policy wonks regularly dream of tidily "solving" America's education problems; the history of schooling is littered with the whitening bones of such solutions. In designing a public school system, the deepest choices are really about what being American means, and so invite ceaseless wrangling.

In thinking about what's to be done, choice itself is so broad a term as to be nearly meaningless—a substitution of rhetoric for analysis. To the question, Do you favor the idea of school choice, the answer has to depend on what kind of choice is on offer. A plan that opened up my alma mater, Bay Shore's Fourth Avenue Elementary School, to all comers would have been a step forward, while more creative pedagogical approaches in each of the town's public schools would have been better still.

A great many school districts have expanded options in this way. In places such as East Harlem—a district where, as Seymour Fliegel notes in *Miracle in East Harlem*, students' academic performance was so awful that almost anything was worth trying— charismatic dreamers were set loose to translate their dreams into workaday schools. It was in East Harlem that Deborah Meier—a veteran of the public school wars with specific views about how to update John Dewey's communitarian vision of education through think-work rather than true-false tests—was invited to design her own academy. Elsewhere in the country, as in Minnesota, legislation has been passed that allows students to enroll outside the school district where they live and to take college classes while still in high school.

Every plan for public-school choice presents a thicket of questions. Must an over-subscribed school draw lots among applicants, as happens in Los Angeles's magnet schools—or can it pick and choose, as in East Harlem, preferring local residents or those with the best academic records? Can a school set its own qualifications, or can the would-be dancer with two left feet get into the performing arts school?

The divide is deeper still between such public-schools-only choice schemes and plans that include private schools as well. Milwaukee now allows such choices, at least for the poorest children, and Jersey City, New Jersey proposes to follow. Supporters contend that every child deserves a shot at the best private schools, the Andovers and Choates of the country, but that's fatuous. Nearly nine out of ten nonpublic schools are church-run, and that has to raise constitutional concerns in a nation that frets over thirty seconds of silent meditation in public schools. Other private schools are rigidly doctrinaire, no-dissenters-allowed places, while still others, like one in Milwaukee that folded in mid-term, are fly-by-night outfits.

The very fact that these schools are private means they owe their allegiance to the concerns of the marketplace, not the common weal. "The risk," as Jeffrey Henig points out in *Rethinking School Choice*, is that "the market rationale...will undermine the social and political institutions that are prerequisites to achieving genuine reform. Granting individuals greater choice to pursue their interests does

not automatically establish a course toward social betterment through the benign mechanism of an invisible hand."

But even a skeptic like Henig reserves a place for choice. He proposes deploying it as a "safety valve" for students who aren't making it in their assigned schools—a proposal that seems heedless of the resentment it would arouse among those who are barely surviving in mediocre schools, whose "reward" would be the status quo. Peter Cookson's more sweeping plan in *School Choice* (similar to one first floated two decades ago by Theodore Sizer, then dean of Harvard's Education School) would deliver vouchers—"educational shares," Cookson calls them—to all children. These vouchers could be used either in public schools or in state-regulated experimental schools. To promote equity, poor children would get bigger shares than children from well-off families.

Policy wonks regularly dream of tidily "solving" America's education problems; the history of schooling is littered with the whitening bones of such solutions. But the answer doesn't lie in the return to some golden age of education, which a generation of social historians has shown never really existed. Nor is there an answer to be found in a single best system of education—a choice-driven system honoring family sovereignty, or a system remade "systemically," from the top down, as presently favored by leading lights in the U.S. Department of Education.

Our collective expectations, our hopes for schools, are both too high and too varied for any particular vision to satisfy them. The progressive dream is for public academies that are nonracist, nonsexist, and nonhomophobic places, institutions that attend to differentness while not inviting difference to descend into factionalism, cheerful and loving family-like environments as well as havens of academic excellence whose graduates, *mirabile dictu,* will swell the subscription rolls of magazines like TIKKUN. Other groups harbor other hopes; some, notably Jewish and Christian fundamentalists, have had some success translating their own sectarian vision of the good society into state-supported school systems. But this only makes the rest of us nervous.

In designing any public school system, the deepest choices are really about what being American means, and so invite ceaseless wrangling. If public schools are made more uniform, nervous middle-class families will seek out private havens for their children (no one is talking about one approach to egalitarianism: amending the Constitution to require that all families send their children to public schools). But if the mantra of education policy becomes "variation, options, diversity," the predictable result will be schools whose course offerings resemble shopping malls for learning. Another and not accidental result of promoting diversity is the replication of social class differences.

Sixty years ago, a University of Chicago sociologist named George Counts caused a stir with a book titled, *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* Now, dozens of failed attempts later, we know the answer: Schools won't basically change things because they can't. The right question would reverse the subject and object in Counts's title.

The virtue of any effort to increase choice has far less to do with quick fixes, much more to do with what Amy Wells, in *Time to Choose*, describes as the "psychology of choice" and the "therapy of involvement." It's only logical that parents and their children will develop a greater stake in the educational enterprise if they have a real say. A school that is selected, not inflicted, becomes one's own, which is probably why evaluations of choice plans show that the fact of having options among schools, although having no clear impact on achievement, does boost enthusiasm among the participants.

The past decade has seen more words, both silly and profound, spilled about education than at any time in the nation's history, and this particular talk show evinces no signs of ending. The enduring tensions—whether they are phrased in terms of liberty and community, equality and individual accomplishment, parochialism and universal norms—will keep being played out in arguments about curriculum and standardized tests, uniform achievement standards, and local autonomy. Those discussions bolster our civic capacity, which is why all this chatter matters so much more than the fate of the educational panacea du jour. □

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BOOK REVIEW

Home, Before Dark

Lawrence L. Langer

Stories of an Imaginary Childhood by Melvin Jules Bukiet. Northwestern University Press, 197 pp., $12.95.



KEN AKIVA SEGAN

With this collection of stories, the author's first book, Melvin Bukiet makes an important contribution to imaginative literature. The stories achieve what all authentic outstanding fiction must achieve—a distinct and original voice. It emerges from the world the author imagines and remains faithful to that world and the characters who dwell there. Clearly, Sholom Aleichem was among the author's literary models, though Tevye's adult point of view and particular family concerns are totally distinct from the tensions plaguing Bukiet's adolescent narrator.

Bukiet has a vivid vision of Jewish life in Eastern Europe before the German onslaught, and he celebrates it with an enthusiasm that is all the more compelling because of our knowledge of how abruptly it ended. From the opening line of the first story, "Virtuoso"—"Show me a Jewish home without a prodigy and I'll show you an orphanage"—to the consoling words of the narrator's father near the end of the last story, "Torquemada"—"There, there. What harm could possibly come to us in 1928?"—he weaves humor and irony into such a delightful blend that the reader's sense of impending doom is lulled into a slumbering nonchalance. Only the mention of a date at the close of the narrative rouses a sudden cause for alarm, though the wary reader may have detected other dim signals along the way.

In recreating part of the vanished world of European Jewry, Bukiet avoids the temptation to sentimentalize, moralize, or melodramatize his tales—lapses a less gifted writer might have had difficulty avoiding. His mythical village of Proszowice teems with provincial characters whose antics will charm the nostalgic fancy of students of shtetl life. We have vibrant portraits of the village music teacher, charged with igniting the hibernating talent of a drowsing Heifetz or Menuhin; of the local millionaire, whose penchant for discarding old wives and acquiring new ones is as dubious as the sources of his wealth; of the generously endowed town whore, whose contempt for the hypocrisy of her fellow Jewish clients is partly redeemed by her unwitting contribution to the youthful narrator's initiation into the mysteries of sex and childbirth; of the melancholy Zalman the gravedigger, who postpones his life in expectation of a promised special destiny that never arrives—and of numerous others. The narrator feels a link with them all, since, like so many of them, he longs for a liberating experience beyond the confining frontiers of Proszowice's Orthodox Jewish community. When he exchanges his protective bed quilt for the battered bicycle of a boy from a wandering gypsy tribe, his gesture simultaneously breaks the domestic shackle and unites him with an exotic tradition.

There is a dimension to these stories that every reader may not grasp instantly, but it adds an intense dramatic level. As a member of the post-Holocaust generation, I was unable to banish from consciousness the sense that I was reading about a doomed people (which in no way curtails the admirable vitality of Bukiet's characters). In a very subtle way, Bukiet builds this complicated response into his fiction.

We cannot help thinking about Pros-

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Lawrence L. Langer is author, most recently, of Art from the Ashes: A Holocaust Anthology *and* Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays *(Oxford University Press). His book,* Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory, *won the 1991 National Critics Book Circle Award for criticism.*

BOOK REVIEW

Volunteers

Burton L. Visotzky

Love and Joy: Law, Language and Religion in Ancient Israel, by Yochanan Muffs. Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992 240 pp., $30.

God is becoming fashionable again. For a long time after the Holocaust, rumors of God's death abounded. Later, God was acknowledged to be alive, but, alas, ailing. God's power was reported to be on the wane—a theodicy that helped explicate both the Holocaust and personal tragedies, but which wreaked havoc with traditional theology. Of late, God is apparently making a comeback. Synagogues, churches, and mosques seem to sprout up overnight. Fundamentalism thrives. Even in skeptical intellectual enclaves like Manhattan's Upper West Side, discussion of God is as common and as varied as lettuces at Fairway.

Despite all this popularity, the nature of individual relationships with God remains troubling. Like a productive hour on the shrink's couch, God experience is all about mediating relationships. Is God overbearing? Is there room for growth in the relationship? Is God Father? Mother? Does the patriarchal God of Sigmund Freud even surface on the screen of computer-age theology? Can a thinking person willingly enter into a God relationship? Just how fulfilling can such a relationship be when one of the partners seems to be a consistent no-show whether the dates are scheduled for Friday, Saturday, or Sunday? God never writes, never calls, never faxes; we just sit here in the dark like the punchline to a bad joke. But week after week, we lay on the couch, sit in the pews, daven, kvetch, study, talk, e-mail, and even fax about God, God, God.

Thus, two of the central postmodern theological concerns focus on the nature of a relationship with God and our willingness to be in that relationship. Yet these preoccupations are hardly unique to our era. In fact, careful reading of the central transcript, the Bible—the canonical record of the relationship, with all its bitching, fighting, threats of divorce, soothing words, and love talk— reminds us that how we talk with God and our willingness to have any conversation helps us define and redefine our relationship.

Yochanan Muffs, professor of philosophy of religion and Bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary, cares passionately about our relationship with God. Muffs scrutinizes the Bible and its contemporary documents for clues about the original settings of those encounters with God that formed the impetus for this literature. Further, he augments his study of the Bible in its historical context with the insights of rabbis throughout the ages, examining why and how the rabbis of old read the ongoing dialogue with God. Muffs employs his vast erudition, utilizing the gems of rabbinic midrash as foils to explicate the Bible. On a third level, Muffs engages both reader and Creator in an ongoing dialogue. His careful studies of "Law, Language and Religion in Ancient Israel" lead his readers not only to new insights about biblical (and even rabbinic) texts, but to reexamination and evaluation of our personal relationship with God.

Since Muff's project seems encyclopedic in scope for a single volume, it's worth noting that these studies are well anchored in the twin disciplines of Semitics and Rabbinics. This means that lay readers will stretch a bit, but since Muffs is a consummate teacher, the stretch is painlessly accomplished and always worth the effort. The opening study of the book—a lengthy essay on prophetic intercession—cloaks a passionate inquiry on the nature of our relationship with God in the garment of biblical scholarship. Like all good biblical scholarship, this essay is great theology.

When Muffs writes, "The essential nature of prophecy is the turning of God from His eternal silence to establish a creative relationship, a permanent conversation with Israel. And if, because of the indifference of Israel, the divine pathos turns into disappointment...if there is no balance in the divine emotion...then the world is placed in great danger," readers are able to see how much is at stake. Muffs takes God seriously and struggles to define and redefine the relationship. In so doing, he provides the reader with a model for such an encounter.

There remains, however, the question of how to be in the relationship. Are we there happily? Do we feel forced? Commanded? Some recent theology (as well as much ancient writing) makes the relationship with God sound unbalanced. Of course, considering that we are contemplating a relationship between the Creator of the Universe and a mere creature, perhaps the imbalance is inevitable. Yet Muffs presents an alternative to the dilemma of a relationship with God based on fear. Despite what the fundamentalist Right suggests, Muffs demonstrates that not only we moderns, but the biblical ancients as well, could conceive of a relationship which the human partners entered of their own volition. People then and now, he explains, can serve God not out of fear, but in love and joy.

In "Love and Joy as Metaphors of Willingness and Spontaneity," Muffs traces the imagery ancient Hebrew, cuneiform, and related literatures used to denote contractual volition in convenantal relationships with the divine. The human partners were part of the covenant of their own free will. They gave freely. It is precisely the mutual aspect of volition that breeds the love and joy in the relationship.

This is an important counterbalance to much right-wing theology, in which the covenant with God is not a matter of choice—being in a relationship with God is routinely called

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Burton L. Visotzky is the author of Reading the Book: Making the Bible a Timeless Text *(Anchor/Doubleday, 1991).*

BOOK REVIEW

In Country

Jeffrey Green

Israeli Preoccupation: Dualities of a Confessional Citizen, by Haim Chertok. Fordham University Press 1994. $25.00, cloth; 16.95, paper.



HALLY PANCER

American Jews regard Israel primarily as a place to have ideas about. The simple truth—that Israel is not an abstract idea but a concrete country, governed by the political instrumentalities of a state and inhabited by a largely Jewish society—should not be very startling. Yet many people who claim to care deeply about Israel and being Jewish have failed to assimilate it. Haim Chertok presents Israel as a real place, arguably the only place where a Jewish person can live an authentic Jewish life, which is why he and his family moved there.

In Israel, the Chertoks and several million other Jews (including my family and me) constantly submit their ideas about Judaism to concrete, experiential tests. The daily facts of Israeli existence—taking the bus from Beersheba to Jerusalem via Hebron, attending a kid's elementary school graduation, shopping in the neighborhood grocery store, following the progress of recent immigrants from Russia as they find work and acclimate—provide the stuff of *Israeli Preoccupations*, as Chertok meditates wryly on their always ambivalent meaning for him as a committed Jew.

As Chertok attests, the longer we former American Jews live in Israel, the harder it is for us to communicate about what touches us most deeply with even the best-meaning of our fellow Jews who have chosen to remain in the Diaspora. We feel that life here offers us a potential for Jewish fulfillment otherwise available only to deeply committed Jews living together as a faith community—the ultra-Orthodox. But our American-Jewish relatives, friends, and visitors don't make contact with that feeling of ours, not even to argue against it. They seem unable to project themselves imaginatively into the experience of life in Israel.

Like Haim Chertok, over the more than twenty years that I have lived in Israel, I have found it increasingly difficult to talk meaningfully with Jews from abroad who have lots of opinions about Israel, the way they have opinions about health care and the homeless in the United States. While they encounter the homeless every day on their city streets, however, they will incur no personal risk if Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories fulfills the expectations of the pessimists and terrorism increases. I, however, live on the border between Jewish Jerusalem and Arab Jerusalem. The issue is not academic for me.

Ironically, the most responsive and interested visitors I entertain are non-Jewish, people such as my former college roommate and his family, German Americans of Protestant background, who spent a week with us and immediately grasped what life in this country can mean for a Jew. Or the Lebanese-American college student who ate in our Sukkah this year. She came here with the Great Lakes College Consortium because her mother is a Palestinian refugee, and she wanted to get direct insight into the conflict that had ripped her family apart. I could talk with her about why a Jew wants to live in Israel, just as I can talk with other Palestinians for whom the conflict is real and painful, not merely a moral dilemma. But most of my American-Jewish visitors don't seem to want to know what life here means for me and my family.

I remember spending a few weeks in the United States in the summer of 1982 after serving for almost two months with an artillery unit during the war in Lebanon. I had been called out of my home in the middle of the night, sent into Lebanon on the second day of the war, completely cut off from my family for more than a month—and none of my Jewish friends or relatives asked me what it was like, what I had seen, what I had done, or how I felt about it. Nor did anyone ask my wife how she had borne the worry and uncertainty, the loneliness and responsibility. No one wanted to acknowledge that Jews who live in Israel have experiences of a different order from their own, sometimes extremely trying and difficult experiences, in an actual place.

So we former American Jews adopt one strategy or another to deal with the huge gulf that separates us from the still-American Jews, who don't know Hebrew, don't know

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Jeffrey Green is a writer and translator who has lived in Israel since 1973. He has translated fiction by Aharon Appelfeld and other Hebrew authors.

much about Judaism, don't understand the ethnic and social tensions between Jews here, aren't sure who's in the government and who's in the opposition, and who don't even seem to realize that they're not communicating with us. Generally I manage to conceal the anger that I feel because most of the American Jews whom I meet ignore and deny some of my deepest feelings about life, those which are related to my choice to live in Israel and to the Jewish quality of my life here.

Haim Chertok expresses some of those feelings. He also made the decision to live in Israel, where the Jewish people have again become a contender in the arena of history, and he takes his Jewish commitment seriously, documenting the experiences of a former American Jew in his particular corner of Israel: Yeroham, a Negev development town. His tone is not self-congratulatory, nor does he paint life in Israel in rosy hues. He has found that the choice to live here creates as many problems as it solves, but at least they are his own problems. He is blunt and occasionally cranky, deeply critical of what he sees—but he knows where he stands as a Jew. □

A Political Analyst

(Continued from p. 67)

that Samuels covers exhaustively, Samuels does not fall into the trap of assuming a set of qualities and values that constitute "Italian-ness," a fixed "content" of psychic reality that overdetermines everything else about the person. Rather, Samuels sees the Italian, national text as one whose meaning can only be read as the patient's capacity for political reflection emerges.

Political identity is usually discovered through forms of conversation, of which psychoanalysis is one. It is not enough to be conversant with the political givens of our situation (the realities of our share of power and of powerlessness); we need also to be placed in conversation with others who are just as concerned and caught up with these issues. In the dialogue that fosters the political psyche, empathy for the person's subjective experience of a political problem is as important as objective understanding of the dynamics of the issue. The importance of empathy, or "mirroring," has long been recognized in psychotherapy, but it has too often been considered unpsychological for the analyst to react with open concern for the objective situation, which the analyst may actually also share.

Political agency comes into being when we recognize that the physical and economic circumstances that define our social reality are shared by other people. The development of political consciousness belongs to the psyche's most characteristic activity, its search for integrity. Understood psychologically, integrity means not only protection from the intrusion of others, but also realization of one's responsibility to others.

Psychotherapy, which lives in the dialectic between Self and Other, has too often in its theorizing emphasized selves at the expense of others, thereby starving one of the psyche's deepest needs, which is to discharge our obligation to the whole of which we are inevitably only a part. Recognizing this need of the soul is inevitably political, because it means taking the Other at least as seriously as the Self. Samuels's image of a political soul challenges the imbalance of power between the self and other that has plagued our psychological practice. And his bracing vision of the possibilities of their dialogue has the potential to give to politically-minded people a new confidence in the psychological as a way to political consciousness. □

VOLUNTEERS

(Continued from p. 76)

"the yoke of the commandments." Despite this distressing image, conservative theologians can nevertheless speak of "the joy of the commandments."

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HOME, BEFORE DARK

(Continued from p. 75)

zowice as one of the hundreds of East European shtetls whose populations disappeared forever during World War II. In the hands of a more romantic writer, the story of the cemetery caretaker who invites his own death by lying in his coffin might seem like a sample of diluted Poe. But here it has a frightening resonance, especially when the caretaker admits that fate must have some other destiny awaiting him. This muted glimpse of a ruinous doom is handled throughout with delicate restraint. The fire ("annihilation" is the author's barbed term for it) that consumes the Proszowice greenhouse in the penultimate story, "Nurseries," spreads ashes over the landscape, forecasting a far more fatal future.

In Bukiet's narrative, most disasters retain their comic overtones, with only sporadic hints of anti-Semitism to remind us of the threats from the surrounding Christian population. The one exception is the final story, "Torquemada," where in a nightmarish bout with delirium the naive narrator exchanges his persona and assumes the identity of one of the most fervent foes of the Jews before the advent of Hitler, the Spanish Inquisition's Grand Inquisitor. He then internalizes the history of Jewish oppression by assuming the guises of Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, and Haman. Neither parents nor doctor nor rabbi can exorcise the spirit that has seized his soul and led him to announce that he knows in his blood that he must kill Jews.

In this potent narrative, the narrator's adolescent yearning for release from the rules of family and tradition explodes into a subterranean hostility toward his defining (and confining?) Judaism itself. He is finally purged of his dybbuk by a confrontation with the Christian schoolmate who had apparently triggered his condition with the insult that the narrator and his coreligionists have perennially faced: "I called him a dirty Jew." Asked by the narrator why he hated Jews, he had replied "because you hate yourselves."

Perhaps freed by hearing this absurd and feeble charge once more, perhaps because his ordeal has pushed him to the point of exhaustion, the narrator bursts into tears, and a "torrential flow of Jewish lamentation" returns him to himself, his family, and his people. At the close of the volume, his father's reassuring reply rings with a sinister irony: "We have each other and it's the twentieth century of civilized man. There, there. What harm could come to us in 1928?" The reader knows how futile and unconsoling lamentation will be the next time Torquemada's successor rises above the Jewish horizon a few years hence.

Loss and renewal thus contend in these tales to draw us into a milieu that continues to appeal to the imagination even though (or because) it no longer exists in time. A legacy of life rivals the memory of death as the reader is forced to conspire with the narrative to mine its treasures and find value in a way of being that can never again be anything but stories of an imaginary childhood. □

Naming the Angel

I have wrestled with the angel of failure.
Was he sent by my brother from across the river?
I say, "Tell me your name?"
The names I have learned were loud in my ear
when we forded Jabbock. Maybe nothing moves down
the ladder but what we ask for, if in greed
then greed, if in anger, then horned anger
gores our nights. Nothing walks down the ladder
but what we dream on the hard rock.
Whether the stars will come out tonight or cold stones
from cold sockets depends on where I lay my head.
"Tell me your name." "I can't tell you.
I have a new name each time I am sent.
My name is your desire meeting me. You have sent
your family ahead of you, and your tribe of goats and camels
to meet me alone. My name is Alone and you have stopped
all night to defeat me Alone. But your brother
waits for you on the other side of Jabbock.
Lonely, you have made yourself Alone."

Rodger Kamenetz

LETTERS

(Continued from p. 6)

response to letters (September/October 1994) that "every community has a right to promote its values, especially those tied to its continuity." Is he kidding? Every community has this right? What about the American South, which fought a civil war to promote its values, including slavery? What about Nazi Germany? How dare he say such a thing!

Communities have the right to promote their values only if, and to the extent that, such values are worthy of preservation. Slavery and racial purity are not such values, and communities that embrace such values must either abandon them or risk the moral condemnation of humanity.

The letters to which Kimelman replies, with their expression of pain—the pain of rejection from a hostile society that too often denies people the possibility of genuine love—present the moral imperative to which Judaism must respond positively. Whether the Jewish tradition deserves to survive depends on its strength to change its institutions so as not to exclude those who genuinely aspire to its highest values. Kimelman should be ashamed.

David F. Willner
Upper Montclair, New Jersey

To the Editor:

I find it difficult even to begin to grapple with the offensive quality of Reuven Kimelman's "Homosexuality and Family-Centered Judaism" (July/August 1994).

One can make a legitimate case for the centrality of the family in classical Jewish thinking without condemning Jews who choose not to or simply cannot adopt that model for themselves. To identify those Jews with pedophiles, adulterers, and kleptomaniacs hardly serves to create the "common ground" that Kimelman says he wishes to do.

Apart from one brief sentence, Kimelman chooses to ignore those Jews who would love to find a spouse but cannot; the infertile couples within our midst; or the fertile couples who, for medical, psychological, economic or other reasons make a considered decision, on moral grounds, not to have children. Surely the search for a "common ground" should also create a framework within which these Jews can be understood and their issues addressed.

But what is most troublesome, to me at least, is the simplistic way in which Kimelman uses texts from the classical tradition. Surely a scholar who has been trained in the historical/critical approach to texts would be expected to understand that simply because a text is "there," its normative quality is not necessarily self-evident. To quote a statement to the effect that the *Shekhina* dwells only with a couple that has children, or that a man without a wife lacks blessing, and then to use these texts as prescribing normative Jewish behavior today, without attending to the historical context in which these texts were composed, or without addressing the theological issue of the authority such texts are to have on us today, betrays a scholarly naiveté that is astonishing in a scholar of Kimelman's training and stature.

One can always consult a rabbinic anthology and find a dictum to support a position one wants to maintain. The responsible scholar, however, will understand that just because a rabbi is quoted as having made a statement does not necessarily mean that it is "true," or the final word, or even valuable as a guide to decision-making today. We do know more about some areas of human experience than our ancestors did. To ignore this is not only to demean some fellow Jews, but even more tragically, to demean the tradition in their eyes. Which responsible teacher would want to do that?

Neil Gillman
Jewish Theological Seminary
New York, New York

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DEBATE

The Bible and Democracy

A Response to Richard Landes

Bennett Muraskin

In his article, "Justice, Work, Study, and Protest: The Biblical Contributions to Modern Democracy," (TIKKUN, July/August 1993), Richard Landes proves the old adage that the Bible can be used to support any argument, no matter how far-fetched.

The Bible's basic story is that of a God who metes out rewards and punishments to his chosen people based on their fidelity to his arbitrary decrees. Do these Bible Jews exercise any semblance of self-government? No. Are they guaranteed any civil rights? No. Are they free to express different points of view and organize opposition political or religious movements? No. So what does all this have to do with democracy?

According to Landes, the Bible fosters four values which underlay democracy and undermine authoritarian forms of government: equality before the law, literacy, freedom of speech, and an appreciation of manual labor. Equality before the law can be a democratic concept only if the people who are obliged to obey the laws have a role in their formation. Obviously this is not the case in the Bible. The laws were made by God, not men, and were enforced by a hereditary priesthood. It is true that some of the laws reflect important moral principles, but honoring one's parents, not killing, stealing, or lying, and dealing fairly with one's neighbors are principles that can and do exist in undemocratic societies. They also must be considered alongside clearly undemocratic injunctions such as those against worshiping other gods, taking the name of the Lord in vain, breaking the Sabbath, cursing a country's ruler, homosexuality, and female equality. Moreover, the penalties for breaking these laws are harsh and barbaric. Landes's attempt to interpret the phrase "an eye for an eye" to imply equal justice under the law is a distortion, because in Leviticus it means literal disfigurement.

As for King David, it is true that he was punished for stealing Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, but what punishment did he suffer for setting up Uriah to be killed by enemy soldiers? According to biblical law, shouldn't he have been put to death? On the other hand, Uzzah is summarily executed by God merely because, in transporting the Ark to Jerusalem, he grabbed on to it to keep it from falling off the oxcart. So much for equal justice under the law. And in the most famous case of preferential treatment, Aaron builds the golden calf and gets off free, whereas Korah, who questions Aaron's authority, is annihilated along with two-hundred-fifty of his followers.

When Landes refers to the biblical laws regarding the treatment of strangers, he is treading on thin ice. Despite the laws which command the Bible Jews not to oppress the stranger, the Hebrews are in constant warfare with foreign peoples, and the massacres which God authorizes then to commit against these peoples are truly genocidal. We should not forget, in this regard, that the reason Saul lost favor with God was that he failed to fully carry out his orders to annihilate Amalek. God ordered Saul to wipe out their men, women, children, and livestock, but Saul spared the livestock and for that "sin" he lost his throne.



ANDREW RODMAN

There is no denying the strong element of ethnic chauvinism in the Bible. Isaiah, who has so often been depicted as a great humanitarian, declares that all the enemies of Israel will be annihilated. "The house of Israel will take captive those who were their captives and rule over those who oppressed them."

"Foreigners shall build up your walls and their kings shall minister to you . . . For the nation and kingdom that shall not serve you shall perish. The sons of those that oppressed you shall bend down at your feet . . . Aliens shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall be your plowmen, but you shall be called priests of the

Bennett Muraskin is a union representative and a secular humanist Jew. He has been published in Jewish Currents, Israel Horizons, *and* Humanistic Judaism.

Lord . . . You shall eat the wealth of the nations and in their riches you shall glory."

Yes, this is the same Isaiah we love to quote as preaching peace and justice, but neither the "good" or the "bad" Isaiah believed in democratic principles.

Literacy, by which Landes means the ability of some Jews to read the Bible and its dissemination through public readings, is hardly a democratic principle. The Bible was the only document the people were allowed to read, and the penalty for disobeying many of its laws was death. Totalitarian regimes have shown how effectively literacy and mass education can be put to undemocratic ends.

There is no freedom of speech in the Bible. It is totally absent from the Torah and the Writings. Contrary to Landes's assertion, it does not exist in the Prophets either; God tells the prophets what to say and those to whom God does not speak are condemned as false prophets. Furthermore, neither God nor the prophets have any respect for differing points of view.

When the prophets attack rulers for allowing the worship of other gods, it is not because these rulers have stifled freedom of expression; rather, it is because they have fostered it by allowing deviations from Mosaic law.

The profoundly authoritarian message of the Bible is perfectly expressed by Isaiah, who said, "Rebels and sinners shall be destroyed together and those who forsake the Lord shall be consumed." "Will you question me [God] and command me concerning the work of my hands? To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Moses, the greatest prophet of all, declared, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord"—a message totally devoid of democratic sensibility.

Landes's claim that respect for manual labor is a precondition to democracy has merit, but typically he overstates his case. Manual labor may be a mitzvah in some parts of the Bible, but it was also the curse God visited on Adam for eating the forbidden fruit. And as the first quote from Isaiah demonstrates, biblical Jews had no reservations about having other people do their work for them. For example, when the Gideonites escaped annihilation by the Hebrews by tricking Joshua into believing that they were a distant people rather than a neighboring one, Joshua spared them only on the condition that they become "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for the Jews. Obviously manual labor was viewed as a mixed blessing.

It is also simply not true that all great biblical leaders performed manual labor. The priesthood was exempt—not surprising, since they were the ruling elite.

Slavery, of course, was practiced in ancient Israel and Judea, despite the centrality of the Exodus story to the Jewish religion. Solomon's reign is depicted as the golden age for Israel, with every man under his vine and fig tree, but non-Jews did not share in the good times. According to the Book of Kings, Solomon used 153,600 foreigners as forced laborers to build the Temple. Shades of Pharaoh! Solomon was later judged harshly for his sins, but enslaving foreigners was not among them. His undoing was, of all things, the sin of intermarriage and his desire to accommodate his wives' religious beliefs by building shrines to their gods. Today we would praise Solomon's respect for other religions as pluralism, but in the Bible, pluralism is heresy.

This brings us to a crucial issue that Landes completely misses—the radical differences between priestly and rabbinic Judaism. After the Bible was completed, Judaism was transformed from a state religion dominated by a hereditary priesthood into a people's religion led by rabbis and scholars. Landes conflates the two by describing both Moses' theocratic dictatorship in the desert and the form of government in post-exilic times as "autonomous self-regulating consensual societies." He could not be further from the truth. It may even be a stretch to describe rabbinic society in these terms, but I don't think any modern scholar has ever made that claim for biblical society.

Landes repeats the old chestnut about the anti-monarchical theme in the Bible. Samuel's admonition against monarchy was an isolated remark, however, which did not prevent the Hebrews from establishing a monarchy that lasted hundreds of years. The prophets often denounced the abuses of certain kings, but never monarchy as an institution. The prophets even thought highly enough of King David to declare him the ancestor of the coming Messiah. The exalted place of King David and King Josiah in the Bible provides ample refutation of Landes's argument.

There is, of course, a social-justice theme in the Bible, but it has been exaggerated. The primary concern of God, Moses, and all the prophets is competition from other gods, not social injustice. Jeremiah proclaimed that God

> will make Jerusalem a lair of jackals and the city of Judah a desolation . . . I will scatter them among nations . . . I will send the sword after them until I have consumed them . . . I have made the widows more in number than the sand in the seas. I have brought against the mothers of young men a destroyer . . . I have made terror fall upon them suddenly . . . And the rest of them I will give to the sword before their enemies . . . Both great and small shall die . . . and no one shall lament them . . . I will cause their people to fall by the swords of

> their enemies and I will give their dead bodies to be food to the birds and to the beasts I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters and everyone shall eat flesh of his neighbor in the siege."

There are equally lurid passages throughout the Prophets. And for what sin will the people suffer these horrors?

Mainly for worshiping other gods, or in other words, for exercising what we would call today freedom of religion. Jeremiah also denounces social injustice, but with considerably less fervor. No oppressor of the poor could compete with God in inflicting misery and suffering on the Jewish people, and Jeremiah was not about to criticize Him.

The fundamental problem with the social-justice theme in the Bible, apart from the fact that it is minor compared to the anti-pagan theme, is that it is limited to denunciation. Not once does any prophet go beyond moral exhortation to advocating action to correct the injustices. When God calls all the shots, there is simply no room for popular movements for social reform.

Only when the Messiah comes will accounts be settled. Democracy couldn't be a more alien concept to the prophetic worldview.

Landes's attempt to extract a revolutionary theme from "Hebraic moral thought" is also specious. It is common knowledge that most rabbis, including Hillel and Yochanan Ben Zakkai, opposed rebellion against Rome and the ideology that inspired it. Modern scholarship recognizes that the Jewish Zealots, relying on terrorism against the majority of Jews, continued the revolt long after it became a hopeless cause. Their determination to fight to the last drop of Jewish blood cost thousands of Jewish lives. The Talmud was written, in part, to suppress this kind of Jewish extremism, which is one of the reasons it extols life, scholarship, and peace over the values of fanaticism, intolerance, and violence expressed by the Zealots.

Landes's analysis of anti-Semitism as an aristocratic reaction to the "democratic" influence of Jews on Christian populations is misguided. The chief practitioners of anti-Semitism in the twentieth century have not been Christian noblemen or aristocrats but elements of capitalist ruling classes in alliance with much of the Christian middle and lower class. They seized on the Jewish role in the economy as middlemen, Jewish sympathy for radical causes, and Jewish insistence on preserving their identity in defiance of nationalist pressures as rationales for denying their humanity. In fact, anti-Semitism was a popular movement in much of Europe, not an aristocratic one. On a related topic, Landes's attempt to lump together Nazis, communists, Arab nationalists, and opponents of Israel at the U.N. in a common anti-Semitic front is reprehensible. It is a comment worthy of Meir Kahane.

Landes's true agenda slips through at the end of his article. He wants to promote democracy in societies that have long suffered from authoritarian rule. Who could argue with this objective? But instead of directing these societies to the real founders of modern democracy, for example, the English Dissenters, the Enlightenment philosophers, Tom Paine, John Stewart Mill, James Madison, or even Clisthenes and Pericles (who, unlike Moses or Ezra, were true proto-democratic thinkers), he would send them back to the Bible in search of the four principles he identifies as the foundations of democracy. The fact that the principles of self-government and pluralism, which are the essential conditions for democracy, are absent from the Bible does not bother Landes in the least.

Landes recognizes that it is impossible to separate "social Halacha" from religious Halacha, but he is willing to accept the risk that if his proposals were accepted, these societies would adopt both. Goodbye secular democracy, hello to the Islamic Republic, or, should I say, hello to the ultra-Orthodox dream of an Israel with the Torah as its constitution.

What is the real Jewish contribution to democracy? The involvement of Jews in democratic movements since the French Revolution has been so extensive that it requires no elaboration here. The ideals that motivated Jews to join these movements, insofar as they derive from Jewish sources, definitely do not come from the Bible, which is a profoundly authoritarian document, and perhaps not even from the Talmud, but from the experience of the Jews as a world people, often oppressed and ostracized, relatively urban, educated, and always acutely conscious of their precarious minority status. Yet Jews did not begin these movements. Had it not been for outside influences such as the development of modern capitalism and the Enlightenment, Jews would never have escaped the ghettos and the shtetls. It is beyond dispute that the rabbis furiously resisted the encroachments of democratic ideas. However, on a more subtle level, Jews did play a part, albeit unconsciously, in inspiring subversive movements which indirectly led to the birth of modern democracy. As Salo Baron wrote:

> By their very persistence in the adherence to their ideas and ways of life, they set the example of dissent from established verities which could serve as a source of inspiration for any disaffected group. Not surprisingly, almost every heretical movement in the West was blamed by its opponents on the Jews and their Scriptures. □

Richard Landes's Reply to Bennett Muraskin

Part of the problem in answering Bennett Muraskin's critique of the arguments I put forth in my article, "Justice, Work, Study, and Protest: The Biblical Contributions to Modern Democracy," (TIKKUN, July/August 1993), is his intemperate tone. For example, to answer the question "Are [biblical Jews] guaranteed any civil rights?" with a categorical "No" is just silly. On the contrary, the Bible is full of civil rights, especially for the underdog: the right of property even from royal seizure, of free status, of a fair trial (including, incidentally, what we call the Fifth Amendment and, uniquely in the ancient world, protection from torture), of rest one day a week, of refuge from vendetta, of public assistance for the poor, etc. Although I could go down the list of Muraskin's gross exaggerations and counter his arguments example for example, it would, I am afraid, merely proliferate the arguments. Let me instead try to address what I perceive as the principal differences between my approach and Muraskin's.

Anachronism: Muraskin has an anachronistic definition of democracy which mistakes refinements for the core. He seems to feel, for example, that biblical intolerance for such non-conforming positions as idol worship, homosexuality, female equality, and blasphemy, de facto disqualify the Bible as a source of democratic traditions. Given how much idol worship was associated with child and slave sacrifice, insisting that such practices be condoned is a bit like arguing that modern democracies should be tolerant of wife and child abuse as a form of male self-expression. In fact, my own research suggests that use of icons in religion tends to accompany vertical, authoritarian social structures on the one hand, and iconoclasm tends to accompany horizontal, egalitarian social structures on the other.

But in a larger sense, such stringent demands for tolerance of diversity make any historical inquiry impossible: No earlier society can claim such a "democratic" structure, including Athens, with its subordination of women, its political exclusion of all but a narrowly defined group of natives, and its rough treatment of a huge slave population. This importing of twentieth-century "progressive" criteria back to the ancient world is precisely the kind of anachronism that my original article was intended to avoid. My point is that we not seek what superficially resembles us, but that we look for the underlying forces which *mutatis mutandis* led to our current situation. In that sense, distinctions such as elite/commoner, intellectuals/manual laborers are far more important in the development of a "democratic society" than the issue of religious pluralism and tolerance for homosexuality. By Muraskin's standard, the most "democratic" regime in the ancient world was the Roman Empire, where tolerance for sexual and religious diversity went hand in hand with monstrous imperial and aristocratic oppression. Similarly, Muraskin argues for a radical distinction between theocratic ancient Israel and a more popular rabbinic Judaism. I prefer to look at the dynamics which permitted them to develop side by side and for Judaism to survive the destruction of the Temple with such strength and resilience.

Secularism: Behind his anachronistic criteria for democracy, Muraskin seems to have an unremittingly secular bias. Thus, egalitarian laws or prophetic denunciations of social oppression that come from God are somehow disqualified from consideration as a source of democracy. Why? Because there is something inherently unfair about "divinely" inspired pronouncements? Or because Muraskin has an allergic reaction to them? I suspect that those "powerless" who benefitted from either isonomia (equality before the law) or from prophetic denunciations of powerful oppressors were probably far less finicky than Muraskin about the source of their protection. Quite the contrary, it probably gave them a far greater sense of importance and security to know that God is on their side than dependence on the vagaries of human legislators. (Note that the postmodern association of Nazism and modernity emphasizes precisely the devastating potential of laws promulgated by mere humans.) Similarly, for Muraskin the very mention of priesthood conjures up theocratic oppression (a point of view whose ironic quality I tried to point out at the beginning of my original article with evidently little success). He thus fails to note the extensive limitations on priestly power in ancient Israel: They cannot bury the dead (cf. the crucial importance of this for the Church), they cannot own land, they play no crucial role in the Sanhedrin (supreme court), nor do they provide monarchs (until the disastrous Hasmoneans),

Richard Landes is a professor of medieval history at Boston University. He is spending the 1994-95 academic year in Israel.



ANDREW RODMAN

and—to return to my favorite theme of manual labor—the high priest emptied the garbage from the Temple mount.

Comparative Perspective: One of our fundamental disagreements here comes from a methodological difference. Muraskin has matched me point for point: For every example of equality and fairness I cite, he cites one of oppression and intolerance. I could contest each point here: for example, God may, in the particular circumstances of the conquest of Israel, call for the massacre of the native populations, but the normative rules for warfare (Deut. 20) are humane even (especially) by today's standards. But I think there is a more important point to make. The fact that I can find as many examples as I do of "proto-democratic" trends is, in the historical context of the ancient world, exceptional. The kinds of oppressive and unjust positions Muraskin cites are not only a dime a dozen in other cultures, they are the very stuff of the culture. What he finds to be pale hues when set beside the democratic pronouncements of the modern West, I find shimmering stars amidst the dark background of the aristocratic worship of power in the ancient world. Thus, while Genesis 2 may subordinate woman to man (more mildly than every other creation myth—for the Greeks, woman is created as a punishment), Genesis 1 makes humans in the image of God, male and female, a unique expression of equality in divinity.

This difference in approach produces a difference in emphasis. While Muraskin seems to feel that the theme of social justice in the Bible "has been exaggerated" and that the anti-monarchical passage in Samuel "was an isolated remark," I would make the opposite point. In contrast with the virtual silence on the subject in most other ancient cultures, even at the level of moral generalities, social justice is a central message of the Bible, at the very core of Hebrew prophesy. As for Samuel's warning about royal tyranny, it is hardly isolated: It is recapitulated as positive legislation in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. And whatever the role of monarchy in the political life of Israel (tenth to seventh centuries BCE) and in Jewish messianic thought, kings are largely peripheral to the social organization of Jewish communities. Once kings were no longer viable, the Jews shifted to other forms of community organization and—unlike every other culture from that time—have survived over 2,500 years without a king and without a country.

Historical Process: Muraskin's invocation of Madison (a republican aristocrat) and Rousseau (the inventor of totalitarian democracy!) as "the real sources of modern democracy rather than Moses" is most revealing. In so doing, he truncates the history of democracy so that only the immediate precedents count. It is a little like studying the forces that keep a spaceship in orbit without paying attention to the discarded booster rocket. In fact even in his own, self-selected list of "real founders of modern democracy," many of the figures looked to and argued from the Bible—the English Dissenters, Thomas Paine, not to mention John Locke. Even the anti-religious, Enlightenment-inspired, French revolutionaries framed their "Declaration of the Rights of Man" in two stone tablets, evoking the first such declaration.

Social Dynamics of Jews among the Gentiles: Perhaps the most clear-cut case where Muraskin's constricted focus leads him to misunderstand both my argument and the issue concerns anti-Semitism. Focusing only on the twentieth century, he insists on seeing it as a product of an alliance between the capitalist ruling class and middle- and lower-class Christians. This is, by my lights, merely one of many such configurations

in which oppressive ruling elites ally with discontented and resentful elements within the populace to target the Jews as scapegoats. Granted, the most virulently anti-Jewish elites were relatively new—the reforming clergy and the royal bureaucracies of the Middle Ages, Protestants, "Enlightenment" figures, capitalists. But those elements of the larger population, jarred by social and economic changes in which the Jews often play a role, rarely develop a spontaneous hatred of Jews; on the contrary, it is carefully fostered by elites concerned for their hegemony. It was not the little shopkeepers of Nazi Germany who invented the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, but the Russian secret police working with documents from ultra-conservative religious figures. Nor did the Russian or Arab masses seize on this document on their own—it was carefully used by tyrannical elites to blame others for the misery they themselves were inflicting on their own people.

If Muraskin finds my identification of similar sociological patterns lying behind Arab anti-Zionism and Nazi anti-Semitism "reprehensible" he needs a better argument than smearing me with the brush of Kahane; he needs to explain why both Nazis and their literature found such a welcome in the Arab world before and after 1948, especially among Palestinians, why the *Protocols* plays such a great role in current Arab and Muslim mythology. He needs to address the arguments of a scholar like Bernard Lewis, who has documented both the direct links and the dynamic parallels between European anti-Semitism and Arab anti-Zionism, in Semites and Anti-Semites. As Muraskin must know, anti-Semitism predates modern capitalism by several millennia; as he may not know, it was an elite disease long before it was a popular one. As for Muraskin's own explanation for the Jewish contribution to democracy, it may satisfy him, but it cannot satisfy the demands of historical argumentation. Many peoples in world history have been marginalized, oppressed, relatively urban, educated, and acutely conscious of their precarious minority status. Often that meant that those among them who could (generally the most talented), assimilated into the majority culture; in no case can one find the "staying power" that sustained the Jews over so long a period as a precarious minority, nor the kind of moral passion for democratic and socialist ideals that one finds in secular Jews.

Nature of "Freedom": Ultimately, the problem of discipline lies at the core of my disagreement with Muraskin. He seems to find any and all of God's demands "arbitrary," and His punishments for non-compliance cruel and tyrannical. I am not here to defend God so much as to emphasize the point that every serious political thinker has made about democracy: If the populace is unable to control itself, democracy is a recipe for anarchy. For conservative thinkers like Plato and Aristotle (not to mention Muraskin's favorite, Madison), the populace at large is not capable of the necessary self-restraint, and democracies, as Aristotle put it, "have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention... incompatible with personal security or property rights... as short in their lives as they are violent in their deaths." As Erich Fromm noted long ago in his study of the totalitarian impulse: "freedom from" (i.e., license) cannot endure without "freedom to" (i.e., the self-discipline not to abuse the lack of constraints). Muraskin's very definition of democracy hinges on license—tolerance of every kind of religious worship, every kind of sexual preference, revulsion at the mere mention of restraints. While in some form this promiscuous "tolerance" may be characteristic of the modern democracy to which he is particularly attached, it can hardly be considered a shibboleth of democracy.

Far from arbitrary, the "divine decrees" I have emphasized are clearly explicable in terms of the crucial element of democratic discipline, i.e., respect for others (even when someone isn't looking). As anyone with kids knows, humans instinctively take out on weaker people (e.g., siblings) what they have suffered at the hands of those too strong for them to strike back at. Most polities acknowledge this need to dominate someone by legitimating hierarchies in which all but the lowest rungs (women, children, slaves) have someone to push around. John Stuart Mill pointed out that women's liberation got little support from working-class men despite their mutual suffering at the hands of an oppressive class system in England because the men could come home from their daily dose of indignity and dominate their spouses and children. The counter-principle to this is known as the Golden Rule: do not do to others what you would not want done to you. The fact that some form of it is found in many cultures (e.g., the Stoics of late antiquity) underlines its universal importance; the fact that most polities ignore it in their structures underlines the equally important point that it remains a distant ideal, hardly applicable as a social norm.

And yet this is precisely the reason given, repeatedly, in biblical legislation for the enactment of laws protecting the weak, the powerless, the stranger in the midst—"because you know the heart of the stranger for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Lev. 19). Rather than the impotent exhortations of the

Stoics (Seneca was Nero's tutor), the Golden Rule in the Bible is directly linked to an emotional memory of the experience of slavery: The urge to oppress is opposed not by abstract ideals but by empathy, and it is made the basis of society through both legislation and liturgical memory. I can imagine neither a myth of origin nor a law code less arbitrary than this. Here in this disciplined ethic, biblically inspired and talmudically sustained, is where I would seek an explanation for both Jewish persistence as a community despite marginalization and oppression, and the "extensive involvement in democratic movements since the French Revolution." Muraskin would explain the latter with the former, as if the former were a fact of nature needing no further elucidation.

The point I make here has a direct bearing on the problems of democracy in the modern world. In 1989, teaching a class on "Isonomia and Democracy" as the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain fell, I predicted that, without self-discipline, all this euphoria would not last long. The former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union look to prove me painfully right. Perhaps we need to be far less ambitious and demanding than Muraskin in terms of our expectations and demands on polities around the world. It is a favorite Zionist argument that until the Arab states are democracies there will be no real peace. Perhaps this is correct; but perhaps the solution is not the imposition of democracy on populations which still don't have isonomia. Perhaps starting with those elements Muraskin so depreciates in the biblical tradition—the right to equal justice before the law for all citizens, respect for honest manual labor, the accountability of, and the right, prophetic style to denounce the oppression of the poor by the rich—may do better than premature rule of the people. □

A Room of One's Own

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long-established women's book groups (imagine each of these with an attached writing group!), or universities, or community organizations, whether the setting resembles more Radcliffe's elite Bunting Institute, or the office of Spare Change, the Boston newspaper written by homeless people.

As a more specific example of how we might build models of change within an already established structure, let me once again offer my own experience. In 1976, a colleague and I began the Harvard Writing Center. During the two years that it existed with its original mandate—to support, validate, and enrich the writing going on within the university—the center, offering one-on-one consultation with writers, workshops on writing, and public lectures, began to make a difference in the writing life of the Harvard community. Our work led to several commissioned lectures on writing, including an important essay by B.F. Skinner, "How to Discover What You Have to Say"; to the first book by a well-known but quite dyslexic Israeli TV producer; to the first published essay by a writer who's gone on to publish several books of nature essays; to several completed dissertations; and, not incidentally, to my learning new ways to support others in their writing.

The many conversations I've had while writing this essay have led me to want to establish a network of women committed to consulting with each other about their writing. Such a network would provide resources—good books, bibliographies, people, and mentors—and then ask each woman helped, in turn, to mentor others. My Harvard colleague Larry Weinstein and I took what we learned from our students at the Writing Center and went on to teach workshops for teachers in a variety of settings and at other grade levels, thereby geometrically enlarging the number of people who could make use of those techniques. Many endeavors within the academy look only inward, but some, like Wellesley College's Center for Research on Women, or the group of authors who wrote *Women's Ways of Knowing, The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, have engaged with women beyond these limited circles.

We have important models in other realms as well: The Children's Defense Fund, and Emily's List. But the important first step is to name and understand the problem to be solved.

Virginia Woolf writes of animating the poet who "lives in you and me," so we may own that "relation...to the world of reality" that the poet represents. And, Woolf declares, "she would come if we worked for her." We owe it to her, to our daughters, and to ourselves to do this work. □

The staff of Tikkun would like to wish all of our readers a very happy Chanukah

CHRISTMAS PRESENCE

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well in a TIKKUN editorial (November/December 1991), "there is a coerced character to celebrating Christmas" in our society, so that non-participants are often made to feel like "party poopers or withholding or non-communal." Personally, I stop listening to the radio during that month, to minimize my exposure to the orgy of obligatory consumerism. But for me, that withdrawal does not extend to ignoring my parents.

Many Orthodox leaders would have all Jews isolate themselves from much of the non-Jewish world, casting a particular interpretation on the phrase regarding "a people that dwells apart, not reckoned among the nations" (Numbers 23:9). But why should the Orthodox be given the right to frame so many Jewish debates? I am reminded of a Roman Catholic nun of my childhood who warned us against even reading about other religions. "It might shake your faith," she pronounced solemnly.

I don't believe that Judaism is so fragile. If we follow a traditional paradigm, then Jews should be suspicious of, and avoid, non-Jews. If we follow a new paradigm of a politics of meaning, then our actions should be guided by different assumptions: trust rather than mistrust, optimism rather than pessimism. My embrace of my parents on Christmas Day is an act of defiant optimism, of refusal to join the naysayers and separatists who believe that Jews will only survive by living in fortresses. Therefore, I'll spend a few hours this month helping my mother and father pick out their Christmas tree. And I'll spend December 25 with them, and my siblings and their children, surrounded by tinsel and gifts, helping them celebrate their tradition in their way. I'll give my parents my Christmas presence. It will be the right thing to do. □

THE MEANING OF HEALTH

(Continued from p. 22)

how many editorials Michael Lerner wrote. When Mrs. Clinton said that "We need a politics of meaning...We need a new definition of civil society which answers the questions posed by both market forces and governmental ones, as to how we can have a society that fills us up again and makes us feel that we are part of something bigger than ourselves," meaning and morality could not simply be ignored. So instead, the pundits scoffed at her embrace of these concerns, ridiculing them or dissecting them in the language of realpolitik ("will this kind of talk help or hurt this or that candidate, or this or that piece of legislation"), the only language that our media pundits are able to understand.

The profit-driven motives of the free market have so thoroughly pervaded the media that the folks who shape our opinions can hardly be expected to challenge the people who sign their paychecks. Rather than challenging what is and imagining alternatives, they accept what is as inevitable and lampoon alternatives. Even when the media appear to be taking concern for meaning and morality seriously, their coverage drips with cynicism. *Newsweek* had a cover feature on what it called "the politics of virtue" in June 1994. But the politics of virtue is all that it was about—who's playing the virtue game and who's likely to win it; nothing about the substance of the claims about the need for virtue that people on both the Left and the Right were making. And *Newsweek* had a poll (of course). "Who is to blame for the problem of low morals and personal character in this country?" it asked. "Family breakdown" led the list, followed by "individuals themselves," "TV and other popular entertainment," "government and political leaders," and "the schools." The hallowed and pervasive market system, which caters to selfishness and makes virtue a sucker's game, wasn't even an option.

To be a virtuous society, we must have virtuous institutions. Virtue is simply too much to ask of people acting alone. And conservatives are right when they say that government can't make people virtuous. It can help, but it certainly can't do the job alone. For this reason, the right kind of health-care reform is crucial, and the Clinton proposal profoundly disappointing. Reformed properly, health care could again become a profession instead of a business. It could provide a living example—one that every member of society encountered on a regular basis—of how to live a life that "fills us up again and makes us feel that we are a part of something bigger than ourselves."

In what appears to be the failure of even modest reform of the health-care system, the Clintons may actually be getting a second chance. Maybe in the next legislative year, they can do it right. Maybe they can take their own rhetoric seriously and go straight to their constituents with a proposal that will not only improve the quality and distribution of health care, but also be the vanguard for the reconstruction of America's soul. □

SHAME

(Continued from p. 26)

celebration of autonomy and personal freedom, remains a crucial component of healthy adult relationships.

Several factors often intervene to make this feeling-state highly conflicted. First, there are various forms of distortion or breakdown within the parent/child relationship. The parent might feel him or herself unworthy of the child's idealization and admiration because of his/her own low self-esteem or anxiety about being loved in this way. The child is unable to enjoy admiring the parent, sensing that the latter doesn't enjoy or can't tolerate it. Or the parent might actually be profoundly impaired or otherwise disappointing, thus frustrating the child's need for a hero. The child might pretend that this is not true, but harbors a deep cynicism nevertheless. Or the parent exploits the child's idealization by narcissistically requiring it, thereby increasing the child's feelings of helplessness. Awe, then, comes to be associated in this instance with submission. In any case, the capacity to experience awe and wonder is associated with disappointment and some form of humiliation.

The experience of love in which one surrenders to an idealized Other can threaten to evoke a traumatic sense of deflation or rejection and thus must be disguised or otherwise warded off. This kind of defensive activity can take many forms. The person might develop a certain cynicism about the possibilities of love. She or he might be vigilant about not appearing to admire or idealize anyone or anything too much. One might develop a sarcastic manner or personality style, or be the first to be "realistic" whenever an idealistic venture is being discussed.

The spiritual experience contains meanings that function as the quintessential triggers for these intrapsychic conflicts. The person who is praying is expressing his or her love for and belief in something greater than the self. It is a state of voluntary surrender. It is saying "I love you and am loved by you," however the divine "you" is conceptualized or represented. This is a state of potential humiliation for many people.

All of the disappointments, rejections, and prohibitions against experiencing the vicissitudes of this state are brought into play within the person approaching this state, and with all of the concomitant defensive resistances. Many—if not most—conceptions of God, for instance, within the Jewish liturgy and practice can become the lightning rod for this conflict. Whether it be declarations of love for the Sabbath "Bride," the flat-out celebration and awe of God in the Psalms, or the images of humble self-effacement in the morning prayer (*Ribon Kol Ha-Olamim*), Jewish rituals and prayers that describe the special relationship between Israel and God as one of loving idealization, awe, and surrender can tap into our reservoirs of shame. And even if we discount the manifest and literal meanings of the words and introduce concepts like the *Shekhina,* or views of God as a force moving us toward transformation and *tikkun,* we are still faced with the latent shameful meanings that are attached to the very stance of spiritual devotion, awe, and love.

Drawing from one's idiosyncratic history as well as certain modern cultural norms, the stance of religious observance or worship is unconsciously equated with a naive, vulnerable, and childish position and, thus, triggers signals of embarrassment. Believing in God, then, is not only problematic on scientific/rational grounds, but is associated with several levels of shameful experience. First, the "God" of one's childhood was probably a personified presence, empty of meaning, with whom everyone around you had a hypocritical, sterile, obsequious, or irrelevant relationship. Having grown up, become "enlightened," and freed yourself of much of the pathogenic baggage of the past, the prospect of relating to this flat God-image of your childhood feels like a humiliating retreat or self-defeating identification with role-models long since discarded.

Second, we all, of necessity, adapt to the disappointment in and corruption of important authorities in our lives, and any notion of a divine authority, however broadly defined, threatens to re-expose us to psychological trauma. We defensively identify with that aspect of our parents that has given up hope, accepted compromise, become resigned to failure, sunk into cynicism. As children, we all seek to connect with our parents in any way that provides us with security. Loving or believing in a divine force that offers up hope and the possibility of transformation, of goodness, can become unconsciously equated with thumbing one's nose at the cynical morality of one's family and facing the extent to which they have disappointed and failed us. To abandon oneself to any kind of transcendental spiritual experience breaks or defies these familial identifications and creates intense anxieties and fears of retribution. The form this punishment often takes is the prospect of being deeply shamed or humiliated.

Traditionally, psychoanalysis has understood the experience of worship in pathological terms—as a passive and infantile love for the father and a sexualized surrender to or merger with his power. What I want to suggest is that this is not only a deep distortion

of Judaism, but is itself a pathogenic psychological belief that equates surrender with submission, idealization of the Other with self-effacement, and love with weakness. In fact, as I have argued, awe, surrender, and idealization are naturally occurring states of being in healthy development, dialectically in tension with other states of self-control and egoistic mastery. The capacity to objectively recognize forces we can't control, as well as to relax our controls at certain times and be swept away by these forces without fear of identity diffusion or humiliation requires that the person has achieved certain developmental skills and acquired a certain self confidence and basic trust. One could even say that the inability to "let go" to some experience or relationship that is "greater" than you reflects an impairment and significant inhibition and reveals the workings of various pathogenic beliefs.

I am describing but one factor—shame, psychodynamically understood—that contributes to the resistance to spiritual involvement among many modern Jews. Clearly, there are a host of other meanings associated with awe, surrender, and worship that lead people to pull away from the experience. To the extent that surrender in fact is associated with submission, it will evoke all of the unacceptable memories and situations that we are right to oppose. Whether it be submission to male authority for women, submission to self-serving social and political authority, or the daily pressure to comply with pathological familial situations while we were growing up, many of us have deep-seated and healthy resistances to bowing down before anything "greater" than ourselves. In addition, there are all of the complex ways in which throughout the social history of Jews as well as the personal experience that many Jews have had with the religious authorities of their childhoods, the experience of worship was either empty of meaning, autocratic and repressive, sanitized by assimilationist forces anxiously seeking public acceptance, or otherwise hypocritical and dead. And my own experience reminded me that this spiritual emptiness and resulting embarrassment is common in the experience of non-Jews as well. But the relevant issue in my current argument is that many Jews have been left with deep visceral reflexes against spiritual experience at all, much less one involving themes of awe, mystery, or connecting to some ineffable "energy" over which one has little or no control.

These reflexes can be quite rational and healthy and are not intrinsically reducible to irrational psychodynamic conflicts. My interest, however, is in looking at how irrational psychodynamic conflicts that do exist contribute to a rejection of both conventional forms of Jewish spirituality and more contemporary, progressive attempts at Jewish renewal. There is an interplay, in other words, between the rational and irrational forces at work, and it behooves us to recognize both. To the extent that our resistances are based on irrational dispositions to shame, then even our best attempts to humanize and radicalize Judaism will incur a reflex opposition.

Finally, I believe that it is easy to see how political resignation and a culture of cynicism and self-interest fits into this characterological inhibition. If everyone is out for him or herself, why should I open myself up by believing in some pie-in-the-sky future or have idealistic hopes for anything? Protecting and expanding one's own turf, not being taken for a fool, guarding against being exploited, firming up one's capacity to act autonomously, being sure not to get one's hopes up, being "realistic"—these are all adaptive, albeit defensive, responses to the kind of market-oriented culture of individualism that we live in today. These socially conservative reflexes harmonize with the intrapsychic reflexes that I have been describing. And, similarly, they are also all intended to ward off the shame and embarrassment of believing in something greater than the self—in this case, that "something" is political transformation and the possibility of a society built on compassion and love. In this sense, then, the contemptuous attitude of Robert's father toward his neighbors' enjoying a family barbecue is intimately related to Charles Krauthammer's contemptuous dismissal of Hillary Rodham Clinton's adoption of a politics of meaning, which is related to the embarrassment of someone invited to share a spiritual experience at a Jewish Renewal minyan. They are linked in their insistence that belief in the transcendent power of love is, ultimately, foolish, sophomoric, and shameful.

An understanding of the dynamics of shame can thus be used to illuminate the resistance to spiritual experience within any religious paradigm. There is nothing more or less embarrassing about Jewish versions of prayer, God, or religious ritual and observance. In fact, as I mentioned earlier, the dynamics I am analyzing apply to the popular cynicism about non-religious experiences as well, e.g., advocacy of a politics of meaning, community, or an idealistic vision of social change. For those of us committed to helping people connect with a Jewish spiritual practice, however, the ways that this practice acquires meanings that trigger shame and avoidance are crucial to understand and address.

How do we help ourselves and others feel less embarrassed? I can't help but try to import certain paradigms that seem to work in psychotherapy. In general, as a therapist, I try to make it safe for the pa-

tient to expose shameful aspects of herself or himself, identify the pathogenic beliefs that produce the shame, and provide experiential evidence in the form of actions, explanations, and attitudes that disconfirm these beliefs and expectations. Successful therapy depends on unconscious, as well as conscious, learning. For instance, with a patient such as Robert who has identified with a cynical father and is contemptuous of his own tenderness or wish for love, I might repeatedly explain to him at moments of emerging shame why he feels that way; explain how it makes "sense" given his familial experience; help him see how it is now highly self-defeating and maladaptive; and articulate a healthier vision of love and mutuality to provide a therapeutic reference point. In addition, I would not hesitate to role model or otherwise reveal attitudes of robust and self-confident tenderness and un-embarrassed expressions of warmth. I would not, however, get too far ahead of the patient. If he tended to use humor, sarcasm, or intellectualization, I would respect his defenses and would "join-in" to some extent, all the while attempting to push the envelope of his ability to tolerate a more serious mutuality by talking to him about his underlying pathogenic beliefs. As psychoanalyst Stephen Mitchell put it, it's as if the patient asks you, the therapist, to dance, but only knows one limited step. You don't condemn the patient for this or refuse to dance. You accept the invitation and gently attempt to suggest some new steps.

Likewise, in our congregations, our minyans, we might try to find ways to talk about how spiritual experience can be embarrassing, confronting our self-consciousness about collective spiritual experience, self-disclosure, and anything that smacks of spiritual surrender. We should lightly encourage, but never require that everyone engage in group "exercises." We should be explicit that it is healthy and good for people to pray and spiritually connect in their own way, however imperfect, so that everyone feels that whatever they do is O.K. and better than doing nothing. We should never take a position that only a twenty-five-hour Shabbat is really Shabbat, but celebrate and support each other for every attempt to put a Shabbat spirit into practice. We should continue, as Michael Lerner has done in his book, *Jewish Renewal,* to generate images of God that people can hook into without shame, and talk to each other about how we can surrender and feel awe without submission. We need to redefine strength and weakness in our religious tradition, as well as in the broader struggle to develop a politics of meaning.

The challenge is to find ways of talking about surrender, awe, and idealization in a context of strength—now reconceptualized as deriving from love, interconnectedness, and a sense of being part of a larger historical religious tradition and movement. These attempts at redefinition can help make it safer for those Jews vulnerable to spiritual embarrassment to re-engage with religious rituals and experience. Understanding the underlying fear and pain that lead to cynicism about spiritual experience can help us develop a greater openness to and tolerance of each other—our imperfections as well as the unique way that each of us relates to the divine. □

Days of Awe

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purged, far gone in beatitude. He belched and purred, his eyes finally blank. The fragment of heavenly coma was not of the duration of a session at the Turkish baths. There, at the shvitz, we cooked and steamed ourselves into a night's sleep as deep as a bodhisattva's waking dream of life before creation. But this, at the cemetery, was as much as prayer could do.

Father had slipped some coins into the hands of the specter who had conducted the prayers. The old ghost studied what was in the palm of his hand and screamed rape. Father claimed that that had been the agreed-upon price. They reprised all that had gone before, the accusations, denunciations, screams for justice, and pity. Father slipped the old man another fifty cents. This, too, I finally realized, was part of the ceremony, to facilitate our reentry into the known world. Father and the old guy hugged one another, cursed one another, and hugged one another; we went home. □

What We Remember

(Continued from p.42)

possibilities for progressive collective action. The ability to share connections to (but not identification with) the past is an important source of the empathy out of which political alliances are forged, something that the privatization of memory encourages us to forget.

If memory is the core of identity, the attention given to studying it is a sign of our own troubled sense of who we are in relation to who we have been. But the study of memory should not merely be a continuation of its privatization, its disconnection from public, political life. The study of the past and its representations, especially those aspects of the past that will not pass, should do more than provide us with examples of naive dreams or dirty scandals from which we can take our distance. The study of memory in relation to history should enable us to see more clearly how our preoccupation with a personal past may also be the denial of the possibilities for a collective future. □

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welfare you have to conform to mainstream values around work and family—it represents an intolerable hypocrisy.

Dan Quayle Was Wrong

The challenge of welfare reform, then, is that it touches deeply some of the core value disputes that have divided us as a nation for the past thirty years. If we are to cope with the social challenges of the future, we need to close the gap between the symbols that have long driven politics and the social reality we face, a point made by E. J. Dionne in his 1991 book, *Why Americans Hate Politics*. Dionne hoped that the old symbolic divides had become so shopworn that Americans were ready to abandon them. Yet, the welfare-reform debate suggests that we are more willing to hold on to a comfortable myth than confront the realities of work and family life in the 1990s.

To move from empty symbols to a complex reality, we need to question some of the key values that touch the welfare debate, especially our ambivalence about individual choices and family stability. Yet, over the past two years, we have moved in just the opposite direction.

During the 1992 campaign, Vice-President Quayle attacked Murphy Brown, a fictitious TV character, for having a child out of wedlock. Along with the "potatoe" incident, Quayle's attack on Murphy Brown seemed to confirm that he was out of his league in national politics. Yet, as the welfare-reform debate heated up over the last year, Quayle began to receive support from unlikely places. Intellectual journals began to find that he had been right after all: Two-parent families were preferable. In September, the President embraced the same theme in an address to the National Baptist Convention U.S.A., the day after Quayle renewed his "family values" crusade in a speech attacking our "ethical chaos."

Well, Dan Quayle was wrong, and unless we are willing to say so, we won't be able to come up with a welfare reform plan that helps women and children. After all, the reason that two-parent families are "better" than single-parent families, according to the social science research, is that single-parent families are poorer. As a consequence, members of single-parent families are sicker, have less time for parenting, and suffer from the constant mental strains of meeting their needs. Those who think Quayle was right have substituted cause for effect. Single-parent families are worse because they are poorer. They are poorer because, as a matter of national policy, we have chosen not to prevent their poverty.

The world would be better if individuals were more competent at making decisions about marriage and child-rearing, if they didn't lapse into a kind of fatalism in which these events just happen to them. Taking responsibility for our decisions in personal relationships is one of our greatest challenges. Perhaps government has a role to play in improving our ability to cope with our personal decisions and emotions, but welfare reform is not the proper vehicle. Either it will be ineffective, or, if it incorporates a rising eugenic sentiment, frightening. In either case, it would send the signal that poor women need a kind of moral guidance that the rest of us can live without.

In fact, progressives have been all too quick to accept the notion that dependency should carry a stigma. The calls from the Left for "self-sufficiency" for the poor fly in the face of economic reality. The "flexible" global economy assures that none of us is really self-sufficient. Last spring, the grotesque claims of the Federal Reserve Board that we had to "cool off" the economy because only eight million Americans were unemployed demonstrated that the market economy will not provide the jobs needed to reduce dependency and poverty. If poverty is going to decline, the public sector will have to do it, either by providing jobs or economic support. By accepting conservative assertions that dependency is a badge of moral failing, we implicitly reduce our ability to attack poverty.

In place of the moral apartheid we've applied to women on welfare, we need to accept that welfare recipients look a lot more like the rest of the population. Most of them are women who for one reason or another have found themselves in need of help and are unable to turn to family to provide it. If they were the focus of the current debate, the proposals emanating from the White House and Congress would be very different.

Certainly any adequate reform would include the expanded job training, education, and social service present in the President's plan. But true welfare reform would also examine the standard of living and quality of life of women and children who must cope with difficult work and family crises. For example, an ideal bill might:

•Assure a national minimum benefit that applies in every state, so that a divorced women in Alabama would have as good a chance as one in California of getting back on her feet.

•Provide a realistic way for women to combine

welfare and work in supporting themselves. Presently, less than a third of women's earnings are "disregarded" in calculating their welfare benefit. A 50-percent standard would do more to "make work pay" than all of the current moral posturing.

•Raise benefit levels. A large number of poor women and children with physical and mental disabilities should be shifted from Aid to Families with Dependent Children to the more generous Supplemental Security Income program to provide them with the resources they need. Women and men who are able to work should be assured an income of at least half the poverty level, and those who combine work and welfare should be able to earn a wage close to the poverty line before their benefits are cut off.

Americans with short memories will view these proposals as hopelessly utopian and radical. For those with longer memories, these ideas will look much like Richard Nixon's 1969 welfare reform initiative. The fact that Nixon's proposal now seems so liberal demonstrates the extent to which progressives have accepted conservatives' stigmatization of dependency and retreated from our commitment to reduce poverty.

We need to recast the current welfare debate, taking as its starting point the fact that many of us will face a life crisis related to work or family during our lives. We'll lose our job and not be able to find one that pays as well. We will get divorced. We'll get sick and be unable to fend for ourselves.

Most of us, when the crisis hits, will not have to go on welfare. We'll have the education to move quickly into an acceptable job. We'll be able to rely on friends and family. We'll qualify for help from our employer, Social Security, or unemployment insurance. But some of us will have to go on welfare.

It makes sense to try to link our vision of a moral order to our understanding of the reality of poverty and welfare, but we need to abandon the contrast between "us" and "them" that has driven this discussion. In place of invidious comparisons, we need to substitute a vision of solidarity and compassion, to make "them" part of "us."

We would all benefit from this change. Welfare recipients would benefit from the acknowledgment that they are not simply a group of internal aliens; the problems from which they suffer are shared by many of us. The rest of us—those of us who believe that we'll never collect welfare—will benefit from opening up the discussion of the difficult dilemmas we face living our lives and accepting our responsibility for those who have not been so lucky. □

SHUL AND SPIRIT

(Continued from p. 28)

Since Yom Kippur, I've struggled with the complex emotions evoked by the congregation of my suburban New Jersey synagogue and its folkways. A year ago, upon moving to a new town, I'd joined this congregation because I found it to be a truly *haimishe* place, devoid of the kind of materialism so endemic to this region and others like it. In the rabbi I saw an empathic, intellectually engaged person open to the varieties of Jewish seekers who came before him and to their myriad paths to spiritual growth. Shabbat at this synagogue always feels welcoming, with a multi-generational corps of regulars, some there for human solace, some for divine, some for both. Though the congregation is heterogenous, I've encountered many people who come to *shul* in search of that elusive effervescence.

What, then, do we do about the clash of values within our midst? One answer would be the venerable Jewish form of mitosis: Split off from the larger group to form your own little *hevrah,* a community of like-minded souls. But secession simply skirts the larger problem, since the community as a whole never engages in a public discussion of its ills. Another, less immediately gratifying but ultimately more effective, response is the one our rabbi offers: a clear vision of what needs to be changed, an honest voice that doesn't shrink from delivering the less pleasant truths about what makes us weak or strong as a people, and what closes us off or opens us to spiritual growth.

But no rabbi can deliver Jewish authenticity as if it were a takeout meal, no matter how busy our lives and how much we may wish it were so. Judaism long ago lost its priests, its intercessors between the people and the divine. The problem of modernity—the fragmentation of religiosity that flows from our apprehension of religious life as a series of choices rather than a divine imperative—is also the modern Jewish problem. As a consequence, we can depend upon few taken-for-granted, shared assumptions about our commonality with the other people in *shul* with whom we are nominally connected. So, for those outside a strictly halakhic worldview, making Jewishness vital and integrating it into our lives is the responsibility of each Jew, all Jews. And to reach common ground takes work, including the courage to articulate to others those spiritual longings and inchoate stirrings of religiosity that in contemporary society are usually considered more intimate than our sex lives and far less seemly to talk about.

Those of us who walk out of *shuls,* spiritually or physically, because they offend our sense of authenticity or allow the negative to hold sway should figure out a way back in and find the voice to speak of our unmet Jewish needs. If we remain silent, we cede our right to shape our future. □

PLACED, AND MISPLACED

(Continued from p. 50)

What I could never "work" in the States was that sense that we live in a world of separated selves where narcissism thrives because the isolated "self" has so much pressure to succeed, yet where both success and failure can disconnect you from family, friends, or the body politic. In the United States, I could rarely generate hope about the violent class divisions and race relations and increasingly random violence, partly because the problems and the place seem so huge.

Yet in Israel, hope often stirs in me, even when visiting Palestinians in the territories. Especially with the peace process fully in motion, there is the pervasive exhilaration of living in an accessible culture where conflict and now conflict resolution so infuse the social climate that I feel I am inhabiting not another country but another planet of meanings. Many times over these past three-plus years, sitting at a cafe on lively Yoel Solomon, or at the Jerusalem Cinemateque's terrace, or hanging out near the Tayellet Park, or walking in the moshav of Beit Zayit, or down a sloping side street in Rechavia, on the beach in Tel Aviv or at the Red Sea; or when driving the curving, lunar roads of the West Bank to Nablus, Beit Sahur, or Jericho, I'd feel the congruence (landscape, climate, conversation, history) mix in my mind and enter a rhapsodic gratitude for finding my place on this earth. This emotion remained so strong that, with a rapture I'd previously attributed only to the deeply pious (my voice intoning like a crazed T.V. preacher), I'd whisper out loud: "Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord." Those were the words that had risen through me from my first week in Jerusalem. I'd leap, two steps at a time, up and down my hotel stairs, singing *Sh'ma Yisrael*, one of the only Hebrew prayers I knew, feeling that my entire past life had been lived in my own biblical bondage, exiled in my own private Egypts, knowing that the alienation that had driven me from place to place to place had finally, miraculously, brought me home.

I'm dreaming of a wide stretch of turquoise sea in Eilat. The color is intensely vivid, but as I look at it, the body of water begins to shrink, until, afraid it will disappear altogether, I spoon my hand down to capture what's left. At the dream's end, I'm holding a small turquoise gem, as I wake back in Cambridge, watching the sun trying to rise through a blanket of gray clouds.

I look at my daughter, Eliza, now eight, who is still sleeping. Although there is nothing in my life as beautiful or precious as this child, and although I've known for months that this day was coming, I'm in shock, wrenched from my home in Jerusalem, forced to return to Cambridge because of her "disability."

After years in Israel, Eliza became increasingly miserable. She was unable to penetrate the Hebrew everyone assured me she'd absorb like a sponge but which she resisted like a rock. Recently, she was recently diagnosed as severely dyslexic. The kind of specialized school she needs—not only to teach her the rudiments of reading and writing in English, but a school where she'll bond with other kids like her, learn what's wrong with her as well as what's right with her—exists in the States; as yet, Israel has nothing comparable.

As a result, I've returned here to live, for at least a year, possibly many more. I sit looking at those already yellowing maples, at the three-decker gray houses on our dead-end street, feeling stranded. "Where's the light?" keeps replaying in my mind.

For in Jerusalem, I was surrounded by light. My desk sat under a huge picture window from which I looked out over the Old City, at the Judean hills and Arab towns on the West Bank. Only three weeks ago, among boxes of books, clothes, rugs, and piled furniture, I gazed at the light sweeping over the desert terrain, musing on how being rightly placed is a feeling akin to great love or God.

Back in Cambridge, I inhabit a world not only physically flat but replete with malls and shopping strips, a world of academic competition and fractured families, with no organic community of meaning, or at least none that speaks to me. This world of separated selves immediately effects my own sense of self.

If my daughter had a rare blood disease, I wouldn't think twice before heading to the best clinic, even if that meant living in rural Iowa, living in a motel for years. I, like every mother I know, wouldn't question the move, would go anywhere she might recover, a metaphor I hang onto by a thread. When she comes home from school, I ask how her day went. She—who spent years marginalized at school by the Hebrew she did not understand, and when placed in an English-speaking school, was unable to decipher c-a-t—answers, face glowing, "Mom, I never went to any school where they make you feel at home, this school is really great." I know I'm doing the right thing. But in the hours when she's in school, and after she falls asleep, the old New England bleakness invades me.

"Get off it," a friend cheerfully admonished me yesterday, when I said (as mildly as I could manage), "I miss the Middle East." She was voicing what my other friends also feel (they do, after all, live here), voicing what I know I must do. For I'm here again, moving in

a fog of disbelief as I drive toward the Star Market in drab Porter Square. In my "other" life, I'd be flying to Damascus or Petra to report what's going on, to continue exploring both the Jewish and Arab Mideast from my home in Jerusalem.

Unlike grieving the death of someone you love, there's no common language for my loss. Placed, misplaced: Who talks of that in depth, who dwells on place as primary? I now know what Freud left out with his dictum that life centers on "work and love." I've had both in the States and in Israel, but what I never achieved here—not for lack of trying—was the feeling of belonging to a larger context with all those minute particulars I've tried to suggest, the happiness and healthiness of being placed in a world that feels like home, however crazy, however painful, however unfair or brutal that world might be.

That I'm the one in a thousand secular American Jews who needs to live in Israel, and that my daughter is the one kid in a thousand who cannot live there, at least not now, is a mystery, a strange denouement, a bizarre twist on that seemingly happy ending in my quest for place. But when I consider how Jews, for close to two millennia, were filled with longing, lamentation, and passionate desire to return to Jerusalem, and how even now, in a very different way, Palestinians will not consider a state without East Jerusalem at its center, I have to wonder if it wasn't, for all my tenacious work, just a bit too easy to call Jerusalem home. Perhaps that most ineffable of cities requires, like a mythic beloved, that we reach her only through long effort, constant prayer, and painful exile. □



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East Side Dybbuk

Hovering above the cobbled streets, I catch
sparks struck by hoofs and stuff them in my
mouth. I eat fire like raisins, flames sweeten

my tongue. Sweat rides on my brows and rolls
into my eyes. I come down to dampen dreams
of greenhorns smoldering in the gutter,

fanned by nimble fingers and broad backs. I roam
unattached as Spirit in a world of nails and thongs.
Undecided upon the lure of evil, sure of the pain

of good, I look for lost souls to cling to
and find a junk man plodding along the docks,
gathering the cream of garbage cans.

Morning light furls flags of a steamship
newly arrived from Hamburg with a cargo
of lathes and presses, Jews and Poles

in steerage and babies dry heaving
from dehydration. Tubs of soup, prayers,
revive them. I meet the driver of a wagon

who rests his whip and tells how cholera
flares along the East River, maybe from India.
I open water mains and flood the streets.

In a cold water flat speculators built almost
windowless on an alphabet street, a child is born.
A nurse helps with delivery in a steaming kitchen.

The father, a carpenter, is out of work; the Panic
of 93 lingers. After circumcision, the baby screams,
the mother's sewing machine sings past bedtime.

I'm roused by tin bells clinking and a junk man
in a top hat yelling, "Old clothes, old clothes."
Soiled suits, broken shoes, corsets are tossed

from windows of diphtheria-plagued tenements.
I walk by the cross-eyed and beautiful, past
a portly beggar with T.B., and pickpockets

with fat fingers and enter a building where coughs
echo in hallways and Norwegian rats parade up
coal chutes. I remove the sign, Quarantined.

I meet a kindred spirit seeking victims and boast,
"Joe's kid dies yesterday from a fever the health
nurse couldn't diagnose. When the last breath

slipped out, I touched Joe's lips, entering his body
under cover of grief. Now he screeches prayers like
a parrot and walks in torn clothes, blaming himself.

At the funeral he howls like a wounded animal."
On Sunday the sin of disease is chastised from
marble pulpits uptown. Dirt is excoriated.

Immigrants packed ten to a bed are blamed
for epidemics. The infant's life was brief, his death
unnoticed, the grave one by two feet,

bought cheap, between two thieves
dug in the cemetery section where crickets
don't chirp and headstones tilt.

Joe and I sway on a low mourning bench.
His shrieks become my shrieks and grab my throat.
We wrestle in smoke and stink, unseen by

sweaty, bearded faces. I stumble over a rebbe
praying in the dark as Joe drifts in and out of focus,
his speech blurred, then sharp as broken glass.

The dusty room becomes luminous, charged by
the current of anxious thoughts. Why do my palms
sweat when I'm inside a body? The rebbe's hands

tremble, he claps for a miracle. Joe's eyes roll,
his arms flail the air. I feel his heart explode in
his chest. He falls, gagging. I breathe air into his

mouth and his thrashing subsides, the blue
in his eyes returns. He looks around and sobs
as his world folds into a plain pine box.

I leave tired and hungry as if my bones
were rendered into a soup of tears for those
seized by the madness of empty plates.

I'm the Dybbuk of Delancey Street, unable
to cast spells in the new world. Lumbago
cramps my attempts at simple witchcraft.

In Gehenna, my father is ashamed I bear his name
and disowns me. I'm forced to earn my keep
behind a pushcart, peddling notions and shoelaces.

In the old country I learned to spin heads and twist
minds. In Kiev, I dealt in fits and gilded nightmares.
On this cold night, I stamp my feet on Orchard Street

and sell the eye of a needle to a blind man and air
in soap bubbles to children. After dark, I hawk
hunger and lust for pearly tits to sailors prowling

dance halls on the Bowery. After midnight, factory
smoke rubs agains my body. Soot covers my head,
I join the minyan of the devil. My head gets grid marks

from sleeping under the Brooklyn Bridge. Spider
light slants through the lattice work and stains
my curbstone pillow. Fire and salt preserve me

through cringing times when evil is not apparent.
Jehovah, protect even me, a Dybbuk with little or no
corrupting spirit, with power only in my pinkie.

Joe returns from the land of lean faces where hope dies.
His friends gather and remove the sheets on mirrors.
Soon Joe's wife laughs again at her husband's silly jokes.

Their secret, a child quickens within the wife's womb.
Her belly balloons like the sun rising over Greenpoint.
Joe saws new leaves for the Passover table. Elijah comes.

Harry Waitzman

What is a Politics of Meaning?

Human beings have psychological, ethical, and spiritual needs that transcend the traditional liberal agenda. Liberals have tended to focus exclusively on economic entitlements and political rights. But most people need something more: to be part of loving families and ethically and spiritually grounded communities that provide a meaning for our lives that transcends the individualism and me-firstism of the competitive market.

Hillary Rodham Clinton made this point decisively when she said in her Austin, Texas speech in 1993 that "The market knows the cost of everything but the value of nothing." What counts in life transcends the materialism of the marketplace. So, too, does it transcend the "rights-oriented" focus of so much traditional liberal politics.

An economistic focus for the Democrats worked well in the '30s, when most Americans were economically oppressed, and a rights-oriented focus worked well in the '60s, when most Americans responded to the demands for equality of the civil rights and women's movements. But by the late '70s, most Americans were experiencing a different kind of pain—a pain related to the breakdown of values, a crisis in relationships, an escalating divorce rate, a growing frustration with the alienation people were experiencing in the world of work.

The Right became politically powerful in the '80s and '90s because it recognized that the society was in a deep ethical and spiritual crisis—and that people hungered for communities of meaning that transcended the individualism of American life.

But the Right's politics of meaning was severely flawed. Its solution to the deprivation of meaning was to hail an idealized community and family. Yet, neither of these had any reality in people's daily lives. The Right's answer to this complaint was demagogic and dangerous: Our fantasy doesn't work because of some "Other" (gays, Blacks, feminists, tax-and-spend liberals) undermining our otherwise wonderful society.

The Right ignored the role of the competitive marketplace: the way our daily lives in the world of work lead us to subordinate all values to the struggle for material success. Nor could the Right acknowledge that an economy whose bottom-line mentality rewarded those who were most effective at manipulating or controlling others would necessarily produce narcissistic personalities who were unable to sustain loving relationships in family life.

The Right fails to understand that its defense of the right of corporations to plunder the resources of the world and pollute the environment not only threatens the physical survival of the planet, but also our moral lives—because it models an ethos of looting that shapes everyone's consciousness about "how the real world works." Addressing the crisis in values and the crisis in families without making significant changes in the values that govern our economic life is ultimately futile.

The Right was able to get away with blaming feminists, Blacks, gays, etc.—and ignoring the impact of the competitive marketplace—because the Democrats and the Left simply had no understanding whatsoever of the crisis of meaning? For the liberals, Ethical and spiritual issues were purely personal, to be dealt with through psychotherapy, or Sunday-only religion; for the Left, they were nothing but a smokescreen through which rightists would assault liberal programs.

It took Bill Clinton to weave a politics of meaning subtly but consistently into his economic program for the Democrats to win back the White House in 1992. But when, as president, Clinton failed to embody a politics of meaning in his actual policies, he found that cynicism and despair increased—because even though his economic policies were working, he wasn't addressing the real pain in people's lives. Moreover, in rejecting "single-payer" health-care plans and catering to the interests of insurance companies and health-care conglomerates, avoiding serious ecological reform, assuming crime and violence could be solved by building more prisons, rejecting principled stands on China and Bosnia, and in dozens of other ways, Clinton emptied the moral content from a politics of meaning.

A progressive politics of meaning seeks to shift the dominant discourse of American society from selfishness to caring. Most people would love that—but find it hard to believe that it's possible.

The fundamental reality of American life is not a deep conservatism, but an inner conflict between the part of us that believes we can have an ethically, spiritually, and ecologically healthy world, and hence that we should invest our hopes and energies in that possibility, and the part of us that believes that nothing will ever be different and that hence we should go for narrow self-interest. When idealism seems impossible, people will move either towards a narrow cynicism, or toward right-wing versions of idealism (with all their attendant racist, sexist, and at times even fascistic possibilities).

That's why it's so necessary to build a very visible movement for a progressive politics of meaning. And that is what we are doing in TIKKUN magazine—developing and legitimating a new discourse. Join us—by copying and sharing this statement with your friends and engaging them in discussions that challenge the dominant materialism, selfishness and cynicism of American society. In TIKKUN you'll find the details of our Campaign for a Politics of Meaning as we attempt to bring these ideas into the mainstream of American political life. Ideas matter.

Tikkun (tē-kün) ...to heal, repair and transform the world. All the rest is commentary

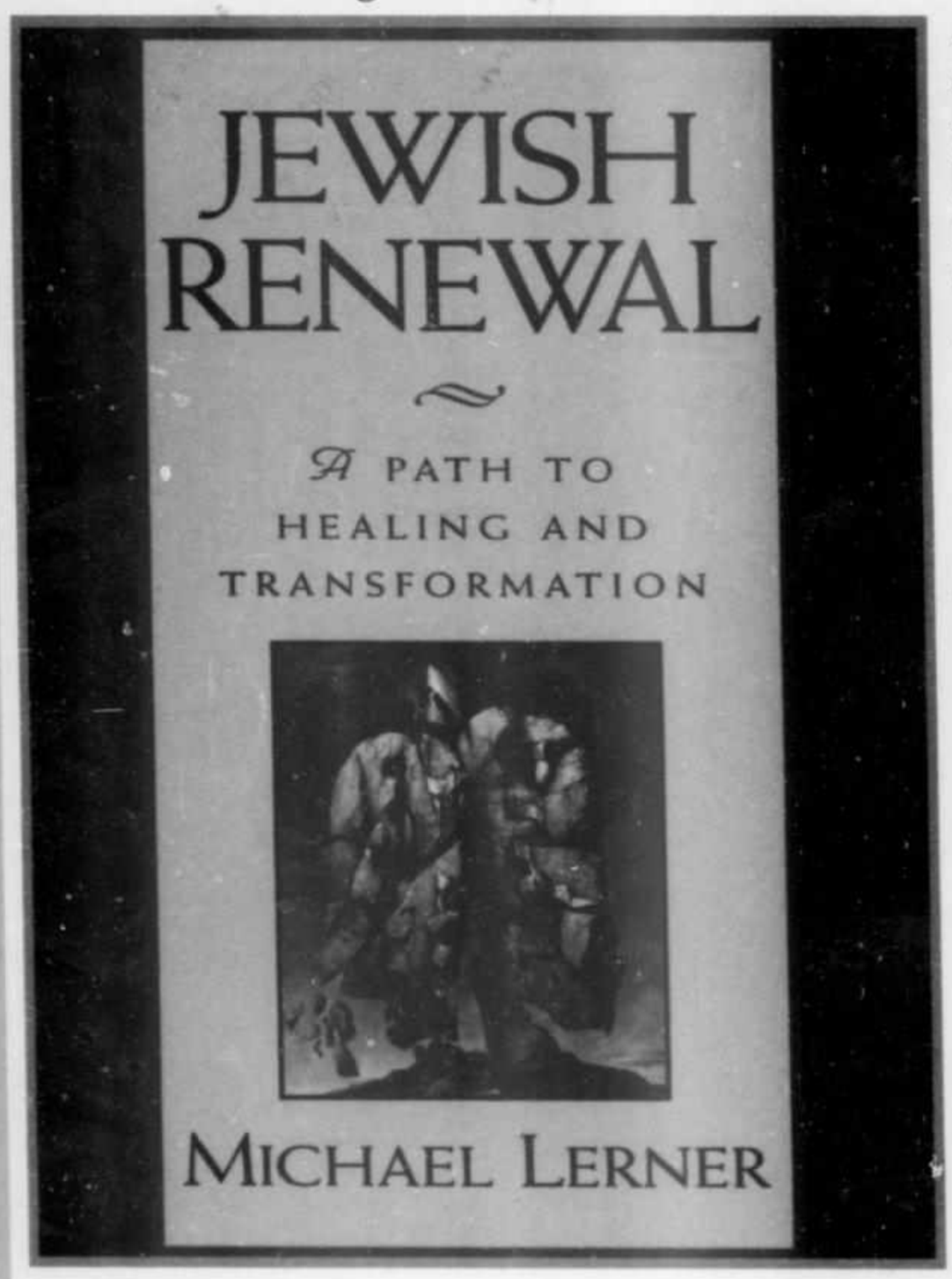
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