

Tikkun

POLITICS + CULTURE + TRANSFORMATION

A Prophetic Voice for Love and Justice

FALL 2017

PLASKOW
AND CHRIST ON
GODDESS & GOD

page 58

ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION AND THE NEW ENLIGHTENMENT

By David Korten



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THE WATER PROTECTORS WERE NOT DEFEATED



Caption and Credit TK

President Trump may have given the go ahead for the Dakota Access pipeline to be built, but the fight was not over. DAPL was not the first time indigenous rights were violated, people were hurt, and the Earth was scarred for the sake of profit, and unfortunately it will not be the last. There is hope, however, as the spark lit by indigenous prayers at Standing Rock spreads strategic resistance throughout the country.

People are heeding Native leaders' call for divestment from extractive banks and creating coalitions that bring together indigenous rights groups, environmental groups, anti-mass incarceration groups, and wall street reformers. The coalitions are founded on the observation that the same structures of capitalism, colonization, and racism are

hurting all of us; and they are making progress in Seattle, New York, Oakland, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia and uncountable jurisdictions throughout the country. The divestment campaigns progress and spread awareness about this not only environmental, but social, economic, and political issue.

Divestment activism calls our attention to how the entire system of capitalism is leveraged to enact violence on the land and inhabitants of this continent. The violence is done in the name of profit and wealth consolidation and then normalized by protecting some groups of people from its most egregious effects while casting it as a necessary part of their lifestyle. This whole project is normalized by a world view and set of behaviors that views the Earth as a resource to be extracted from, humans as tools to be used, and purpose of life as consumption.

Standing Rock provided a stark example of the intersection of racism, colonization, and environmental impact as the pipeline was rerouted from Bismarck to indigenous territory because of complaints, but not rerouted again as a result of protests. This is the same intersection we saw in Flint where urgent threats to the health of Black and poor residents were ignored. It's the same thing we saw in New Orleans after Katrina, in the Warren County Landfill, and in the Altgeld Gardens.

Divestment campaigns that deeply listen to the prayers and visions of indigenous people teach us that we do not just need to divest money from banks; we need to divest our entire selves from colonial mentalities, behaviors, thought patterns, cosmologies, ways of relating and ways of being that enable these processes to take place and become accepted as parts of everyday life. These teachers call on us to notice that the roots of the violence we see at Standing Rock run deep within our country. They are so normalized that we see the branches of that violence in our wallets every day without thinking about it, and most of it condone it with each trip to the ATM.

In order to protect the Earth we must decolonize our land, our economy, our culture, and our minds. We have to heal from the intergenerational effects of social systems based on fear and control. There is no way to decolonize this land or ourselves without first listening to those that carry the wisdom of what was here on this continent before colonization began.

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Readers Respond

A NOTE ON LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome your responses to our articles. Send letters to the editor to letters@tikkun.org. Please remember, however, not to attribute to *Tikkun* views other than those expressed in our editorials. We email, post, and print many articles with which we have strong disagreements because that is what makes *Tikkun* a location for a true diversity of ideas. *Tikkun* reserves the right to edit your letters to fit available space in the magazine.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCCUPATION

Fantastic issue, I read it cover to cover and passed it along to my sister (to share with members of her congregation). So refreshing to read progressive views. Thank you.

—Cheryl J. Hall

Dear Editor,

I am sending this in response to your recent issue on the 50th anniversary of the occupation. Below, I describe my recent experience being tear-gassed by the Israeli military, along with a large group of Palestinians, while standing in line at the Qalandiya Checkpoint. Incidents like this are an everyday experience for Palestinians living under occupation. Sadly, the only reason this incident is receiving

any attention at all, particularly in American Jewish circles, is because I—an American Jewish activist with a social media presence—happened to be there. Here is what I wrote on my social media accounts as it was happening:

8 June 10:48pm

Tonight I was tear gassed *literally* for standing in line with a large group of Palestinians, including babies.

This afternoon I visited a dear friend in Ramallah. I hadn't seen him in four years. It was lovely.

My friend dropped me off at Qalandiya Checkpoint at around 7:30 in the evening so that I could head back to Jerusalem. As I waited in line, folks were beginning to break the Ramadan fast, nibbling on pita bread and

smoking their first cigarettes of the day. Typically, I would take the bus through the checkpoint, but there were no buses at iftar (breakfast time). My friend said, "I better drop you off fast so they don't shoot at me." I laughed it off.

I couldn't figure out why there was such a hold up in the line. People were hungry, and it was hot, and the line wasn't moving. Rumors started circulating that the soldiers were not allowing Palestinian residents of the West Bank with Ramadan permits to enter after 8:00PM. Folks were confused by this and wanted to stay in line to see what was going on.

*Note: Every year, Israel gives thousands of Palestinian residents of the West Bank special permits to enter Jerusalem to pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan. There are all kinds of age and gender restrictions, and of course everything is subject to last-minute changes, but it happens. And tomorrow is Friday, Islam's holy day, so folks were hoping to get into Jerusalem with their Ramadan permits to pray the Friday prayers at Al-Aqsa.

An Israeli soldier shouted incomprehensible orders into the loudspeaker. I muttered to myself that nothing has changed. Three years ago, I helped draft a petition to the Knesset on this very issue. How can Palestinians understand what to do at the checkpoint if the orders are in garbled Hebrew? I'm a pretty fluent Hebrew speaker and even I couldn't make them out.

More rumors about the timing issue. "So can we go through?" "Maybe we can still get through until 8:30?" The Jerusalemite Palestinians started to yell at the Palestinian residents of the West Bank to just give up and stop holding up the line. I watched two men pull out their prayer rugs and begin to pray in front of the bars.

The military finally let a big group of folks through the first cage of the checkpoint, including me. It's hard to describe Qalandiya, but it's basically a series of cages with



Picture of Israeli checkpoint in the West Bank, just outside the Palestinian city of Ramallah, also known as Qalandiya Checkpoint

MORE LETTERS

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turnstiles that only move when the soldiers decide to press a button.

I moved on to the next cage, waiting to go through the next turnstile. This is the part where the soldiers usually check your stuff, check your papers, and check your body. I stood behind two women, each holding a baby.

Suddenly folks were running back to the other end of the cage. The two women with the babies ran past me. I started following the crowd, wondering what had happened. And then my nose started stinging and my throat started burning and my eyes starting tearing. The soldiers had literally shot tear gas (or pepper spray?) into the crowd with no apparent provocation. My theory? They couldn't seem to convey their instructions to the Palestinian residents of the West Bank in words, so they decided to tear gas all of us instead. Easiest way to get folks to leave.

My whole body was shaking. I didn't know where to run. After all, we were in a cage. In panic, my mind immediately flew to images of Jews getting gassed in enclosed spaces. Where to breathe. Where to breathe.

I started to wonder if I was going to faint. Or vomit.

In the first cage, where I had already passed, the army shot stun grenades to disperse the crowd. I saw the flashes of light in the air and the loud popping sounds that wouldn't seem to stop. It was probably 2 minutes but it felt like 20.

The Palestinian residents of the West Bank gave up and left. Who knows if they'll get in for Friday prayers tomorrow? The Jerusalemites got right back in line. The soldiers wouldn't let them through the far left section, where I was standing, so the Jerusalemite Palestinians gave up one by one and tried a different section. But when the soldiers saw me, a lone white woman standing by the door, they buzzed me through. When I motioned to show them my passport, the soldier didn't even bother to open his window. He winked at me and waved me along.

I checked Twitter and Facebook to see if anything special was being reported about the Qalandiya checkpoint. I know that the use of tear gas and stun grenades at the checkpoint is not uncommon, but still. Nothing was reported. Folks went on as usual. I hopped on the bus waiting on the other side of the checkpoint.

Ramadan in Palestine, everyone.
—Leanne Gale

Dear Rabbi Lerner,

Your article is magnificent, but you miss one little point:

You seemingly support the establishing of a Palestinian state on the hills of Judea and Samaria, formerly known as the West Bank of the Jordan.

Can you, or anyone else, guarantee that this Palestinian state will never turn into another Hamas state, either by free elections (as already happened in January 2006) or by force (as happened in Gaza in June 2007)?

And if you cannot guarantee this, it means that you agree with the assumption that Hamas can take this state over. Therefore it means that you support the establishing of a state which might become another Hamastan, looking over most Israel from Beit Shean in the North all the way to Dimona in the South, passing through Afula, Haifa, Hadera, Netanya, Herzliya, Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Jerusalem, Ashdod, and Be'er Sheva. 80 percent of the Israeli population will have to live within range of the short range missiles which Hamas produces.

Are you willing to live in such a place, under a constant threat of terrorists with missiles? If not, how can you preach to me and millions of Israelis to live in such a place?

Israel is not California; the Middle East is different, a region where peace is given only to the party which is strong, armed to its teeth, dangerous, and ready to immediately retaliate in disproportional reaction. It is better described as "credible threat." Only this party can enjoy peace which in the Middle Eastern terms is nothing more than a documented truce or ceasefire.

Kol Tuv,
—Mordechai Kedar

RABBI LERNER RESPONDS TO
MORDECHAI KEDAR:

It is far more likely that Hamas will take over the West Bank if Israel continues its Occupation than if it deals with the Palestinian people in a spirit of reconciliation, generosity, and caring for their well being. I'd be happy to live in an Israel that had implemented a peace agreement that I present as the only sustainable path to a lasting peace and justice for all, and does so in a spirit of real generosity and caring for the well being of the Palestinian people and the security and well being of Jews living inside the boundaries as I describe in my book *Embracing Israel/Palestine*.

WHAT KIND OF FEMINISM IS THIS? WONDER WOMAN AS OCCUPIER

The Spring 2017 issue of Tikkun with its focus on the oppressive occupation by Israel of the West Bank Palestinians may have been quickly overshadowed by the release of a pop movie featuring a pro-Occupation movie star, the same week of the 50th anniversary of the Occupation.

In case you were not following the entertainment news or don't have young daughters you're supposed to be empowering through popcorn cinema, Gal Gadot is an Israeli model and actress who, after appearing in several big budget films including the *Fast and Furious* franchise, has leapt to superstardom with the massive premier of her first *Wonder Woman* film. According to the film's director, Patty Jenkins (who is now being celebrated as the first woman to direct a Hollywood comic book blockbuster) *Wonder Woman* is a "new kind of action hero;" the "feminist hero we've been waiting for" whose representation in the film is an "attack on patriarchy." The cover of *Glamour* declared, "Gal Gadot Is Wonder Woman," and so it's hard to know to which one—the actress or the character—the *New York Times* was referring when it explained how the film will impact young girls' self-esteem, "If Wonder Woman can do it, she can too."

But whose self-esteem are we trying to raise exactly? Do we really need women in tight fitting outfits with golden lassos and superhuman powers to raise girls' self-images? Why wasn't Scarlett Johansson's Black Widow from *The Avengers* good enough? When Americans will elect a confessed pussy grabber as President, is an Amazonian princess really where we should be putting our emotional energy? I would think Jessica Jones, the far more troubled, realistic looking and hipster star of the eponymous Netflix show, would be the better role model. More like Lena Dunham if she'd played club soccer straight through college, but kept her razor sharp tongue and disdain for conventional sexual morality (*Wonder Woman* is more or less sexless, or at least doesn't see much point or use for men. Her stance on women and sex is not spelled out).

But isn't the point precisely that the only way to defeat Donald Trump and the horrific misogynistic, transphobic and all-around racist side of America he represents is not going to be through *Wonder Woman*, Superman, or Captain America? It's going to be through much more prosaically talented people, women and men, standing up and fighting against a system that is grinding them down with greater force than we've seen in decades.



Gal Gadot promoting Wonder Woman at San Diego Comic-Con.

Perhaps we can accept that there's at least a place for superheroines in the budding self-identities of young women. Why has Gal Gadot's Wonder Woman generated such controversy, even as it's breaking box office records? For the mainstream media, there is no controversy, as "journalists" have been duly repeating the advertising pitch that she is a feminist icon—as the Daily Beast's Melissa Leon declared, "this Diana Prince is so good, and so inspiring, that she—and her superhuman director Patty Jenkins—make you want to be better, too." The Jewish media has gone absolutely nuts over her, both in Israel and the Diaspora, conflating her identities as a Jew and an Israeli to see each *reinforcing* the other in her portrayal of Wonder Woman and in so doing being *good for Jews*.

As the father of a 12-year old young woman, I'd have thought her heroines should be Serena Williams, Carli Lloyd, Katherine John-

son, Judith Butler, JK Rowling, Malala, her pediatrician, or the mailwoman. Real-life women who've demonstrated incredible intelligence, talent, drive, and/or ethical grounding in their lives and work. Let's assume that in theory superhero films can inspire young girls to be more "bad-ass" and succeed to greater heights in their lives than they otherwise would be. What happens if the heroine supporters Occupation?

The fact that Gadot clearly has a politics that are at odds with the character she's portraying does not automatically disqualify her from playing that character. But Gadot is not simply an actress who happens to be Israeli. Nor is it merely that she's an Israeli actress who served, like most young Israelis, her compulsory military service.

Rather, Gadot has continuously brought up her time in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and her role as a combat trainer and

her support for IDF operations that are recognized universally to have involved large-scale war crimes. That she is identifying her own personal backstory with the backstory of Wonder Woman—that is the problem.

Brand Israel Versus Reality of Israel — for Women and Palestinians

The reality is that the producers and Gadot herself have intentionally morphed Gadot's backstory with that of the character she's playing. She is depicted as very much a "wonder woman" herself—a beautiful, young, modern, strong Israeli woman who excelled in her combat training to the point of training Israeli soldiers, and who has since then repeatedly used her time as a soldier as the foundation of the training she went through to become Wonder Woman. This is not a case of politically (over)sensitive film goers projecting or confusing the character with the actor; it's Gadot projecting and deliberately tying her personal experiences to the character in order to create the impression that she is uniquely qualified to bring that character to life. In her various interviews leading up to the film's release in which she explicitly uses the term "role model" and talks about her experiences in the IDF and Wonder Woman without any separation.

In this situation, young girls—or anyone for that matter who identifies Gadot with the values espoused by her character, Wonder Woman, are quite naturally going to look at her statements and the conflict in which she is clearly taking sides and assume that she, and through her, Israel, represent the ideals of Wonder Woman. This automatically means that the other side, Palestinians, must represent the very opposite of these ideals; and by extension, Palestinian women must represent the opposite of the "badassery" either as passive subjects of humiliation from their Arab/Muslim culture or as supporters of irrational hatred of Jews and Israelis.

Indeed, Gadot is a prime example of Brand Israel, which is one of the most important elements of the propaganda war on Palestinians. The former IDF poster girl is using herself and being used by Israel as the perfect propaganda piece to project the image of Israel as a modern, enlightened, democratic society where women enjoy complete equality with men and are free to excel in whatever they dream (in fact, she said precisely this in a Hebrew Language article on Ynet published to coincide with International Women's Day).

Never mind that this image of Israeli women, which returns to the pre-1948 era Zionist propaganda, is belied by the reality of an extremely macho society where one in three

women is a victim of sexual assault, with harassment in her beloved IDF rising in recent years, and secular and particularly Orthodox Jewish women suffering significant gender oppression. Needless to say, the realities of women's lives in Israel is no different than that of women in most every other country. But based on my Hebrew as well as English internet searches, it seems Gadot has rarely, if ever, spoken out about these issues. How would Wonder Woman feel about that?

As former B'Tselem head Jessie Montell argued back in 1991, every Israeli woman grows up thinking hers is a "country of sexual equality," which is defined as such first and foremost through women and men "fighting alongside each other." This trope is intimately tied to another one, that the conflict is not the fault of enlightened and modern Israel, but rather of backwards and chauvinistic Palestinians. Of course, pointing out that Israel does not live up to the mythology surrounding women's equality does not signify anything other than Israel is no different than most countries, and in fact better than many when it comes to the treatment of its female citizens.

Needed — A Real Lasso of Truth

The reason for pointing out this gap between Gadot's narrative and reality is because it is repeated in an even more extreme form in her discussions of Israel. Specifically, in her many public discussions of the IDF, including her clear tweeting of support for the 2014 war on Gaza. Gadot has never, as far as I have been able to find in English or Hebrew, said a word about Palestinians suffering, about the ills of the Occupation, or the fact that those soldiers she brags about training routinely commit war crimes and otherwise oppress, harm, and even kill Palestinians whose Occupation has just turned 50.

For Gal Gadot, it appears that Palestine and Palestinians simply don't exist, or at least are not worth mentioning in any meaningful way (I would appreciate being shown otherwise here if people have found any articles or interviews with her talking in any meaningful way about the Occupation, about the excesses of the IDF, or otherwise demonstrating some kind of critical distance from the IDF and Israeli policies.) Instead, she *tweeted* her "love" for the IDF during the Gaza war as a thousand Palestinian civilians were being killed. If we're being honest, we might conclude that if Wonder Woman met Gal Gadot, she'd lasso her and bring her to the Paradise Island Court of Justice to face trial as an accomplice to terrible crimes. At the very least, her Lasso of

Truth would force Gadot to own up to her own complicity in the Israeli machinery of war and occupation.

Ultimately, if Gadot is in fact a "*feminist hero*," she's a hero for women and girls who can ignore certain atrocities which don't directly affect them. Your children are safe, their bodies aren't being policed by soldiers, their schools haven't been bombed, the hospitals they lay in don't have bullet holes in the walls, their water supplies haven't been cut, their electricity isn't regularly shut off by another government. This is not the hero I want my daughter or son to emulate.

For all of us who are interested in supporting the forces seeking reconciliation and peace between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, this particular Wonder Woman has just become yet another obstacle in our path.

Mark LeVine is a professor of history at UC Irvine. He is presently completing a collaboratively written history of the Occupation to be published by the University of California Press.

END CENSORSHIP FOR HILLEL

Tikkun's Spring 2017 issue addressing the 50th anniversary of the Occupation led me to think about the way the Occupation's immorality can only be defended if people don't know what is going on. So I was not surprised when I learned that Israel's Education Minister Naftali Bennett has proposed a new ethics code for Israeli universities.

According to reports, this code would forbid professors from expressing their political views and would require each school to "establish a unit that would monitor political activity" on campus. How can students and professors speak openly about the Occupation if they face disciplinary action for expressing their ideas and opinions? In Israel, students, leaders in academia, and even members of Knesset are speaking out against this code of censorship, calling it "another step to wipe out debate and freedom of thought," and comparing it to a form of "thought police."

Yet, this is not the first time that Bennett has used his position as Minister of Education to silence and intimidate his critics. Since Bennett took office in 2013, he has censored books and plays, and banned human rights organizations from Israeli schools.

Last year, Bennett extended his censorship practices to college campuses in the United States. He launched a \$66 million initiative, Mosaic United, which aims to "combat critical discourse" around Israel. In August 2016, Hillel International announced a \$22 million

partnership with Mosaic. Hillel should stand up against Bennett's censorship, but instead, they are choosing to facilitate his censorship campaign, undermining Hillel's former commitments to religious and political pluralism. Hillel should not accept donations from those working to suppress student discourse. Doing so is an affront to the value of pluralism upon which Hillel was founded and compromises the integrity of Hillel as a home for Jewish students.

If you agree, please go to the website <http://bit.ly/2s1YKld> and send a message to Hillel International CEO Eric Fingerhut that Hillel must end its partnership with Naftali Bennett and Mosaic United today. With your help, we can reject Bennett's censorship practices and promote open discourse on college campuses and in our Jewish communities. Together, we can reclaim Hillel as an open, pluralistic, and democratically accountable Jewish community.

—Elana Metz, *OpenHillel.org*

EXCELLENT ARTICLE (EDITORIAL SPRING 2017) RABBI.

I really appreciate your perspective and have a couple other thoughts to offer.

For nearly a year, I explored joining a synagogue for the first time since age 18 (I'm 65 now).

Temple Emanuel is the most "progressive" and largest synagogue here in Dallas.

However for me the awful "elephant in the room" was despite calls for social justice, there is a complete ignorance of what's happening in Israel. In fact, last month they celebrated a "Celebrating Israel Week", and of course no mention of the disasters going on there. So this strongly contributed to a choice on my part to stop attending services there and letting my membership expire.

I do agree with everything your article stated, with a move to either a two-state solution, or one state honoring all peoples and all faiths.

The only difference I have is that I do believe Jerusalem needs to remain as the capital of Jewish Israel just as Vatican City is the Catholic capital of Italy and the entire world. However it's also crucial that Palestinians have free and total reign for governing their sacred sites as well as government in East Jerusalem.

Why? For years in the Passover text, one of the affirmations was "next year in Jerusalem."

This has such symbolic meaning for Jews worldwide, and it may sway some of the more tradition bound Jews to our side.

—Stephen Levine

RABBI LERNER REPLIES TO
STEPHEN LEVINE:

I fully support Jerusalem remaining the capital of Israel. But if you've ever visited East Jerusalem with its majority of Palestinian Muslims, you can see why, in a final settlement agreement, it makes sense for that part of Jerusalem to become the capital of a Palestinian state. I lay out my vision of what the terms of that final peace agreement would be in my book *Embracing Israel/Palestine* (available at www.tikkun.org/eip). The editorial in our 50th Anniversary of the Occupation addressed what to do in the meantime before Israel is ready to seriously negotiate and generously support the creation of a Palestinian State. In that period, Israel should extend full voting rights in Knesset elections to everyone living under Israeli rule, including the 2 million Palestinians in the West Bank. When that idea gets universal support, as it will in most of the world and in the US, even right-wing Israelis, fearful of the outcome of making Israel a democratic country, are likely to move more honestly to create the Palestinian state, but that is not happening now.

THE NSP SPIRITUAL ACTIVIST TRAINING IN THE TRUMP YEARS

The Spiritual Activism training has had a profound effect on my work and my life. As a rabbi who perhaps has been saying the same old stuff for too long a time, the vision of creating the world we want without being confined by either a rigid reality-orientation or surplus powerlessness has led to a new sense of inspiration that I have applied to all of my public communication. I have also been inspired to become much more involved in the political arena and in working for Tikkun Olam on many levels, including in my invocations to both houses of the Michigan legislature, as well as work with the Mayor's office in Lansing and the office of Michigan Senator, Gary Peters. I've recently started working with the Michigan chapter of the National Association of Social Workers to develop programs to break down religiophobia among progressive professionals. After our local clergy association enthusiastically responded to my presentation on the Network of Spiritual Progressives, I organized a local NSP chapter that has been

active, and thriving over the last few months. I have also been involved with the national NSP clergy caucus and am serving on the Editorial Advisory Board of Tikkun Magazine. Within my rabbinical association, I have advocated for solution-based approaches that go beyond simply resisting Trump-ism, and expanding our diversity work to focus on the concerns of poor white working-class families.

I participated in the training together with our synagogue president and other members. Since that time we have taken Tikkun Olam activities to a new level together, including seminars on racism, classes on Torah teaching for addressing the world situation, and the decision to devote the following year to support of refugees and immigrants by affiliating with the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society's refugee-supporting congregation association. With the unanimous endorsement of our board, we proudly display a huge banner facing a busy street, affirming our support for immigrants and our Muslim neighbors.

On a personal level, the focus on nonviolent communication and respectful dialogue has had a significant effect in my family life, where the challenge of overcoming patterns of defense, misunderstanding, and aggression can be especially acute.

In short, the Spiritual Activism training, in my view, is a vital step for building the world we value and reversing the world-wide slide into anti-democratic and even fascist ways of thinking. This training and the movement behind it deserves generous financial support and far greater visibility and participation.

Sincerely,
—Rabbi Michael Zimmerman,
*Congregation Kehillat Israel,
Lansing, Michigan*

Tikkun magazine is . . .

. . . a vehicle for spreading a new consciousness. We call it a spiritual progressive worldview. But what is that?

What Do You Mean by "Spiritual"?

You can be spiritual and still be an atheist or agnostic. To be spiritual, you don't have to believe in God or accept New Age versions of spirituality. You don't need to give up science or your critical faculties. We use the word "spiritual" to describe all aspects of reality that cannot be subject to empirical verification or measurement: everything pertaining to ethics, aesthetics, music, art, philosophy, religion, poetry, literature, dance, love, generosity, and joy. We reject the notion that everything worthy of consideration to guide our personal lives and our economic and political arrangements must be measurable.

What's a Spiritual Progressive?

To be a spiritual progressive is to agree that our public institutions, corporations, government policies, laws, education system, health care system, legal system, and even many aspects of our personal lives should be judged "efficient, rational, or productive" to the extent that they maximize love, caring, generosity, and ethical and environmentally sustainable behavior. We call this our New Bottom Line.

Spiritual progressives seek to build "The Caring Society: Caring for Each Other and Caring for the Earth." Our well-being depends upon the well-being of everyone else and also on the well-being of the planet itself. So we commit to an ethos of generosity, nonviolence, and radical amazement at the grandeur of all that is, and seek to build a global awareness of the unity of all being.

If you are willing to help promote this New Bottom Line for our society, you are a spiritual progressive. And if you are a spiritual progressive, we invite you to join our Network of Spiritual Progressives at spiritualprogressives.org.

Don't Despair

Hope is the Chanukah and Christmas Message

THERE ARE MANY REASONS TO BE UPSET.

The violence of Nazi, fascistic, racist and anti-Semitic forces in Charlottesville and in many subsequent locations, defended by the Trump Administration, has pulled politics even further to the Right. This enables extremists in Congress to denounce the overt Nazis and hence look “responsible” while still pursuing a reactionary agenda that is de facto racist and classist in its impact. In between the moments when Trump seems threatening nuclear war, he promises to take actions that will cause a collapse of Obamacare and open the door for the embrace of the Republican alternative that will cut off care for 24 million people and also Medicare and Social Security. The Trump Administration is dismantling environmental protections, food safety, workers rights, protecting corporations from environmental restrictions and corporate taxes, and enacting more evil. They have already succeeded in the Right’s primary goal: to undermine trust in government.

Oy.

All of this is deplorable, and it needs to be challenged. In order to make any serious impact, the liberal and progressive forces need to win at the ballot box, and that is unlikely until the Democratic Party, the Green Party, progressive foundations, think tanks, and tens of thousands of local activists and public opinion shapers change in important ways. We cannot win people who did not vote or voted for the Right not because they agreed with its program (many had voted for Obama in 2008 or even Sanders in the Democratic primaries) but because of their anger at liberals and progressives, until we make two serious revisions: (1) We must not only present more progressive policies to the American public, but also use a psychologically sophisticated approach to the need for respect of many who have felt dissed by the Left. This must be accompanied by an end to leftist religio-phobia, elitism and thinking we are on a higher plane than others, and an explicit and worked out vision not only of what we are against but also of the world we are for — the Caring Society: Caring for Each Other and Caring for the Earth. (2) We must stop blaming and shaming the rest of the

population, assuming that if they are not yet with us it is only because they are racists, sexists, homophobes, xenophobes or stupid. Meanwhile, Cat Zavis is offering an online training so you can learn how to be an effective and psychologically astute organizer during the Trumpist years ahead. For more information, go to www.spiritualprogressives.org/training.

Is it unrealistic that the liberals and progressives could change, and influence the Right to win back an important segment of support? Do we need a miracle? Well that kind of miracle is precisely what we are celebrating on Chanukah and Christmas.

Chanukah celebrates the victory of a liberation struggle in Judea 165 B.C.E. when a tiny guerilla army of farmers and religious activists beat the powerful occupying army of the Hellenistic Syrian regime. All the “smart money,” the sophisticated “realists” said that such struggle was ridiculous and had no chance of winning. Christmas celebrates the birth of a child who became the symbol through the ages to billions of people who were faced with economic and social realities of oppression and clung to the belief that this child, crucified as an adult by the Roman occupying army in Judea, would return and establish a new global reality of peace on earth.

Each of these religious traditions eventually got screwed up. The Maccabees became a corrupt Hashmona'im dynasty that would open Judea to Roman rule. The crucifixion became the excuse to vilify and murder Jews, women (supposedly witches), and people of color around the world and to justify class oppression. All true. And so even when Trump and his coterie of haters and oppressors is no longer in power, we will still have much more to do to replace our current global system of inequality and oppression.

Yet what Chanukah and Christmas celebrate is the possibility of a different kind of world. The Chanukah lights of the Menorah and the Christmas lights at the darkest moments of the year are a testimony to our capacity to hope. Don't give Trump a victory by falling into despair! Our motto: “Don't be realistic.” You never know what is possible till you struggle for what is desirable, even if this struggle takes many, many years to achieve a compassionate Left capable of communicating true caring to the American people and more years to win to our side the many people who are in pain and whose pain can only really be relieved by dramatic changes in our economic, political and cultural systems . . .

We will be engaging in that struggle here at Tikkun, so consider sharing some of your holiday generosity with us — we depend on your tax-deductible donations to enable us to continue to promote our hopeful vision to the world. Go to www.tikkun.org/donate or send a check to Tikkun, 2342 Shattuck Ave, Box 1200, Berkeley, Ca. 94704 and buy subscriptions to Tikkun (either the print version or the online version) or call us with your credit card: 510-644-1200. Gift subscriptions are the perfect holiday gift for anyone whom you wish would also share our hopeful vision. ■

Seeing through the Wall

A life and film

BY DOV TAYLOR

COULD I LIVE a more authentic Jewish life in a “Jewish state”? Could there be a Jewish nation-state that would not succumb to the evils of the modern nation-state, but would organize its existence consistent with the classical Jewish values of justice and love? The questions are not new to me, but they are unfortunately still pressing.

With one year remaining before rabbinic ordination at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City, I decided to take a year’s leave of absence (1966-67) to explore these questions for myself at HUC-JIR’s School of Biblical Archaeology in Jerusalem.

When I signed up to participate in the dig at Tel Gezer in the spring of 1967, it never occurred to me that archaeological excavation would become one more weapon in the ongoing struggle between Israel and Palestine for legitimacy in this ancient land; or that it would become a metaphor for the self-scrutiny many of us engage in as we try to sort out our Jewish identity from the un-Jewish policies of “the state of the Jewish people.”

That year I read *Toledot ha-Emuna ha-Yisre’ilit*; Yechezkel Kaufmann’s thesis was that Israelite monotheism began with Moses. He states, “It was absolutely different from anything the pagan world knew; its monotheistic world view has no antecedents in paganism.”

Thanks in large part to archaeology, we now know that in all likelihood the Israelites were never in Egypt or the wilderness, didn’t conquer the land or divide it among the twelve tribes of Israel, and adopted monotheism much later than Mount Sinai. Archaeological evidence doesn’t support a Jewish claim to a Greater Israel.

On May 15, 1967 at the annual Israel Song Festival at *Bin-yanei ha-Uma*, I heard Shuli Natan sing for the first time a new song that had been commissioned by Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek — Naomi Shemer’s “Jerusalem of Gold” — and the crowd went wild. The song lamented, “One can’t go



Officers in the Israeli Defense Force during the Six-Day War in 1967.

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down to the Dead Sea by way of the Jericho Road” or “visit the Temple Mount in the Old City,” expressing a bittersweet longing. At the time, no one knew that, in less than a month, the Jericho Road and the Temple Mount would be under Israeli control and the song lyrics would need to be changed to reflect the new reality.

Then came May 23rd and Nasser’s threatened blockade of the Straits of Tiran and its effects on Israeli shipping. Everyone knew that a response was inevitable, and we were terrified that a war against three Arab countries could result in a massacre — and even the end of the State of Israel. Very quickly the country was on a war footing. All reserves were called on. We piled sandbags against the glass walls of the college that faced the Old City and donated blood in anticipation of what was to come. Most foreigners scrambled to get out of the country before war broke out, even if it meant flying east instead of west. My academic year had ended, and I had a reservation for a flight home in a few days. No one could have predicted Israel’s stunning victory in what would come to be known as The Six-Day War.

Sometimes we discover what we *really* believe only when forced to make a decision. At home in America I felt like a Jew. In Israel, despite my facility with the language, I felt like an American. I was homesick for my family and my country — the country that had made me who I was and had given me everything I had, and was eager to get back to.

But I’d lived for nine months in Jerusalem, travelled the land, made Israeli friends, shopped in Israeli markets, encountered the beggars of Jerusalem made famous in Elie Wiesel’s book of the same name. I could leave. But for them, this was the last stop. Had I been in America at the time, I doubt whether I would have boarded a plane for a war zone; but I was already in Israel, and the country was in crisis. I knew that if I left, I couldn’t live with myself — let alone claim the mantle of rabbinic leadership for which I’d spent so many years preparing. I cancelled my flight reservation and did my best to make myself useful.

After the war, the mood quickly changed from fear to euphoria, which soon turned into triumphalism and a sense of invincibility. Few Israelis were in the mood to heed wiser voices, which warned that being an occupier meant doing things for which Israel would come to hate itself.

Three months after the war ended, an open letter appeared in *Haaretz*:

Our right to defend ourselves against annihilation does not grant us the right to oppress others. Conquest brings in its wake foreign rule. Foreign rule brings in its wake resistance. Resistance brings in its wake oppression. Oppression brings in its wake terrorism and counter-terrorism. The victims of terrorism are usually innocent people. Holding onto the territories will turn us into a nation of murderers and murder victims. Let us leave the occupied territories now.

This voice was not alone. In a prescient 1968 essay entitled, “The Territories,” the well-known Israeli philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz wrote:

The Arabs would be the working people and the Jews the administrators, inspectors, officials, and police — mainly secret police. A state ruling a hostile population of 1.5 to 2 million foreigners would necessarily become a secret-police state, with all that this implies for education, free speech and democratic institutions. The corruption characteristic of every colonial regime would also prevail in the State of Israel. The administration would suppress Arab insurgency on the one hand and acquire Arab Quislings on the other. There is also good reason to fear that the Israel Defense Forces, which has been until now a people’s army, would, as a result of being transformed into an army of occupation, degenerate, and its commanders, who will have become military governors, resemble their colleagues in other nations.

Alas! Fifty years later, the letter and Leibowitz’s essay accurately describe the contemporary reality of Israel and Palestine. What began as an attempt to use captured territories as bargaining chips in a peace settlement has become a full-fledged occupation, one that has corroded the Israeli soul while heaping misery upon the Palestinians. In a 2004 interview with *Haaretz*, noted Israeli journalist and intellectual Amos Elon called the occupation, “the crappiest colonial regime that I can think of in the modern age.”

I have returned to Israel many times since the fateful years of 1966-67. In 1970-71, I spent another year in Jerusalem — this time with my wife and infant daughter — while researching a doctoral dissertation in Modern Hebrew literature and teaching in HUC-JIR’s newly instituted “Year in Israel” program for first-year rabbinic students. In subsequent years, I attended several rabbinic conventions in, and led a congregational trip to Israel. In December 2013, I presented a paper at an academic colloquium at the Hebrew University.

I had a fairly good idea of what was happening in the West Bank but, like most Americans and most Israelis, I’d never been there to see it for myself. So, in the spring of 2016, I took a group to Israel/Palestine with three goals in mind: to meet Palestinians as human beings with the same needs, hopes and dreams that we all have for ourselves and our children, to see for ourselves what the occupation looks like on the ground, and to hear from organizations in which Israelis and Palestinians work together to achieve justice and peace. It was to be not a sightseeing tour but an encounter with the truth — or with many truths.

To enable us to share that encounter with a much larger audience, I invited filmmaker Anne Macksoud (www.olddogdocumentaries.org) to accompany us and document our experience — through the eyes, ears, minds, and hearts of our travelers. The film crew schlepped its equipment through

U.S. and Israeli security and recorded over forty hours of footage, which Anne distilled into an hour-long riveting documentary entitled, *Seeing through the Wall: Meeting Ourselves in Palestine and Israel*.

Seeing through the Wall has elicited many appreciative responses. A typical reaction is that of Professor of Jewish Studies Susannah Heschel, daughter of the late Rabbi Abraham Heschel and chair of the Jewish Studies program at Dartmouth:

I just want to tell you that your film is great! What I appreciate in particular is the way you take the viewer, along with the travelers, on a journey of gradual discovery. You don't give us the conclusions or a drumbeat of ideology, but let us follow along. I know there is a huge split about Israel . . . and I appreciate that your film takes a gentle, sympathetic position toward all sides. You create a tone of voice that I think is absolutely crucial if we are to make any progress.

I hoped that the film might engender a civil discussion among Americans in general and American Jews in particular. It didn't occur to me that another audience would see the film as a sign of hope. I was in for a surprise.

A 26-year-old Palestinian man was part of a small-group screening in a private home. At the end of the film he said, "I want to tell you why I was weeping. I grew up in a refugee camp in the West Bank. The only Israelis I ever saw were either soldiers armed to the teeth or settlers who took our homes and our land. Now I see that there are Israelis and American Jews who are sympathetic to our plight. This is a very hopeful sign to me and I want my people to know about it."

Then he attended a screening of the film at our local theater, which was almost filled to its four-hundred-seat capacity. During the Q&A that followed, he joined Anne and me up front to respond to questions. Suddenly he turned to me and said, "Rabbi Taylor, I need to apologize to you." I had no idea what he was talking about. Then he turned to the audience and said, "And I need to apologize to you as well. When I was in the refugee camp, I cursed the Israelis and the Jews and the Americans, and now I see that there are Israelis and Jews and other Americans who understand our situation and are sympathetic. I apologize to all of you for cursing you."

I've just seen the excellent Broadway play, *Oslo*, which tells the story of the back-channel talks that led to the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords. It reminds us that when we meet on a human level to talk to one another and to truly listen to one another, walls of fear, anger, and mistrust can crumble. It kindles light in a dark time.

In his 1988 volume, *Where are We?*, Leonard Fein tells a story that is true, whether or not it is apocryphal. In nineteenth-century Russia, Berl asks a non-Jewish acquaintance, "What do you Russians really think of the Jews?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, we think you're a remarkable



The Hawara checkpoint in the West Bank is one of many in the occupied territories.

people. You're smart, you're clever, you're hardworking. You value education, you care for your families. But there's one thing about you that really bugs me."

"What's that?"

"You think you're better than us. What makes you think that?"

"It's a long story," says the Jew, "but I'll make it short. We think we're your moral betters because you hunt and we don't hunt."

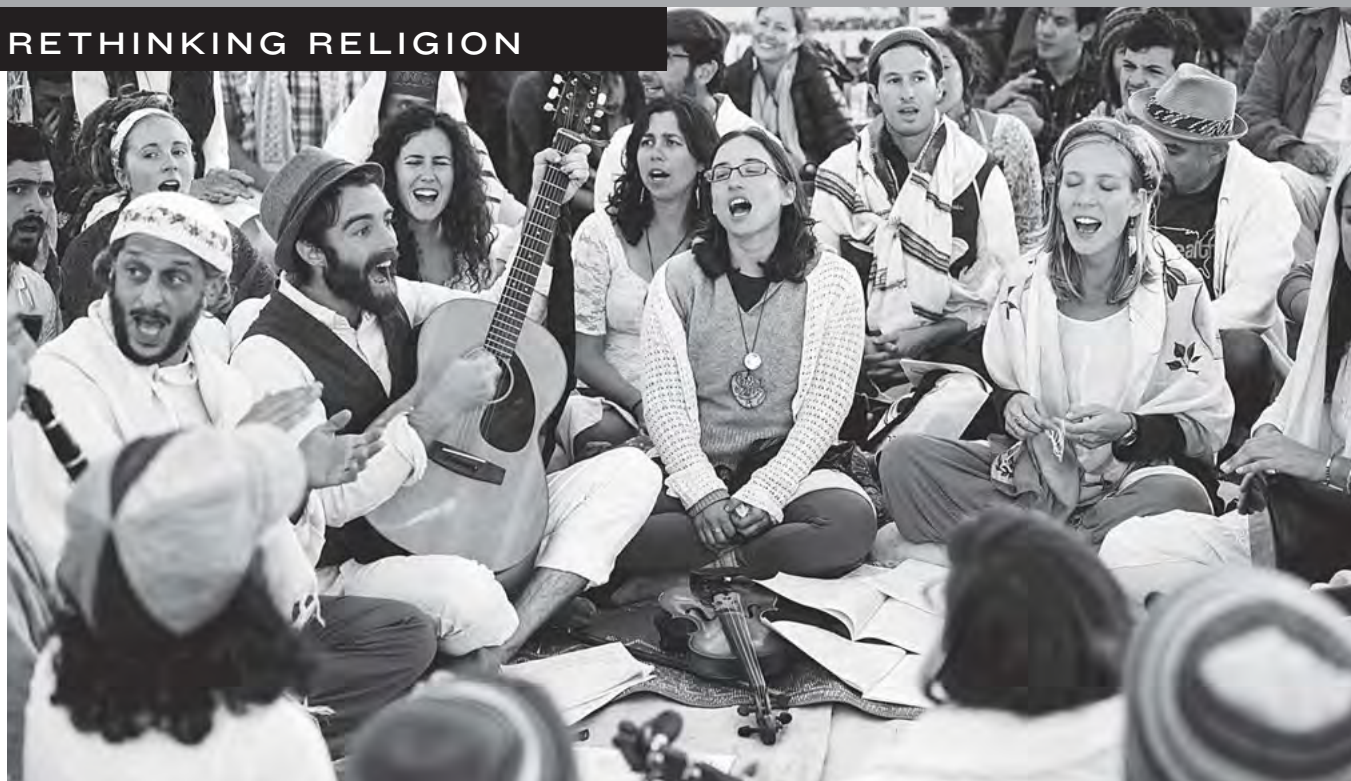
"You silly, trivial people! Of course you don't hunt! We don't let you own guns!"

Whereupon Berl's Jewish friends say, "Tomorrow we pack and go up to the land, to Jerusalem, and there we shall prove that even with guns we shall not become hunters."

Fein concludes: Now that Jews have guns, will we too become hunters?

Well, we still don't hunt, but now we know what can happen when Jews have guns — we use violence in a worse way. We maintain the brutal occupation of 2.7 million Palestinians who yearn for independence. We turn Gaza into an open-air prison camp. We condone the extra-judicial execution of would-be terrorists. We confiscate Palestinian land and demolish Palestinian homes. We suppress free speech and intimidate both Palestinians and Israelis who oppose our shameful behavior. We give the lie to the myth we've been telling ourselves that Jews are somehow more ethical than others.

And now that we know the answer to Fein's question, are we content with this knowledge, or must we try to change it? As we work to envision an alternate future, *Seeing through the Wall* offers a way to begin. ■



Participants in a Jewish festival hosted by Wilderness Torah.

The Magic of Emergence

BY NATAN MARGALIT

THE WHOLE IS GREATER than the sum of the parts” is an old adage, but it could be one of the most important keys to a healthy, meaningful life. People yearn to be a part of something. When we are a part of something, we feel whole. When we see how things connect and relate to form a whole, they make sense and resonate: they come alive.

In 1973 I arrived at Camp Swig, a Reform Jewish summer camp in Big Basin, California as a shy 15 year old kid from Hawai`i. My parents were New York Jewish intellectuals who moved to Hawai`i when I was a baby. They wanted nothing more than to get away from the New York part of their identities, and were fairly unconcerned with the Jewish part as well. So to say I didn’t have much Jewish background would be an understatement.

But Camp Swig hit me like a revelation. There was something magical about it. I could feel it especially on Friday afternoons when we sang together in a big circle under the redwoods; everyone cleaned up and dressed in white. I loved

the sound of the Hebrew songs. I loved discussing and earnestly arguing about God, social justice, and identity. I loved the artistic creativity and do-it-yourself ethic seen when campers painted the water tower or dug our own gaga pit into the ground instead of just turning over some benches. I loved the camp friendships. The fact that we were all thrown together in an intense, highly interactive social environment, away from the cliques and in-groups of home made it easy to talk, easy to interact (or at least easier for this shy kid to meet girls). That magical mixture of camp life changed me, as it has for many Jewish teens — it made me finally feel whole. When I graduated high school and got too old for summer camp, I found that I needed to go in search for whatever it was I had experienced there.

It wasn’t a straight path, but the next time I deeply felt that wholeness was in my early 20s, when I was involved in the Orthodox Judaism of Jerusalem; especially on Shabbat. Shabbat in the Orthodox world wasn’t the same as at Camp Swig — there was no swaying with a pretty girl on

NATAN MARGALIT was ordained in Jerusalem in 1990 and earned a Ph.D. in Talmud from U.C. Berkeley in 2001. He has taught at Bard College, RRC, Hebrew College Rabbinical School and is Founder and President of Organic Torah Institute, a non-profit which integrates systems thinking and Judaism. www.organictrah.org

each arm singing Hebrew songs — but it came to epitomize for me much of what attracted me to Orthodoxy. On Shabbat, I felt I was entering into something that gently held me for 25 hours, transforming my experience of time and self. I especially loved the Shabbat meals. They were almost always with a group of friends, maybe with a family or two. There wasn't anything wrong with small talk, catching up, and joking around, but it was also perfectly normal for someone at the table to open up a book of commentaries on the weekly Torah portion and read a little, offer some of his or her own thoughts on it and start a discussion.

After a good discussion, we sang. The singing of Shabbat songs (*z'mirot* in Hebrew) is true folk music in the sense that tunes are composed, learned, and passed on from person to person. Sometimes we'd lose ourselves in the singing and it would go on for hours.

Put together with good food, and a little rest (sometimes I'd take a short nap right in the middle of the meal, lying down on a couch and catching a few Z's before returning to the table) the Shabbat meals of my Orthodox days were usually very restorative and often richly satisfying experiences. Deep friendships were created, personal journeys were navigated, and I really did understand why Ahad HaAm had famously said, "It is not that the Jewish people kept Shabbat, but Shabbat has kept the Jewish people."

What was the commonality between the Camp Swig experience and my Orthodox Shabbatot in Jerusalem? Both had the same magic — it's the magic that happens when people come together long enough, or intentionally enough, to let down their guards; to share something of themselves; to enter into a circle (literally or metaphorically) and focus on something larger than themselves.

This feeling of Shabbat as an entity, as a palpable reality that one can enter into, emerges from the community of people practicing it. I'm reminded of a story from the Talmud (BT Tractate Shabbat 119a) in which the Roman emperor, having experienced a Shabbat meal with the rabbinic community, asked Rabbi Yehoshua, "Why is it that the Shabbat meal has such a delicious fragrance?" Rabbi Yehoshua answered, "There is a particular spice that we put in it." The emperor ordered Rabbi Yehoshua to give him some of the spice. But Rabbi Yehoshua had to tell him: "it works if you're keeping Shabbat, but if you're not, the spice doesn't work."

I think Rabbi Yehoshua is saying that you can't take one thing like the food, that tastes so good on Shabbat, and "bottle" it, taking it out of the context of the whole of which it is a part. It won't taste the same. A meal, as we know from writers like Michael Pollan, Claude Levy-Straus, and Mary Douglas, is not simply putting food into your mouth. A meal is a cultural creation, something that emerges from the people around the table, the feelings and memories attached to the foods, and the tempo and rhythm of the event.

I've found that to be especially true of the Shabbat meal.

We can eat Challah and have wine, we can even light candles and make a blessing, but if there isn't enough context to make it a whole Shabbat experience, those individual Shabbat items by themselves can feel flat and lifeless. Perhaps even worse, they can feel *kind of nice, sort of meaningful* — and then we can conclude that this is all Shabbat is: kind of nice, sort of meaningful.

And, unfortunately, too much of contemporary Judaism does seem to fall somewhere into that zone between "flat and lifeless" and "kind of nice, sort of meaningful." We're like that Roman emperor, trying to reproduce something by pulling out an element or two, but missing the whole that emerges when all the parts come together. The point of the Talmudic story is that there isn't one "spice" that makes Shabbat special; but rather that there is something essential, ineffable, even mysterious, that emerges from the whole.

I am no longer Orthodox and I'm too old for summer camp, but I, and I believe many people in the Jewish world, find ourselves searching for that magic of wholeness that I found in those contexts. For some it may be camp-like immersive experiences such as retreats, going to a Kallah or a Shabbaton. For others, some version of the weekly traditional Shabbat experience can capture this magic. This isn't the property of any one form of Judaism. I've felt some of this in every movement and many different synagogues and homes. The key is creating enough of a deep context for sharing and community that there is a palpable feeling that something new has emerged.

When I use the term "emerge" it is more than a casual phrase. In Western academic and scientific settings "emergence" is a new discipline in itself and it is gaining acceptance



The indescribable making an appearance in the California Redwoods.



Jews gathering at a festival to find presence and community.

in many fields from biology to entrepreneurship, from sociology to medicine. When one talks to the experts there are many and conflicting definitions, but the simplest way that I've found to express emergence is in the old saying, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

Water is H_2O —a molecule made up of hydrogen and oxygen. Neither hydrogen nor oxygen by themselves feels wet, puts out fires, or sustains life. But, together they do. Something new has emerged when the parts become a whole. Closer to home: if I'm teaching a class and I'm droning on with what I think is a fascinating topic, but the people are just sitting there trying to absorb my brilliance, that usually feels dead, dull and boring. But if I engage the class in a discussion by laying out an idea and getting their feedback and then the feedback leads me to a new idea and it bounces back and forth, that class feels alive and vibrant—something new has emerged in the interaction that was more than the subject, more than me, and more than the students. We've all felt classrooms of both types.

It is important to recognize that emergence as a modern, scientific concept is bucking the trend of more than three hundred years of scientific thought. Since the days of Descartes, Bacon, Newton, and the other pioneers of the 17th century Scientific Revolution, we have been taught that the scientific way to understand the world is to break things down into component parts. Emergence is one concept within the growing area of systems thinking which move in the direction of seeking explanation by putting together rather than breaking apart. While there have been a number of discrete schools of thought (think Cybernetics of Jungian) and different labels for the movements that have parted from reductionism, these have been like waves lapping up on a shore, even as the tide is going out. I believe that we are perhaps coming to a tipping point (another concept spun off from systems science, by the way), in which the tide is turning. We are coming to a point where the old reductionist explanations are not adequate to the problems that we face, and thinkers in

many different fields are turning to a new systems approach. This approach, as I hope to show below, is much more in sync with traditional cultures such as Judaism.

For one clear example: It has been very powerful to know that diseases are caused by particular bacteria that we can see in a microscope. That we can now make antibiotics to fight those bacteria has been a revolution in human health. But, for all the success that modern medicine has had through breaking things down and looking for the most basic underlying causes of disease—an example of "reductionism" insofar as it explains by reducing a problem to such underlying causes—we are starting to see the limitations of this approach. We've started to see that killing the bacteria isn't a one way street, it's a feedback loop: the more we use antibiotics on them, the more the bacteria mutate to resist them and we are now in real danger of "superbugs" or antibiotic resistant strains.

Emergence is one concept within the growing area of system thinking which move in the direction of seeking explanation by putting together rather than breaking apart.

We have also learned that, while it is true that particular bacteria can be a major factor in the onset of disease, many other factors also play a part. For one thing, bacteria are present all the time and we don't always get sick. We now know that other bacteria might be counteracting the "bad" ones that are living in our bodies. In fact, we have discovered that the human biome (the community of microorganisms living inside us all the time) is essential to our health and functioning.

We also know that our immune system fights off many bacteria. What factors, such as emotional stress, might be weakening our immune system? We are starting to see that health is a complex system. It emerges out of the interaction of many factors, biological, psychological, social and spiritual, that together create a whole greater than the sum of its parts. What factors, such as emotional stress, might be weakening our immune system? What factors, such as strong social bonds, might be strengthening our immune system?

What does all this medical theory have to do with the life of the spirit? The father of modern agrarian writing, Wendell Berry, has made the connection very well. He writes,

“the concept of health is rooted in the concept of wholeness. To be healthy is to be whole. The word *health* belongs to a family of words, a listing of which will suggest how far the considerations of health must carry us: *heal, whole, wholesome, hale, hallow, holy.*”

Berry is writing about how farming is much more whole and healthy when it is a complex pattern of plants, animals, human communities, sun, air and land, all interacting with one another as in a small farm. That pattern is broken when we try to increase profits by raising cattle by the thousands in giant Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), or we try to increase efficiency by raising monocrops of corn or soy on giant industrial farms. He is also saying that there isn't a separation between the life of the farm and the life of the spirit. When we break that wholeness, that interactive pattern, we endanger not only our health, but also our holiness.

It is sadly true that religion has especially suffered under the modern reign of reductionist thinking. There is a danger of what some experts have called “nothing buttery”—the tendency for scientists to say something is “nothing but” Love is “nothing but” your chemicals reacting to someone else's chemicals; that religious vision was “nothing but” a mental aberration caused by stress or mental illness; God is “nothing but” a projection of our psychological needs.

Emergence is a concept and new scientific field which touches a wide variety of area from medicine to agriculture, from psychology to theology and more. In science, it is a shift from a reductionist theory which seeks explanation by reducing phenomena to underlying causes, toward systems science which looks for explanation in the interactions within a system. Unfortunately, reductionism has infiltrated beyond scientific theories; our society, our education and our economics have all recently taken on a more fragmented quality, and would be well served to take note of emergence.

Judaism has long been sensitive to emergence, even if it is not named as such. The ancient idea of a minyan, the quorum of ten adult Jews (in the past, and presently in Orthodox settings, Jewish men) who must be present for certain prayers and blessings to be said, is a perfect example of emergence. There are certain utterances which are considered so holy that they are not appropriately said by individuals, but only in community. The *Kaddish* (an affirmation of God's holiness) and the *Bar'khu* (a call to communal prayer) for example, may only be said with a *minyan*. There seems to be a deeply felt ancient acknowledgment that there is something that happens in community, a spiritual presence that emerges, which is beyond the individual. The mystics would say that there is a new kind of *kli* — Hebrew for vessel, which is created when there is a community present.

The underlying value of emergence, the magic which comes about when things are put into relationship with one another, is not limited in Jewish tradition. In my own experience of



Smelling that special spice.

studying classic Jewish texts, I've found that they come alive when I look for the relationships and patterns in and between texts, rather than trying, in reductionist fashion, to break the texts down into smallest components. While I'm not against breaking down the texts for some purposes, like finding out who wrote what, and when, or even breaking the texts down into fine points of a Talmudic argument, for me the texts naturally speak to me, they seem most “at home,” when we interpret them in terms of interweaving patterns. After all, the major sections of the Talmud, which we translate as “tractate” (a Latin word having to do with the idea of extending) is in Hebrew *masekhet*, which means a weave.

The ancient classical Jewish texts such as the biblical texts, the Midrash, Mishnah and Talmud, were, in fact, woven together in an organic cultural process over centuries. Many prophets, writers, preachers, editors, and scribes left their marks in the texts, but none of them was the sole author. The texts come together as a whole, but it is not a logical, linear coherence. Rather, the coherence of these texts is harder to define in more fluid, organic patterns.

I believe that the ancient rabbis knew that the way to keep the Torah alive was to jump into the process of comparing texts, discovering or inventing new relationships between them. This is the essence of what we know as *Midrash* — the rabbinic search for meaning in the texts. This ancient story about one of the early rabbis, Ben Azzai, gives an idea of this process:

Ben Azzai was sitting and learning and there was fire all around him. The other students went to Rabbi Akiva and told him. He came and said to him, “I hear that you were learning and fire was all around you.” He answered, “Yes.” He said, “Perhaps you were dealing with (the secret mystical text) the Chambers of the Chariot?” He answered, “No, I was sitting and threading together words of Torah, and from the Torah to the Prophets, and from the Prophets to the Writings, and the words were as joyous as on the day they were given on Sinai,

and as sweet as the very day they were given. (Midrash Song of Songs Rabbah 1)

The method Ben Azzai uses involves creating new juxtapositions to string the texts together like jewels into beautiful combinations that reveal new meanings to old words. This is why he says the words were as joyous as on the day they were given on Mount Sinai: by creating new juxtapositions, new meanings emerge in what is essentially a new revelation. The fire surrounding Ben Azzai was the same fire that accompanied the revelation on Mount Sinai!

This is one perspective on how emergence works in Jewish text study — the sparks which fly when we follow Ben Azzai's example and bring texts together into new patterns. Another angle brings us back to the image of wholeness which Wendell Berry wrote about — the wholeness of the Torah and also the wholeness of a person. Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapiro (1889–1943) was the *Rebbe*, the rabbinic leader, of the Hasidic community in the Warsaw Ghetto during the war years. He was an amazingly creative and courageous Torah scholar, leader and martyr. He writes about the need for wholeness:

The mitzvot (individual commandments) reveal only the “limbs”, while the *sefer* (book) reveals the essence, the whole structure of which the mitzvot are only the limbs. . . . Therefore, when one looks into a book or hears words of Torah, if one only sees or hears one or two things, and especially if someone only wants to hear a nice idea or “drosh” — one only hears the “limbs” and misses the teacher’s wholeness, and doesn’t encounter the prophecy within the words.

He goes on to give the practical recommendation that when you study, you should focus on a book or two and learn them deeply. When you find a teacher, stay with him or her for the long haul, until you get a deep feel for their personal Torah. He concludes that if you actually do experience that wholeness, you yourself will be transformed. Your experience of wholeness is the way for you to become a fountain of Torah yourself:

And then a person knows not only the words that one heard, but will also come to reveal from within oneself new thoughts and paths and understandings. (*Derekh HaMelekh, Shemot*)

It is interesting to note that, as we saw with Ben Azzai, there is a reference to a feeling of divine revelation when we experience a new emergence. I think Shapiro’s references to “prophecy” are pointing to the same feeling that Ben Azzai experienced: an exhilarating feeling of new meaning emerging. Of course, according to Jewish tradition, prophecy ended with the biblical prophets, but these testimonials from the early



The 72 names of God woven together to create the tree of life.

rabbinic period to the 20th century speak of something akin to prophecy which still remains: that almost magical feeling of something new emerging, like a revelation.

Maybe it’s because I’ve jumped off of a few islands in my journey — the beautiful Hawai`ian islands of my youth, and the intense and exciting islands of Jewish learning and community that I lived in Old Katamon, Jerusalem, New York City or Berkeley, CA in my Orthodox days — that I know what it is to feel adrift in a sea of separation as well as that exhilarating feeling of discovery when I find a new wholeness. I’ve found it when I’m teaching a class and all of a sudden there is a depth of understanding that I didn’t create, or couldn’t have created on my own, but rather that emerged from the event of our energies and thoughts combining. I’ve found it when I’m writing and I discover a new juxtaposition, such as tossing Wendell Berry up against the ancient Rabbis and seeing a new insight emerge. I’ve found it when I’m singing and praying with a group of people and tears come to my eyes because I experience an emotion that is hard to express in words — I feel that I’m touching or am touched by something beyond myself.

Whether we are talking about community and the feeling of being enveloped in something larger than ourselves or diving into a Jewish Torah study, emergence — the continually amazing fact that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts — is a key new concept that we should be paying attention to. As concepts like emergence, which represent a shift away from our habits of reductionist thinking, become more central to our mental tool kit, we may find it easier to create a Jewish life — or any life — that is vibrant, creative and holy. ■

Ecological Civilization and the New Enlightenment

BY DAVID KORTEN

DURING THE PAST CENTURY, we humans have become a truly global species with both the ability and the imperative to choose our common future by conscious collective choice. Growth in our numbers and the destructive power of our economic and military weapons of mass destruction creates the necessity; advances in communication technology that link us into a seamless web of global communications and in biological and ecological sciences that deepen our understanding of what life is and how it organizes give us the means.

A Species in Terminal Crisis

The unfolding collapse of three critical systems puts our common future at serious risk.

1. **Environmental Systems.** Lead indicators include climate change, loss of fertile soil, diminishing supplies of clean freshwater, disappearing forests, and collapsing fisheries. All are a result of an increasing human burden that human numbers and consumption place on a finite planet. Per the Global Footprint Network, we humans are consuming globally at a rate 1.6 times what Earth can sustain. Everything above 1.0 comes at the cost of diminishing Earth's ability to sustain life and in turn drives a violent competition for what remains and a growing flow of desperate refugees.
2. **Social Systems.** In 2010, the combined wealth of the world's richest 388 billionaires equaled the combined wealth of the poorest half of humanity — 3.5 billion people. Now, just 7 years later, it takes the combined wealth of only the 8 richest billionaires to equal the combined wealth of the world's

poorest 3.6 billion people. The combination of extreme inequality and environmental displacement undermines human well-being, institutional legitimacy, and the social fabric of families and communities. The violence driving massive numbers of refugees from the Middle East is a direct consequence.

3. **Governance Systems.** The legitimacy of political and economic institutions that demonstrate their inability to address the above environmental and social crises is disintegrating. This gives rise to political demagogues who exploit the resulting fear and uncertainty.

These three system failures are interlinked, self-imposed, and threaten our species viability. All are a direct consequence of a takeover of our access to the essential means of living by global corporations that value life only for its market price, promote the idolatry of money, and sponsor those politicians who equate the corporate interest with the human interest. Awareness that something is going very wrong is sweeping global society, but with limited understanding of the nature of and reasons for the cultural and institutional system failure now playing out. Lacking such understanding, we look for solutions that tinker at the margins of a failed system grounded in false assumptions and values in the hope of making it slightly less destructive.

Our hope for a viable human future depends on a deep system transformation supportive of an Ecological Civilization that brings people and planet into balance, nurtures innovation and creative expression, and provides all people an opportunity for material sufficiency and spiritual abundance.

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Already underway, that transformation is grounded in three foundational truths of our being:

1. We humans are living beings.
2. Earth is our mother — the source of our birth and nurture, and
3. Life exists — can exist — only in communities of place that self-organize to create and maintain the conditions essential to their own existence.

The Emerging New Enlightenment

The Enlightenment of the 18th Century was grounded in the Newtonian image of a mechanistic universe. This image greatly expanded and deepened our human recognition and understanding of the order inherent in creation. In so doing, it set the stage for extraordinary advances in technology and social organization through which we came to dominate Earth and one another — leading to the great environmental and social unraveling now unfolding. At the same time, it undermined faith in an authoritarian Church and the divine right of kings and unleashed the forces of democracy and self-organizing social movements essential to successful cultural and institutional transformation. Together, these dynamics create the imperative and capacity to navigate a great human turning to the Ecological Civilization of our future.

A now unfolding 21st century Enlightenment draws from the ancient wisdom of indigenous peoples, the great religious prophets, and the findings of contemporary science to greatly expand and deepen our human understanding of ourselves and our place in creation. Metaphysically it acknowledges the intelligence and consciousness the 18th century Enlightenment denied. Politically, it recognizes that we have only begun the journey to a truly democratic sharing of power.

The Price of Idolatry

Why do we tolerate a system that strips away the relationships that define our humanity and reduces us to servitude to money? It traces to a fundamental aspect of our human nature: with the gift of language, we humans organize as societies around shared cultural narratives. Political demagogues have long recognized that those who control the framing narratives of a society's culture, control its people.

During the 20th century, corporate public relations and advertising specialists mastered the arts of cultural manipulation to create an individualistic culture of greed and profligate material consumption that serves well the short-term interests of a financial oligarchy. Once immersed in this culture, society lost sight of that on which our true health and happiness depends.

Of our many influential cultural narratives, the most important are those that define what we hold to be sacred [entitled to reverence or respect]. When we get the sacred wrong,

we easily become entangled in a web of self-destructive, even suicidal, deceptions.

Separated from nature and one another, we of modern society have lost our sense of what is truly sacred. Losing sight of the truly sacred, we fill the breach with a familiar narrative constantly affirmed in the public mind by pundits and economists schooled in what Nobel Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz has called a faith-based religion. I call it our Sacred Money and Markets narrative.

Time is money. Money is wealth. Those who make money are society's wealth creators. Poverty is a sign of laziness and personal failure. Consumption is the path to happiness. Individualistic greed and competition are human virtues that the invisible hand of the free market directs to ends that create opportunity and prosperity for all.

Those who would deprive society's wealth creators of the fruits of their labor engage in envy — a mortal sin. Maximizing financial gain is a moral and legal duty of business — indeed of every individual. Earth is here for our use and pleasure and is best used in whatever ways maximize financial gain.

Every element of this narrative is false or misleading. Yet over the past few decades this has become the narrative by which we define the purpose, meaning, and direction of society — and of our individual lives and relationships. In its thrall, we embrace money as a sacred object of veneration and the measure of our human worth and accomplishment, banks as our temples worship, consumption as our solace, economists as our moral authorities, and free [unregulated]



<http://maxpixel.freecatpicture.com/in-The-Dark-Light-Hope-Tunnel-Christian-Faith-1872961>



"As our sacred Earth mother loves and cares for us, we must love and care for her."

markets as a superhuman controlling power that meets our needs and rewards the worthy.

The Sacred Money and Markets *narrative* frames the moral and intellectual foundation of the Sacred Money and Markets *economics* taught as an objective values free science to business and economics students in the world's leading colleges and universities.

False on every point, the narrative perverts our sense of values and legitimates the concentration of decision-making power in the hands of a financial oligarchy. It is neither a true science nor a true religion. It is an immoral, anti-democratic political ideology at odds both with the moral teachings of the world's great religions and the findings of contemporary science. Its immoral and intellectually false premises set us up to measure economic performance by financial metrics like GDP and stock price indices like the Dow Jones Average.

GDP is in substantial measure an indicator of the rate at which we are monetizing relationships previously based on mutual caring. This process destroys the natural bonds of family and community, while increasing our dependence for our essential means of living on money created and allocated by global financial institutions lacking concern or accountability for our well-being.

With a similar bias favoring financial interests over life interests, stock price indices are primarily an indicator of the rate at which the inflation of financial assets is increasing the financial power of those who own them relative to the power of those who do not.

Sacred Life and Living Earth

Contrast the fabrications of the Sacred Money and Markets narrative with truths of the following reality based Sacred Life and Living Earth narrative. Imagine how different our world would be if this were the foundational narrative by which we structure and manage the economy.

Time is life. Life is the most precious of the many forms of wealth. Money is just a number useful as a medium of exchange in well-regulated markets. We humans are living beings born of and nurtured by a living Earth itself born of a living universe evolving toward ever-greater complexity, beauty, awareness, and possibility.

Life exists only in community. We humans survive and prosper only as contributing members of a living Earth community. It is our human nature to care and to share. Making time for life—to experience and serve—is the path to happiness and well-being. Equality, community, and connection to nature are essential foundations of human health and happiness.

As our sacred Earth mother loves and cares for us, we must love and care for her. The only legitimate purpose of institutions of business, government, and civil society is to serve as vehicles through which we humans cultivate and express our true nature and create our means of living in ways that serve both ourselves and the Earth Community to which we all belong.

The Christian biblical verse Matthew 6:24 says it well: "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and



We take part in the
creation of the Earth
and its future.

love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

If we visualize God as the spirit of life, this verse frames the defining choice we now face as a global species. Will we organize as a global society in the service of life? Or of money?

The Human Quest for Meaning

Now let's take a deeper dive into our narrative problem. Three contrasting creation narratives have currency in Western culture: The Distant Patriarch, the Grand Machine, and the Mystical Unity. Each conveys a very different understanding of relationships, agency, and meaning.

1. The **Distant Patriarch** narrative is most commonly associated with the institutions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. By the reckoning of this narrative, our most important relationship is to a distant God who is the source of all agency and meaning. All that is, is by his will. Our defining task is to obey His commandments to win his favor and thereby a favored place by his side in the afterlife. We know who are God's most favored, as he has granted them the wealth and power to rule over us. *It is not our place to challenge or change what he has willed.*
2. The **Grand Machine** narrative comes to us as the standard narrative of Newtonian physics and classical evolutionary biology. By its reckoning, the universe is best understood as a giant clock works winding down to a heat death as

the energy of the tension in its spring is exhausted. Life is merely an accidental and meaningless outcome of material complexity. Only the material is real. Consciousness and free will, or agency, are illusions. We are alone and powerless in a mechanistic cosmos devoid of agency and possessed of no meaning or purpose. *Wow, this is depressing. Let's go shopping to lift our spirits.*

3. The **Mystical Unity** narrative, most commonly associated with Buddhism, comes to us from the world's spiritual traditions. In its classic expression, the only reality is spirit. What we experience as material reality is an illusion generated by the ego, which is the cause of our suffering. We find peace only by shedding the ego through meditation and meld with the timeless eternal One. *Please don't disturb our peace with your distracting tales of social conflict and environmental disasters.*

Each of these narratives is dated, partial, and tends to absolve us of responsibility to care for one another and Earth. Yet each contributes a truth essential to our understanding of our true nature and the meaning, purpose, and responsibility of our place in creation.

The Distant Patriarch narrative recognizes intentional purpose. The Grand Machine narrative recognizes order. The Mystical Unity narrative recognizes that the ground of all being is a unifying spiritual consciousness.

Creation's Epic Journey

Each narrative contributes to an emerging Living Universe narrative that draws from all the sources of human knowledge and understanding — our inner awareness and daily experience, indigenous wisdom, the teachings of the mystics, and the findings of science. Together, they tell the story of creation's epic journey in search of self-knowing — a story to inspire and guide our way to an Ecological Civilization.

The essence of the Living Universe narrative has long been known to indigenous cultures, suggesting it lives in the human heart. To bring it to the fore of public consciousness as our shared narrative, we need only affirm what most people already intuitively know — and what science is gradually coming to acknowledge as its findings increasingly defy explanations based solely on mechanism and chance.

As science tells the story of creation, the universe was born some 13.8 billion years ago, when a giant energy cloud burst forth in a blinding flash of quantum energy particles. With time, these particles formed into complex atoms that formed into complex molecules that joined to form stars and galaxies that gave birth to planets — one of which gave birth to carbon based life.

Evolutionary biologists pick up from this story to tell us that some 3.6 billion years ago, the first living organisms appeared on Earth. As their numbers, diversity, and complexity increased, they organized themselves into a planetary-scale living system comprised of trillions of trillions of individual choice-making living organisms; they worked together with Earth's geological processes to filter excess carbon and a vast variety of toxins from Earth's air, waters, and soils and sequester them deep underground. In so doing, this grand alliance of seemingly primitive species, created the environmental conditions suited to the emergence of ever more highly-advanced species.

To this day, with no discernible source of central direction, the countless organisms of Earth's living community work with Earth's geological structures to continuously renew Earth's soils rivers, aquifers, fisheries, forests, and grasslands while maintaining global climatic balance and the composition of Earth's atmosphere to meet the diverse requirements of all Earth's widely varied life forms. Constantly experimenting, testing, and learning this living superorganism has been on its own journey of self-discovery toward ever-greater complexity, beauty, awareness and creative potential.

A Daring Experiment

We, the human species, are a product of that journey. We represent creation's most daring experiment in the creative evolutionary potentials of a living organism with a self-aware reflective consciousness. We are aware that we are aware, an essential piece of what makes us distinctively human.

All species, even microbes, contribute to shaping the life of

the place where they live. Only we humans can moderate and shape our impacts as a conscious collective choice. As Earth's dominant species, we now shape the destiny of Earth and all who call it home. Yet we act as irresponsible adolescents, unmindful of the responsibilities that go with the choices we have the ability and the freedom to make.

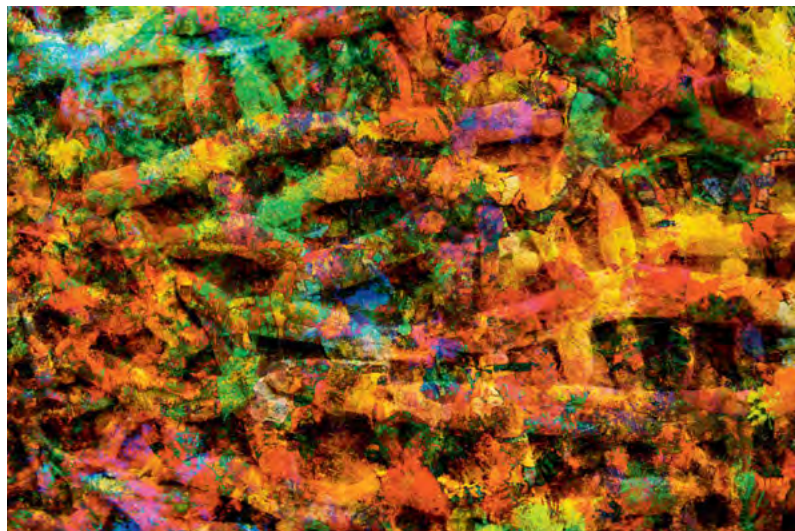
Think of our present choice point as an initiation rite — a test of our worthiness and potential to contribute to creation's journey of self-discovery through actualizing its creative possibilities. If we prove worthy, we may endure as contributing members of Earth's still evolving community of life. If we fail, we join the growing list of extinct species — a small footnote to creation's grand journey.

Our current life destructive, climate disruptive, but financially profitable expansion of tar sands oil extraction, deep-sea oil drilling, hydraulic fracture natural gas extraction, and mountaintop coal removal are only particularly visible current examples of our reckless disregard for Earth mother that birthed and nurtures us.

We do not strengthen our case by dedicating our best minds and most advanced technologies to accelerating the extraction and release of sequestered carbons and toxins back into Earth's atmosphere, waters, and soils in a foolhardy effort to dominate, suppress, and control the natural processes of a living Earth that makes our own lives possible.

United We Flourish, Divided We Perish

For an even deeper look at life's wondrous capacity for intelligent, cooperative self-organization, we can turn to the human body — the living host to our individual human consciousness and the instrument of its agency. Each of us is



Even the smallest microbes shape our lives as part of the living environment.



a composite of more than 30 trillion individual living cells, each engaged in a continuous and ever adapting exchange of energy, water, nutrients, and information in response to ever changing conditions of temperature, diet, location, schedule, physical and mental stress, cell damage, and invasive pathogens — all below the level of our conscious awareness.

Equally essential to our health and wellbeing are an even greater number of microorganisms, such as the bacteria and yeasts of our gut that manufacture essential vitamins and help metabolize our food. Each cell and microorganism is an individual, self-directing living being joined together in a self-organizing, continuously self-renewing alliance that functions as, and by all outward appearances is, a single being.

Throughout our life span, the body continually renews its physical structures through cell death and replacement. In each human body, approximately three billion cells die each minute — each reliably replaced by a living cell of like kind.

Each of these cells is constantly making choices that balance its needs and those of the whole on which its own existence depends. It is as if each cell lives by a nuanced moral code reflective of creation's intention grounded in a recognition that the well-being meta-organism, without which the single cell cannot exist, must always be primary.

The wonder of these infinitely complex and purposefully adaptive processes confirms the existence of mechanism and order in creation. Yet the idea that this miracle is solely the outcome of a combination of purposeless mechanics and chance — to this day the public premise of science — defies logic, common sense, and the foundational principles of Newtonian mechanics.

Quantum physicists now suggest that solid appearing matter is defined more by relationships rather than particles. Similarly, the observations of the life sciences suggest that life, as well, is defined primarily by the symbiotic relationships by which communities of organisms sustain themselves through dynamic adaptive exchanges that defy purely mechanistic explanation.

If we assume that conscious intelligence is synonymous with spirit, the premise that all being is a manifestation of spirit aligns with the premise that the spirit is both immanent and transcendent. It also aligns with a living universe cosmology that recognizes intelligent consciousness as the ground or origin of the energy field that following the Big Bang gave birth to matter — and to all that now is.

Hope for our human future lies in our now accelerating human awakening to the consequence of our recklessness and its source in flawed assumptions and dysfunctional institutions. We have touched briefly on the intellectual and cultural sources of the self-destructive system failure. Let us now turn to the institutional sources — starting with the choice between the household and the firm as the primary unit around which we organize to secure our means of living.

Healthy Communities, Healthy Households

I once asked an economist friend and colleague for whom I have special regard, “Why do economists so often come up with the wrong answer?” His reply, “Because they take the firm rather than the household as the primary unit of analysis.” The household organizes around living. The firm organizes around money.

The word “economy” is derived from the Greek word *oikos*, meaning household management. This suggests that the Greeks thought of the economy in terms of people, households, and communities organizing to make their living from what nature provides them. Think, perhaps, of a family farm on which family members grow and prepare their food, and harvest wood for fire and wild game for meat from a local forest.

The household in most traditional societies organized around gifting. Communities of traditional households organized around gifting and barter. Money entered in only as a supplement — primarily to facilitate exchange among strangers. Earth's complex systems of self-organizing exchange involve no equivalent of money. To this day, the primary relationships of healthy households and communities are primarily gifting or barter relationships based on mutual trust and caring. The same is true of a healthy modern society, supported by strong and efficient public services — including free public infrastructure, education, and health care.

A society organized primarily around monetary exchange, markets, privatized infrastructure, privatized services, and

an ethic of buyer beware is a deeply troubled society. The actions required to transition from our current circumstance to the life serving living Earth economy of a healthy society, go far, far beyond increasing worker pay and implementing additional rules to curb abuses of corporate power. Such actions — essential as they are — leaves in place an inherently destructive system driven to use every means available to free itself of the restraints.

Our goal is a system that greatly reduces this conflict between the power of the few and the common good of the many by equalizing financial power and rooting it in caring communities of place with strong commitment to public services that secure the health and well-being of all who call that place home. This in turn significantly reduces the need for intrusive government regulation and oversight.

The health of a living community depends on constant creative micro-adaptation to local conditions. Decision making is necessarily local and cannot be centralized.

Earth's biosphere localizes decision making by segmenting itself into self-reliant, self-regenerative bioregional communities, each engaged in the constant locally self-reliant capture, sharing, reuse, and regeneration of locally available nutrients, energy and water to maintain the health and vitality of all its resident organisms. Each community member contributes; each in turn benefits.

As we humans achieve local balance between our needs and our local biosystems, we simultaneously move toward global balance. Appropriate indicators of economic performance will assess our progress toward the goals of material sufficiency for all in balanced relationship with Earth's biosphere.

Our biggest challenge will be achieving the structural changes required to shift power from money-serving corporations to life-serving communities.

Our Self-Inflicted Institutional Threat to Human Viability

In a recent conversation, a colleague observed that we are heading to a future in which robots will no longer work for people. People will work for robots. I at once affirmed the prediction, but corrected him on the timing. We already do.

We call them corporations. They are soulless legal entities with no physical body, consciousness or moral sensibility. They have no need for air, food, or water. They do not love, reproduce sexually, or have a natural life span. Essentially legally protected pools of money programmed by law and financial markets to grow themselves, they value life only for its market price and have no fear of death or imprisonment.

The corporation is animated solely by those it employs. Some employees may be lavishly rewarded. Yet with the possible exception of those who may also be major owners, employees — including the CEO — work for the corporation at its pleasure and can be terminated without notice or recourse.

Linked together by legal contracts, interlocking ownership, and computerized financial markets, private-interest, for-profit corporations bear an eerie resemblance to the Borg of Star Trek science fiction. Part organic, part artificial intelligence, the Borg strips living beings of their capacity for independent agency and reduces them to drones in service to itself.

These robotic self-directing dehumanizing creatures increasingly control our human access to food, water, information, shelter, education, healthcare, energy, transportation, and recreation. Caring nothing for our relationships to family, community, and nature, they turn us against life and strip us of what makes us most truly human. They make a mockery of democracy, and threaten our species viability.

It is a wholly anomalous development. Corporations are human creations and in fact — like money — they have no existence beyond the human mind. By the actions of a corporatist US Supreme Court, a money saturated political system, and international agreements crafted by and for corporate interests, we now live under a system that assigns corporations more rights than people, and our Earth mother no rights at all. This subversion of democracy has been carried out in the name of democracy through processes never subjected to any test of the consent of the people stripped thereby of their liberty.

The legal instrument of incorporation is a useful — even essential — tool to facilitate the necessary and beneficial self-organization of complex modern societies. It only works to the benefit rather than the detriment of society, however, for so long as the corporation's power is subordinate and accountable to the power of a democratic state.

Democratic governments are constituted by people to serve their essential needs for services and infrastructure



beyond their individual means. A corporation is in turn created by the government that issues its charter — presumably to fulfill a public need that government is accountable to its electorate to fulfill. A corporation, thereby, is properly considered a transparent and accountable public entity and is governed accordingly. Such corporation has no inherent right to operate beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the government that issued its charter.

Legitimate multinational corporate bodies, as for example the United Nations, are created by intergovernmental agreements and accountable to intergovernmental governing bodies. Transnational or multinational private interest corporate entities that operate beyond national identity and are accountable only to private self-perpetuating and publicly unaccountable governance boards are inherently illegitimate institutions that increasingly threaten not only human viability, but as well the viability of Earth as a living superorganism.

We must rethink and transform the institution of the corporation to subordinate corporate power to people power. It's called democracy. It requires breaking up transnational and multinational concentrations of economic power into independent entities, each operating within and accountable to the jurisdiction of the government that issued its charter. Ownership of such entities is then properly transferred from short-term absentee owners to long-term stakeholder owners under cooperative ownership structures.

We need a parallel effort to reclaim and reconstitute finance as a *service* sector. Financial institutions produce nothing of real value. Their only function is to ration access to money. They should be cooperatively owned and managed as public utilities. Financial speculation is properly prohibited. Gambling is properly limited to well-regulated casinos.

A Defining Moment

This is a defining moment in the 200-thousand-year evolutionary history of *homo sapiens* — an endgame struggle between money and life, between corporate power and people power, between the right to exploit life for private gain and

the right to live. Corporations, the champions of money, command the most visible and powerful position. Less visible, but growing rapidly, are the emerging forces of a deep civilizational shift — a dramatic turning of the human course.

These forces include the awakening already underway within science, religion, and the public to the living universe narrative of the 21st century Enlightenment. There is a tandem disintegration in the credibility of the institutions of corporate rule evident in the highly dangerous political chaos playing out around the world. This disintegration is a counterpoint to the growing movement of people who are turning their backs on the institutions of global corporate rule and directing their life energy to the task of rebuilding the relationships of community and a living Earth economy.

They are advancing sustainable community agriculture, renewable energy and energy efficiency, local zero-waste circular manufacturing, Independent retail, green building, local financial services, local and/or fair trade clothing, holistic education, independent media and communications, local business development and professional services, public transportation, holistic health and wellness, creative participatory arts and culture. The greater their success, the greater our opportunities to engage and meet our needs through the emerging living Earth economy.

We need a multitude of voices and actors clearly and explicitly connecting these potentially mutually reinforcing and amplifying trends.

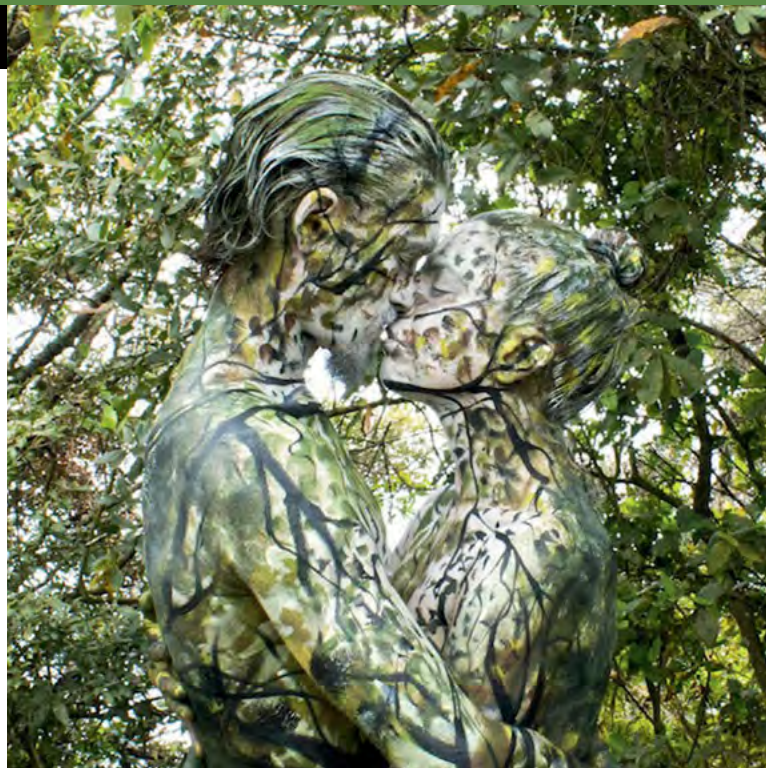
There is no solution to the unfolding environmental, social, and governance system collapse within an institutional system based on demonstrably false values and flawed assumptions. We humans are engaged in a monumental work of reinventing ourselves, our culture, and our institutions. This presents a strong challenge and opportunity, especially for the institutions of religion and education that are essential to the success of the New Enlightenment on which the transition to an Ecological Civilization ultimately depends.

It is the most exciting intellectual challenge and creative opportunity the human species has faced since our ancient ancestors first walked the Earth. ■

Healing Ourselves and the Earth

An Interview with
Cover Artist, Orly Faya

BY MADELINE COOK



The Lovers, by Orly Faya

PART ARTIST, part activist, part ritualist, and part therapist, Orly Faya's work reminds us that, as she puts it, "humanity was born from the Earth and it is intrinsically connected to *one living* biosphere." Faya first began observing humanity's distance from its interconnected and dependent nature during her extensive travels, and was called upon to heal this disconnection by painting people into the Earth during a ceremony in Peru.

When she put out a message offering to paint humans into the world, people responded and she created seventeen pieces in the span of twenty days. The images were put into an exhibition, but Faya soon realized the focus of the project "was about the experience *with* the people that were involved in the process."

For Faya, the creation of each piece is a conversation between herself, the people being painted, the natural environment, and the mystery of existence. Before agreeing to paint each piece she has a conversation with her client to ensure they carry a strong intention. This is not a tourist exercise, it is a spiritual practice. She guides each client into an intimate relationship with the landscape through meditation and a ceremony honoring the Earth which is crucial for the painting process.

The piece seen here, titled "The Lovers" was the result of particularly synchronistic process during which, as she puts it, "the metaphors [were] very real." She climbed a mountain

with the young couple with the intention to paint them into an expansive landscape, but the sky was cloudy. Undeterred, the couple looked through the brush to find a place where a column of light entered just perfectly. The couple embraced, at times leaning too much on one another and at times not leaning enough. Through the process they learned to gain strength from themselves and the Earth that enabled them to stand still through the two hour long painting process. Lived experiences like these helps to re-establish a relationship between the body and the Earth through healing and connection.

Ceremony, healing, and activism all blend together in a journey that Faya takes with her clients. Her work has brought her to work with multiple environmental organizations such as The World Wildlife Fund and The BioSphere Foundation to spread awareness about the linked fate between the Earth and humanity. Faya describes that in the midst of global climate change, "we're using all of these resources only to our detriment. So we remember who we are through the journey of understanding that we came from the Earth and therefore should honor it." ■

For more information on Orly Faya, her projects, or to participate in her work, she can be contacted through her website, www.orlyfaya.com.

MADELINE COOK was a summer intern at *Tikkun*. She is a senior at Mount Holyoke College, where she majors in Politics and minors in Africana studies. Her academic interests include the intersections of political, feminist, and critical race theory.

Educational Reforms for Survival

BY CHET BOWERS

ONE OF THE PRIMARY challenges facing educational reformers educated in the last decades of the 20th century is recognizing how previous understandings of social justice issues failed to account for reports on climate change. As the rate of change in the earth's ecosystems continues to impact individuals' daily lives through droughts, warming, acidifying oceans, rising sea levels, melting glaciers, and the disappearance of species and their habitats; the emancipatory vocabulary handed down from the long tradition of social justice struggles in the West must be revised.

This does not mean abandoning common educational reforms that challenge how the West's consumer-dependent industrial, and now digital, revolution continues the old forms of injustice and perpetuates new ones as globalization continues. What needs to be revised is the vocabulary that supports the West's interpretation of progress. Ironical as it may be, the social justice agenda of educational reformers, as well as the neoliberal agenda of computer scientists, corporations, and the government's foreign policies both use the same conception of progress; and that conception is causing grave problems.

Across the political spectrum people are thinking of "progress" in terms of vocabularies inherited from the legacy of the Enlightenment thinkers of the late 16th and 17th century. That legacy was founded on concepts like individualism (with the ideal being the autonomous thinking individual), change and innovation, critical inquiry and science overturning traditions, transformative thinking, freedom, and literacy. These values are meant to lead to objective knowledge and individual empowerment that is epitomized by students constructing their own knowledge and values from the available data.

Still today, "progress" the most powerful word for legitimating ideas, policies, innovations, and the continual quest



Our education system is linked to how we learn about the environment and our relationship to it.

for the new and experimental. In this context, progress is understood as overcoming the backwardness of the past—that is, overcoming traditions. When Enlightenment thinkers, or modern scientists such as Carl Sagan, claim that “we give our highest rewards to those who convincingly disprove established beliefs” (Sagan, 1997, 35), they fail to understand that social justice achievements of history, such as habeas corpus, become traditions. By reducing traditions to abstractions Sagan and other anti-tradition thinkers failed to recognize the traditions they relied upon daily. They also failed to recognize that overturning traditions, is itself a tradition.

Following in the tradition of ethnographically uninformed thinking of John Locke, René Descartes, John Dewey, and Paulo Freire, most of today's critical pedagogy reformers continue to share the same Enlightenment view of traditions as sources of oppression and backwardness. But overturning

CHET BOWERS (1935-2017) has written 23 books on the ideological, linguistic, and cultural roots of the ecological crisis. His latest book, *Reforming Higher Education in an Era of Ecological Crisis and Growing Digital Insecurity* has just been published by Process/Century Press.



traditions in the name of progress is a complicated affair. While educational reforms seek progress in the name of justice, computer scientists and neoliberal and heads of corporations rely upon this same Enlightenment vocabulary to justify overturning cultural traditions throughout the world in order to promote consumer-dependent and environmentally destructive lifestyles.

The irony is that none of these Enlightenment thinkers had a deep cultural understanding of the traditions they took for granted—even as they relied upon the many traditions built up over generations to write their books. The tradition they relied upon most is still so powerful, that we often fail to even recognize it as a choice at all: writing. They relied upon the long standing tradition of the early Greeks who encoded their ideas in the printed word to foster abstract thinking. This emphasis stifled awareness of the lived cultural patterns that connect within different face-to-face relationships.

The anti-tradition abstract theorists of the past (as well as those still under the spell of the Enlightenment legacy that have morphed into today's progressive ideologies) ignored how the crafts and skills used to create their dwellings, grow their food, provide the artistic performances of the day, and even enact social justice were embodied and passed through

generations. Living is so much richer than can be contained in a word printed on paper.

An even greater loss is that if these Enlightenment thinkers had been less ethnocentric and ignorant of environmental limits, they might have detected the interconnectedness between their traditions and their development of ecological intelligence from indigenous cultures.

Silences and misconceptions of Enlightenment thinking are still being carried forward by computer scientists, hubris driven researchers genetically re-engineering the biological world, academics, teachers, and curriculum theorists. In confronting this, we will be well served to remember that one of the traditions of Enlightenment philosophers that is being carried forward, is to ignore the practices of cultures that failed to recognize environmental limits and eventually died off.

In *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (2005), Jared Diamond documents the experience of cultures that failed to recognize that their forms of intelligence were unable to understand the emergent, relational, and co-dependent nature of the ecological systems they were dependent upon. The vocabularies that support the West's understanding of progress as emancipation from tradition that leads to ever more profits leaves little space for recognition of distinctive cultural expressions of ecological intelligence.

In order to slow environmental degradation and end the West's messianic tradition of economic and technological colonization, we need a social justice vocabulary that does not repeat the naive anti-tradition tendencies of the Enlightenment. We must notice that neoliberal and libertarian promoters of consumerism, worker exploitation, and overturning civil liberties couch their philosophies in the name of progress; and social justice educators are taking this progress oriented vocabulary to articulate their own goals. In imagining justice to be only emancipation from tradition, reformers are losing sight of the wisdom held by tradition, and repeating many of the very mistakes they are fighting against.

An Educational Reform Vocabulary

As educational reformers begin to recognize that the warnings of environmental scientists must now be taken seriously, they are likely to be caught in the same conceptual double bind as the sixty or so percent of the public that is concerned about what the future holds for them: they understand the need to change, but are unable to imagine the nature of the lifestyle changes that must be undertaken. The double bind is rooted in being educated to think of themselves as autonomous individuals, in an environment they have traditionally exploited, and in a world of unending progress. Too many people, including curriculum theorists, cannot see and teach alternatives to the misconceptions that are at the core of the Enlightenment progress-oriented paradigm. People will be

stuck unless they can see that the ecological crisis is also a cultural crisis.

The way out of this double bind, where “progress” reigns supreme, is to begin to think within an ecologically informed paradigm that takes account of how all life forms are emergent, relational, co-dependent, and participating in different ecologies of information and semiotic exchange. We can begin by recognizing that everything has a history. Cell behavior, insect communication, personal identities, oral and print communication, and ideologies that justify exploitation all arise because of a complex and interconnected set of causal factors. We should not see these phenomenon as separate, but rather as part of a complex ecology of thoughts and things.

All ecologies involve observable patterns and relational networks of communication, and it is these observable connecting patterns that provide evidence of whether ecology is headed in a sustainable direction, or if it is a self-destructive mode. Relying upon an ecological paradigm as the source of knowledge means giving close attention to the emergent nature of lived cultural and environmental patterns rather than relying upon the printed word which generally overlooks the interpretations of the writer, and later the reader, as well as the interpretation of classroom teachers and professors who are often unaware of their own assumptions.

In order to invite people into this way of thinking, we need a new vocabulary of social and environmental justice that supports the exercise of ecologically informed intelligence and intergenerational knowledge. We need to start speaking in words like: ecological sustainability, ecological intelligence, intergenerational knowledge and skills, traditions of social justice, indigenous knowledge and skills, wisdom, critical inquiry and exploration, double bind thinking, cultural/bio conservatism, non-monetized relationships and practices, face to face communication, living in an interpreted world, ethnically diverse cultural commons, enclosure of the commons, and so forth.

This vocabulary is also relevant for understanding how cultural and natural ecologies differ from the neoliberal/libertarian (Enlightenment) paradigm that is being promoted by many computer scientists, engineers, and corporate heads who do harm in the name of “progress.” By differentiating our vocabulary we can see the fundamental problems of Enlightenment thinking more clearly: data collections that can birth artificial intelligence and algorithms that eliminate jobs and amasses profits is lauded as innovation; long term memory is being replaced by short term memory; face to face relationships are being replaced by abstract relationships; monetized activities and relationships are leading to digital profiles that are sold to corporations and governments; intergenerational knowledge and skills essential to viable cultural commons — and that have smaller ecological footprints — are being replaced by the convenience



and efficiency of online consuming; and the Internet is undermining privacy and birthing hackers, cyber attackers, and extremist groups along with all of the good it brings.

We are fast losing our civil liberties as governments become more able to gather data to anticipate possible behavior in order to do “predictive policing” and post photographs of millions of people on the FBI network without their consent. How does one explain the willingness of so many people to exchange their privacy for the conveniences of the Internet and its processes? All of this is happening in the name of progress. Perhaps the myth of progress has become a religion that promises salvation from the forces of evil; and if it is, then we need to be very cautious of how we use it in our social justice education.

The Ecological Paradigm and Awareness

An ecological paradigm involves a reversal in how language functions within the Enlightenment paradigm where print-based and thus abstract vocabularies influence both awareness and interpretations of the ecologies of the behaviors and communications encountered in daily life. The abstract vocabulary that represented traditions as backward, women as conceptually limited, autonomous individuals as original thinkers, and now data as objective, has led to ignoring the complexity of people’s lives that did not fit with the stereotypes of a print-based abstract world.

The lack of an adequate vocabulary to describe how all forms of life are dependent upon robust natural systems — like the lack of adequate vocabulary to describe how women were being repressed — led even well-intentioned social justice reformers of earlier eras to ignore the biases encoded in the language that framed their awareness, and what that

language ignored. To make the point more directly: academics across disciplines have taken for granted the core Enlightenment assumptions; this led them to fall behind on recognizing gender bias, and now they are behind on recognizing the threat of the digital revolution to our civil liberties and to the cultural commons that represent community-centered lifestyles that have a smaller ecological footprint. Language can mask important dynamics, and the Enlightenment's obsession with language, particularly its own language, is steering reformers off course.

Educators need to introduce students to how emergent, relational, and co-dependent patterns in natural and cultural ecologies can lead to the reframing of words. In the same way print-based Enlightenment influenced thinkers took for granted the autonomous nature of a single plant or piece of data, they took for granted the autonomous static nature of ideas such as freedom, free markets, and property; and in doing so they took fictions and imagined them into facts. This stands in opposition to the thinking of someone like Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist and deep ecological thinker. He explains that the truth that every aspect of the life world is emergent, relational, and co-dependent, is overlooked when we focus on a word. For example, when we see the word “flower” we imagine a separate autonomous entity, but this is a confusion inherited from the misconceptions of our past. The truth is that “nothing can exist by itself alone:”

Looking deeply into a flower, we see that the flower is made of non-flower elements. There is nothing that is not present in the flower. We see sunshine, we see rain, we see clouds, we see the earth, and we also see time and space in the flower. A flower, like everything else, is made entirely of non-flower elements. The whole cosmos has come together in order to help the flower manifest herself. The flower is full of everything except one thing: a separate self, a separate identity (2002, 47-48).

All aspects of both natural and cultural ecologies can be described in the same way.

The use of a metaphorical language with meaning framed by the analogs settled on in the past and passed forward as the taken for granted way of thinking (i.e. the ideas of progress and emancipation from traditions, the objective nature of data, the ecological crisis, and so forth) would all be understood differently if our language were informed by an awareness of relationships — and the observation that each of the relationships also has a history that continues to influence the present and even the future. The use of nouns hides the emergent, relational and co-dependent nature ecological world within which we live. The ignoring of the history of words such as data, intelligence, progress, God, I, property, globalization, and so forth, contributes to the misrepresentation of the living world by focusing us on nouns and not on interconnected relationships.

Curriculum Reforms that Contribute to Exercising Ecological Intelligence

The intellectual mistakes of our Enlightenment based vocabulary are clear: the fixation on the written word makes us believe things are autonomous and separate; we even see ourselves as separate from the traditions and histories that birthed us; and we think of progress and freedom as becoming more separate from naive traditions of the past. Disregard for interconnectedness and tradition has come to dominate our social justice vocabularies as well. In order to address the cultural and linguistic roots of the ecological crises we need to change the way think, and to do that we need to change the way we teach.

The following four areas represent the starting points for curriculum reform. They all need to be expanded as different ethnic groups begin to assess which of their traditions will contribute to slowing the rate of environmental degradation and which have been imposed on them by the colonizing efforts of the West.



How can we produce a vocabulary that links environmental justice to the digital age?

Kevin Huang

(A) Promoting Relational Thinking

Classroom teachers can begin to overcome the the West's vision of isolated entities by presenting an ontology of relationship, emergence, and interdependence. This paradigm shift can be incorporated in many settings beginning even with students in the early grades. Teachers can lead students to consider the experiential differences between the printed and spoken word; between sharing a meal with their family and friends and eating in front of the television; between face to face conversations with friends and communicating through an iPad or cell phone; between caring for a garden and purchasing industrial processed food; between learning a skill from a mentor in one of the arts and studying YouTube clips. Then teachers can have students compare their reflections on these questions with one another.

Learning to give explicit attention to the emergent, relational, and interdependent patterns that connect in these examples exercises ecological intelligence. There is an added hurdle because learning to think relationally is undermined by other taken-for-granted patterns in culture such as the notion that there is a "right answer" that can be found by constructing an idea within the solitude of one's own head (thereby reinforcing the myth of the self as an autonomous individual thinking about the external world in terms of discrete parts). It will be necessary for teachers to pose questions that prompt students to consider aspects of their taken for granted experience and challenge assumptions about what truly constitutes learning.

Promoting relational thinking in the later grades can involve a wider range of examples that integrate more complex thinking: students can measure the environmental impact of hundreds of thousands of people driving to see their favorite football team; reflect on the relationship between the history of scientific achievements and the growing number of prominent scientists now engaging in scientism; debate about who benefits from reducing people's experience to data and from the growth of surveillance technologies; research how the use of printed maps and treaties were use as colonizing technologies; investigate how the industrial system of production, digital technologies, automation influence cultural change, unemployment, and political extremism; study how online consumerism leads to the use of more delivery trucks and more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere; and provide reports on how the idea that progress and technologies are both inherently positive force coexists at the same time as the notion they are culturally neutral. All these examples could be projects or units in high school classes that weave threads between disciplines while engaging students in the realities of the contemporary moment.

Relational thinking needs to be promoted by using examples from the different cultures represented in the classroom itself. Students can reflect on the ways in which they

rely on the internet and how that impacts intergenerational communication; examine the relationships between racial differences, levels of unemployment, prison populations, the privatization of the prison systems, and the history of racism in America; compare how culture impacts their understanding of wealth; reflect on their relative reliance on the money economy; and consider how minority cultural groups are now represented on television as driven by the same pursuit of fun, silliness, and consumerism as the members of the dominant white culture. Teaching around these issues will draw students' attention to the ways culture and history impact how they exist in the world.

Disregard for interconnectedness and tradition has come to dominate our social justice vocabularies as well.

Making relational thinking a part of the curriculum can focus on the mundane, on what students want to explore, and even on the deeply important cultural issues and relationships that may not have occurred to students as affecting their future well-being. As prior socialization to the autonomous world of things and stand-alone entities reinforced by the noun dominated nature of the English language still dominates most students' taken for granted world, it is necessary to continually remind students that thinking relationally is part of learning to exercise ecological intelligence — of learning to recognize the patterns that connect within the emergent, relational, and co-dependent worlds of the cultural and natural ecologies that their futures depend upon.

(B) Demystifying Language Issues

Students need to understand more about how language is impacting their thought if they are going to free themselves from the insidious effects of their inherited vocabulary. Teaching should focus on three dynamics that provide insight into how ontology and language impact power relationships and are leveraged as ecological and colonizing forces: (1) the failure to understand the metaphorical nature of our largely taken for granted vocabularies; (2) how print and data (for all of their important uses), reinforce abstract thinking that undermines the exercise of ecological intelligence; and (3) how face-to-face intergenerational communication is essential to revitalizing the cultural commons.



Pointillism shows the bringing together of many parts to create a whole.

Understanding the metaphorical nature of language is especially important to becoming aware of how taken-for-granted vocabularies carry forward the misconceptions and silences that are at the root of so many of the ecological and social justice problems we now face. The question for many Americans, including classroom teachers and university professors to wrestle with is this: *how have the misconceptions that fail to represent all living systems as relational, emergent, and as networks of information exchanges embedded itself in the words that express our own ideas and that represent the nature of the external world of facts and objective knowledge?*

Though it may seem pedantic, we need to take seriously what seems like an absurd and difficult to understanding explanation of the metaphorical nature of our taken for granted vocabularies. Understanding why Nietzsche got it right and George Lakoff and Mark Johnson got it wrong will give all of us more ability to craft the understandings required to achieve environmental justice. By understanding that the basis of the meaning of language lies in metaphor, we can reclaim the power to creatively reimagine our language.

Popular social justice discourse often points out that the meaning of certain words such as “woman” were framed by reference points settled upon by influential thinkers in the past who were themselves carrying forward the misconceptions and silences of their era. But we rarely discuss how this is the process by which *all* language gets its meaning, and that every speaker is an active participant in the process. If we made a deep inquiry into language a part of our curriculum learners might notice that many apparently neutral words carry tremendous cultural baggage. The analogs that framed the meaning of the word progress, turning it into a universal myth, were derived from the advances in print, from the

early stages of modern science, and more efficient and profitable technologies that became the analogs for the mechanistic interpretative framework (root metaphor) for understanding even organic processes — including the human brain.

The taken for granted meaning of most of our vocabulary ranging from “civilization,” “tradition,” “primitive,” “individualism,” “data,” “work,” “poverty,” “mankind,” “God,” “science,” “technology,” and so forth, were framed by the analogs settled upon in the past — and reproduced through generations as new members of the language community relied upon the meanings they inherited. That the analogs that frame the meanings of the vocabulary can be changed is usually not explained, even though social change continues to introduce different analogs that highlight what is problematic about the old analogs. This leaves the majority of people in the language community not empowered to participate actively in the meaning creation process.

This way of thinking about language is really just a specific site of relational thinking, albeit a very important one. Relational thinking about language can be made explicit as part of helping students examine the nature of the analogs that frame the meaning of words they would otherwise not reflect upon. The political nature of the accepted metaphorically encoded vocabulary can be seen in how different words

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See article about *Seeing Through the Wall*
(by Rabbi Dov Taylor) in this issue of *Tikkun*.

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privilege certain groups over others; as is now being recognized in terms of gender, ethnic, and racial differences. Relational thinking is also involved in examining how the taken for granted vocabularies of neoliberals and libertarians, prevent them from recognizing that there is an ecological crisis and that it is leading to a catastrophic endgame. Exploring how the use of nouns both serves to hide the metaphorical nature of most words but also marginalizes awareness that life forming, sustaining, and destroying processes are emergent, relational, and interdependent, will lead to other important insights.

(C) How Print and Data Undermine Awareness of the Emergent, Relational, and Co-Dependent World in Which We Live:

The taken-for-granted view of print-based cultural storage and communication, which is now being replicated in how the authority of data is being understood, has been focused on the positive contributions of these Janus-faced technologies. How they reproduce both the Enlightenment view of individual intelligence and reinforce the tradition of abstract thinking that undermines an awareness of our complex world is less recognized. As the benefits are well understood, the focus here will be on what has generally been ignored.

Students need to discuss how print and data undermine the exercise of ecological intelligence that will enable people to recognize how to live less consumer and environmentally

exploitive lifestyles. They will also be well served by a deep ethnographically informed examination of what aspects of their own experience cannot be fully represented in print and by data.

Focusing on the impermanent and interconnected nature of the world gives the lie to the notion that fixed and autonomous entities characterize life forming and sustaining processes, and thereby helps us witness the limitations of print and data that often go overlooked. Print and data enable an abstract understanding which includes the following limitations: (a) a surface knowledge that lacks depth in representing local ecological contexts; (b) they represent a mere snapshot of the flow of experience (which can be tested by obtaining a printed account of a crashing wave or an ongoing conversation); (c) what is committed to print, even when used by a gifted writer, too often takes on a life of its own and becomes reified as a universal, which can be seen the abstract theories of Western philosophers and social theorists; (d) the abstract thinking reinforced by print and data-based accounts is inherently ethnocentric and it ignores the emergent, relational, and semiotically complex networks of communication taken into account in oral cultures. (That is, face to face communication often involves historical memory, awareness of what is being communicated by the Other, critical thought, awareness of traditions, and even empathy); (e) what is committed to print and represented as data encodes the taken for granted assumptions, cultural

frameworks, and silences acquired earlier in the writer's and data collector's process of primary socialization to thinking in the language handed down from the past; (f) because of the limitations accompanying the use of print and data, and the cultural tradition of thinking of language as part of a conduit, that is, a sender/receiver process of communication, both the printed word and data are too often assumed to represent objective facts, information, and data; (g) the lack of understanding that the taken for granted meaning of most words were framed by the analogs settled upon in earlier times, along with the cultural convention of writing as a third person observer, leads to the widespread failure to recognize that what is written is always an interpretation, and the reader's relationship to what is written or represented as data is also an interpretation based the taken for granted thinking of earlier generations; (h) the abstract thinking reinforced by print and data leads to unequal power relationships, especially in light of other cultural baggage such as the assumption that print is evidence of a civilization's superior rationality and advancement from oral based culture. (this can be seen in how the use of maps, printed treaties, and the use of Western metaphors established ownership of the lands of indigenous cultures).

(D) Toward Ecologically Sustainable and Community-Centered Lifestyles

Ecologically sustainable community-centered lifestyles also represent zones of safety from the predatory practices of the hackers, scammers, and surveillance systems that now exist throughout the world. They are called the cultural commons that enable people to be less dependent upon money economies and industrial systems of production and consumerism that are based on the myth of unending progress. The intergenerational knowledge and skills (i.e. traditions) passed forward—primarily in face to face and in mentoring relationships—cover the entire range of cultural activities: from the growing and preparation of food, to ceremonies, the arts that range from music, dance, poetry, traditions of social justice, mentoring in the how to exercise ecological intelligence, vocabularies, games, craft knowledge of how to work with wood, clay, stone, and metal to how to read what is being communicated between the natural and cultural ecological systems.

Learning, through careful observation, how talents and skills are nourished within the community, how acquiring the skills connected with different cultural commons activities, and how cultural commons activities involve patterns of mutual support, should be a central focus of curriculum reform. The curriculum should encourage students to consider why cultural commons activities are less environmentally destructive than consumerism, and how they lead to

being less dependent upon a money economy that will become increasingly restricted as digital technologies and the combination of market liberalism and Enlightenment ideology replace more workers with robots and algorithms. There should also be an in-depth discussion of the relational and co-dependent nature of how the cultural commons conserves traditions of local decision making, enabling people to be less vulnerable to digital technologies that put their security at risk—including their moral narratives central to their sense of cultural identity. Wealth in the cultural commons is understood as the talents and skills that contribute to the wellbeing of others. Unlike the wealth that is measured in money, wealth of the cultural commons is largely immune from being hacked.

The curriculum should also introduce students to how the ideology of market liberalism/libertarianism continues to undermine what remains of the cultural commons of different cultures, as well as how according high status to print and digital based knowledge serves to undermine the cultural commons. This is where the earlier discussion of how the vocabulary that supports the myth of progress needs to be reintroduced as part of the discussion of why so many people are unable to recognize that the traditions of today's cultural commons represent alternatives to the industrial/market driven/consumer-dependent culture that is leading the world to the endgame of collapsing natural systems. This discussion should also introduce students to the many groups and movements that go by different names, such as the Transition Communities in the southwest of England, the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, and the global spread of the Localism Movement described in the following way: <http://www.localfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/climate-action-paper.pdf>.

In addition to making different aspects of the cultural commons the focus of ethnographic studies of the community, and exploring issues related to the health of cultural commons activists—as well as their satisfaction of living lives characterized by voluntary simplicity—students need to experience the difference between engaging in cultural commons activity and a similar activity that involves a consumer relationship. What are the basic differences in terms of discovering a personal talent and developing the skills that reduce dependency upon consumerism? Many students are already involved in the creative arts, in helping others in the community, and in social justice activism—including environmental restoration projects. Their insights about the experiential differences between learning a skill and participating with others in largely non-monetized activities will help bring out what is ecologically sustainable about the cultural commons. ■

Participation and the Mystery

BY JORGE N. FERRER

HOW DO WE creatively participate in the mystery of spirituality? The *participatory approach* holds that human spirituality emerges from human co-creative participation in an undetermined mystery, generative power of life, the cosmos, or reality. My understanding of the mystery is aligned with Rabbi Michael Lerner's account (in his book *Spirit Matters*) of Spirit as the "energizing Force" behind the Big Bang and the ongoing evolutionary process.

Spiritual participatory events can engage the entire range of human epistemic faculties (e.g., rational, imaginal, somatic, vital, aesthetic) with both the creative unfolding of the mystery and the subtle entities or energies in the enactment—or "bringing forth"—of ontologically rich religious worlds. In other words, the participatory approach presents an enactive understanding of the sacred that conceives spiritual phenomena, experiences, and insights as *co-created events*. The emergence of spiritual knowing can be located amidst the connections of human multidimensional cognition, cultural context, subtle worlds, and the deep generativity of life or the cosmos. Importantly, this account avoids both the secular postmodernist reduction of religion to cultural-linguistic artifact and, as discussed below, the dogmatic privileging of a single religious tradition as superior or paradigmatic.

The rest of this essay introduces nine distinctive features of the participatory approach: spiritual cocreation, creative spirituality, spiritual individuation, participatory pluralism, relaxed spiritual universalism, participatory epistemology, the integral *bodhisattva* vow, participatory spiritual practice, and social engagement.



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Linda Brunker | Photo by Colin Brown

Dimensions of Spiritual Co-creation

Spiritual co-creation has three interrelated dimensions—intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal. These dimensions respectively establish participatory spirituality as embodied (spirit within), relational (spirit in-between), and enactive (spirit beyond).

Intrapersonal co-creation consists of the collaborative participation of all human attributes—body, vital energy, heart, mind, and consciousness—in the enactment of spiritual phenomena. This dimension is grounded in the *equi-primacy principle*, according to which no human attribute is intrinsically superior or more evolved than any other. To be sure, the mind-centered character of Western culture hinders the maturation of non-mental attributes, normally making it necessary to engage in intentional practices to bring these attributes up to the same developmental level the mind achieves through mainstream education. In principle, however, all human attributes can participate as equal partners in the creative unfolding of the spiritual path, are equally capable of sharing freely in the life of the mystery here on Earth, and can also be equally alienated from it. The main challenges to *intrapersonal co-creation* are cognicentrism, lopsided development, mental pride, and disembodied attitudes to spiritual growth. Possible antidotes to those challenges are the integral *bodhisattva* vow (discussed below), integral practices, the cultivation of mental humility, and embodied approaches to spiritual growth. Intrapersonal co-creation affirms the importance of being rooted in *spirit within* (i.e., the immanent dimension of the mystery) and renders participatory spirituality essentially *embodied* and *integrative*.

Interpersonal co-creation emerges from cooperative relationships among human beings growing as peers in the spirit of solidarity, mutual respect, and constructive confrontation. It is grounded in the *equipotentiality principle*, according to which “we are all teachers and students” insofar as we are superior and inferior to others in different regards. This principle does not entail that there is no value in working with spiritual teachers or mentors; it simply means that human beings cannot be ranked in their totality or according to a single developmental criterion, such as brainpower, emotional intelligence, or contemplative realization. Although peer-to-peer human relationships are vital for spiritual growth, interpersonal co-creation can include contact with perceived nonhuman intelligences, such as subtle entities, natural powers, or archetypal forces that might be embedded in psyche, nature, or the cosmos. The main challenges to interpersonal co-creation are spiritual pride, psychospiritual inflation, circumstantial or self-imposed isolation, and adherence to rigidly hierarchical spiritualities. Remedies to those challenges include collaborative spiritual practice and inquiry, intellectual and spiritual humility, deep dialogue,

and relational and pluralistic approaches to spiritual growth. Interpersonal co-creation affirms the importance of communion with *spirit in-between* (i.e., the situational dimension of the mystery) and makes participatory spirituality intrinsically *relational* and *eco-socio-politically engaged*.

Transpersonal co-creation refers to dynamic interaction between embodied human beings and the mystery in the bringing forth of spiritual insights, practices, states, and worlds. This dimension is grounded in the *equiplurality principle*, according to which there can *potentially* be multiple spiritual enactions that are nonetheless equally holistic and emancipatory. For example, a fully embodied liberation could be equally achieved through Christian incarnation or Yogic integration of *purusa* (consciousness) and *prakriti* (nature); likewise, freedom from self-centeredness at the service of others can be attained through the cultivation of Mahayana Buddhist *karuna* (compassion) or Christian *agape* (selfless love) in the context of radically different ontologies. This principle frees participatory spirituality from allegiance to any single spiritual system and paves the way for a genuine, ontologically and pragmatically grounded, spiritual pluralism. The main challenges to transpersonal co-creation are spiritual disempowerment, indoctrination, spiritual narcissism, and adherence to naive objectivist or universalist spiritualities. Antidotes include: the development of one’s inner spiritual authority and the affirmation of the right to inquire, heretical courage, and enactive and creative spiritualities. Transpersonal co-creation affirms the importance of being open to *spirit beyond* (i.e., the subtle dimensions of the mystery) and makes participatory spirituality fundamentally *inquiry-driven* and *enactive*.



Jews performing the mitzvah of shaking the lulav on Sukkot; a time-honored embodied and enactive spiritual practice.



Although all three dimensions interact in multifaceted ways in the enactment of spiritual events, the creative link between intrapersonal and transpersonal co-creation deserves special mention. Whereas the mind and consciousness arguably serve as a natural bridge to subtle spiritual forms already enacted in history that display more fixed forms and dynamics such as cosmological motifs, archetypal configurations, and mystical visions and states, greater access to the more generative power of life or the mystery can be found through attention to the body and its vital energies. From this approach, it follows, the greater the participation of embodied dimensions in religious inquiry, the more creative one's spiritual life may become and a larger number of creative spiritual developments may emerge.

A Creative Spirituality

In the infancy of participatory spirituality in the 1990s, spiritual inquiry operated within certain constraints arguably inherited from traditional religion. As the historian of religion, Mircea Eliade famously argued, many established religious practices and rituals are “re-enactive” in their attempt to replicate cosmogonic actions and events. Expanding this account, I have suggested that most religious traditions can be seen as “reproductive” insofar as their practices aim to not only ritually reenact mythical motives, but also replicate the enlightenment of their founder or attain the

state of salvation or freedom described in allegedly revealed scriptures. Although disagreements about the exact nature of such states and the most effective methods to attain them abound in the historical development of religious ideas and practices — naturally leading to rich creative developments within the traditions — spiritual inquiry was regulated (and arguably constrained) by such pre-given unequivocal goals.

Participatory enactment entails a model of spiritual engagement that does not simply reproduce certain tropes according to a given historical *a priori*, but rather embarks upon the adventure of openness to the novelty and creativity of life or the mystery. Grounded on current moral intuitions and cognitive competences, for instance, participatory spiritual inquiry can not only undertake the critical revision and actualization of prior religious forms, but also the co-creation of novel spiritual understandings, practices, and even expanded states of freedom.

Spiritual Individuation

This emphasis in creativity is central to *spiritual individuation*, that is, the process through which a person gradually develops and embodies her or his unique spiritual identity and wholeness. Religious traditions tend to promote the homogenization of central features of the inner and outer lives of their practitioners, for example, encouraging them to seek the same spiritual states and liberation, to become

like Christ or the Buddha, or to wear the same clothes (in the case of monks). These aspirations may have been historically legitimate, but after the emergence of the modern self, our current predicament (at least in the West) arguably calls for an integration of spiritual maturation and psychological individuation that will likely lead to a richer diversity of spiritual expressions. In other words, the participatory approach aims at the emergence of a human community formed by spiritually differentiated individuals.

It is important to sharply distinguish between the modern hyper-individualistic mental ego and the participatory selfhood forged in the sacred fire of spiritual individuation. Whereas the disembodied modern self is plagued by alienation, dissociation, and narcissism, a spiritually individuated person has an embodied, integrated, connected, and permeable identity whose high degree of differentiation, far from being isolating, actually allows him or her to enter into a deeply conscious communion with others, nature, and the multidimensional cosmos. A key difference between modern individualism and spiritual individuation is thus the integration of radical relatedness in the latter.

Participatory Pluralism

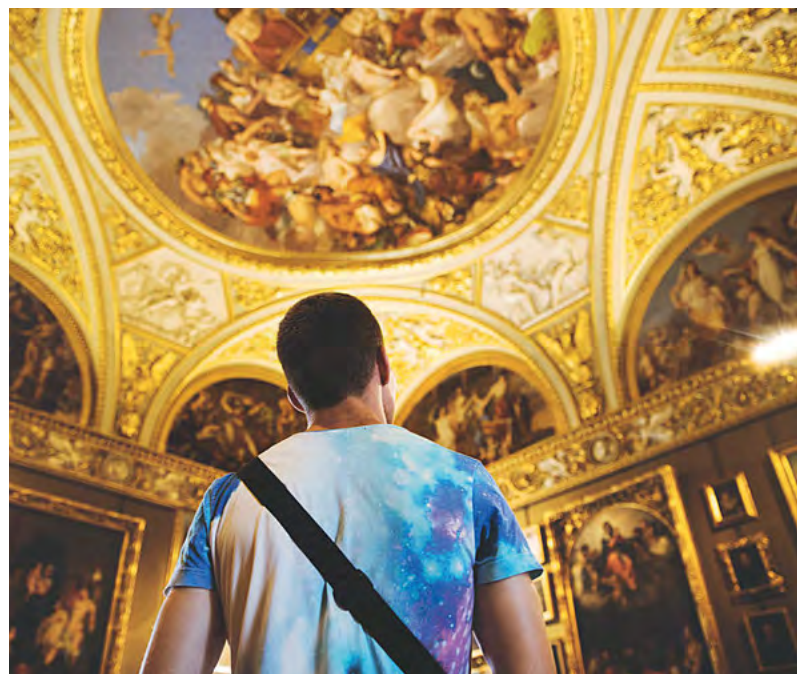
The participatory approach embraces a pluralistic vision of spirituality that accepts the formative role of cultural and linguistic factors in religious phenomena. This simultaneously recognizes the importance of nonlinguistic variables (e.g., somatic, imaginal, energetic, subtle, archetypal) in shaping religious experiences and meanings while also affirming the ontological value and creative impact of spiritual worlds.

Participatory pluralism allows the conception of a multiplicity of not only spiritual paths, but also spiritual liberations, worlds, and even ultimates. On the one hand, besides affirming the historical existence of multiple spiritual goals, the increased embodied openness to immanent spiritual life and the spirit-in-between fostered by the participatory approach may naturally engender a number of novel holistic spiritual realizations that cannot be reduced to traditional states of enlightenment or liberation. If human beings were regarded as *unique* embodiments of the mystery or the cosmos, would it not be plausible to consider that as they spiritually individuate, their spiritual realizations might also be distinct even if potentially overlapping and aligned with each other?

On the other hand, participatory pluralism proposes that different spiritual ultimates can be enacted through intentional or spontaneous participation in an undetermined mystery, spiritual power, or generative force of life or reality. Whereas I take these enactions to be ultimate in their respective spiritual universes, this consideration in no way relativizes the various traditions' ultimates — nor does it posit a

supra-ultimate spiritual referent beyond them. In contrast, I hold that participatory enaction allows one to not only move away from representational and objectivist accounts of spiritual cognition, but also avoid the problematic *dualism of the mystery and its enactions*. Building on both the enactive paradigm's account of cognition as embodied action, I maintain that in the same way an individual is her actions (whether perceptual, cognitive, emotional, or subtle), the mystery is its enactions. In this understanding, emptiness (*sunyata*), the Tao, and God (in their many inflexions) can be seen as creative gestures of the mystery enacted through participating human (and perhaps nonhuman) individuals and collectives.

Hence, the participatory perspective does not contend that there are two, three, or any limited quantity of pre-given spiritual ultimates, but rather that the radical openness, interrelatedness, and creativity of the mystery or the cosmos allows for the participatory co-creation of an indefinite number of ultimate self-disclosures of reality and corresponding religious worlds. Participatory approaches seek to enact with body, mind, heart, and consciousness a creative spirituality that lets a thousand spiritual flowers bloom. Although this may at first sound like a rather “anything goes” approach to religious claims, I hold to the contrary: namely, that recognizing a diversity of co-created religious worlds in fact asks both scholars and practitioners to be more perspicuous in discerning their differences and merits. Because such worlds are not simply given but involve human beings as agents and co-creators, individuals are not off the ethical hook where religion is concerned but instead inevitably make cosmopolitical and moral choices in all their religious actions. As



discussed below, ethical considerations are crucial, especially in light of the demonstrably pernicious ecological, political, and social impact many religions historically had — and continue to have today.

A More Relaxed Spiritual Universalism

The pluralistic spirit of the participatory approach should not eclipse its “more relaxed” spiritual universalism — although eschewing dubious equations among spiritual ultimates (e.g., the Tao is God or Buddhist emptiness is structurally equivalent to the Hindu Brahman), the participatory approach affirms an underlying undetermined mystery or creative spiritual power as the generative source of all spiritual enactions. This shared spiritual dynamism should be distinguished from any Kantian-like noumenon or “thing-in-itself” endowed with inscrutable qualities and from which all spiritual ultimates are always derived as incomplete, culturally conditioned, or cognitively constrained phenomenal manifestations. In contrast, the enactive epistemology of the participatory approach does away with the Kantian two-worlds dualism by refusing to conceive of the mystery as having objectifiable pre-given attributes (such as personal, impersonal, dual, or nondual) and by affirming the radical identity of the manifold spiritual ultimates and the mystery, even if the former do not exhaust the ontological possibilities of the latter. Put simply, the mystery co-creatively unfolds in multiple ontological directions.



Relationships with nature provide many people a sense of the mystery of creative power.

Moreover, the relationship between pluralism and universalism cannot be consistently characterized in a hierarchical fashion. Whereas there surely are “lower” and “higher” forms of both universalism and pluralism (e.g., more or less rigid, sophisticated, encompassing, explanatory), the dialectic between universalism and pluralism, between the One and the Many, displays what it may well be the deepest dynamics of the self-disclosing of the mystery. The affirmation of a dialectical movement between the One and the Many in spiritual unfolding renders any abstract or absolute hierarchical arrangement between universalism and pluralism utterly misleading.

Participatory Epistemology and Critical Theory

It cannot be stressed strongly enough that participatory pluralism does not entail the uncritical or relativistic endorsement of past or present religious understandings or forms of life. Put differently, the participatory rejection of an objectifiable pre-given spiritual ultimate referent does not prevent qualitative distinctions in spiritual matters. To be sure, like beautiful porcelains made out of amorphous clay, traditions cannot be qualitatively ranked according to their accuracy in representing some imagined (accessible or inaccessible) original template. However, this account does not mean discernment cannot be cultivated regarding more (or less) evocative, skillful, or sophisticated artifacts.

In addition, whereas the participatory turn renders meaningless the postulation of qualitative distinctions among traditions according to a priori doctrines or a prearranged hierarchy of spiritual insights, these comparative grounds can be sought in a variety of practical fruits (e.g., existential, cognitive, emotional, interpersonal). Specifically, I have suggested two basic guidelines: the *egocentrism test*, which assesses the extent to which spiritual traditions, teachings, and practices free practitioners from gross and subtle forms of narcissism and self-centeredness; and the *dissociation test*, which evaluates the extent to which the same foster the integrated blossoming of all dimensions of the person. Given the many abuses and oppressions perpetuated in the name of religion, it may be sensible to add an *eco-socio-political test*, which assesses the extent to which spiritual systems foster ecological balance, social and economic justice, religious and political freedom, class and gender equality, and other fundamental human rights.

In light of these guidelines, qualitative differences among traditions can be observed, and this is important — from both “positive” and “negative” angles. In a “positive” light, for example, some traditions may have developed contemplative awareness more than others; the same could be said about psychophysical integration, emotional intelligence, social service, or eco-spiritual understandings and practices

fostering a harmonious relationship with nature. In a “negative” light, some traditions may be more prey than others to somatic dissociation, sexual repression, class and gender oppression, religious fanaticism and violence, or ecological blindness, among others. The fact that different traditions have cultivated different human potentials is part of what makes inter-religious cross-fertilization fruitful and arguably crucial for the development of more integral spiritual understandings and practices.

Two important qualifications must be made here. First, some spiritual paths and liberations may be more adequate for different psychological and cultural dispositions (as well as for the same individual at distinct developmental junctures), but this does not make them universally superior or inferior. The well-known four yogas of Hinduism (reflection, devotion, action, and experimentation) come quickly to mind in this regard, as do other spiritual typologies that can be found in other traditions. Second, the participatory emphasis on overcoming narcissism and self-centeredness, although arguably central to most spiritual traditions, may not be shared by all. Even more poignantly, most religious traditions would likely not rank too highly in terms of the dissociation or the eco-socio-political tests. For example, gross or subtle forms of repression, control, or strict regulation of the human body and its vital/sexual energies are the norm in most past and present contemplative endeavors, though one could choose autonomous maturation, integration, and participation of the body in spiritual knowing. Likewise, many religions have had a demonstrably negative environmental impact, supported violence, militarism, authoritarian regimes, and brought about serious violations of human rights even though they have also provided vital resources to secure them. Thus, the integrative and socially engaged thrust of the participatory turn is foundational for the development of a participatory critical theory of religion.

More positively, these tests normatively point toward the universal ideal of a *socially responsible integrated selflessness*, which (although the attainability of a fully integrated selflessness is open to question) can act as a regulative principle à la Jürgen Habermas’s “ideal speech situation.” The idea of integrated selflessness is thus capable of providing procedural criteria for critical discernment in spiritual matters, that is, concerning how qualitative distinctions in spiritual discourse might be made. From this evaluative principle, applicable standards, rules, or tests to assess spiritual choices and practices can be derived. In addition to self and peer-assessment, one might consider the use of standardized tests such as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI). In addition, the thoughtful combination of other tests may indicate the degree of psychosomatic integration of spiritual states, for example measures of transcendence used with measures of body intelligence and awareness.

To sum up, in this scenario it will no longer be a contested

issue whether practitioners endorse a theistic, nondual, or naturalistic account of the mystery, or whether their chosen path of spiritual cultivation is meditation, social engagement, conscious parenting, entheogenic shamanism, or communion with nature. The new spiritual bottom line, in contrast, will be the degree to which each spiritual path fosters both an overcoming of self-centeredness and a fully embodied integration to make individuals not only more sensitive to the needs of others, nature, and the world, but also more effective agents of cultural and planetary transformation in their own unique ways.

Integral Bodhisattvas

Since the conscious mind is the seat of most individuals’ sense of identity, an exclusive liberation of consciousness can be deceptive insofar as one can believe that one is fully free when, in fact, essential dimensions of the self are underdeveloped, alienated, or in bondage—as the dysfunctional sexual behavior of numerous modern spiritual teachers attests. Participatory spirituality seeks to foster the harmonious engagement of all human attributes in the spiritual path without tensions or dissociations. Despite his downplaying the spiritual import of sexuality and the vital world, the Indian mystic Sri Aurobindo was correct when he wrote that the liberation of consciousness cannot be equated to an integral transformation entailing the spiritual alignment of all human dimensions.

It cannot be stressed strongly enough that participatory pluralism does not entail the uncritical or relativistic endorsement of past or present religious understandings or forms of life.

With this in mind, I have proposed an integral *bodhisattva* vow in which the conscious mind renounces its own full liberation until the body, the heart, and the primary world can be free as well from alienating tendencies that prevent them from sharing freely in the unfolding life of the mystery here on Earth. Needless to say, to embrace an integral *bodhisattva* vow is not a return to the individualistic spiritual aspirations of early Buddhism because it entails a commitment to the *integral* liberation of all sentient beings, rather than only of their conscious minds or conventional sense of identity. Likewise, as the above description reflects, my use of the term *bodhisattva* does not suggest a commitment to early Buddhist accounts of liberation as extinction of bodily



"Interpersonal co-creation emerges from cooperative relationships among human beings growing as peers in the spirit of solidarity, mutual respect, and constructive confrontation."

senses and desires and release from the cycle of transmigratory experience.

This vow is arguably connected to the contemporary re-visioning of many religious traditions, such as Michael Lerner's, "Jewish Renewal and Emancipatory Spirituality", Matthew Fox's, "Creation Spirituality for Christianity", or David Loy's and Donald Rothberg's, "Socially Engaged Buddhism." These and many others spiritual leaders and authors propose reconstructions of their traditions that seek not only to critique eco-socio-political oppression and injustice, but also to integrate human dimensions that had been previously inhibited, repressed, or even proscribed such as the roles of women and feminine values, body appreciation and sensual desire, or intimate relationships and sexual diversity.

Participatory Spiritual Practice

In addition to many classical spiritual skills and values of mindfulness, compassion, or unconditional love, participatory spiritual practice cultivates the embodied, relational, and enactive (i.e., creative, inquiry-driven, and world-constituting) dimensions of spiritual growth. This emphasis can be found in some traditional practices, many contemporary revisions of traditional practices, and a number of innovative spiritual developments. Whereas some traditional practices (e.g., Kabbalistic, contemplative, Indigenous, esoteric) are participatory in many regards (for illustrations, see my coedited anthology *The Participatory Turn: Spirituality,*

Mysticism, Religions Studies), in their modern (re-)articulations one can find more explicit and robust affirmations of participatory values. Here I locate, for example, Michael Lerner's highly integrative and body-affirming "Jewish Renewal and Emancipatory Spirituality", Reginald Ray's embodied reconstruction of Buddhist meditation, contemporary postural yoga and Ian Whicher's account of Patanjali's yoga, modern Eastern and Western approaches to Tantra, and Christian engagements of the body and sexuality in Christian prayer, among many others.

In addition, the last few decades have witnessed the emergence of a variety of novel participatory spiritual practices, such as Ramón Albareda and Marina Romero's interactive embodied meditations, John Heron's cooperative spiritual inquiry, and my own method of embodied spiritual inquiry. Other bodies of practice with important participatory elements include Stanislav Grof's Holotropic Breathwork, A. H. Almaas's Diamond Approach, feminist and women's spirituality approaches, modern forms of entheogenic spiritual, Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga, some contemporary somatic approaches, relational approaches to spirituality, and modern engagements of sexuality as spiritual path, among others.

Social Engagement

In a fundamental way, humans *are* our relationships with both the human and nonhuman world. This recognition is

inevitably linked with a commitment to social transformation. To be sure, this commitment can take many different forms, from more direct, active social or political action in the world (e.g., social service, spiritually grounded political criticism, environmental activism) to more subtle types of social activism involving distant prayer, collective meditation, or ritual (as thoroughly discussed by David Nicol in his recent book, *Subtle Activism*). While there is still much to learn about the actual effectiveness of subtle activism, embodied spirituality cannot be divorced from a commitment to social, political, and ecological transformation — whatever form this may take.

This commitment arguably calls for the articulation of a common, albeit contextually sensitive, global ethics. This global ethics, however, cannot arise exclusively out of humanity's highly ambiguous moral religious and even mystical past, but needs to be crafted in the tapestry of contemporary interfaith interactions, comparative religious ethics, cross-cultural dialogue on global human rights, and cooperative spiritual inquiry. In other words, it is likely that any viable future global ethics will be grounded not only in human spiritual history, but also in the critical reflection on such a history in the context of present-day moral intuitions (e.g., about the pitfalls of religious dogmatism, fanaticism, narcissism, and dissociation). Besides its obvious relevance for regulating cross-cultural and interreligious conflicts, the adoption of global guidelines — including guidelines for dealing with disagreement — seems crucial to address some of the most challenging issues of the “global village,” such as the exploitation of women and children, the increasing polarization of rich and poor, the environmental crisis, xenophobic responses to cultural and ethnic diversity, religion-based terrorism, and unfairness in international business.

In closing, although participatory spirituality arguably provides resources for critical discernment in spiritual matters, it is misleading to consider the participatory movement, or any particular participatory approach, a spiritual tradition that could be situated above all others. In contrast, participatory spirituality might be better understood as a spiritual orientation (i.e., toward embodiment, integration, relationality, and creative inquiry) that can be found in various degrees within many existing traditions, that is increasingly alive in the ongoing contemporary renewal of traditions, and that may also give rise to new spiritual expressions and shape the emergence of novel religious or spiritual traditions.

In addition, I believe that the participatory movement should be seen more as a *network* of independent thinkers sharing a scholarly/spiritual sensibility about the cocreated nature of spiritual knowledge, the centrality of embodiment and multidimensional cognition, or the import of religious pluralism than as a school of thought or discipline formalized through traditional scholarly structures. The inherently

pluralistic character of a network can house greater theoretical diversity than a school of thought, which often achieves its identity through commitment to specific paradigmatic assumptions or conceptual frameworks. Thus, a network-type organization is not only coherent with the pluralistic ethos of the participatory movement, but also fecund in the sense of not imposing a priori theoretical constraints via premature commitments to particular models or the aspiration to converge into a unified theory. Furthermore, the decentralized nature of a network is consistent with the critique of hierarchical and authoritarian tendencies in society and religion issued by many participatory thinkers, as well as with related proposals for peer-to-peer modes of knowledge production, access, and distribution. *Tikkun* magazine's interfaith and secular-humanist-welcoming Network of Spiritual Progressives is an important example of what such networks might seek to accomplish, not only sharing modes of knowledge, but also actively seeking to promote a variety of strategies for healing and transforming the contemporary social, economic and political realities of capitalist dominated societies.

Lastly, a participatory approach envisions the long-sought-for spiritual unity of humankind, not in any global spiritual megasystem or integrative conceptual framework, but in the shared lived experience of communion with the generative dimension of the mystery. In other words, the spiritual unity of humankind may not be found in the heavens (i.e., in mental, visionary, or even mystical visions) but deep down into the earth (i.e., in the embodied connection with our common creative root). As the saying attributed to 13th-century Persian poet and mystic Rumi describes, “Maybe you are searching among the branches for what only appears in the roots.” The recognition of such creative roots may allow to growth by branching out in countless creative directions without losing a sense of deep communion across differences. Such a recognition may also engender a sense of belonging to a common spiritual family committed to fostering the spiritual individuation of its members and the eco-socio-politically responsible transformation of the world.

I extend an invitation to both scholars and practitioners to add their voices and perspectives to the conversation and to expand participatory thinking in new directions and into new fields. I proceed with the conviction that the participatory approach provides helpful understandings and practical tools to facilitate a more fertile interreligious interaction, empower individuals in the embodied co-creation of their spiritual pathand, perhaps most fundamentally, participate more fully in the mystery out of which everything arises. ■

NOTE: This essay is based on themes more fully developed in Jorge N. Ferrer's new book, *Participation and the Mystery: Transpersonal Essays in Psychology, Education, and Religion* (State University of New York Press, 2017)

Reb Zalman, Neo-Hasidism, and Inter-Religious Engagement

Lessons from My Teacher

BY OR N. ROSE



RABBI ZALMAN SCHACHTER-SHALOMI, widely known as Reb Zalman, was one of the most creative and influential Jewish religious figures in recent decades, known for weaving together various strands of Eastern European Hasidism and American counter-culture to create the Jewish Renewal movement. Among the core elements of his Neo-Hasidic project was an innovative approach to interreligious cooperation. In his later years, he would come to describe this vision as “Deep Ecumenism.” Beginning in the late 1940’s, Reb Zalman began to participate in a series of personal and professional experiments in dialogue, shared ritual practice, and theological reflection that included transformative experiences with such Christian luminaries as Howard Thurman and Thomas Merton. By the time of his death, Reb Zalman was widely recognized as one of the great ecumenists of our time by many, including his much-celebrated friendship with His Holiness, The Dalai Lama.

In this essay, I examine four key elements of Reb Zalman’s approach to interreligious engagement. I do so as a rabbi intensely involved in interreligious education and activism, and as a person for whom the teachings of Hasidism have been a key spiritual resource for much of my life. As a child raised in the nascent Jewish Renewal Movement in the 1970s

and 80s and a longtime student of Reb Zalman’s, I regard him as a powerful model of a learned and innovative Jewish teacher whose expansive religious vision included an abiding commitment to interreligious bridge-building. Therefore, in this article I pay specific attention to the ways in which Reb Zalman drew on, revised, or departed from established Hasidic ideals and norms as he encountered people from different spiritual traditions. Finally, in presenting his teachings on interreligious engagement, I articulate briefly what I find compelling about each of these ideas and how we might build upon them, carrying forth Reb Zalman’s legacy of renewal.¹

“Seek God’s Face Evermore”— Humility & Curiosity

Reb Zalman often referred to himself mockingly as a “spiritual peeping Tom.” I would describe his curiosity in much more positive terms. As a person ever searching for insight into life’s great mysteries, he was humble enough to recognize that no one person, community, or religion possesses ultimate truth. In his memoir, *My Life in Jewish Renewal*, he describes a critical moment in his spiritual development: After immigrating to the United States in 1941, he studied in the Habad-Lubavitch yeshiva in Brooklyn, New York for

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several years. Even before completing his ordination process, he was dispatched in 1946 by the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn (d. 1950), to help establish a yeshiva in New Haven, Connecticut. As Reb Zalman writes, this was part of a broader effort to “restore traditional Jewish life” in the aftermath of the *Shoah*; an effort that this young emissary and many others in his community understood in eschatological terms: “I was sure that under the Rebbe’s impassioned directive, a resurgence of Jewish education would provide the necessary ‘tipping point’ to bring down *Moshiach* [Messiah].”

Shortly after arriving in New Haven, Reb Zalman prepared for his outreach work to Jewish youth by making a visit to the local public library in search of resources on childhood development. As he glanced at the books on the new acquisitions table, he came upon two titles that changed his life “in ways [he] could not possibly have foreseen at the time.” One of these books was Robert Ballou’s *The World Bible*, a large anthology of sacred writings drawn from humanity’s major religions. As Reb Zalman stated in his memoir, “Today, hundreds of such works exist, but published on the cusp of the Holocaust [1944] such ecumenism was unusual and almost visionary.” The other book was *Difficulties in Mental Prayer* by a Cistercian monk named Eugene Boylan from the Abbey of Mt. Joseph in Ireland. The title of this devotional manual immediately caught the young rabbi’s eye:

[It] intrigued me, for outside Lubavitch Hasidim, no Jews I had yet encountered even mentioned the reality and nature of “mental prayer” . . . Over the next few weeks, *Difficulties in Mental Prayer* awakened my soul to the realization that other religions besides Judaism hold real wisdom and effective methods for drawing closer to God.

I find this comment particularly powerful given the fact that Reb Zalman had only recently escaped Nazi Germany, and was involved in a Jewish educational project that he understood in messianic terms. Given his painful experiences of anti-Semitism in Europe and the overwhelmingly negative portrayal of non-Jews and of non-Jewish religious traditions in many Hasidic sources, his openness to Christianity and other religious traditions was remarkable. Like his older colleague and fellow Neo-Hasidic teacher, Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972) Reb Zalman made a deliberate choice to engage in interreligious and cross-cultural activities, rather than shield himself from such encounters as many others in their battered Hasidic communities chose to do.

Reflecting on his theological development decades later, Reb Zalman commented that as a young adult he thought that “the true spiritual treasures were among us Jews and even among Jews mostly with the Hasidim.” However, in time, he began to reconsider his religious worldview. In the latter part of his life, he would come to articulate his pluralistic perspective in terms influenced by Gaian thought:

When we understand Gaia, we begin to see that just as every species is important, so is every religion. If all the pesticides killed all the insects, we would have a silent spring, because there would be no birds — so the whole chain of life depends on everything being there. Analogously, my sense is that Judaism needs to have Christianity to challenge it, and in the same way each religion is a necessary, integral part of the planet. So we are beyond triumphalism. But to say that therefore we will need to give up our special way of being misses the mark; the world needs us.

For Reb Zalman, this meant that each community should maintain its distinct identity, while also sharing vital “nutrients” and working cooperatively for the health and wellness of the planet. This Gaian vision of planetary health requires that Jews, like people from other religious communities, offer up their wisdom, ideas, and practices to humanity as a whole, but without seeking to convert others to Judaism or to insist that their way of life is better than all others.

As a person ever searching for insight into life’s great mysteries, he was humble enough to recognize that no one person, community, or religion possesses ultimate truth.

This is a very different theological vision than that articulated by many classical Hasidic thinkers, who present Judaism as a superior religious tradition and Jews as more sophisticated or evolved spiritual beings. Further, in many of these traditional sources when the Hasidic masters speak of the interaction of Jews and non-Jews, they teach their followers to try and “redeem” the goodness that might be found in their non-Jewish neighbors or their cultural creations, and restore these “holy sparks” to their rightful place within a Jewish devotional context. Reb Zalman’s vision of a world of interdependent religious communities is a conscious departure from such teachings and to other “triumphalist” materials in Jewish and non-Jewish religious sources.²

Like Reb Zalman, I reject the notion that Judaism is a superior religious system or that Jews are ontologically, or otherwise, more advanced or enlightened than non-Jews. While I love being Jewish and believe that Judaism has distinct contributions to make to the world, we are not alone in this effort; the great project of *tikkun* (mending or healing) requires a global effort that includes meaningful input from



Reb Zalman and spiritual teacher Ram Dass in 2008



Reb Zalman meeting with longtime friend, His Holiness, The Dalai Lama

people from different religious and cultural perspectives. When I allow myself to dream of a perfected world, I envision a robust international civilization in which the values of universalism and particularism are enacted in ways unimaginable to us today because of our current ethical and spiritual limits.

Rooted Engagement — Know Thyself & Others

Building on the previous point, while Reb Zalman spread his interreligious wings far and wide, it is important to point out that he did so with deep roots — knowledge and lived experience — in Judaism. Further, he had a clear sense that his engagement with non-Jewish texts and teachers would contribute to his growth as a Jewish practitioner and professional. As an example of what I am calling here “rooted

engagement,” I turn to Zalman’s humorous, but poignant recollection of his first visit to Bardonia, Kentucky to meet his beloved friend, Thomas Merton (with whom he had corresponded several times before meeting in person), at the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemane.

In early 1962, I had eagerly finalized plans to visit Merton at Gethsemane in the upcoming summer. I will [always] remember that August day . . . It was already evening [when I arrived] and the gate was officially closed . . . To my dismay, the entrance bell announcing visitors was attached to a rope with a cross at its end. As a Hasidic rabbi, I really didn’t want to grasp the cross, but it was necessary to pull the rope in order to ring the bell. After a moment’s thought, I grabbed the rope above the cross and yanked. The bell instantly rang! Suddenly a Trappist monk emerged from the shadows, where he had obviously been standing silently all along. Striding over, he opened the gate for me and said, smiling, “An interesting solution to a problem of conscience.”

As this text demonstrates, while Reb Zalman was excited to make this inter-religious pilgrimage, standing at the front gate of Gethsemane he bumped up against a personal religious boundary. To be sure, Reb Zalman’s borders would shift significantly over time, but on that summer evening in 1962, this evolving young rabbi had to devise a creative response to a “problem of conscience.”

In a 1983 interview Reb Zalman reiterated this same point, making mention of his experiences with Merton and the Trappist monks, but also referencing a more recent encounter with individuals from a different spiritual community:

Another time, when I sat in a teepee with Native Americans, somebody said, “Why is he wearing his little hat?” I turned to Little Joe . . . the old Pueblo Indian, and I said, “I’m sitting here in the presence of God. To take off the hat would be to deny that. What do you say, Grampa Joe?” Grampa Joe just looks at me, and he says, “It’s your head.”

These anecdotes are important to me because in both cases Reb Zalman maintained awareness that interreligious engagement involves the navigation of boundaries. As a Jew, there are certain religious practices that I simply will not participate in, or that I will engage in only with modification, because of theological, historical, or personal considerations. In my experience this process is dynamic and requires ongoing reflection, conversation with trusted mentors and companions, and study. There is a related point that emerges more explicitly in the second vignette: I appreciate Reb Zalman’s choice to wear his yarmulke while sitting in the teepee because by doing so he intentionally communicated his desire to be in dialogue with and *learn* from Grampa Joe and the Pueblo community, while also sharing with them a core element of his identity. I think it was an effective way of expressing his understanding of himself as an attentive and

engaged guest in their spiritual home, while simultaneously making visible his Jewish identity.

In using the term “grounded engagement,” I also wish to point out that Reb Zalman was a dedicated student of *other* religions. Reading through his correspondences with Thomas Merton, for example, one is struck by the fact that much of what these inter-religious pioneers discussed were Jewish and Christian sacred texts and manuals on religious practice. In one touching moment in a letter Zalman sent to Merton in the fall of 1963, the young Hasid tells his Trappist friend to be on the lookout for a recent English translation of a Jewish mystical text called *The Tract on Ecstasy*. In loaning the book to Merton, he writes, “Would you please as you read it, mark it with pencil as to the comparisons and so forth. That will make the reading of the book, for me, a delight.” While Reb Zalman was a person of uncommon intellectual acuity, who had the great benefit of an unusual blend of traditional Jewish and academic training, I think his dedication to learning about the other is an essential teaching for anyone interested in interreligious collaboration. Not only does it demonstrate genuine interest and respect for the religious other, but it allows for more sophisticated conversation and thoughtful engagement.

One important lesson I have learned from studying about the inter-religious journeys of pioneers like Reb Zalman is that as an educator working with future Jewish leaders—rabbis, cantors, educators—I need to provide my students with appropriate inter-religious training. For example, what should these emerging professionals know about Christianity or Islam? How much emphasis should be placed on classical texts or contemporary manifestations of these traditions? How often should students from different religious communities meet to study and explore religious, academic, and vocational matters? There are no simple answers to these questions, but I want to ensure that future Jewish leaders, living in an increasingly interconnected world, are not left alone to sort these things out, as Reb Zalman was for many years as a fledgling rabbi. We cannot rely on the episodic appearance of virtuosos like Abraham Joshua Heschel and Zalman Schachter-Shalomi to engage in this sacred work. Thankfully, there has been an increase in inter-religious offerings at Jewish seminaries and professional programs in the last several years. Still, there is much more work to be done in honing this area of leadership education.

Dialogues of Devotion—Cultivating Personal Relationships

According to Reb Zalman, one of his most formative religious experiences was studying with the distinguished African American clergyman and theologian Howard Thurman (1899–1981). Following a decade of intensive training with HaBaD and various informal interreligious explorations in

the late 1940’s and early 1950’s, Reb Zalman enrolled in a graduate program in the Psychology of Religion at Boston University, for which Dean Thurman served as the academic advisor. Reb Zalman began this educational undertaking with real trepidation, despite several positive interactions with individual Christians leading up to this experience:

Deep down in my guts I felt anxious about entrusting my soul to a Christian—knowing that they all want to convert Jews. Was he open enough to allow me to learn spiritual disciplines and resources to make me a better Jew? As a pulpit rabbi for several years, I had learned enough to know that such methods require ample trust to be effective, and to do that, I wanted to make sure Minister Thurman was trustworthy—that is, that he wouldn’t try to convert me to Christianity.

To Reb Zalman’s credit, rather than holding tightly to this negative generalization and retreating from the scene, he met with Thurman and respectfully explored his ambivalence with the acclaimed Christian thinker:

Talking over coffee with the dean, I explained that I really wanted to take his course and learn from his experiential methods. But I also confessed that “I’m not sure if my anchor chains are long enough” to relinquish self-control and allow him (as a non-Jew) to guide me spiritually.

Reb Zalman was deeply moved by Thurman’s answer to him: “With a pensive expression, he put down his coffee mug. His graceful hands went back and forth, as though mirroring my dilemma. Howard Thurman looked right at me and said, ‘Don’t you trust the *Ruach Hakodesh* (Holy Spirit)?’”

Feeling that Thurman’s response—a theological query consciously expressed in Hebrew—was a sign of deep respect and understanding, Reb Zalman carefully considered the question for the next few weeks and then went on to apprentice with this esteemed religious leader, whom he lovingly referred to as his “Black Rebbe.” This experience not only helped shape his pedagogic vision, but it also served as a model of the power of personal interreligious relationships. In Reb Zalman’s memoir, he describes how years later, when one of his sons was approaching the age of bar mitzvah, he introduced him to Dean Thurman and asked the minister to offer them a *berakhah* (blessing) as they neared this milestone (just as a traditional hasid might ask his rebbe to do at such a moment). Reb Zalman was deeply moved to learn that the encounter had made a lasting impression on Thurman too, who wrote about it in an unpublished portion of his own autobiography, *With Head and Heart*.

Throughout the rest of his life, Reb Zalman would seek out companions from various religious and cultural communities with whom he could engage in spiritual experimentation and deliberation. In reflecting on his friendship with Thomas Merton, he described it as a “dialogue of the devout”—“I love God, you love God, so let’s talk about how we’re getting on



Jewish, Muslim, and Christian texts appearing as a unified whole.

with God and with our prayer.” In the case of Merton, he and Reb Zalman established enough intimacy to share with each other both the joys and the pains of their religious journeys. In the following letter, Reb Zalman speaks openly about how disappointed he feels because his pastoral and teaching duties severely curtailed his prayer life: “It is so difficult to think about G-d [sic], always being His errand boy, then I say to myself: “I didn’t ask for the errand. It was sent to me. Maybe He wants my errands more than my meditations.” Characteristic of the intimacy and playfulness Reb Zalman and Merton shared, Zalman closed his letter with the following words: “So, I will pray for you and please pray for me, and we will keep in mind, won’t we, that whatever curve we get pitched, we will try to bat. And after all, what is the business of the cross all about if not that.”

While many interreligious initiatives involve officials from various religious communities speaking at communal gatherings or writing joint public statements — often in

response to civic or political unrest — Reb Zalman invested much of his interreligious efforts in cultivating personal relationships with teachers, colleagues, and students. As Reb Zalman moved further from the Lubavitch community, he craved the intimacy and intensity he once shared with his peers and teachers in the more insular world of Hasidism. After all, it was Reb Zalman who dreamed of creating B’nai Or, a Neo-Hasidic commune (influenced, in part, by the Trappist monks of Kentucky and Manitoba), and who wrote a doctoral thesis on the Hasidic practice of *yehidut* (private counseling by a Hasidic master of a disciple) and analogues in modern psychology and pastoral care. It is no accident that he developed close relationships with mentors and peers from other religious and cultural traditions, who were also impassioned seekers and leaders often located on the edges of their communities — Thurman, Merton, Timothy Leary, Ram Dass, and Matthew Fox. Commenting on his connection to the Dalai Lama, Reb Zalman said:

We work in different spaces, but it doesn’t mean that we do different work. We each want to preserve as much of the ethnic and traditional material that we can, but to transform it so that it can be practiced in the present. Once I see somebody like this doing it, I feel that I have greater connection with such a person than I would have even with people of my own faith who are trying to do, still, the restoration work.

Reb Zalman viewed his own spiritual trajectory as a movement from restoration to renewal, and it was this shift that led him to break with HaBaD (and with Orthodoxy more generally) and to create the Renewal movement. Of course, one of the challenges of interreligious work is finding ways to work with individuals and groups with whom we have significant theological and political disagreements; both “restorationists” and “renewalists,” to use Reb Zalman’s language. These more complicated relationships can help us grow in surprising ways and accomplish goals that would be impossible without engaging with people with whom we otherwise share little in common.

The “Skillful Means”— Cultivating the Spirit

Throughout his many years of interreligious exploration, Reb Zalman always had a particular interest in learning about the “spiritual technologies” of other seekers and devotees. What helped a Sufi sheikh feel God’s loving presence in his life? Which prayers did a Catholic nun find most useful in cultivating her capacity for compassion? Reflecting on this point, Reb Zalman wrote that what drew him and Thomas Merton together was their shared interest in the *upaya*, the “skillful means” (in Sanskrit) that people use for personal and communal transformation. Using Jewish and Christian

terminology, Reb Zalman added that they sought to better understand what would help with *tikkun ha'midot*, “repair of one’s attributes” and *conversatio morum*, “fidelity to the monastic life,” with the fundamental question being, “How do I move from my *is* to my *ought*?” I believe this approach to interfaith engagement grew largely from Reb Zalman’s understanding of and experience with Hasidism. As Arthur Green writes:

Zalman understood and taught that Hasidism was primarily a devotional mysticism, and he made sure that neo-Hasidism was that as well. Its focus, and his, was all on worship. Abstract truths, theological formulations, were all well and good. But then Zalman would ask: “But can you *daven* (pray) it?” By this he meant two things. First: Do you really mean it? Are you saying it with your whole heart? But beyond that: Does it have a devotional quality to it? Can you say it in a worshipful way? Can you serve God with it? Zalman, like Heschel . . . understood that Judaism is all about the devotional life. We are here to serve, and a teaching takes on real meaning only if it inspires you to that service.

Reb Zalman was passionate about exploring different ways to connect with God, to refine one’s character, and to build intentional community. As a mystic and religious pluralist, he believed that thoughtful practitioners from different religious and cultural contexts could help one another expand their consciousness and become better servants of the divine and of humankind.

Woven into the universalistic vision was Reb Zalman’s more particularistic desire to reinvigorate Jewish life in the United States in the post-Holocaust era. He felt an urgent desire to provide people, particularly young adults, with a variety of compelling spiritual tools that would open them, or re-engage them, in a Jewish quest for meaning. In the introduction to his 1975 primer on Jewish mysticism, *Fragments of a Future Scroll*, he writes as follows:

It is now a part of our general education to know the ideas and principles of Eastern teachings, in one form or another, which pervade contemporary culture. Still, the Jewish establishment is mainly unprepared to meet the new demands that this new consciousness calls for.

He goes on to say that in order to meet the needs of this rising generation, Jewish teachers must become more open to and adept at sharing Jewish mystical resources with countercultural seekers, and open to exploring with these searching spirits how to make thoughtful use of insights and techniques from *other* religious traditions. Interestingly, even during this period of intense exploration — while breaking other conventional boundaries — Reb Zalman

remained concerned about the issue of religious boundaries. As he writes:

I do not consider it dangerous for persons of Jewish backgrounds to experience and explore Eastern mysticism, provided they check it out for technique and content, rather than for ritual, dogma, and ethnic lifestyle. The process of a soul’s way to God is often initiated by an excursion into the realms of the Eastern religions.

Unfortunately, he does not elaborate on these distinctions, but clearly Reb Zalman considered that if one chooses to “cross over” and explore other religions, they think about how to integrate these methods or insights into their Jewish life. He then goes on to briefly compare and contrast different contemporary Hindu, Buddhist, and Sufi practices, recommending a few teachers and schools from these traditions that he considers to be particularly hospitable to Jewish seekers who wish to *remain* Jewish. By Reb Zalman’s own admission, not all of his attempts at conceptual and ritual adaptation worked well, but in keeping with his early experiences with Howard Thurman — including his spiritual “labs” at Boston University — and his own highly experimental nature, he continued to explore different ways of experiencing the sacred and sharing his insights with others.

The process of a soul’s way to God is often initiated by an excursion into the realms of the Eastern religions.

Among the many lessons I learned from Reb Zalman is the importance of offering people different ways through which to connect to their own religions, and across religious traditions. He was particularly concerned that modern Jewish life had become overly rational and over-verbalized, and consistently urged rabbis and educators to create more contexts for other forms of religious experience such as song, dance, silent meditation, etc. One can hear in Reb Zalman’s voice echoes of the original Hasidic masters, whose bold revivalist agenda included a call for renewed focus on prayer, contemplation, and other affective paths to God. Commenting on the need for a holistic approach to interreligious engagement specifically, Reb Zalman’s longtime colleague at Temple University and fellow inter-religious pioneer, Leonard Swidler, often speaks about three different forms of dialogue: a dialogue of the “head” (the cognitive or intellectual), of the “hands” (the illative or ethical), and of the “heart” (the affective or aesthetic).

Though Reb Zalman forged close relationships with Jewish and interreligious colleagues who were deeply involved in social change movements — individuals for whom the illative or ethical dimension of this work had a strong political dimension — this was not where he invested the bulk of his time and creative energy. Unlike Heschel or Merton, for example, he did not speak regularly at rallies or write extensively about African American civil rights or against the War in Vietnam. Like his older colleagues, however, he did mentor and support several people who became leaders in the Jewish peace movement and other progressive political causes, including Rabbis Arthur Waskow and Michael Lerner. Further, through his teaching, counseling, and prayer leadership he advocated for environmental responsibility, women's rights, and inclusion of LGBTQ people in organized religious life. As Waskow noted recently, Reb Zalman often expressed his political commitments through the creative interpretation of classical Jewish texts and liturgical innovation, as well as periodic engagement in more conventional political action. Commenting on Reb Zalman's deep commitment to prayer and ritual as forms of activism, his longtime student and friend, Carol Rose, added:

He believed that *davenning* (praying) was a powerful tool for social transformation. Chant, song, breath work, and movement all could provide people with opportunities to refine their values, motives, and strategies. Further, like his Hasidic teachers before him, Zalman also believed that when one's prayers were spoken with *kavannah* (intention), they could have real effects in the world beyond the individual or community worshipers. Exactly *how* that worked was a mystery he pursued throughout his life. It inspired his exploration of Jewish mysticism, transpersonal psychology, Vipassana meditation, neuroscience, and more.

In Reb Zalman's last years of life (what he referred to as the "December" years) he stated to me several times that a leader must be thoughtful about his or her strengths and limitations, and carefully consider how best to serve others. I think that in his own discernment process (particularly as he aged) he determined that his *avodah* (devotional service) should be channeled largely into prayer leadership, interreligious dialogue, and spiritual counseling, leaving the more overt political work to others better suited for this task.

Conclusion

Reb Zalman was a pioneer in the North American interreligious movement. A person of great intellectual and spiritual hunger, he set out on a religious quest in his mid-twenties that took him on a lifelong journey from Brooklyn, New York to Bardonia, Kentucky, to Daramsala, India, to his final resting place in Boulder, Colorado. As a mystic, he believed that God's mysterious presence animated and infused all of existence, and that no single person or community had

full or unobscured access to the Infinite. While he remained deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition, Reb Zalman actively sought out the wisdom of other religious and cultural traditions. A gifted autodidact, he learned a great deal from his independent studies, but also forged significant relationships with practitioners from other communities. He was particularly drawn to religious devotees who were fellow "renewalists" — teachers and leaders who were actively working to reinvigorate their traditions using an eclectic combination of traditional and contemporary methods, including interreligious and cross-cultural dialogue.

While Reb Zalman clearly broke with traditional Hasidic teaching and mores when it came to his approach to non-Jews and non-Jewish religious traditions, his desire for dialogue grew from his longing to experience God's presence more fully in his life, as is so often spoken of as the ultimate goal in Jewish mystical literature: "I have set YHWH before me continuously" (Psalm 16:8). Further, he had a lifelong passion for prayer and spiritual practice, which he developed in the world of HaBaD Hasidism and carried with him into the inter-religious sphere. Chanting the Psalms with Catholic nuns, sitting in a sweat lodge with Aboriginal elders, or reciting the 99 Arabic names of God with a Sufi sheikh were all attempts to discover something new or different about the mysteries of the cosmos and of the human soul. However, unlike his Hasidic forbears, this was *not* understood as an exclusivist undertaking through which the Jewish devotee attempts to redeem the "holy sparks" imbedded in the "shells" of the non-Jewish world. Rather, Reb Zalman viewed it as part of an "organismic" process in which people across communities share their wisdom and help strengthen one another, recognizing both their similarities and differences.

As I wrote in the introduction to this essay, Reb Zalman is one of the primary models for me of an erudite and innovative Jewish teacher whose vision of religious life propelled him into interreligious dialogue, study, and ritual practice. Through his daring, idiosyncratic, and heartfelt experimentation, he modeled possibilities for growth and healing — both individually and communally — through intentional interreligious engagement. May Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi's memory continue to inspire all those who seek to live on the "growing edge" of life — *Yehi zikhro barukh*. ■

Notes

1. As I explained above, this essay is designed as an appreciative introduction to Reb Zalman's vision of interreligious engagement, including his evolving relationship to Hasidism. Each of these areas of study is deserving of more in-depth analysis, including critical scholarly reflection. Dr. Shaul Magid has pioneered the academic study of Reb Zalman's thought. In preparing the current essay, I found Dr. Magid's article, "Rainbow Hasidism in America — The Maturation of Jewish Renewal — A Review Essay" particularly helpful (published in *The Reconstructionist*, Spring

2004, pp. 34–60). See, also, his work on Reb Zalman in *American Post-Judaism: Identity and Renewal in a Postethnic Society* (Indiana University Press, 2013), particularly chapters 2–5.

2. Interestingly, Reb Zalman wrote that some of the seeds of his ecumenism were sown in his youth, including a powerful experience studying Jewish texts and European philosophical and literary sources in an informal HaBaD study group of diamond cutters in Antwerp. See, Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *My Life in Jewish Renewal*, pp. 15–16 and pp. 30–31.

Anti-Semitism, Uprootedness, and Zionism

My Voluntary Political Exile from Israel

BY MIKI KASHTAN

Uprooted Tree by Preston Rhea

I HAVE WRITTEN HUNDREDS of articles in which I rarely addressed anti-Semitism at all, certainly not my own encounters with it. I know it's because of unease about calling attention to anti-Semitism. I would never have that unease calling attention to other dimensions of being targeted for who I am: it's specific to anti-Semitism; as if calling attention to it could bring on more rather than less targeting of Jews; as if by speaking of anti-Semitism I could fuel it; as if anti-Semitism is ultimately about what Jews do.

This unease became clear to me only while working on this article, born of reading a definition of what it means to be indigenous, and realizing, with a physical sense of shock, that being indigenous is diametrically opposed to the experience of uprootedness that is so quintessentially Jewish. While uprootedness is indeed quite the opposite of being indigenous, it is also very distinct from the experience of colonizer cultures. Being uprooted — repeatedly — has been our quintessential experience for thousands of years, born of empires, Christianity, and colonialism. Ironically and tragically, it is only when we took steps to reclaim our indigeneity that we became colonizers.

I want to tell the story of what I — an Israeli Jew in voluntary political exile — see from my particular vantage point. I want to tell the story because in so many self-defined progressive contexts, anti-Semitism is rarely a topic of conversation, even though it's sadly alive and well, with its overt forms on the rise, especially since Donald Trump's election, and its cyclical nature barely understood.

Not long before the expulsion of Jews from Medieval Spain, Jews were highly assimilated into many dimensions of life.. Similarly, Jews were well-integrated into German society before the rise of the Nazis, as just a second of many such examples. Whenever the cycle is in its point of integration, Jews find ways of believing that it may just be over. Even Arthur Waskow, writing about anti-Semitism in the US in *Tikkun*, said: "Until very recently—again that foreboding phrase! —we had been fully accepted into the American culture, economy, politics, and society." Acceptance of Jews, so far in human history, has only been temporary.

Not being talked about, not being seen during parts of the cycle, is an aspect of anti-Semitism. I want anti-Semitism to be understood because I want it to end, like all forms of separation and oppression in the world. All of them.

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Pontius Pilatus, the Jews, and Me

I am in Poland, on the last day of a training retreat, in a room with over forty people. I am facilitating a discussion about when and how much to involve a group in the process of making a decision. One participant raises his hand to offer an example.

With a smile on his face indicating to me that he is appreciating the example and probably thinks I would, too, he begins recounting the story of Pontius Pilatus in the (in)famous passage taking place just before Jesus was crucified. For my student, this is likely an example of someone, Pontius Pilatus in this case, stepping back and putting a decision on the group that was his to make by dint of his authority.

I stopped him before he was done, knowing all too well what was coming. Here's the original passage in its entirety for anyone who is not familiar:

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. 'I am innocent of this man's blood,' he said. 'It is your responsibility!' All the people answered, 'His blood is on us and on our children!' (Matthew 27:24–25)

I was simply unable to continue. The pain it brought up was physical, and searing. For anyone who doesn't know, and perhaps many don't, this passage has served as "proof" that the Jews murdered Jesus, and has been used for centuries as justification for killing Jews. It wasn't until Vatican II, 1962–1965, that the Catholic Church formally repudiated this doctrine. I can't imagine that repudiation has been propagated forcefully outward from that center.

Just minutes before this incident, I had been telling the group how facilitation requires quick recovery and being able to function even when in emotional pain. So there was context for the moment. Here's more or less what I told the group: "You may not know this, but this passage that G. is referring to is at the core of how Jews were persecuted for hundreds of years in Europe. The level of pain this brought up for me is extraordinary. I want to take a moment to metabolize this pain, and then come back to facilitating, which is the purpose of why we are here. I can then attend to the rest of the pain later, outside this context." I then sat quietly and chose to process this internally and quickly. It took less than a minute in front of the group, allowing the knife of the experience to course through me to the other end, recovering enough to be able to function well, and tucking the experience away for later. It was exhilarating to be able to model so fully what I had just been talking with them about before.

Before proceeding, I checked only one thing with the group, and learned that I was the only Jew in the group. The retreat was in Poland, a country that had recently elected a nationalist government, and where most of the extermination of Jews happened during the Holocaust; not that long

ago. And it was a German who shared the example (a dear friend, and one whose utter lack of intention to harm I am 100% convinced of, even as the effect on me was so strong). The whole moment was so intense I cannot even bring clear enough words to it.

Then, over lunch, I had my very first ever experience of mourning and grieving Jewish history. I sat with a group of about eight people I fully trusted, and cried and cried and cried. I told them things they didn't know about the history of Jews in Europe. My mother, who specialized in Christian history when she did her master's degree in history in Israel in the early 1970s, has said that it is impossible to understand Christianity and the history of Europe in the Middle Ages without the presence of the Jews as the targeted other. The Holocaust was not an isolated event; it grew out of a thick web of anti-Semitism fed by the church and the ruling elites, who used the presence of Jews to siphon the anger of masses away from themselves. Time and time again Jews found a new place to be after being expelled, killed, or otherwise persecuted. Rarely allowed access to most forms of work, they were semi-invited and semi-forced into positions that made them an easy target of anger during times of stress, economic hardship, and instability.

It wasn't only the past that I was crying about. I was also mourning the continued persistence of Jewish uprootedness, and the total impossibility of Jewish existence. There is *still* no place in the world where Jews — *as Jews, unassimilated to*



Pontius Pilot assigns Jews responsibility for the execution of Jesus. Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann in 1896.

the local culture — are welcome to call home, not even Israel, as I explain shortly. It's no wonder that at least some Jews have internalized this and thus question the purpose of having a continued existence of the Jewish people, suggesting things would be so much simpler otherwise, as if the disappearance of the Jewish people and the Jewish culture would not be a loss. It would be — to me — a terrible loss.

It wasn't only Jewish suffering I was mourning during that precious forty-five minute period of grief. I was also mourning the suffering of Palestinians. I was mourning what the attempt to undo uprootedness has done. We have been uprooted for long enough that even our ancestral land, although now governed by Jews, could not be welcoming of us. As much as it was obvious to many of us, especially following the Holocaust, that our survival depended on returning to that homeland, there were other people living there, and from their perspective, the land was clearly theirs. And so it was that, in the wake of unspeakable horrors done to us, we found ourselves turning into oppressors of the Palestinian people.

We can only call Israel home at immense cost to Palestinians and our own sanity. This is why I am not living in Israel, why I am in voluntary political exile. And, at the very same time, I would like to have someone, anyone, tell me what the Jews of Europe were to do after WWII, when no place was ready to accept them? Where would they go, when killings of Jews continued even after dismantling the camps; when survivors who sought to return to their homes were faced with mobs of angry European Christians who had taken over their homes and resisted their return (sometimes murdering these Jewish returnees who had once been their neighbors)? What would have been a solution then, and what is a solution now?

A Conversation about Christmas

The echoes of Pontius Pilate meet me in America. I am in a Midwestern city, hosted by a friend while doing some work. It's morning, early in December. Svetlana, a warm and friendly woman from the Ukraine who is cleaning my friend's house, is chatting with me about this and that. It's a pleasant uneventful morning, and the conversation doesn't register, until Svetlana asks me what my plans are for Christmas. I tell her, still in the same mode, easy about it, that I have no plans for Christmas, because I am Jewish, and Jews don't celebrate Christmas. Svetlana is visibly surprised, and looks at me intently as she asks for more information. I tell her again that Christmas is not a Jewish holiday and we have different beliefs. She is not settling and keeps asking questions. The tone rises, as Svetlana struggles with the information. We both sit down, because the conversation is beyond her continuing to clean and me continuing to be casual. Finally, she looks at me and says, all earnest and clueless: "You Jews don't recognize and accept Jesus Christ as your lord and savior?"

This is the moment when the many hundreds of years of persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe hit me fully. It was so often people like Svetlana, warm, friendly, passionate, and earnest who were engaging in the violence. They genuinely believed what they had been fed about the Jews by their religious and political leaders, and acted from a deep conviction. In case it's not evident, the question Svetlana asked implies, within its framing, that Jesus simply is the lord and savior. The question cannot be answered as asked. Answering it, bridging the gap with Svetlana, requires erasing the anti-Semitism built deeply into the fabric of Christianity, exposing the simple and complicated truth that different groups have different beliefs.

I don't know how many people in the US, where I live, or even in Europe, know what violence was done to Jews because of holding a belief system in which the *idea* that a mortal human could be lord and savior simply doesn't make sense. I assume that Svetlana didn't realize she was standing in the ideological boots of Crusaders, the Inquisition, and the Nazis. I don't know how I would begin to explain to her, or even to some of my friends, what her seemingly benign statement echoes.

I don't even know how many people in the US, including Jews, know of the blood libels that flared up around Passover, when the Jews were accused of stealing and killing Christian babies and using their blood to bake the Passover matzah, an accusation that anyone who knows even basic Judaism would recognize as an impossibility. How many know of Jews being accused of poisoning the wells in Europe during the Black Plague? This one was based on Jews having far lower rates of contracting the pathogen because of the observance of handwashing before eating, and that lower incidence is what led to the accusation.

Speaking up about Anti-Semitism

The day after my experience with the man who brought up the story of Pilate washing his hands of responsibility for killing Jesus, I received an email from *Tikkun* with the text of an *article* by Yotam Marom. Yotam is the son of Israelis who grew up in New Jersey and is a young activist, having been active in Occupy and co-founded other movements. Yotam's writing is breathtaking in its openness and courage as he exposes anti-Semitism on the left. Still freshly opened by my experience of the previous day, I found Yotam's words like a salve for my soul. Here's just one passage as Yotam recounts his own complicity in saying nothing for a long time, and gives example after example of what he had been silent about prior to writing his article. I am struck by its depth of anguish, especially the very last phrase:

I said nothing about the deafening silence of my friends about the children murdered at the Jewish day school in France, the shootings at Jewish community centers in Kansas City and

Seattle, the Bat Mitzvah shot up in Denmark, the Jewish stores destroyed in Brussels, the synagogues firebombed in Germany, the Jewish graves defaced in Toronto — as if the only purpose of grieving Jewish death would be to justify Israeli militarism or American Islamophobia, as if mentioning these tragedies was to equate them with the oppression of other peoples, as if Jews today are too powerful to have compassion for.

Yotam calls on Jews to speak about anti-Semitism, to transform their own internalized anti-Semitism and commit to exposing and changing the system of anti-Semitism, for everyone's benefit. I am heeding his call, in my own way.

Zionism

I must speak about Zionism, the most high-profile attempt by Jews to respond to anti-Semitism, to find protection from continued exposure and powerlessness, to change the flavor of Jewish history. I also want to increase the number of people who can see beyond the polarized versions of what Zionism is.

I hear two dominant stories about Zionism, both of which are limited and unidimensional, both of which are fed by anti-Semitism, and neither of which I believe will bring us peace. The two stories are Zionism-as-racism and Zionism-as-saving-the-Jews-from-extermination.

Anti-Semitism feeds the former in the same way that it fed anger at Jews all through history: pointing the anger at the Jews as if they are the truly powerful, obscuring the ruling elites: the British Empire, and now the US government.

Anti-Semitism feeds the “Zionism-as-saving-the-Jews” story as justification for ongoing use of force by Jews in the name of having “no choice” if Jews are to survive at all. The

continued presence of anti-Semitism, and the fear it evokes in many Jews, allows them to tolerate violence they wouldn't otherwise endorse.

I agree with neither story. Instead, I see Zionism through a tragic and complex lens.

We Jews have succeeded in creating a physical and political presence, a home of sorts, in a land that has been contested territory for the entire existence of the Jewish people, and in that act we have lost our moral standing in the world. Our long existence as a persecuted people tenaciously managing to maintain its identity among hostile or indifferent cultures has been partially or completely erased, and we are seen as successful and beyond worry in places like the US, and, in Israel, as powerful beyond measure and dominating others in what should be their land.

I am an Israeli Jew in voluntary political exile because I am unable to digest the cost of establishing the state of Israel. I couldn't live in peace with what was being done in my name, as the occupation of land beyond the armistice borders of Israel in 1949 deepens and makes the lives of millions a daily assault on their dignity and freedom. This by no means amounts to me agreeing with those who see Zionism purely or primarily as a racist, genocidal, or colonial endeavor.

Being in voluntary exile means I am still an Israeli Jew, and still by choice. I treasure being part of an ongoing tradition of *tikkun olam*, the healing and repair of the world. I derive sustenance, despite being entirely nonobservant, from knowing that my ancestors brought us the prophetic voice (as Cornel West so aptly noted); a blueprint for economic justice; a practical rather than dogmatic approach to religious life, including a healthy respect for the body; the honest capacity



“I worry that the search for fairness more often than not yields an endless cycle of violence, and I want to search instead for what's possible.”



"No one has the right to obey."—Hannah Arendt exemplifies a secular Jewish call for justice.

to look at the human fallibility of leaders; the conviction that life is redeemable; and detailed attention to interdependence and community. More than anything, I am honored to know that I come from a long lineage of people who questioned authority. I am inspired by the tenacity that supported my people in finding ways to maintain their difference and uniqueness despite all odds.

Because of this, I am weighed down by the excruciating reality that I don't know what could have been done as the tragedy of the Jewish existence over millennia accelerated into massive genocide. *Still*, no one welcomed the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust as a group, leaving traumatized individuals to fend for themselves. This meant either staying in Europe and absorbing continued anti-Semitism, or migrating to faraway countries without having family or community support. As I mentioned before, the killing of Jews continued after the camps were liberated. Overt anti-Semitism has been on the rise in Europe and in the US (for a while now, and more intensely after the election of Donald Trump) and the more subtle forms of it have not been seriously questioned anywhere that I can tell. I am deeply affected by it.

This in no way means that I am seeing Zionism only as a national liberation movement. Zionism is, at one and the same time, both a national liberation movement *and* a de-facto colonial endeavor. I see it as an unusual national liberation movement precisely because of uprootedness, as there isn't a clearly discernible occupying force that it seeks to get free from. It is hard for so many to see what the liberation is from, because it's the entire dominant culture that has been

involved in persecuting Jews for so long. It is also unusual in that it has involved, yet again, uprooting Jews from where they were living to another place, even if only to go back to our original land.

Where I Stand Now

The tragedy of Zionism is that the possibility of liberating Jews as a people, rather than as individuals, within the world as we know it, simply doesn't exist.

Liberating ourselves came intrinsically intertwined with becoming the colonizers of what has been the land of other people.

Even more tragically, anti-Semitism, and the trauma associated with it, has not been mourned and digested fully by Jews. The result has been that Zionism has acquired elements of active racism. Those, too, are complex responses to anti-Semitism. Some of the racism builds on centuries of reactive xenophobia within Judaism, and some is more recent, stemming—in a tragic irony—from importing European attitudes of cultural superiority even while being rejected as inferior by that very culture. It may well take undoing anti-Semitism, which would likely mean transforming Christianity, before we can untie this knot and move into a future that works for all who see the narrow strip of land between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean sea as home.

Yet moving forward we must solve the impossible, and *Tikkun* has been at the forefront of ongoing discussions about *how* to do so, including the recent Spring 2017 issue dedicated fully to these concerns. What, then, can be done given what I am seeing?

Michael Lerner, Jonathan Kuttub, and others in this and earlier issues of *Tikkun* make concrete proposals, sometimes demands, of one or both sides in the bitter struggle. In my mind, if there is a path forward, it's not likely to come from someone telling Israelis and Palestinians what they have to do, what should each of their negotiable and nonnegotiable elements be, or what prescribed steps would bring about peace. I worry that the search for fairness more often than not yields an endless cycle of violence, and I want to search instead for what's possible.

For that, I start with humility, with not knowing, and with trusting the organic wisdom of people solving their own problems with adequate support. As Hagai El-Ad, director of B'Tselem, says, "In the end, I'm sure, Israelis and Palestinians will end the Occupation, but we won't do it without the world's help." I see that help, the task of those from outside the region, as creating those conditions: enough support for productive processes, enough capacity to absorb the pain and trauma, and enough vision and faith to maintain a sense of possibility in the face of the outstanding obstacles that the conflict presents, with no prescription for solutions.

Perhaps then the traumatized people of Israel and Palestine will together be able to take steps to shift from focusing

on who's right about the past — which reinforces separation, bitterness, and mistrust — to that future which is possible.

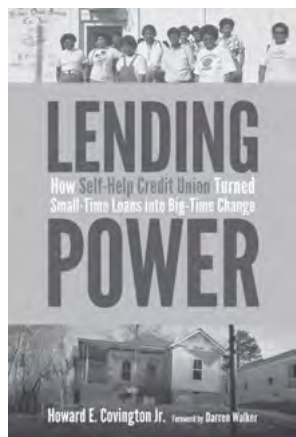
Perhaps then, Israelis and Palestinians will recognize the deep need for acknowledging things done to and by all players. Perhaps then, Israelis will manage to take the immense leap of recognizing the unique and specific suffering we have brought on the Palestinians through coming to the region, through establishing the state of Israel, and through decades of occupation.

Ultimately, the past cannot be undone and there is no specific time in history that is the “definitive moment.” Similarly, it's not possible to give either side what their idealized preferred outcome might be, because that would be too costly for the other side. What, then, is possible? Beyond everyone being fully heard; beyond specific aspects of recognition, especially from Israelis to Palestinians; beyond the will- ingness, as Kuttub says, to open to another narrative; and beyond working to establish personal and political relationships of mutuality and trust as Cherie Brown and Sami Awad

speak of, there is perhaps also a need for massive collective mourning. The mourning would be both of the specific history and experiences of all parties to the specific conflict, along with the entirety of human history in the last many thousand of years, including in particular anti-Semitism, and more broadly — violence, separation, and oppression.

Mourning is nature's tool for metabolizing the gap between what we want and what exists in the world. My experience tells me that with enough mourning, a spontaneous shift can come about. At that time, Palestinians and Israelis, together, can finally focus their attention and work on the enormously rich and hopeful puzzle of figuring out, together, and in the context of all that has happened, how to create a future that truly attends to all of our needs even without transforming the entire dominant structure of the world. Wouldn't it be a fitting miracle if this tortured region could finally become a model of what's possible? ■

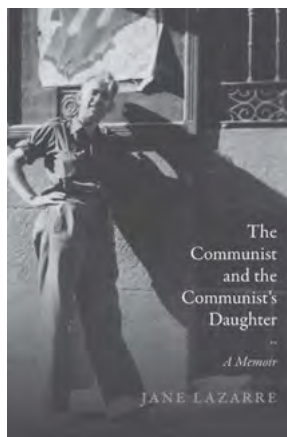
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The Voyages of the Starship Enterprise

In the beginning there was darkness
and then there was light.
There are generations. They begin in darkness.
They get light. A kind of darkness returns.
We are Diaspora and post-garment district
which makes us both post-exilic and post-textilic.
Our late elders wrote Russian as well as Yiddish
so we are also post-Cyrillic.

By the Babylon turnpike we sad down and wept.
By the waters of the Gowanus Canal. Everyone
an exile, sits at the edge of the East River, or
aches for some lost temple, on a turnpike wall.
An unusually ancient people, within a century
of an attempt at our eradication beyond scale.
It makes you unhappy. Ask any Ute or an Inuit.
This is a very strange land between Proxima
Centauri and the fat old sun, absurd even.
How can we sing in the strange land these years
turned out to be?

These are the generations of heaven and earth.
These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise.
The thesis is that there was a beginning.
The thesis is there was an ending and the ending
was exile. The thesis is that something sweet
came before the horror. Something Edenic
before the bloody ash.
How does it feel to be post-exilic, post-textilic,
and post-Cyrillic?

It's not idyllic.
They were from someplace dangerous.
We are from someplace dangerous too.
Then you did something you shouldn't have done,
ate something you shouldn't have eaten.
You are always eating, aren't you?

Voltaire's Enlightenment was nice
but Spinoza led the Jews into light
a good two centuries prior.
Which set us on fire.
Which set us on fire.

As Eve said to Adam,
"If this is the beginning
why am I already so tired?"

It was going when we got here. Yet we
stare in it, standing there like Captain Picard.
Hearts on our sleeves like Commander Troi.
Leonard Nimoy and Bill Shatner are both Jewish;
the "live long and prosper" hand rabbinical,
a secret sign Nimoy spotted in shul when his
father told him to close his eyes. Like Lot's
Wife he looked, and like her got stuck for life.

There they are on the bridge, Kirk and Spock,
sailing into the universe
where no one has ever gone before,
exile upon exile,
until nothing feels like home as much
as further exile, further out.
By the waters of the Babylon Turnpike,
in Brooklyn by the Gowanus,
in a strange land. Song.
Everything changes, all are exile,
wailing on a turnpike wall. Song.
In a strange land.
Animals and every creeping thing.
Song. Replenish the earth.
In a strange land.
By the water of Babylon
sat down and song.

— Jennifer Michael Hecht

This poem is a new vision of a ten-page poem, "The Thesis Is That There Was a Beginning,"
published only in my book, *Who Said* (Copper Canyon, 2013), with lines in common.



"These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise."



"In a strange land."

Gardener in the Wild

You come out of the Torah, through
Russian pogroms and the fucking Nazis
and find yourself in Brooklyn worrying
over a natural world a world away.
For a Jewess, it's genocide and otherness
with no names of titans as a recompense,
as a boy gets, Einstein, Marx, Freud, etc.

The Jewess is a constant gardener of her
backyard plot. Now she is running inside,
half-cracked, menaced not by bees but
recollection. The sky was illuminated
gray and is darkening fast. Hours pass.

Now she is ginned up and running back
out there, trampling her living jewels.
Some as-yet green tomatoes will survive
this rampage, her heels a softer hell
than hail. They're looking for her.

Dragnet comes up empty because she's
never there. She weeds weeds, unwinds
morning glory vines from pepper plants,
so we know she is out there. The constant
gardener loves clippers in her hand,

editorial demeanor demeaning what's dry,
unintended, or bitten by unseen squirrels,
but really does just enough to keep it
going, barely anything, it's a pose,
the constancy of the gardener, a stance.

Half-cocked, having read that trauma
rides epigenetics into future generations.
Thanks for the news. A person knows
her own recoiling from the world. Odd
campaign against your name and you.

— Jennifer Michael Hecht



"Girl in White" Vincent Van Gogh

Psalm 116

for Nasia

You are making me now,
Right now, the clay of me
Warm in your hands,

The hands of me warmed
By your hands that shape them, shape a heart
That's never beaten, been beaten,

Skin that shivers in secret places,
Places that will never be touched
Except by the maker

Hunched patiently over
The stupidity of matter,
Leaving your mark between my eyes, my hips,

In the clay turning slowly in your hands,
Blinking a little in your light
As I learn to forget

The tenderness you reveal
In the act of making, to confuse
The feeling of your fingers

Moving inside me
With smaller, less luminous fingers
That will never reach as deep, whose love

Will never make me
Something that can think, can suffer,
As your love, finger by finger,

Is making me now.

— Joy Ladin



My Mother Died on Simchat Torah

The completion of the annual cycle,
when we read the last portion, when
we begin to believe, as we have throughout

the centuries, that this time we will get it right
and be finished with this labor, this
rolling up, like Sisyphus and his rock,

the heavy stone of commandments
and wrestling with — what to call It? —
It doesn't even have a name — that Holiness,

that Tyrant, one moment embracing us
as if we were his children and another
smiting us as if we were better off as the nothing

we were before He claimed credit
for creating us — yes, this time we'll chant
the very last passage once and for all. The one

about Moses, the favored son, whom He loved,
above all the others, the one who
He asked to do His dirty work — to corral

all of us complainers into that dreamland,
that grand retirement home, only to be told,
at the last moment, that — though he

did wonders, he can *see* the place,
he may not enter, all his yearning
almost-fulfilled. *Better to have stayed*

a shepherd, this leader must have thought.
But we read: *No prophet has risen like Moses,*
whom the Lord knew face to face.

Just as we pronounce these closing words,
again — for the how-many-millionth-time? —
clasping again to the hope that we're finished

with all this repetition, and just as the rabbi
is about to seal the magnum opus for good,
and he raises her arms in benediction

above us, exhausted as we are
from the long week of work and heartaches —
and we rise and sway and he squints,

assessing all the secrets that lay hidden there,
and just as he is confirmed in his decision
to rollback the scroll and once again place

his pointer under the opening words and chant:
In the beginning, God created the heaven and earth —
at that precise moment, between the last words

and the first, between the standing up
and the sitting down and the starting all over again,
just as the Sabbath sun burns down

into its deepest flame — you decide it's time
to depart, you don't need to recite all those words again.
You know the whole story by heart.

By Philip Terman



Sisyphus and his rock

Blood Moon

Came a red moon the night between the Easter vigil
and the morning of the resurrection and that shade

made a horizontal of the window rail and a vertical

of half the curtain, *a cross* — and because I wasn't well
(some spring distemper) lying alone in the guest room

where we also kept a small shrine and our mothers' ashes

Stephen sleeping on an upper floor but I wasn't asleep
the moon too bright and part of me knowing I had begun

to see a cross only because it was almost Easter 2015

and another part said *but I'm not the kind of person who sees
crosses in curtains* long finished with The Church or churches

but nevertheless here at first seemed to be *three* shadows

three crosses just like in the story which after a time became
one and then O shit a tree The Tree the World Tree the tree

of the world and behind my eyes came a kind of light

and I thought to myself I have not recently taken drugs
have I or gone strictly-speaking crazy like Philip K. Dick

who experienced his *Vast Active Living Intelligence System*

as a pink illumination bearing the message that his infant son
had some kind of knot in his gut that could kill him (which

a reluctant doctor confirmed and saved him from)

and have I anyway gotten my antidepressant dosage right?
My light too though not pink was somewhat real because

after a while it went away which is the test of real things

and then it was night again *noche oscura* as St. John of the
Cross
might have put it and I knew I was in danger of making of
all this



a meaning because it was Easter and outside the rabbits

fucked in the chamomile wearing burdock burrs like crowns
but still could there have been any part which was not just

of my making Christ the vertical and the horizontal Christ

Ygdrassil the Allfather hanging nine days without food or
drink

Christ the plane tree *Platanus orientalis* with lights in it

that Xerxes stopped his armies to adore and away from which

he would not move again until his goldsmith struck the image
on a medal which afterwards he wore always next to his heart.

At 11:11 in the morning from this vision I awoke I who do not

have visions or want any but for all that is the sad world not yet
utterly emptied of parable? Does the young corn still put

his ear above the soil like a flute?

— Patrick Donnelly
April 4, 2015, Blood Moon

Poems of a Lifetime of Passion and Grumpiness



Stanley Moss's *Almost Complete Poems*

BY DAVID DANOFF

STANLEY MOSS has been a longtime fixture on the poetry scene. He's worked as an editor at New Directions, the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *New American Review*, and elsewhere; and he founded the

Sheep Meadow Press, dedicated to poetry in English and translation. He's enjoyed friendships with Dylan Thomas, Theodore Roethke, Robert Lowell, Stanley Kunitz, Yehuda Amichai, W.S. Merwin, and many others. But his work as a poet has received less attention than his activity as an editor, publisher, and literary man-about-town.

As Moss approaches his 92nd birthday, the wittily titled *Almost Complete Poems* brings his poetry to the forefront. The book chronicles a seven-decade career writing poems that are erudite and whimsical, parabolic and plainspoken, obsessed with God (and His absence), the natural world (especially dogs and trees), the mechanics of language (and poetry), and the human body (especially female bodies). It's a capacious collection, and it bears witness to a considerable poetic talent, albeit one that is hard to pin down or affix a label to.

Moss got off to a somewhat slow start as a poet, with his first book appearing at age 41 and his second at age 54. But he seems to be accelerating in his twilight years, with roughly half the poems in this 600-page volume having appeared after the age of 78 (fully one-third after the age of 88, i.e. in the last three years). The persona in his late poems bears some resemblance to Yeats' "Wild Old Wicked Man": aggressive, frankly carnal, unembarrassed by his animal urges, and perhaps a bit eager to shock the reader. But even his early works are not the poems of a "young person." Beginning with his first collection, the persona is worldly, irreverent, and gluttoned with experience. From the start, he's feasting in the shadow of mortality:

Give me a death like Buddha's. Let me fall
over from eating mushrooms Provençale,
a peasant wine pouring down my shirtfront,
my last request not a cry but a grunt.

His poems often take the form of little parables or allegories. The symbolism is teased out gently from an image or

idea, sometimes in multiple directions at once. In an early poem titled "Clams," he seems to be both celebrating the innocence of life and cursing its stupidity:

Ancient of Days, bless the innocent
who can do nothing but cling,
open or close their stone mouths . . .
Bless all things unaware that perceive
life and death as comfort or discomfort:
bless their great dumbness.

We die misinformed
with our mouths of shell open.
At the last moment, as our lives fall off,
a gull lifts us, drops us on the rocks, bare
because the tide is out. Flesh sifts the sludge.

The early work tends to be shorter and a little more impersonal than it will later become. There's an impatience, a bluntness, a stripping away of anything merely decorative, as in the title poem of his second book, "On Seeing an X-Ray of My Head":

This face without race or religion
I have in common with humanity —
mouth without lips, jaws without tongue,
this face does not sleep when I sleep,
gives no hint of love or pleasure . . .
I don't look as if I work for a living.

In his later work, Moss relaxes into longer, sometimes sprawling and garrulous poems that touch very explicitly upon his family history, his wives and children, his body, his appetites, and his friends. The title poem of his 2003 collection, "A History of Color," begins with a riotous explosion of imagery and associations, both sacred and profane:

What is heaven but the history of color,
dyes washed out of laundry, cloth and cloud,
mystical rouge, lipstick, eyeshadow? Harlot nature,
explain the color of tongue, lips, nipples,
against Death, come-ons of labia, penis, the anus,
the concupiscent color wheels of insects and birds,
explain why Christian gold and blue tempt the kneeling,
why Muslim green is miraculous in the desert,
why the personification of the rainbow is Iris,
why Aphrodite, the mother of Eros, married
the god of fire, why *Adam* in Hebrew
comes out of the redness of earth . . .

The poem continues like this for six pages, mustering every sort of vision or allusion in a struggle with the idea of death: “I fight death with peppermints, a sweet to recall / the Dark Ages before the word Orange existed.” Art is one possible means of resistance, but unreliable:

Against oblivion a still life of two red apples
stands for a beautiful woman. On her shoulder
the bruise of a painter’s brush — she is no more
than a still life of peasant shoes.

“You will not keep apples or shoes or France,” Death says.

It’s in the raw material of life itself — sex, generation — that the poet finds his best hope for a color that may endure:

A master can draw every passion with a pencil, but light,
shadow and dark cannot reveal the lavender iris
between the opened thighs of a girl still almost a child,
or, before life was through with her, the red and purple
pomegranate at the center of her being.

Moss is not shy about sex. In fact, he seems to closely associate it with poetry. In the fascinating prose memoir “Diary of a Satyr,” he links his vocation as a poet and his emergent masculinity with an image from classical European art: “In my seventh year, I had a revelation. A teacher asked me a question. I knew the answer . . . ‘I am certain I am a poet.’ Then Miss Green said, ‘I knew it. You, Stanley, are a bronze satyr,’ and she wacked my erect penis with a twelve-inch Board of Education wooden ruler.” The piece goes on to describe early travels abroad with his family, including bold erotic encounters: “I wandered off alone into the red light

district of Algiers. An auburn-haired, tattooed lady smelling of flowers and sweat kissed me for nothing behind a beaded curtain. She touched a naked breast to my lips.”

There are Oedipal elements: his father he compares to “an angry centaur,” his mother to “a bronze Lucretia” threatening to “stab herself in the heart with a kitchen knife.” This world of violent classical art fits uneasily with his family’s secular Judaism: “We were a family of atheists; still, we celebrated an occasional seder with uncles, aunts, and their children, most of whom kept away from me, lest I molest them.” The portrait is of a headstrong boy, ravenous for experience, with a certain degree of contempt for the world he came from, who keeps kicking against that world and who never feels at ease until he learns what he “is” — and travels to Europe, works as a writer, befriends other poets. But even then, he can’t fully leave behind his origins; the memoir ends with a description of his parents’ graves.

He writes often of his Jewish heritage, and of God, but almost always at a wary distance: “I pray weary of his nothingness my No God / will not call back his dogs: Night and Day, / or, for his pleasure, let slip another flood.” Alongside his literary pursuits, Moss has made his living as a private art dealer, specializing in Italian and Spanish old masters, and Christian imagery is at least as frequent a presence in his poetry as Jewish imagery. Christian and Jewish motifs are generally presented in tandem, as though insisting upon their equivalence — and most of the time they both are overshadowed by pantheistic themes:



“We die misinformed with our
mouths of shell open.”

When I was young and prodigal,
I dived into God's womb and the ocean.
God spoke to me as I swam
through a thousand reflections,
his face and my face touched
like Mary's cheek on the cheek of her deposed son.
God washed across my face. My face was in him.
From time to time I spit him out as I swam.

Moss revels in joining the high and low, the human and animal, the sacred and profane, smashing every sort of experience together with a mischievous grin, as in the late poem "Pollen":

It is time to uncover the mirrors —
there is no death in the family now.
It is time we wear each other's skin,
fur, scales, feathers, our mouths covered with pollen;
let's sing insect and reptilian songs.
It is time for the carnival of love.

What kind of a poet is he, ultimately? There are confessional elements: you will hear a fair amount about his difficult relationship with his father, his grief following his mother's death, and the children he raised and didn't raise. He's a poet of place: you will visit his homes at Montauk, Long Island, and Dutchess County, New York, explore his garden, his art collection, and watch his dogs run around. He's a poet of ideas, frequently losing himself in abstract reveries about Time, Death, Language, etc. He's also an insistent chronicler of the body in all its majesty and indignity: there are poems titled "Shit," "Vomit," "Snot," "Spit," "Piss," and one about Theodore Roethke soiling himself on



A young
Stanley Moss.

a train. There are many fine poems in this book, showing Moss the equal of any of his poetic cohort, and also quite stronger than a few.

It's a record of a lifetime of wisdom and folly, passion and grumpiness, recorded in poems that sometimes crackle with invention and inspiration, and other times just fill up another page. Perhaps the experience of reading this collection can best be summed up in the words of Walt Whitman: "Who touches this, touches a man." ■

DAVID DANOFF is a poet and critic whose work has appeared regularly in *Tikkun*. He lives near Washington DC, where he works as an editor.

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The Scholar as Poet: Remembering Geoffrey Hartman (1929-2016)

BY MORRIS DICKSTEIN

GEOFFREY HARTMAN, who died in March 2016, was known as one of the most eminent literary scholars of the past half century, going back to his book based on his doctoral thesis, *The Unmediated Vision* (1954). His book on William Wordsworth, published ten years later, remains a standard work, perhaps the single most searching study of Wordsworth's poetry to appear in the twentieth century. He subsequently became a leading figure in the turn toward literary theory beginning with the essays collected in *Beyond Formalism* (1970) and *The Fate of Reading* (1975), as well as a general study, *Criticism in the Wilderness* (1980). In the 1980s his work took yet another direction: towards Jewish issues, including biblical and Midrashic interpretation, as well as the conditions for understanding and assimilation of the Holocaust. Along with his wife Renee, a Holocaust survivor, he was instrumental in the founding of the Yale Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, which paved the way for the much larger archive of oral recollections created by Steven Spielberg after the worldwide success of *Schindler's List*.

I met Geoffrey Hartman some fifty-five years ago when I was a fledgling graduate student, quite miserable, and he was on the verge of leaving Yale, having been unaccountably turned down for tenure. I looked him up in one of the college's remote basement offices after reading an essay he wrote for the *Chicago Review* on Maurice Blanchot, a mesmerizing European critic altogether unknown to me. Soon afterward I ambled down York Street to the offices of Yale University Press, where I bought one of the few remaining copies of his first book, *The Unmediated Vision*, still available at its original price of four dollars. I never studied with him, but we formed a bond rooted perhaps in mutual unhappiness along with an instinctive sense of intellectual kinship. In the Yale of 1961, a gentleman's university still dominated by complacent academic and social routines, we both felt like outsiders.

Undoubtedly, there were also shared Jewish feelings neither of us mentioned. He became an informal mentor to me — in both the new currents of literary theory wafting over from Europe and the nascent revival of interest in Romanticism that had already attracted me as an undergraduate at Columbia. Geoffrey was working on his Wordsworth book, which would come to make his reputation. It

would mark a signal turn in the new Romantic scholarship, transforming Wordsworth from a decorous nature poet and Victorian icon into a probing, dark modern poet of consciousness. Soon after the book came out I began to work on a thesis on Keats, far more modest but along the same lines.

But Geoffrey was far more than an admired and fitfully emulated scholar for me. I loved his genuine warmth, his sparkling and urbane intelligence and wit, his cosmopolitan range of interests. He was a living heir of the émigré comparatists and philologists like Erich Auerbach and René Wellek who had been his teachers at Yale. Ideas and texts had an almost visceral reality for him; his exhaustive scholarship was part of the air he breathed. This might help explain his brief romance with deconstruction — the sheer ingenuity of Derrida or de Man must have proved irresistible for him. When his own essays turned knotty, dense with learned puns and allusions, it was because he loved being playful and challenging. The plain style, he once told me, held little interest for him, though he mastered it effectively. The Hebraic side of his later work and his unexpected engagement with issues of Holocaust memory and representation spoke more directly to me. In helping to create a pioneering archive of oral witness, he became a public person, an actor as well as a thinker. But above all else I'll always recall and cherish the sweetness of his personality, along with his scrupulous attentiveness and insight as a reader and essayist. He served as a beacon and role model for many former students, just as he did for me.

That Hartman had also written and published poetry was not so widely known — though a small volume, *Akiba's Children*, appeared in 1978. In 2013, he published *The Eighth Day: Poems Old & New*, which includes selections from that book along with later work. The differences in style between the older and newer poems make it seem like two books in one. The poems from *Akiba's Children* are intensely worked, almost impacted with terse and constantly shifting linguistic detail, but also at times gnomic, even opaque. Hartman's criticism is celebrated for its close readings of poetic language and has been at times poetic itself in its compression and density. This is true of these early poems, which belong to the latter end of a phase of high modernism which aimed for a maximum of compression

and allusiveness, sometimes by deploying a fragmentary discontinuity in the manner of Eliot's *Waste Land*. This kind of writing was promoted by the New Critics and welcomed in the classroom. Here not simply intensity but difficulty itself was seen as a mark of authenticity, an exorcism of the prosaic and the extraneous. In exactly this vein, note, for example, the telescoping of the opening lines of Hartman's "Mariner's Song":

After he had maimed the dragon deep
and throned us in new limbs of everlasting
opening to fable the mortal stars
we wept praises and harped the flood of his word.

It's hard to know what to make of phrases like "harped the flood of his word" or enjambments like "new limbs of everlasting/ opening to fable the mortal stars." The poem seems to be referring suggestively to a known myth yet the actual allusion remains out of reach, to me at least. The language is at once rich and subtly deformed, at least by any prose standard. In another early poem, "The Middle of the Garden," the thing not named, clearly, is Adam and Eve, but even if we catch the allusion it scarcely makes the poem more accessible. The best of these poems are those with an overt biblical subject and/or a clear narrative thread, such as "Abraham," "Passage to Ithaca," "The Silence," "Ahasuerus," "In Honor of the Master of the Good Name," and

especially "The Reporter." This last poem is a fine biblical meditation of the passage in the Book of Samuel in which the Holy Arc is captured in battle by the Philistines. The poem has sweep, clarity, and fine continuity. But in many other poems from this part of the book, there is instead an overall sense of dark mystery; the poems seem to have been conceived as enigmas, encoded challenges to the reader to experience them as language and feeling without fully understanding them.

Matters are very different in the later sections of the book. Here, in line with more recent trends in American poetry, the verse forms are more free and irregular; the language is marked by an almost colloquial and conversational flow, as in "Day of Remembrance," a Passover poem but also a Holocaust poem, which begins: "This is the flat bread/ nothing rises/ this is the time/ nothing can rise." Later he writes: "In the ovens/ overt/ the loaves are/ flat corpses:/ unpardonably/ only nightmares lurk,/ words like a tired bell,/ a maimed and graying sun." At this seder "Elijah's cup/ stands untouched./ Through the door echoes fly/ and unreadable ash." The remembrance of liberation, the very matzoh itself, as turned to flattened corpse and ash. Here, he concludes, "We break bread with each other/ in the bitter dawn of night," a scene of both dark and light.

Another late poem, "Elegy at the Bodensee," not only has a narrative shape and flow but seems based on a real



Yale University, where Morris Dickstein and Geoffrey Hartman first met.

experience, not simply meditation and allusion. These poems are less like riddles, more like diaristic notations recording both intimate feelings and external happenings. "Psalm," for example, though its title points to a biblical antecedent, reads like personal poem with a real rather than a narrative "I," a self wholly present though elusive: "My soul, who has anointed you,/ are you still thirsty like the east winds,/ or sated, ready to be poured out?/ Whose dark dew floods you and I do not know it?" This is an interior language reminiscent of the Psalms, but also an accessible voice. A poem like "Passing By," about the descent from the cross, has a clear narrative spine, as if it were a recollection of an actual experience. It is reader-friendly in a quiet, unassuming way. "I saw them take a man down from the cross," it begins, and it proceeds to take the point of view of a witness, a mere passer-by, who, without knowing what he is taking in, provides us with descriptive details, such as the lowering a body that feels like "dead weight," the sight of inserting it awkwardly in a shroud while others are simply looking on, murmuring or weeping.

I was curious to know what crime the corpse
had committed, but no one seemed to care
about the bearded, not unbeautiful face,
except to dispatch the dead in good order,
to lay the body carefully from sight
with lavings, myrrh, and linen grave-clothes:
so I too committed his face to the earth.

The strength of these later poems can be seen in "The Memory of Paul Celan," a tribute to the German poet whose spirit presides over some of these works. It is a jagged poem, like so many of Celan's own, with a rhythm that reflects the experience of rupture and dissonance, the very difficulty or writing, the challenge of finding language to express almost unspeakable memories and experiences.

Somewhere in Kadesh, color of shard and sound,
pen's mouth stopped up, my fingers broken teeth,
I who feed on memories rotting like manna
strangle words near his darkened breast.

Hartman's poems represent a lesser known, more personal side of his work. They show him wrestling with Judaism and the Bible in ways that surfaced only much later in his critical prose. Hartman never claimed to be anything more than a Sunday poet but he was able to express things in verse — misgivings, meditations, evocations of moments in Jewish texts and the Jewish calendar — that he could not find expression in his critical writings. "Yoma" was his last poem — it's deeply wrenching lines written during his final illness, grappling with it in terms that link the anguish of

the Psalms with moods and images from Gerard Manley Hopkins's so-called "terrible sonnets," poems of spiritual crisis, but also Eliot's *Waste Land*, with its evocation of a dry season of the soul. The poem's title "Yoma," is the tractate of the Talmud that deals with the preparations for Yom Kippur, the Day of Repentance and Judgment. Projecting a heart-rending sense of uncertainty, desperation, and contrition, it raises an ultimate but unanswerable question, "Where is comfort to be found?" ■

MORRIS DICKSTEIN's most recent book is a memoir, *Why Not Say What Happened: A Sentimental Education* (2015). He first wrote about Geoffrey Hartman's work for *Tikkun* in 2000. [<https://www.questia.com/agazine/1P3-50361433/a-surplus-of-meaning>]

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Creating the Nonviolent Peace Force

An activist reviews *Waging Peace*
by David Hartsough

BY RICHARD TAYLOR

DONALD TRUMP'S ascension to the presidency makes me feel as though a group of aliens from another planet have moved in and taken over the US government. How did a person with values so completely antithetical to ours assume this powerful office? Why didn't we see this coming?

It may be a long road back to sanity and we need all the help we can get to find the way. David Hartsough's new book, *Waging Peace: Global Adventures of a Lifelong Activist*, can, I think, help us address these questions. It suggests ways to mobilize ourselves, particularly in the context of increasing violence and what *Tikkun* calls "the Left's religiophobia."

Tikkun argues that the Right has succeeded in portraying liberals, progressives, and others of the Left as elitists who exhibit contempt for ordinary Americans and their values, including their religious values. When these "ordinary" folk interact with people who hold leftist views, they are often met with extreme disdain for anything spiritual or religious. Many studies, however — like those from the Pew Research Center — show that a substantial proportion of Americans feel positive toward religion, or are becoming more favorable toward it. Religious Americans feel that leftists view them as unenlightened, uneducated, or just plain stupid. This attitude — which is so widespread among leftists — can be called "Leftist religiophobia."

The Left's current approach toward religion, I believe, is one of the factors inhibiting the building of a large progressive movement for change. When a substantial portion of the American populace feels that leftists see them as stupid, they are not going to welcome the progressive views or analyses of those same leftists, vote for Left-leaning political candidates, or join progressive movements. "Come and join us, even though you're prejudiced and simple-minded," is not a great recruiting pitch.

However, there are progressive individuals and groups on the left who — without softening their social, economic, and political radicalism — don't shy away from religious or spiritual language. *Tikkun*, of course, is one of them, as are *Sojourners* and the Shalom Center, to mention just three of the groups who are not reticent to make public their religious or spiritual underpinnings.



David in Russia

David Hartsough — author of *Waging Peace*, Director of Peaceworkers, and co-founder of World Beyond War — falls into this category as well. David was raised in a Quaker family in which words and phrases like "God," "The Inner Light" and "love your enemies" were not only heard, but put into practice. His father was, at one time, a Congregational minister and later worked for the American Friends Service Committee, an organization whose work for peace and alleviation of human suffering is based on the Quaker concept of "God in every person." In 1951, Hartsough's mother went to Washington, fasted for a week, and lobbied members of Congress to reject a peacetime military draft. It is not surprising, therefore, that David became active in the peace movement at an early age, participating in peace marches, nonviolence training, vigils, and civil rights sit-ins.

During his teens and early twenties, Hartsough met and talked with many of the luminaries of organized peace and justice work such as Ralph Abernathy, Bayard Rustin, and Martin Luther King Jr. Hartsough also had what he calls "the rare blessing" of hearing Martin Luther King Jr. preach monthly at Howard University, the school Hartsough had transferred to.

Early on, Hartsough's principles of nonviolence were tested: he was punched, kicked, spat upon, cursed at, knocked to the floor and thrown into jail by those who defended the racial discrimination that he and his college friends challenged. The most dramatic experience came when twenty-year-old David, who was protesting segregation at a drugstore counter in Arlington, VA, was approached by a man with a long switchblade. The man threatened to stab it through Hartsough's heart. Remembering his nonviolence training and Jesus' command to, "love [one's] enemies," Hartsough mustered the courage to

stay put, look the man in the eye, and say, “Friend, do what you believe is right, and I will still try to love you.”

“Miraculously,” Hartsough writes, “the man turned away and walked out of the store.”

“It confirmed my belief in the power of love, the power of goodness, the power of God working through us to overcome hatred and violence.” This is the first of a multitude of “miracles of nonviolence,” that Hartsough describes in his inspiring and informative book.

Reading *Waging Peace*, we go with David (and often with Jan, his astute and loving partner) on peacemaking and nonviolent movement-building trips, not only in the US, but all over the world: Cuba, Vietnam, Kosovo, Mexico, Yugoslavia, Germany’s “Checkpoint Charlie,” Russia, the Philippines, Palestine and elsewhere, often risking his own life to participate in local movements. Through these extensive travels, Hartsough not only created an extensive network of contacts, but also learned from local activists’ experience. When invited, he drew upon his own extensive knowledge to strategize with local communities about possible and best next steps for their campaigns.

Waging Peace contains many moving and inspiring stories, but the one that touched me most describes Vietnam-vet-turned- peacemaker Brian Wilson’s incredible sacrifice. Wilson’s legs were severed while sitting on railroad tracks at the Naval Weapons Station in Concord, CA, trying to block trains laden with munitions bound for Central America. Hartsough, who was part of the action, wrote: “As I got up and ran toward Brian, I first came to one of his legs. . . . The wars came home in a powerful way that day.”

One extremely positive outcome from David’s trips, and the relationships he has built across the world, is the formation of the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP). Already nominated to receive the Nobel Prize, NP is a truly international, unarmed, paid civilian protection force. Its members are trained in nonviolence and work with local partners,



Unarmed civilian protection teams in Mindanao, Philippines. Nonviolent Peaceforce teams are presently helping to establish and protect peace corridors for civilians coming out of Marawi.

fostering dialogue among parties in conflict and providing a protective presence for threatened civilians.

For example, recently, an NP team in the Philippines came upon two armed groups face-to-face. The two groups were on the verge of a fierce gun battle. Vulnerable and frightened civilians stood watching. The NP team was able to talk down the armed leadership on both sides, communicating that the conflict was based on rumored misunderstanding, and thus restoring peace.

Working always with local people, NP has intervened in the name of nonviolence many times across the world — working to prevent children in Sri Lanka from being kidnapped and turned into child soldiers to nonviolently protecting defenders of human rights for women in Guatemala.

Currently, NP has field staff in the Philippines, South Sudan, Myanmar and the Middle East. For more about NP, including their truly remarkable work protecting civilians in active war zones, see their website at nonviolentpeaceforce.org.

I could heap more praise on Hartsough and his work. I think he has a great deal of wisdom to offer to progressives in the Trump years (which, one can only hope, will be brief). For the purpose of this review, I am eager to point out his complete lack of religiophobia, his tremendous experience in nonviolent social change, and his knowledge of organizing and movement-building. May his tribe increase. ■

RICHARD K. TAYLOR lives in Philadelphia, PA. He is a co-founder of Witness for Peace and author of nine books, dozens of articles, and training manuals on nonviolent direct action.

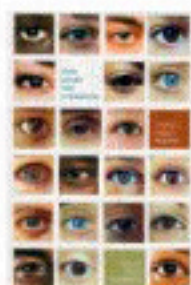
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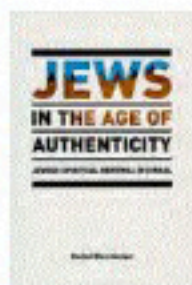
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Tikkun RECOMMENDS



God Loves the Stranger

Sheila Peltz Weinberg
White River Press
2017



Jews in the Age of Authenticity

Rachel Werzberger
Peter Lang Publishing
2017

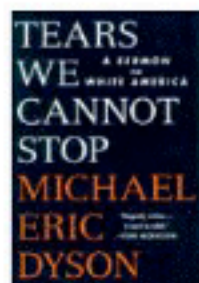
Jewish Renewal, a new movement that emerged in the last decades of the 20th century, has become one of the most significant developments in Judaism in the lives of thousands of American and Israeli Jews. Sometimes described as neo-Hasidism by its proponents, and New Age Judaism by its detractors, this movement has produced a fusion of spiritual intensity

in its prayers, astounding creativity in its theology, and a joyous renewal of the love-oriented aspects of Judaism that is a refusal to let Holocaust grief, patriarchal or homophobic practices, or Zionist loyalty define what 21st century Judaism will be about. Its most significant expositors are Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Judith Plaskow, Marcia Prager, Michael Lerner, Arthur Waskow, Shefa Gold, Tizah Firestone, Burt Jacobson, David A. Cooper, Yitz & Shonna Husband-Hankins, Shaya Isenberg Bahira Sugarman, Simcha Rafael, Jeff Roth, David Seidenberg, Or Rose, Arthur Green, Shawn Zevit, David Ingber, Phyllis Ocean Berman, Daniel Siegel, and Elliot Ginsburg.

Into this boiling over of creativity we can now add Sheila Peltz Weinberg and Rachel Werzberger. Rabbi Sheila Peltz Weinberg is a co-leader of the Jewish Mindfulness Teacher Training Program and her book *God Loves the Stranger* is a collection of stories, poems and prayers building on the Torah's injunction "Thou Shalt Love the Stranger" and reminding us that God loves every person on this planet. Her book teaches us how to handle suffering, creative skills for mindfulness, meditation, and how to bring the love and gratitude into our everyday lives.

Rachel Werzberger tells of the unexpected growth of Jewish spiritual renewal in Israel. Most Israelis are well known among Jews worldwide for being deeply skeptical about Judaism, given the strong anger that the Orthodox Jewish community in Israel has provoked by using their power in government coalitions to impose religious practices on secular Israelis. Many Israelis present themselves as tough-minded, and hence resistant to anything that cannot be verified through science or empirical observation. Those who have sought spiritual nourishment in opposition to the materialism and self-centeredness that Israelis adopted from global capitalist culture have often turned to visits to India or attempts to bring Buddhism to Israel. Werzberger focuses on the powerful impact of two Jewish Renewal efforts in Israel, Hamakom and Bayit Chadash and the leadership of Rabbi Ohed Ezrahi as her book presents some of the innovative approaches that these developed that have given Judaism in Israel a spiritual depth only seen when Shlomo Carlebach and Zalman Schachter Shalomi spent time teaching in the Holy land. The New Age Judaism she describes has much in common with the rise of the ethos of authenticity which has been central to both Christian and Jewish renewal movements in the West, though Werzberger takes pains to show that the

Israeli version "offers a new way of articulating the subjective affinity of Jewish individuals to their religious and cultural legacy." Sadly, unlike the versions of Jewish Renewal championed by Tikkun and by Arthur Waskow's Shalom Center, the Israeli version described in this book rarely reaches into Israel's central contradiction: its oppression of the Palestinian people. With such ethical blindness, any form of Jewish renewal will have a limited shelf life.



Tears We Cannot Stop

Michael Eric Dyson
St. Martin's Press
2017



One Another's Equals

Jeremy Waldron
Harvard U Press
2017



Big World, Small Planet

Johan Rockström & Matthias Klum
Yale University Press
2015

These are three important books for anyone interested in healing and transforming our world. We have long acknowledged that social transformation is going to require overcoming the racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and religiophobia that divides us into contending identities. Unfortunately, too many people on the Left use this truth in a way that destroys rather than enhances solidarity among groups by labeling all whites and all men as "privileged" and guilty of hurting others. So it is an important step forward to have Dyson, an African American theorist and professor of sociology at Georgetown University, remind us that "you don't get whiteness from your genes. It is a social inheritance that is passed on to you as a member of a particular group...whiteness is an advantage and privilege because [some white people have made it to, not because the universe demands it." Sadly, he does not take the next step of suggesting how those who have not taken on whiteness as an advantage can most effectively show those who have done so that this privilege is also at the root of why so many are able to be manipulated into supporting candidates and policies that in most respects work against their own economic, political and spiritual interests. Jeremy Waldron lays out with sophisticated and caring intention the philosophical content that human beings are entitled to be seen as fundamentally equal in regard to those qualities that underlie the rationale for equal respect, the capacities to potentially develop speech and thought and to be a moral agent—and rejects the attempt by Peter Singer and others to place the severely disabled in some other species besides human. Rockström and Klum create a powerful rendition of environmental knowledge together with beautiful drawings and photos of Earth to enhance our capacity to care. The good news: we still have the capacity to create sustainable development as the pursuit of good lives for all within a safe and just operating space on Earth with zero emissions, zero loss of biodiversity, and zero expansion of agricultural land. What it takes to get there, however requires careful reading of David Korten's article in this issue of Tikkun.