

TIKKUN

POLITICS+SPIRITUALITY+CULTURE

(tê•kûn) To mend, repair, and transform the world. NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2010

AFTER THE 2010 ELECTIONS



SCIENCE & SPIRIT

Joan Roughgarden, Peter Gabel, David Loye,
Christian de Quincey, Raymond Barglow, and others

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Jim Douglass and John Perkins: Should Obama Fear Assassination?

Iranophobia | Oscar Grant | Latin America's Rising Left

Is Diaspora Better for the Jewish Soul? | Hannah Arendt

Biblical Jubilee | Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi on Czernowitz

Let's Celebrate the Holidays Deeply This Year



Where did I say you should buy all that stuff to celebrate my birthday?



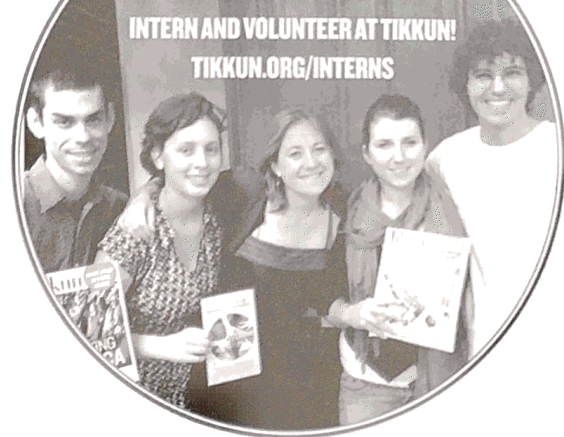
Ironically, many people think of Chanukah, which commemorates a revolution against assimilation, as the Jewish Christmas, replete with elaborate gift-giving. Join the growing movement to devote the sixth night to learning about social justice and giving to organizations that assist the poor, locally or globally.

RESOURCES: See *Tikkun's* alternative guides to Christmas and Chanukah, as well as rituals for other faiths, at tikkun.org/holidays.

For more on Christmas, go to buynothingchristmas.org (our thanks to them for the idea above) and adventconspiracy.org.

For ideas for the sixth night of Chanukah, go to urj.org/socialaction/issues/poverty/ner_shel_tzedakah.

And when Jesus says don't buy stuff, he doesn't mean *Tikkun* subscriptions and memberships—they make great gifts! (You can use the envelope at page 32.)



3 LETTERS

6 **THE CONTRARIAN:** America to Washington: "We Have a Problem"

Editorials: After the 2010 Elections

7 **Will Obama Stop Betraying His Progressive Base?**
It's not even so much what he does, as whether he levels with us about it.

9 **Middle East Peace Negotiations?**
Here are the specifics on which a peace agreement could still be built.

SPECIAL SECTION: SCIENCE AND SPIRIT

- 33 A Spiritual Approach to Evolution by MICHAEL LERNER
- 37 The Responsibility of Theology to Science by JOAN ROUGHGARDEN
- 40 The Secret Life of Plants by RAYMOND BARGLOW
- 42 The *Presence* of Living Organisms by PETER GABEL
- 45 Nature Has a Mind of Its Own by CHRISTIAN DE QUINCEY
- 48 The New Theory Versus the Old Story by DAVID LOYE
- 51 How Science—and Civilization—Survived the Twenty-First Century by DAVID BELDEN

Politics

- 11 **How Hannah Arendt Was Labeled an "Enemy of Israel"** by DANIEL MAIER-KATKIN
The calumny campaign against one of the twentieth century's most important thinkers.
- 14 **Not My Priorities: A National Campaign to Decrease Military Spending** by ELLEN AUGUSTINE
Congress allocates 60 percent of its discretionary budget to military spending, at the expense of schools and social programs. Does that match your priorities?
- 16 **JFK, Obama, and the Unspeakable** by JAMES W. DOUGLASS
Can a peaceful president prevail against a national security state?
- 20 **Prophetic Contingency: Why Jim Douglass's JFK Book Matters** by CHED MYERS
Douglass is no conspiracy geek. He's a Catholic steeped in Gandhian *Satyagraha*.

Cover:
David Bygott and
Design Action Collective

Politics (continued)

- 21 **Obama: The Fear of Assassination and What You Can Do About It** by JOHN PERKINS
The president may be at a loss against the reigning corporatocracy—but we, the people, need not be.
- 25 **Oscar Grant or LeBron James? The Systemic Devaluation of Black Life in America** by JOSH HEALEY
A white cop shot and killed an unarmed black man. The jury deemed it “involuntary.” The people took to the streets in protest. And the media’s top story is still on the Cleveland Cavaliers?
- 27 **Iranophobia: The Panic of the Hegemons** by IRA CHERNUS
What’s behind the rhetoric of vilification in the United States and Israel?

Rethinking Religion

- 54 **Elements of a Philosophy for Diaspora Judaism** by EVERETT GENDLER
- 56 **The Exile of the Presence and the Presence of the Exile**
by AARON SAMUEL TAMARET, TRANSLATED BY EVERETT GENDLER
“When Torah and Exile are joined, great wonders are born in the soul.” But nation-states are a mixed blessing.
- 59 **Strange Land, New World** by JONATHAN SHEFA
The Yovel (the Biblical Jubilee when wealth is redistributed) is God’s holy reset button. It’s exactly what we need.

Culture

BOOKS

- 63 **Racial Justice: New Structures and New Selves**
The Machinery of Whiteness by Steve Martinot; *Categorically Unequal* by Douglas Massey;
and *The Art of Happiness in a Troubled World* by the Dalai Lama and Howard Cutler
Review by JOHN A. POWELL
- 64 **A Great Yearning Fills Them All ...**
Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer
Review by SIDRA DEKOVEN EZRAHI
- 66 **Jewish Anti-Zionism**
A Threat From Within: A Century of Jewish Opposition to Zionism by Yakov M. Rabkin; translated from French by Fred A. Reed
Review by RAFAEL CHODOS
- 67 **Coercive Environments**
Youth in a Suspect Society: Democracy or Disposability by Henry Giroux, Review by BILL YOUSMAN

FILM

- 69 **Latin America’s Rising Left**
South of the Border by Jose Ibanez/Cinema Libre Studio
Review by DAVID KANE

POETRY

- 30 **Rilke’s America** by PAUL BRESLIN

HUMOR

- 80 **Fasting for Tom Zipper** by JOSH KORNBLUTH

INTERN AT TIKKUN

Come help with editing, web design, and online outreach. We also need help promoting the Global Marshall Plan, the Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (ESRA), and a progressive middle path for Middle East peace that is both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine.

Info: www.tikkun.org/interns.

Readers Respond

ANOTE ON LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

We welcome your responses to our articles. Send your letters to the editor to Letters@Tikkun.org. Please remember, however, not to attribute to Tikkun views other than those expressed in our editorials. We 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.

KUCINICH AND THE ESRA

IN THE SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER issue of *Tikkun* magazine, Dennis Kucinich proposes an Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the Constitution (in “ESRA: An Opportunity to Reshape the World”). Such an amendment has as much chance as the proverbial snowball in hell. And even if passed, it wouldn’t timely address the overwhelming problem of global heating. Maybe Kucinich is trying to compete with David Cobb and Move to Amend; but both divert attention from addressing global heating in the next six years, which is the time that Jim Hansen and others say we have to avoid climate hell.

Juvenal, a Roman poet, said luxury is “more ruthless than war” and violence. His words are particularly relevant today, when carbon dioxide is around the world in hours and in the atmosphere for up to a thousand years. Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions from American big houses, big vehicles, and other luxuries are the largest threat to the Global Atmospheric Commons and have already led to floods (Pakistan), drought, crop failure, water wars (Kenya), genocide (Darfur: “when the rains stopped, the genocide began”), and will lead to climate hell, if not abated.

ROLAND JAMES
Seguin, TX

SAVING THE WORLD FROM CORPORATE GREED

I FOUND A TROUBLING AMOUNT of psychological denial in the September/October issue of *Tikkun*, starting with the cover article title, “Saving the World from Corporate Greed.” That title emerges from a state of what we wish for, rather than anything we can realistically hope to accomplish. It averts the eyes from the immensity of the trouble we face.

After attending the San Francisco NSP conference, I came away convinced that the Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the Constitution (ESRA) was a giant distraction. A five-page ESRA is even more irrelevant.

I was intrigued by the richness of the question “Do the Dems Deserve to Lose?” In my mind, the Dems have made their deeply flawed choices and will reap the consequences. It’s not up to progressives to save them—we can’t.

However, the editorial never addressed the cover’s question. Instead, Rabbi Lerner wrote about the Obama of his dreams. He chose to not deal with the Obama who actually lives in the White House. In the ugly times we are in, that just doesn’t cut it.

I constantly grieve over how the world is not the way I would like it to be. It seems to me that thoughtful people have a responsibility to see the

world as it is, no matter how painful that is. I believe this is the path to truth, love, and peace.

DAVID SCHONBRUNN
San Rafael, CA

Editor responds:

BOTH MR. SCHONBRUNN AND Mr. James have trouble imagining how the world can be fundamentally changed. In this, they resemble those Black pastors who warned Martin Luther King Jr. to stop trying to challenge segregation, or the women who cautioned second-wave feminists about challenging patriarchy, or the homosexuals who were disturbed when gay activists sought to bring the question of homophobia into public awareness. We at *Tikkun* do not have any evidence that the emphasis we place on the Spiritual Covenant with America, the Global Marshall Plan, and the Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (ESRA) will actually switch the power relations in our society (though they would if passed). What these campaigns may succeed in doing is to reframe U.S. public political discourse in a way that will change consciousness by creating a concrete vision of what progressives are for, not just what they are against.

We do not see any reason why a focus on this campaign should detract

MORE LETTERS

Thank you for all your letters! We receive many more than we can print. Visit www.tikkun.org/letters to read additional letters about the “death of theology,” the responsibilities of congressional candidates to their constituencies, queer politics and activism, the influence of morality on Israel-Palestine positions, and more!

attention from any strategy Mr. James has that would, in the meantime, end global warming, and our NSP/*Tikkun* communities will do everything we can to support any plausible strategy that will reduce global warming. Our guess, however, is that corporate control over the electoral process (and over the resulting Congress and administration) will not be significantly reined in until there is a comprehensive constitutional amendment of the sort that ESRA proposes. The unrestricted use of corporate incentives to maximize companies' profits at the expense of the environment will also continue unchecked until we pass a comprehensive amendment. The suggestion from Mr. Schonbrunn that we are not looking at the world realistically ("as it is") seems to miss our point that the world as it is can be changed, and that one significant way to build the movement for such changes is to move beyond a narrow focus on "what's wrong" and put forward visionary ideas about how the world

could look if people were to unite and struggle for that new way of arranging our world.

BEYOND GOVERNMENT

DR. PHIL WOLFSON'S ARTICLE, "Cuba Sí," has stirred me. What troubles me most is how individuals and the populace can become and remain stagnant due to their broken governments for fifty years, one hundred years, or more. I am truly sorry for America's role in Cuba's sorrows, and I support the Spiritual Progressives' Global Marshall Plan as I dream of America as a cooperative ally rather than a dominant enforcer. I worry for my own country in the grips of corporate power and the rapidly growing inequality, and feel helpless as a citizen as I observe our government muddling through bureaucracy yet keeping things status quo. I wonder if Dr. Wolfson feels that if American citizens got together and gathered seeds and plants from our own gardens and cooperative seed groups, and if we gathered our used computers,

of which we have plenty in our throw-away society, and sent them to Cuba, that that would help. What I am hoping for is a seed of people helping people to go beyond the limitations of what governments can achieve to help their citizens and create peace in the world.

SUZANNE SHERMAN
Petaluma, CA

HAMAS AND PALESTINE

IT COULD BE THAT "THE IDEA OF Hamas is about liberation, an end to Occupation, and independence," as Jeremy Ben-Ami says in his article "The New Zionist Imperative is to Tell Israel the Truth." But the Arab hostility existed long before the IDF changed the Green Line in 1967, already then a highly disputed border between Israel and the surrounding Arab states. So for that matter a peace treaty and good intentions between Israelis and Arabs should long ago have been established. So, sorry Ben-Ami, Hamas and Hezbollah and Abu Mazen drive after another road

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map. That road map is the whole of the former Palestine, and “Israel” isn’t printed on that map.

KIEL HESSELMANN
Nyköbing, Denmark

Jeremy Ben-Ami responds:

I AGREE WHOLEHEARTEDLY THAT Arab hostility to Israel preceded 1967. I would further agree that there will be those in the Arab world and far beyond who will continue to oppose the very existence of Israel as the national home of the Jewish people, even if there is a two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The question is which future is better for Israel and the Jewish people—one with a negotiated two-state solution or one without.

The answer to my mind is unequivocal. The surest route to a map without a state of Israel is to fail to achieve a lasting and comprehensive peace. Saddest of all would be to end up on that route because Israel couldn’t stop itself from building a few more structures over the Green Line for a matter of months while it negotiates a permanent border.

GAY SPIRITUALITY

JAY MICHAELSON IS A FRIEND and colleague. I agree with the central points of his article (in the July/August “Queer Spirituality and Politics” issue of *Tikkun*): the gay rights struggle is based in virtue and religious values, and good people should support this struggle out of compassion and loving kindness. And I want to add that the function of “gay spirituality” in gay people’s lives is to discover the meaning of one’s homosexuality as a stepping-stone in one’s spiritual path. Being gay gives people a different perspective on the world. We have a different sense of what life is for, and how to participate and contribute. How we relate to religion and religious institutions is certainly part of the personal developmental process, but there’s so much more to the gay spiritual life than what “straight people”

think about homosexuality. What matters to us is how we think about homosexuality and how we can find in our experience of being gay clues to the experience of “God.”

TOBY JOHNSON
Austin, Texas

HINDU SPIRITUALITY

TIKKUN IS A SPIRITUAL MAGAZINE, but Ruth Vanita’s article “Same-Sex Weddings, Hindu Traditions, and Modern India” (July/August 2010) had references to Hindu rituals but no discussion of the deeper spiritual practices of meditation and yoga. As such, the article gives a very unbalanced view of Hindu spirituality. An article that mentions only the Kama Sutra but no other Hindu scriptures does a disservice to the reader and sincere spiritual seekers.

The principles of *ayurveda* (science of life) and yoga hold that cultivating the spiritual energy, known in Sanskrit as *prana*, is central to transforming one’s mind and body in preparation for deeper spirituality and final liberation from the cycle of rebirth. But it also holds that the use and overuse of the five senses are the primary manner in which *prana* is dissipated, wasted, and therefore not available to power the spiritual pursuit. Sex in any form, whether heterosexual or homosexual, results in a large loss of *prana*. This is the underlying reason for the practice of austerity in the yoga tradition, and most probably, in many other religious and spiritual traditions. It is the practice of gradually and lovingly loosening the ties that bind, and giving up “small” experiences of bliss, in order to achieve the highest Bliss, direct knowledge and communion with God, also known by the Sanskrit word *samadhi*. These principles are stated emphatically through all of the Hindu and Yoga scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, and the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

The article also states that an individual is reborn in order to work through attachments from previous

births and move toward freedom from attachment. This is true; however, indulging in an attachment, also known as a *samskara*, only serves to strengthen the attachment, making it all the more “irresistible.” I would ask the author and the reader to consider that perhaps the reason for these so-called “irresistible” impulses is repeated indulgence in previous lives and the present life. I do agree with the author in that forcible suppression of attachments is not healthy, but rather, as stated earlier, working through an attachment is a process of gradually and lovingly letting go of it, with the knowledge that a higher purpose and goal is being served.

GREG POLANCHYCK
Wilmington, DE

Ruth Vanita responds:

TIKKUN ASKED ME TO SUM UP MY decades-long work on same-sex love and marriage in a limited word-count. In my book *Love’s Rite: Same-Sex Marriage in India and the West*, I discuss two parallel strands in Hindu life—that of asceticism, which takes a negative view of desire, as outlined by Polanchyck, and that of everyday practice, which honors desire as one of the four goals of life, and worships Kama, God of love, as a beautiful young male God. If many Hindu texts advocate giving up desire, many other equally popular Hindu texts hold up ideals of loving marriage and friendship, with marriage being seen as a kind of friendship and friendship as a kind of marriage. Lord Shiva is an ascetic, but also a loving husband to Parvati, with whom he enjoys erotic bliss (which, by the way, does not produce children).

The ascetic tradition is balanced by a strong this-worldly tradition in Hinduism. Strict nonindulgence of all desire would rapidly lead to the dissolution of relationships, the family, society, and ultimately the species. Whether such dissolution is a “higher purpose and goal” is open to debate; I suspect that most ordinary Hindus in India do not incline toward this goal.

America to Washington: “We Have a Problem”

BY GEORGE VRADENBURG

WHO CAN FORGET THE LOW-KEY, UNDERSTATED report from Jim Lovell that something was amiss as Apollo 13 circled the moon—“Houston, we have a problem”? Lovell’s problem was serious, the likelihood of a solution remote, and the lives of the astronauts saved only through messy, jury-rigged solutions and the personal bravery of key players.

Recent election cycles remind me of Jim Lovell’s report from Apollo 13. Washington is mired in bitter personal partisan battles. Republicans are, by most estimates, likely to improve their position in both houses of Congress with a “repeal and replace” argument that Washington is “out of control” and must be stopped a mere two years after the electorate voted for “change.”

The likelihood of a solution to this hyper-partisanship seems remote in the short term. Fueled by a national round-the-clock media/blogosphere and fluid “independent” campaign financing moving from race to race, Republican and Democratic candidates are forced to focus on fundraising from their respective base voters and getting them out to vote—even as more Americans self-identify as independents. The two-party system seems itself to be lurching out of control and unable to respond thoughtfully to the pragmatic, problem-solving center of the political spectrum.

Progressives argue that the current partisan bitterness was the product of an “Obama as president” who did not deliver on the inspirational promise of “Obama as candidate.” Conservatives will argue that this bitterness is the product of Democratic leadership ramming an Obama agenda down their throat without adequate consultation.

Both views are, in my opinion, incorrect. There is something more deeply wrong with our current political system. Obama has delivered exactly what he promised during the 2008 election campaign—a stimulus program and health care, education, and financial reform. What he did not deliver, and could not be expected to deliver, was a speedy economic recovery to the economy timed to the election cycle. The Republicans argue that the Democratic stimulus failed to keep the unemployment rate at a promised 8 percent and thus that the nearly \$1 trillion stimulus was Democratic overspending that is adding to an already alarming budget deficit.

Are the Republicans countering with a more sensible economic plan? No. They have made a calculated political judgment that frustrated, out-of-work voters want to “stop” further ineffective,

debt-creating meddling in the economy and that just saying no will advance their political position. And the Republican political strategy appears to be working.

This strategy mirrors the strategy employed by the Democrats after the election in 2004 when then-President George W. Bush proposed to stabilize the looming insolvency of the Social Security system by allowing beneficiaries to allocate a small percentage of their Social Security savings in personal accounts that could be invested in the stock market. Democrats argued that President Bush was “privatizing” Social Security and putting pensioners at risk of losing their life savings. So, while Bush’s proposal was a positive and relatively modest reform, the Democratic strategy to refuse to negotiate any Social Security reform was a calculated political judgment that voters wanted to “stop” any meddling with Social Security. The Democrats’ strategy worked: they took back the Congress in 2006 and extended their majority in 2008.

Net, each party has calculated that its political interests are best served by stopping the initiatives of the other party and then accusing that party of incompetence or ineffectiveness.

Is there no room in Washington for the pragmatic, problem-solving, bipartisan centrists?

Most sustained, progressive transformations in American policy have been bipartisan—the 1960s Civil Rights Acts were drafted in Republican Senator Everett Dirksen’s office and received support from both parties. The World Wars and the Cold War of the twentieth century were waged in the environment of a bipartisan foreign policy. Health care reforms—Medicare, Medicaid, and the Medicare Prescription Drug benefit—were adopted by significant congressional majorities.

If the moderate middle of the political spectrum is dying or dead, and if each party gains by stopping or reversing the policies of the other party, this country is in for a revolving “repeal and replace” mentality every four to six years. The Congress will simply become a game of who can best throw sand in the gears of the governing party’s work.

Maybe America will be better served by divided government that puts both parties in charge. Then, America can hopefully look to the personal political bravery of centrists from both parties to work out the messy bipartisan compromise that will produce a sustainable policy on the critical issues facing the country. ■

George Vradenburg is co-publisher of Tikkun. He often disagrees with our editorial opinions.

After the 2010 Elections

Will Obama Stop Betraying His Progressive Base?

SOMETIME IN MID-SEPTEMBER 2010, PRESIDENT Obama suddenly discovered that twenty months of governing by capitulation to the very mainstream ideas he campaigned against in 2008 was a losing strategy. But instead of acknowledging his errors, he acted as though his liberal and progressive base were betraying him.

Like most progressive activists who supported Barack Obama's campaign, I understood that a president is limited in what she or he can accomplish in reducing the power of America's economic and political elites. But what a president *can* do is challenge the ideas of the powerful and rally those who have become aware both that the system is destructive to the future of the planet and that there is an alternative—a possibility of constructing lives with a sense of meaning beyond the accumulation of money and things.

In frantic activity before the November 2010 midterm election, President Obama traveled the country seeking to rebuild the enthusiasm he generated in 2008, but he seemed clueless as to why it was not there. The Democrats in Congress who followed his lead seemed similarly clueless: they tried to blame our lack of enthusiasm on their inability to pass the legislation that we (their political base) wanted—a desire that they dismissed as unreasonable. Even a Democratic majority in Congress and a Democratic president could not, they suggested, overcome the resistance of the Republican Party and the powerful institutional constraints that have been built up over many decades. Then they reminded us that a Republican Congress would certainly make things worse.

The reason progressives are upset with Obama and the Dems is not that we held a naive belief about how much he or the Democratic Congress could accomplish, given the fact that the Democratic majority in Congress was in fact filled with corporate-oriented “centrists.” We knew the limitations of this reality—a reality that was created by Rahm Emanuel and Nancy Pelosi, whose supposedly brilliant strategy in 2006 of backing the most conservative possible candidates in Democratic primaries in “swing districts” worked in the sense of giving the Democrats formal control of the House. Emanuel and Pelosi were more interested in securing political power than in changing the direction of the country. Not trusting the growing anti-war sentiment in 2006, they supported candidates who were ideologically pro-business and pro-war, constructing a Democratic majority in Congress that would back neither anti-war efforts nor the pro-working-and-middle-class measures that Democrats had promised.

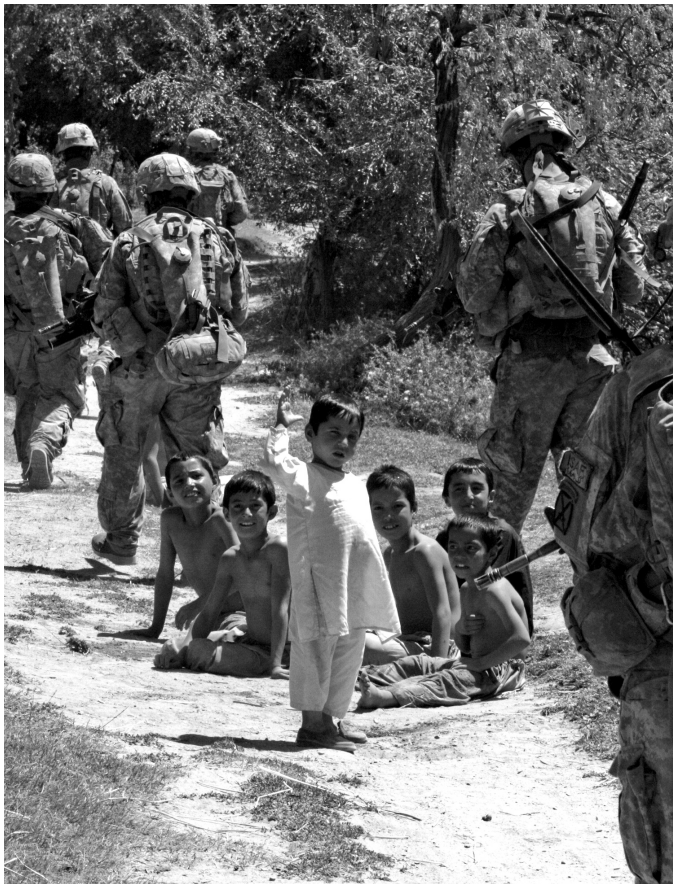
By late 2007, liberals and progressives were deeply disturbed that, after the Democratic sweep of Congress in 2006, Congress continued to fund the war in Iraq despite overwhelming popular opposition. So when Obama entered the primaries, he created his base of support in part by fostering the impression that he would challenge the warmakers and in part by speaking against the pro-corporate and pro-Wall Street ethos of the Bush administration. His famous speech on racism, in which he distinguished himself from his lefty preacher in Chicago, was understood by most progressives to mean he'd champion the interests of Blacks but also of whites, and he'd do that by avoiding the destructive “political correctness” rhetoric that has isolated so many progressives in the past thirty years, while still maintaining a progressive core to his policies. So when he challenged the selfishness and materialism on Wall Street and explicitly raised everyone's hopes by making “change” the theme of his campaign, progressives reasonably felt we had a candidate who would be willing to speak truth to power.

So what happened? First, he appointed Emanuel as his Chief of Staff and surrounded himself with a White House crew that lacked representatives from the social change movements that brought him electoral success (and this remains true even with the departure of Emanuel and Summers). Then came the sad reversals of direction: He bailed out Wall Street but gave almost nothing to the millions of unemployed or to those losing their homes to



Will anything change now that Rahm Emanuel, the supposed “realist,” has left the administration? Here Obama hugs his outgoing White House Chief of Staff on October 1, 2010, before Emanuel's departure to run for mayor of Chicago.

avaricious financial lenders. He escalated the war in Afghanistan and left 50,000 troops as “advisers” in Iraq, publicly justifying his reliance on preemptive military force upon receiving an ill-conceived Nobel Peace Prize. He refused to push for a public option for health care and instead supported a plan that forces tens of millions of people to buy health insurance without putting any restraints on insurance companies’ continuing escalations of the amount we have to pay. Moreover he agreed to oppose methods to reduce the costs of prescription drugs in return for a promise to slightly reduce the level of drug profits by big pharma. Indeed, the list of reversals seems unending: he pursued repression against illegal immigrants; allowed continued drilling in the oceans for oil even after the Gulf of Mexico disaster and substituted the empty promise of “cap and trade” for the tax on carbons that is the only plausible way to reduce carbon emissions; refused to punish those in the U.S. intelligence community who engaged in torture; invoked a “state secrets” rationale to allow U.S. executive branch leaders to unilaterally assassinate any American citizen they want without redress or due process (the al-Aulaqi case), while giving free rein to private security companies like Blackwater to kill for hire; escalated the use of drones that often kill more civilians than suspected terrorists; and



We recognize that Obama faces real constraints from the military-industrial complex and from the intelligence community surrounding him in the Oval Office, which insists on pursuing the war in Afghanistan, pictured above. In articles by James Douglass and John Perkins in this issue of Tikkun, those constraints, and the possibility that Obama might be killed if he were to stand up to them, are addressed.

appointed friends of the worst big agricultural firms to run his Department of Agriculture. The list goes on.

Many progressives will vote or have already (through absentee ballots) voted Democratic in November, despite all this. But don't expect liberals and progressives to be able to rally others when the best they can say is that the Democrats and their national leader are less bad than the plausible alternatives. Many others, feeling humiliated at allowing themselves to believe in the hope Obama elicited, find themselves either totally uninterested in politics or wishing to strike back at the Democrats for making fools of those who trusted. Politics is partly about the alternation between hope and despair. Obama's twenty-month abandonment of the ideals that enthused us in 2008—combined with the failure of his Wall Street-oriented economic policies and his capitulation to the military-industrial complex—has generated more despair than hope, and blaming his base for that is stupid and self-destructive. The Democratic Party strategists console themselves by looking at poll data that tells them that most liberals and progressives will vote for the Dems in any case, so their attention has to be on what they conceive to be the concerns of “centrists” and young people who are disaffected. What the poll data doesn't reveal is what everyone who worked in 2008 understands: that it was the mass enthusiasm of progressives that persuaded centrists to overcome their skepticism and students to overcome their political passivity, allowing themselves to believe that a change-oriented president could make a huge difference. Demographically, the progressives may not be so important, but in terms of the psychodynamics of an election, they are often crucial. Obama and the Democrats remain clueless.

In October 2010, *New York Times* columnist Tom Friedman suggested a new third party for the “radical center.” A third party, yes, but another party with centrist politics will spew toothless high-mindedness of the Tom Friedman variety, which will only further weaken the Democrats, without coming close to speaking to what really bothers most of those disaffected from the two establishment parties. What is actually needed is a third party that combines the kind of vision articulated in the Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment (ESRA) to the U.S. Constitution, the policy directions of our Spiritual Covenant with America, the foreign policy direction shown in the Global Marshall Plan, and the love, compassion, generosity, and non-religiophobic discourse we've sought to develop in *Tikkun*. Lacking such a party, many progressives will find no other option for themselves but to grudgingly support the Democratic Party. Obama may be able to slip into office a second time in 2012 if the Republicans nominate one of their more horrendous leaders, but until the Democrats and Obama really atone for the directions they've taken, and embrace a spiritual progressive worldview, they are unintentionally but powerfully helping to build the kind of resentment and humiliation that has in the past become the psychological underpinning for the emergence of powerful fascistic movements from the right. ■

Middle East Peace Negotiations?

UNTIL THE POPULATIONS OF ISRAEL AND PALESTINE really want peace, the peace negotiations will be nothing but a slightly sad sideshow, unless the Obama administration, momentarily freed from its own electoral concerns, is prepared to put forward a substantive peace plan of its own.

It used to be that the elites in both societies would tell you that once they worked out a deal, their relatively excitable populations would embrace it. Perhaps. But what has become clear in recent years is that neither side has sufficient stability based on popular support to actually make the compromises necessary to negotiate a peace agreement with terms that could actually work.

So, instead of playing to each side's elites, those who seek peace must now launch a broad educational campaign to reach ordinary citizens (if necessary, over the heads of those elites) with a message that is convincing—a message that says, here are the terms of a fair peace agreement and here is why we believe that if each side makes the necessary compromises, it will work to meet your best interests.

Some say this is a hard case to make. They point out that Israelis seem to be doing quite well at the moment from a material standpoint and have little interest in what goes on in the West Bank and Gaza. They argue this situation is unlikely to change so long as the restraint of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, the partial effectiveness of intrusive searches at checkpoints and the careful patrolling of the Israeli-constructed Wall, impressive intelligence based on willing (and less than willing) collaborators, and newer protection technologies collectively manage to minimize the number of terrorist attacks in Israel. We are glad for the reduction of terror; but not for the resulting complacency and willingness of many Israelis to live with the torture

and oppression that their army inflicts on the subjugated Palestinian populations of the West Bank and the open-air prison that is Gaza.

The United States and other countries committed to a peaceful solution should present a detailed plan for what a final agreement must encompass to the people of the Middle East and the United States. Such a plan must on the one hand take into account the tremendous economic, political, and military inequality between the two parties, as well as recognize the historical injustice done to the Palestinian people. On the other hand, it must speak to the great pain that both parties have suffered. It is this pain from the past that leads them each to interpret everything through a framework based on memories of being betrayed, oppressed, and denied their fundamental humanity. Lasting peace will require steps toward healing that pain and trauma, so that each party can approach the other with a spirit of generosity and openheartedness, rather than needing to insist that since their pain has “really been greater than the pain of the other side,” their needs (for justice, security, and respect) trump the needs of the other side.

We who live outside Israel/Palestine can play a role, partly by challenging the discourse of “blaming the other” that gets strengthened by the more extreme partisans in both camps, but more importantly by insisting that our political leaders present to both sides a vision of a future that will appeal to the people of the region and give them reason to push their leaders to make the necessary compromises. Obviously, the people of the region will make the final decisions, but having a proposal that seems comprehensive and fair coming from the greatest economic, military, and political powers of the world will strengthen the part of each Israeli and Palestinian who wants to believe in the possibility of a conclusion to this struggle based on peace, justice, and recognition of the dignity and fundamental humanity of both sides.

Keeping that in mind, yet wanting to propose something that our spiritually and psychologically tone-deaf politicians might at least understand, I offer the following advice for what a peace plan proposed to both sides by the United States could involve. Use it also when assessing future negotiations, because proposals that do not address the issues below are unlikely to meet the approval of even the most fair-minded and balanced people on both sides of this conflict.

1. A peace treaty that recognizes the State of Israel and the State of Palestine and defines Palestine's borders to include almost all of pre-1967 West Bank and Gaza, with small exchanges of land mutually agreed upon and roughly equivalent in value and historic and/or military significance to each side. The peace plan must also entail a corresponding treaty between Israel and all Arab states—approved with full diplomatic and economic cooperation among these parties—along borderlines that existed



We like the fact that it's not clear who the “we” refers to in this photo of a street in Jerusalem. All of us need peace.

in the pre-1967 period. And it should include a twenty-to-thirty-year plan for moving toward a Middle Eastern common market and the eventual establishment of a political union along the lines of the European Union.

2. Jerusalem will be the capital of both Israel and Palestine and will be governed by an elected council in West Jerusalem and a separate elected council in East Jerusalem. The Old City will become an international city whose sovereignty will be implemented by an international council that guarantees equal access to all holy sites—a council whose taxes will be shared equally by the city councils of East and West Jerusalem.
3. Immediate and unconditional freedom will be accorded all prisoners in Israel and Palestine whose arrests have been connected in some way with the Occupation and resistance to the Occupation.
4. An international force to separate and protect each side from the extremists of the other side who will inevitably seek to disrupt the peace agreement. And the creation of a joint peace police—composed of an equal number of Palestinians and Israelis, at both personnel and command levels—that will work with the international force to combat violence and to implement point number six below.
5. Reparations for Palestinian refugees and their descendents at a sufficient level to bring Palestinians within a ten-year period to an economic well-being equivalent to that enjoyed by those with a median Israeli-level income. The same level of reparations must also be made available to all Jews who fled Arab lands between 1948 and 1977. An international fund should be set up immediately to hold in escrow the monies needed to ensure that these reparations are in place once the peace plan is agreed upon.
6. Creation of a truth and reconciliation process modeled on the South African version but shaped to the specificity of these two cultures. Plus: an international peace committee appointed by representatives of the three major religious communities of the area to develop and implement teaching of a. nonviolence and non-violent communication, b. empathy and forgiveness, and c. a sympathetic point of view of the history of the “other side” mandated in every grade from sixth grade through high school. The committee should moreover ensure the elimination of all teaching of hatred against the other side or teaching against the implementation of this treaty in any public, private, or religious educational institutions, media, or public meetings. Such teachings would become an automatic crime punishable in an international court set up for this purpose.
7. An agreement from Palestine to allow all Jews living in the West Bank to remain there as law-abiding citizens of the new Palestinian state as long as they give up their Israeli citizenship and abide by decisions of the Palestinian courts. A fund should

be created to help West Bank settlers move back to Israel if they wish to remain Israeli citizens and to help Palestinians move to Palestine if they wish to be citizens of the new Palestinian state. In exchange for Palestine agreeing to allow Israelis to stay in the West Bank as citizens of the Palestinian state, Israel must agree to let 20,000 Palestinian refugees return each year for the next thirty years to the pre-1967 borders of Israel and provide them with housing. (This number—20,000—is small enough to not change the demographic balance, yet large enough to show that Israel cares about Palestinian refugees and recognizes that they have been wronged.) Each state must acknowledge the right of the other to give preferential treatment in immigration to members of its leading ethnic group (Jews in Israel, Palestinians in Palestine).

8. Agreement by the leaders of all relevant parties to talk in a language of peace and openhearted reconciliation, and to reject the notion that the other side cannot be trusted. The agreement has the greatest likelihood of working if it is embraced in full and pushed for enthusiastically by the leaders of all relevant parties, as well as endorsed by a majority vote of the populations of each country that wishes to be a party to this agreement.

Our task in *Tikkun* and in the Network of Spiritual Progressives is to devise strategies to get our own Western countries to publicly articulate this vision, and to get President Obama to use his full energies and skills to convince the American public, the Israeli public, and the Palestinian public that this agreement and nothing less will provide greater security and well-being to the people of the United States, Israel, Palestine, and the Middle East more broadly.

All the other stuff happening in the “negotiations” should be viewed as political theater. At the moment the main issue is who is going to be blamed for getting the process to fail, with people on each side maneuvering to prevent the blame from falling on themselves. But the plan we present seeks a very different spirit—a spirit of hopefulness that we now have a concrete plan that would work if implemented and should be adopted by anyone serious about lasting peace. All the rest is commentary, fluff, and political self-interest and has little to do with creating peace.

In the final analysis, we at *Tikkun* believe that peace can only come through a fundamental transformation of consciousness, so that the people on each side begin to abandon the worldview that teaches that their own security depends on dominating the other side, construed as the “evil other.” Only an openhearted reconciliation based on faith that the other side will be able to see its former enemies as real human beings sharing similar needs for peace, security, dignity, and recognition as created in the image of God will produce lasting peace. The implementation of these formal proposals would not necessarily be sufficient to create that change of heart. Yet the step of envisioning this process may itself contribute to a thawing of the icy rejection of “the other”—a thawing that is the precondition for developing the consciousness that is needed. For that reason, articulating this vision may itself be a step toward its achievement. ■

How Hannah Arendt Was Labeled an “Enemy of Israel”

by Daniel Maier-Katkin

A *D HOMINEM* ATTACK IS NOT NEW IN JEWISH POLITICS. INTIMIDATION of critics of Israeli policy is as old as the modern State of Israel itself. The discourse within Zionism about Israel’s path to security and peace has not been tolerant of dissenting ideas. A recent example known to *Tikkun* readers was the disturbingly odd graffiti attack on Rabbi Lerner’s home in May that portrayed him embracing Justice Goldstone, declaring “any enemy of Israel is a friend of mine.” (Goldstone authored the UN report that accused both Hamas and Israel of war crimes in the Gaza invasion of almost two years ago.)

Goldstone and Lerner are not the first Jews to have detractors equate their criticism of Israel with treason against the Jewish people. Perhaps the most famous example is the reception of Hannah Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Arendt’s experience in the 1960s offers an early example of repressive strategies for the punishment and repression of dissent. Arendt’s story has value to progressive Jews not only because she is a matriarchal figure in the development of progressive Jewish political thought, but also because the campaign against Arendt illuminates the recurring threat to freedom of thought that still menaces Justice Goldstone, Rabbi Lerner, and others in the present moment. That Arendt’s ideas are now so widely respected should make us think twice about those pilloried in similar ways today.

Arendt was born into a comfortable, educated, secular Jewish family in East Prussia at the beginning of the twentieth century. She was educated to the highest university levels in classics, Greek, Latin, continental philosophy, and German literature. She was not a Zionist because she did not personally have any impulse to emigrate to *Eretz Yisroel*. She was at ease with her identity as a Jew in the diaspora, happily European, immersed in the warm glow of Enlightenment culture and Western civilization. Palestine would have been an “exotic” destination for her; Paris and New York were not.

Nevertheless, Arendt respected the idealism, acumen, and courage of the Zionists and greatly admired her friend Kurt Blumenfeld, the dashing, brilliant president of the German Zionist Organization. It was library research on the extent of anti-Semitism in Germany just weeks after the Nazi seizure of power, undertaken at Blumenfeld’s request, that was



German Jewish political theorist Hannah Arendt (above in 1954) was reviled by many Jewish intellectuals for her 1963 book on *Eichmann*. Its insights into the “banality of evil” are much more widely accepted today.

Daniel Maier-Katkin, author of *Stranger From Abroad: Hannah Arendt, Martin Heidegger, Friendship and Forgiveness* (W.W. Norton, 2010), is a professor of criminology and human rights at Florida State University.

The Jewish
Spectator
headlined:
“Self-Hating
Jewess Writes
Pro-Eichmann
Series for the
New Yorker.”

denounced by a librarian as anti-state propaganda, precipitating Arendt's arrest and eight days of police detention, after which she immediately entered exile, slipping into Bohemia and making her way to France.

Arendt's Solidarity with the Jewish People

IN PARIS ARENDT WORKED TIRELESSLY FOR ZIONIST ORGANIZATIONS, PRINCIPALLY Youth Aliyah, which rescued Jewish young people from Europe, preparing them to emigrate to Palestine as agricultural workers. Caring for these penniless youths entailed feeding and clothing them, providing instructors and social workers, dealing with the parents whom the youth would leave behind, dealing with legal documents, and above all raising money to keep the whole operation afloat.

In New York, after the fall of France, she became Senior Editor at Schocken Press, the largest publisher of Judaica and Jewish-themed books in the world. She emerged quickly as a respected figure in New York literary, cultural, and progressive circles. Her first published essays reflect solidarity with the Jewish people, calling for the creation of a Jewish Army to join the armies of the world in confronting Hitler, warning Jews that a people that “does not have a place in the war, will not have a place in the peace.” After the publication of *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt became an internationally prominent public intellectual.

When she returned to Germany for the first time after the war, in 1950, it was as research director of the International Commission for the Cultural Reconstruction of European Jewry. In this capacity she assumed responsibility for one and a half million objects, books, and artifacts of Judaica held by Allied authorities as “abandoned property.” She arranged for Torahs, prayer books, artwork, menorahs, and other objects associated with Jewish religious practice to be returned whenever possible to rightful owners; when that could not be determined, she arranged to have some objects sent to places where they might be protected or preserved, distributing others to needy congregations often in remote locations.

Arendt's Vision of Israel as a Homeland for Palestinians and Jews

ARENDT HAD BEEN A TIRELESS ADVOCATE FOR JEWISH VICTIMS AND FOR THE EXISTENCE of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine, but she envisioned the homeland as a federated, pluralistic, democratic, secular state—a homeland for Palestinians and Jews coexisting peacefully as neighbors without an official state religion. This may seem a pipe dream now, but in early Zionism this was called the “general” view. The “revisionist” view that Israel must be a Jewish state and a homeland only for Jews did not come to dominate the discourse until the end of World War II, when the Holocaust was revealed in its full terror and destruction.

In 1944 the Zionist Organization of America adopted a resolution calling for “a Jewish commonwealth to embrace the whole of Palestine, undivided and undiminished.” Arendt wrote that it would be preferable to work toward statehood slowly through local agricultural and irrigation projects to build trust among neighbors and thus bring about a peaceful multicultural solution of tensions in the region. An explicitly Jewish state, she warned, would inevitably treat its Arab population as second-class citizens, be an endless provocation to hundreds of millions of Arab neighbors, and channel its material and human resources into military preparedness, which she doubted could succeed indefinitely. Even Sparta could only dominate its neighbors militarily for a few hundred years. Militarism, she thought, cannot be a successful long-term strategy for the survival of the Jewish people; it points too clearly toward an eventual crisis.

By 1950—with Israel established and no immediate prospect for reconciliation with the Arabs—Arendt withdrew from Jewish politics, focusing her considerable energy on philosophy and political theory. Then in 1960 Israeli intelligence captured Adolf

Eichmann, the German Nazi who had managed the deportation of Jews to the concentration camps, in Argentina and transported him secretly to Jerusalem, where it was announced that he would stand trial for crimes against humanity. Arendt arranged to report on the trial for the *New Yorker* (an assignment that testifies to the prominence she had achieved as a writer and intellectual).

The Reception of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*

THE RECEPTION OF HER BOOK *EICHMANN IN JERUSALEM*, ESPECIALLY AMONG JEWISH intellectuals, was perhaps the most vituperative literary event of the twentieth century, at least in the English language. The hostilities revolved around the book's subtitle, *A Report on the Banality of Evil*, and its criticism of the dominance of anti-Arab Jewish nationalist sentiment dominating Israeli politics.

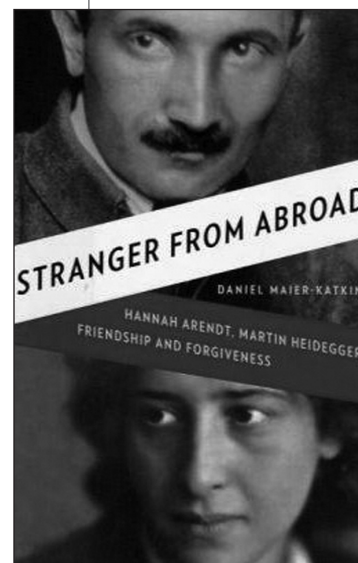
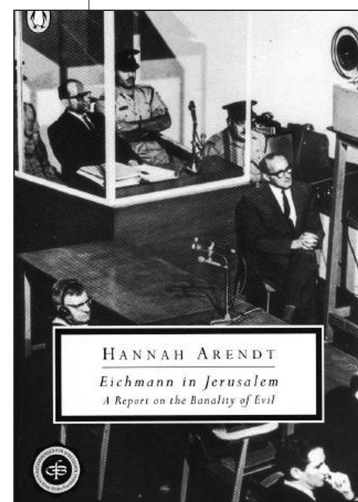
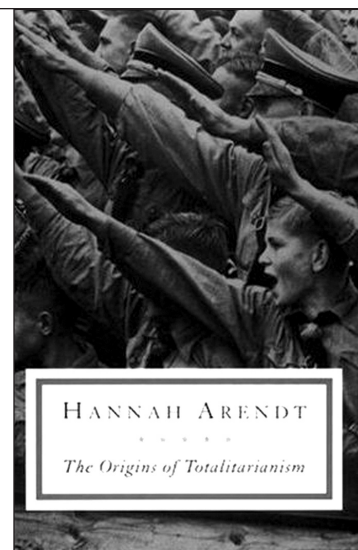
Arendt never denied that Israel should exercise jurisdiction over Eichmann, or doubted that he should be executed; but she was struck by the absence of blood lust or rabid anti-Semitism in Eichmann, who appeared more a banal bureaucrat than an inhuman monster. She was frightened by the insight that the most awful, reprehensible crimes might be committed by ordinary people.

This in turn made her suspicious of the prosecution's caricature of Eichmann as "the monster" responsible for the suffering of the Jewish people, as well as impatient with the use of a judicial proceeding to rehearse the story of Jewish suffering before the world and especially before young Israelis in an orchestrated political celebration of militarism as the only way for Jews to be safe in a world populated with hate-filled, Jew-killing monsters. Better, she thought, for young people to see that in the long run, the survival of Israel depends on finding a path to peace with its neighbors.

The reviews were brutal. One was published under the headline "Self-Hating Jewess Writes Pro-Eichmann Series for the *New Yorker*." Another concluded that Arendt was "digging future Jewish graves to the applause of the world's unconverted anti-Semites." She was characterized by the president of the World Zionist Organization as a person without any "reverence for the unparalleled suffering and tragedy of the 6,000,000 who perished." The Council of Israeli Jews From Germany wrote to her demanding that she withdraw the book from publication or face a "declaration of war." Her old friend Gershom Scholem wrote a public letter declaring that Arendt had "insufficient love for the Jewish people." Lionel Abel wrote in *Partisan Review* that Arendt had called the Holocaust banal, and that her portrayal of Nazis made them more aesthetically appealing than their victims. William Shawn, the editor of the *New Yorker*, observed that "in town" people seemed to be discussing little else. Irving Howe described the bitter public dispute over the Eichmann book as "violent"; Mary McCarthy wrote that it assumed the proportions of a pogrom.

In the introduction to a new edition of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Amos Elon compared the treatment of Hannah Arendt to the excommunication of Baruch Spinoza, another "enemy of Israel." Like Spinoza, Arendt seems to prevail over the forces arrayed against her thought. Her books are still in press thirty-five years after her death and have been translated into dozens of languages; new collections of her essays are still being published. She is the subject of many books and even a few plays. In this way Arendt's story encourages us to hope that campaigns of intimidation and delegitimization do not succeed in repressing critical discourse and dissent.

On the other hand, there is also a cautionary note: a campaign against the memory of Hannah Arendt continues, and the ideology that rationalizes and justifies *ad hominem* attacks and menacing gestures against Jews who dare to criticize Israel persists. As Rabbi Lerner and Justice Goldstone have learned, a Jew who fears that Israel is on a path that leads to destruction, or who is skeptical of a "divine mission to possess the land," or concerned about the legality or morality of unrelenting military strategies to secure regional domination, will be attacked as self-hating and anti-Semitic. To hate



Above: Two of Arendt's classic works and Daniel Maier-Katkin's 2010 book on Arendt and Heidegger.

oneself is *ipso facto* pathological, and this, it is asserted, leads to irrational hatred of Israel, which is seen as the embodiment of the Jewish people. Thus, defenders of Israeli policies aim to exclude Jewish critics from public discourse by defining them as crazy persons, driven to anti-Semitism by self-loathing. In this way Lerner's criticism of Israel, or Goldstone's, or Arendt's is dismissed as arising from psychological or spiritual disturbance rather than reasoned argument or an ethical posture.

Calumny, an old-fashioned blend of slander, distortion, and innuendo, has been a recurring instrument of intimidation in post-Holocaust Jewish politics. Hannah Arendt's experience offers an early example, and there are echoes of it in the current campaign against Lerner and Goldstone. Indeed, calumny is leveled against any Jews in the "loyal opposition" who are worried that Israeli militarism inevitably points to some final disaster, as well as convinced that the pursuit of peace and justice in a spirit of friendship and cooperation might also advance national security. ■

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Not My Priorities:

A National Campaign to Decrease Military Spending

by Ellen Augustine

HOW MUCH DO WE REALLY NEED TO SPEND TO DEFEND OURSELVES?
At \$708 billion, the Pentagon gets nearly 60 percent of our discretionary budget (the money Congress is free to allocate). Meanwhile our schools are in crisis, lacking the money for teachers and books, and social welfare programs are weakening, depriving the most vulnerable members of our community of vital support and health care.

Buddhist scholar and teacher Joanna Macy, author of *Despair and Empowerment in the Nuclear Age*, took a strong stance against this madness in a May 2010 presentation with Not My Priorities, a national campaign that seeks to stir up the public and create a debate in Congress about our defense spending. Speaking to the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, she said:

There seems to be a scandal going on, an insanity we are in the midst of... Our president said firmly in the State of the Union: "I'm going to hold the line on domestic spending." But military spending? Greater than ever. So we are heartsick over that. At this time when so many people and their children are suffering with foreclosures and joblessness, we are pursuing an illegitimate, illegal, devastatingly expensive military operation, to say nothing of the 800 to 1,000 military bases around the world. Future generations are going to look back and say, "What was happening? Were all the people asleep?"

Ellen Augustine, M.A., is codirector of notmypriorities.org. She is a speaker and author on creating a just, peaceful, and sustainable world. She was the Democratic candidate for U.S. Congress in 1994 (as Ellen Schwartz).

We look into our heart minds to see what's going on, not to run away from it. To rise above the denial and torpor that is seizing the media and so many of our brother/sister citizens. We are alive at a time when this country, which prides itself on being the last remaining superpower, is spending as much on its defense as all the other countries in the world combined. We should be up in arms about that, or de-arming them, in any case. But we're waking up. I am so pleased the Not My Priorities project is doing something so creative.

The Not My Priorities campaign centers around a budget pie chart postcard that has three spaces on the back for people to write *their* alternatives. Postcards are pre-addressed to the president, representatives, and senators. More than 100,000 are in circulation across the nation. Macy said:

What is heaviest on my heart in this, are the absolutely terrifying, sickening increases in nuclear weaponry that are put into this budget. There is more being assigned for development of nuclear weapons now than at any time since or even during the Cold War. So I feel very enthusiastic, relieved, and excited about the Not My Priorities postcards, which help us see this so clearly. A picture is worth a thousand words. And they're going to let us wake up our brother/sister beings to bring them into a sense of activism and agency that our citizenry needs, needs it like oxygen to come awake to who we are and to our responsibility.

The postcard is a graphic means. The tiny little slivers of the pie for environment, education, and community development are a source of shame for me, a source of revulsion. Now in Buddhist teachings, that sense of revulsion is very encouraging. It shows that you see something that relates to you and you want to do something about it. So revulsion is positive. You're ready for a new path, perhaps for The Great Turning. The Great Turning is away from the industrial growth society, the military-industrial complex fattening on war. The red portion on the postcard represents folly in terms of the weapons it's producing through contractors getting hundreds of millions of dollars even as they are being investigated for fraud like Halliburton or Blackwater. I predict this wonderful concept of the Not My Priorities postcards is going to appear everywhere so it can lead people to The Great Turning and to a sensible, life-sustaining future.

Decreasing the military budget would be a boon to our economy. A recent study by Robert Pollin and Heidi Garrett-Peltier at the University of Massachusetts Amherst found that spending the same billion dollars on education, health care, energy retrofits, or mass transit creates between 30 percent and 100 percent more jobs than the military, most of which pay a living wage.

What can you do? Not My Priorities campaign codirector Barry Hermanson suggests: "Start by sending the postcard in this issue of *Tikkun* to your representative. Then take this on as a project—personally. Carry postcards with you when you meet friends for lunch, to walk, or when you go to your church, synagogue, or mosque. Mail cards to your family and friends in other states. Encourage whatever group you are involved in to adopt this as a project—it's a perfect adjunct to whatever else they are doing."

For a free set of four postcards (one for President Obama, one for your representative, and two for your senators) go to www.notmypriorities.org or contact Barry Hermanson (barry@notmypriorities.org or 415-664-7754) or Ellen Augustine (ellen@notmypriorities.org or 510-428-1832).

It's in your hands. ■

U.S. BUDGET PRIORITIES



NotMyPriorities.org

(This chart is the 2009 U.S. Discretionary Budget. It does not include funds for the bailout or the economic stimulus package. www.NotMyPriorities.org for source data)

Do the priorities of the current U.S. budget seem right to you? Look between pages 16 and 17 for a physical copy of this postcard to mail to the White House. There is room on the back to offer your opinion on the budget.

PROMOTE THE ESRA

Get corporate power out of politics! Gather signatures for the Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (spiritualprogressives.org/ESRA). Contact: natalie@tikkun.org

JFK, Obama, and the Unspeakable

by James W. Douglass

OUR GREAT PROPHECIES ARE CONTINGENCIES. THE WAY OUR GREATEST U.S. prophet, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., put our common future in the nuclear age was: “The choice today is no longer between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence.”

King’s prophecy applies to all of humankind as we decide whether to exterminate ourselves. His prophetic contingency, our turning collectively toward nonviolence or nonexistence, applies especially to the citizens of the planet’s most powerful country, the United States of America, and particularly to the citizen we elect to preside over our government: the president.

John F. Kennedy was in the same dire position every U.S. president has been in since World War II. As president, Kennedy was under the control of what his predecessor, Dwight D. Eisenhower, identified in his Farewell Address as the military-industrial complex. “[Its] total influence—economic, political, even spiritual,” Eisenhower said, “is felt in every city, every state house, every office of the federal government.”

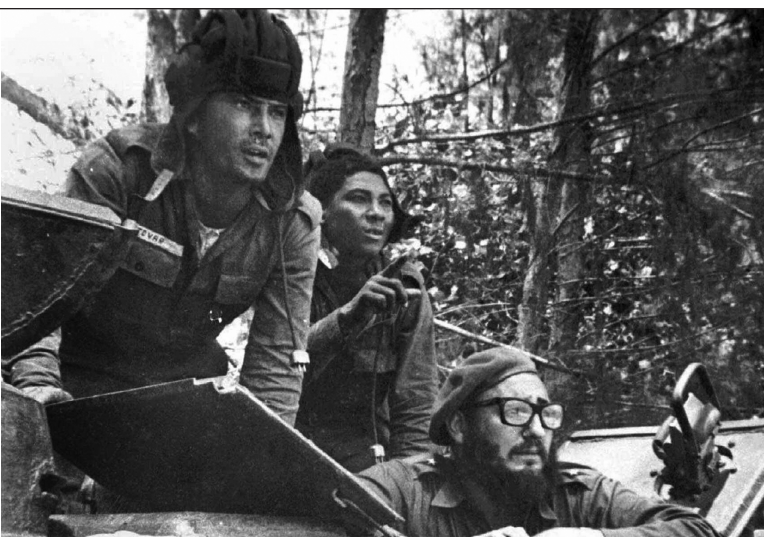
The military-industrial complex, more powerful today than ever, imprisons the president. A U.S. president is always accompanied by a military attaché bearing a nuclear code that can incinerate the earth. That gun to the world is a gun to the president. When he accepts the power to kill everyone, the president becomes a prisoner morally and politically to the demands of our national security state. Whether his name is Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, or Barack Obama, once he accepts nuclear power over the world, his permissible movement as president is confined to a very tight space—tighter than we as citizens might imagine.

How Kennedy Rebelled Against the Pentagon and CIA

PRESIDENT KENNEDY REBELLED AGAINST THE “ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, EVEN SPIRITUAL” influence that President Eisenhower described. During JFK’s two years and ten months in power, while that power pressured him relentlessly, he compromised with it to survive a few months but in the end stood his ground and took the bullets. In fact both he and his enemies saw the writing on the wall as early as the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, in the first spring of his short presidency.

The CIA lied to Kennedy about the political and geographic conditions that premised his approval of the agency’s Cuban exile brigade landing at the Bay of Pigs. He realized afterward he had been set up—he had to either send U.S. combat troops into Cuba to supersede the CIA’s futile exile brigade (as he said in advance he would never do) or accept a huge defeat. After the revealing CIA documents were declassified, the way National Public Radio commentator Daniel Schorr put it was: “In effect, President Kennedy was the target of a CIA covert operation that collapsed when the invasion collapsed.” JFK swallowed defeat instead

James W. Douglass is a Catholic Worker and the author of JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters (being published as a Simon & Schuster Touchstone paperback this fall).



of committing U.S. troops; in recognition of the CIA's trap, he said he wanted "to splinter the CIA in a thousand pieces and scatter it to the winds."

The Bay of Pigs enabled Kennedy to see the cloaked demands of the CIA and the Pentagon as a usurpation of his power as president. He began to break free from his military and intelligence commanders. Prisoners get shot for doing that. JFK's decision to fire CIA Director Allen Dulles and his deputies in the wake of the Bay of Pigs was his first step toward freedom, meaning also death. He was asserting a presidential control that Eisenhower never did over Allen Dulles and his brother, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. The Dulles brothers were career Wall Street lawyers who dominated Eisenhower and served the military-industrial interests that he warned against. It was a warning Ike gave only when it was too late for him to shake those interests off. He left that chore to the next president.

When JFK bowled over kingpin Allen Dulles (who would return to power as the most influential member of the "Warren" Commission), the upstart president was acting as if he—not his military and intelligence commanders—were in charge. Kennedy was shocked by the CIA's scheming against him at the Bay of Pigs, and the CIA was shocked by Kennedy's removal of Dulles. Who did he think he was?

How Kennedy Took On the Steel Industry

THE STEEL CRISIS WAS JFK'S SECOND STEP TOWARD FREEDOM.

On April 10, 1962, U.S. Steel chairman Roger Blough informed President Kennedy that Blough's company was raising steel prices by 3.5 percent—breaking an agreement to control inflation that the president had just brokered between U.S. Steel and the United Steelworkers. U.S. Steel was joined publicly in the price hike by five other companies already in collusion with it. JFK was furious at being double-crossed. He said to his staff, in a sentence Wall Street would not forget: "My father always told me that all businessmen were sons of bitches, but I never believed it until now."

President Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy launched an all-out domestic war to force the heads of the six colluding companies to cancel their price increase. The Justice Department raided Big Steel's corporate offices. Robert Kennedy subpoenaed the steel executives' personal and company records. The Kennedys were going for broke. Most ominously for Big Steel, the president ordered the Defense Department to market its steel business overseas, so as to take huge profits out of the hands of U.S. Steel and its cohorts, at the heart of the military-industrial complex. Faced by the fact that the Kennedys meant business—their business—the steel heads surrendered quickly, rescinding their price raise.

However, they accomplished a more sinister purpose. A *Fortune* magazine editorial stated with an insider's knowledge that U.S. Steel's decision to raise prices, made by a board of directors composed of the financial elite of the country, was designed to present the president with a dilemma: either accept the price hike and lose credibility or push back and unite the business world against him, as he did. *Fortune* publisher Henry Luce, the most powerful media magnate in the world, was behind the editorial. Drawing on Shakespeare's prediction

The author argues that Kennedy's assertion of control over the CIA after the Bay of Pigs fiasco was a major cause of his assassination.

Above left: Cuban leader Fidel Castro, with glasses, sits inside a tank near Playa Giron, Cuba, during the Bay of Pigs invasion on April 17, 1961. About 1,500 Cuban exiles, supported by the CIA, landed in Cuba on that day with the goal of sparking a popular uprising against the government. Most were quickly captured or killed by the Cuban armed forces. The CIA had lied to Kennedy in order to get his approval for the invasion.

Above right: Kennedy's funeral on November 25, 1963. He was assassinated, the author argues, by the national security state.



Kennedy fired CIA director Allen Dulles (seen here the summer before Kennedy was elected president) when the CIA schemed against him at the Bay of Pigs. But when Obama faced his own “Bay of Pigs moment,” he fired General McChrystal, only to promote McChrystal’s more powerful mentor, General Petraeus (above, behind Obama).

So Kennedy asserted executive power against the “military-industrial complex” and, the author argues, paid the ultimate price, while Obama has been more circumspect.

by the soothsayer of Julius Caesar’s assassination, “Beware the ides of March,” the Luce editorial’s title warned Kennedy of the fate he was tempting by his stand against imperial power: “Steel: The Ides of April.”

The powers that be had to be more than a little angry to be threatening the president so boldly. An American parable was in the making. As Kennedy turned heretically toward peace after the Cuban Missile Crisis, the parable of the president and the powers would be played out until it climaxed a year later on a sunny street in Dallas. Then it would be up to us to open our ears and hear.

Dorothy Day’s Take on Kennedy’s Character

I AM A CATHOLIC WORKER. I AM DEEPLY SKEPTICAL OF THE POWER OF KINGS AND presidents—all of them. But what I also learned from Dorothy Day, mother of the Catholic Worker movement, was a belief in the goodness of every human being. Dorothy had that belief in John Kennedy. She told me pointedly, after JFK’s death, to study his life.

I didn’t know that she and Kennedy had met. Young Jack Kennedy and his older brother Joe, who would die in World War II, visited the Mott Street Catholic Worker in Manhattan one day in the summer of 1940. Catholic Worker Stanley Vishnewski recalled the incident in an interview with Bill Moyers:

I remember distinctly how bewildered [John Kennedy] was by the sight of the poverty and the misery of the place. And then Dorothy came in. She talked to him. Then Dorothy says, “Come and have supper with us.” And Kennedy looked at her, a little startled, and says, “No, come out and have dinner with us instead.” So Dorothy, and Joe and John Kennedy ... we went out to a little restaurant around the corner. We had a wonderful conversation.

They talked long into the night “of war and peace and of man and the state,” as Dorothy wrote in her book, *Loaves and Fishes*.

Even when Dorothy Day was marching and speaking out decades later against JFK’s Cold War policies, something about him struck the chord of her belief in human goodness. So she said after he was killed: “Pay attention. Learn more about his life.” It took me over thirty years to follow her recommendation. Yes, we can learn more from his life ... and his death.

Kennedy and Khrushchev Ally Against Their Own Militaries

IN THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS, PRESIDENT KENNEDY HAD TO CONFRONT THE unspeakable in the form of total nuclear war. At the height of the terrifying conflict that his own anti-Castro policies had helped precipitate, he felt the situation spiraling out of control, especially because of pressures and provocations by the Pentagon led by General Curtis LeMay. At a moment when the world was falling into darkness, Kennedy did what his generals thought was unforgivable: he not only rejected their pressures for attacking Cuba and the Soviet Union, but even worse, the president also reached out to the enemy for help. That could be considered treason.

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev saw it as hope. Robert Kennedy had met secretly with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin in Washington, warning that the president was losing control to his generals and needed the Soviets’ help. When Khrushchev received Kennedy’s plea for help in Moscow, he turned to his foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko, and said, “We have to let Kennedy know that we want to help him.”

Khrushchev hesitated when he heard himself say “help.” Just when the U.S. president seemed to be at his wit’s end, did he, Khrushchev, really want to help his enemy? Yes, he did. He repeated the word “help” to his foreign minister: “Yes, help. We now have a common cause, to save the world from those pushing us toward war.”

How can we understand that moment? The two most heavily armed leaders in history, on the verge of total nuclear war, suddenly joined hands against those on both

sides pressuring them to attack. Khrushchev ordered the immediate withdrawal of his missiles, in return for Kennedy's public pledge never to invade Cuba and his secret promise to withdraw U.S. missiles from Turkey—as he would in fact do. The two Cold War enemies had turned, so that each now had more in common with his opponent than either had with his own generals.

Neither John Kennedy nor Nikita Khrushchev was a saint. Each was deeply complicit in policies that brought humankind to the brink of nuclear war. Yet, when they encountered the void, they turned to each other for help. In doing so, they turned humanity toward the hope of a peaceful planet.

Kennedy kept walking in that direction, as did Khrushchev.

JFK gave his greatest speech on June 10, 1963, at American University. In it he envisioned an end to the Cold War, saying he was stopping atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons and “we will not be the first to resume.” He said he wanted to negotiate a test ban treaty with the Soviets as soon as possible in Moscow (a less hostile context for negotiations with the enemy than the president's own Washington). His long-range goal, he said, was “general and complete disarmament—designed to take place by stages, permitting parallel political developments to build the new institutions of peace which would take the place of arms.”

Khrushchev responded in the same spirit. In an astonishing six weeks, the two leaders agreed to the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Kennedy said, however, that getting Senate ratification would be “almost in the nature of a miracle.” The president convened peace activists, business leaders, women's magazine editors, union activists, scientists, and religious leaders in a White House council to organize massive citizen support for the treaty. Their grassroots campaign turned public opinion around. The Senate passed the Test Ban Treaty by a large majority in September 1963.

A President Assassinated by the National Security State

ALSO IN SEPTEMBER, JFK INITIATED A SECRET DIALOGUE WITH FIDEL CASTRO, THROUGH U.S./UN diplomat William Attwood, to normalize U.S.-Cuban relations. Kennedy's first back-channel representative in that dialogue, French reporter Jean Daniel, was actually meeting with Castro on the afternoon of November 22, 1963, when they heard the news that, as Castro said, “changed everything.” The U.S.-Cuban dialogue died in Dallas.

On October 11, 1963, JFK had signed National Security Action Memorandum 263. It ordered a U.S. troop withdrawal from Vietnam—bringing home “1,000 U.S. military personnel by the end of 1963” and “by the end of 1965 ... the bulk of U.S. personnel,” an order that President Johnson quietly voided. The Vietnam War was reignited in Dallas.

President Kennedy's courageous turn from global war to a strategy of peace provides the why of his assassination. Because he turned toward peace with our enemies, the Communists, he found himself at odds with his own national security state. Peacemaking had risen to the top of his agenda as president. That was not the kind of leadership the CIA, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the military-industrial complex wanted in the White House. Given the Cold War dogmas that gripped those dominant powers, and given Kennedy's turn toward peace, his assassination followed as a matter of course. Given what we know now, there can be little doubt it was an act of state.

In His Own Bay of Pigs Moment, Obama Backed Down

JUST AS JOHN KENNEDY DID, BARACK OBAMA HAD A BAY OF PIGS EARLY IN HIS PRESIDENCY. He became the target of a covert operation that trapped and compromised him as president. In Obama's case, the challenge to his authority as commander-in-chief came not from the CIA but from the Army, and not in Cuba but in Afghanistan. As in Kennedy's case, Obama's response to the entrapment established the pattern of his presidency, (*continued on page 70*)



Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev meets with Kennedy in June 1961. The author writes that they conspired with each other against hotheads in their own militaries to avoid nuclear war during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

Prophetic Contingency: Why Jim Douglass's JFK Book Matters

by Ched Myers

Hope comes from walking through the darkness of our history.

—James W. Douglass



*The official White House
portrait of John F. Kennedy
by Aaron Shikler.*

THIS NOVEMBER MARKS THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF JOHN F. KENNEDY'S election. The best way to honor his legacy is to muster the courage to walk again through the "dark history" associated with his short but consequential presidency, in order to learn its lessons and discover its hope. Jim Douglass's *JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why it Matters*, which Touchstone is reissuing this month as a trade paperback, is a reliable guide for that demanding task.

Admittedly, walking back through this history is no small thing to ask of those who are too young to recall that contested chapter of the American story, or those who lived through it but cannot bear the burden of making sense of it. Mired in either "conspiracy fatigue" or cynicism, we as a people have yet to fully face the fact that in November 1963 the National Security State assassinated a sitting president who was challenging its hegemony. Yet the many poignant parallels between the upstart presidency of Obama and that of JFK (see Douglass's piece in this issue) urge us to reckon anew with "the Unspeakable."

The Unspeakable was an eschatological metaphor (in the Berdyaevian sense) coined by the great Trappist monk Thomas Merton in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis. In his 1966 book *Raids on the Unspeakable*, Merton described it as "the void that gets into the language of public and official declarations ... and makes them ring dead with the hollowness of the abyss. It is the void out of which Eichmann drew the punctilious exactitude of his obedience."

That void indeed characterizes contemporary history, from Truman's insistence that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were "necessary to save American lives" to George W. Bush's glib pronouncement of "Mission Accomplished" in Iraq. The steady, numbing diet of lies and spin from political and corporate elites, compounded by spectacularized infotainment, wears relentlessly on our personal equilibrium and political imagination. But that only underscores the importance of Merton's search for a *spiritual* hope that "begins where every other hope stands frozen stiff in the face of the Unspeakable." It is this quest that Douglass has taken up and invites us into.

Douglass is no conspiracy geek. Part of the Catholic theological renaissance that emerged from Vatican II, his incisive interpretations of both politics and religion through the lens of Gandhian *satyagraha* have for more than forty years inspired and resourced many faith-based peace activists, myself included. His critique of the totalitarian logic of nuclear militarism led Douglass to leave a promising academic and ecclesial career to cofound the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action (www.gzcenter.org) right next to the Trident submarine base in Bangor, Washington.

In the 1990s I admired Douglass's peacemaking efforts in the Balkans but was frankly puzzled (like many in the movement) at his growing preoccupation with researching and writing

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about the assassinations of Jack and Bobby, Martin and Malcolm. But when I read *JFK and the Unspeakable* (originally published by Orbis Books in 2008), the first fruits of a decade of labor, I began to fathom the profound depths this mentor is probing on our behalf.

Last year my wife and I visited Jim and Shelley at the Catholic Worker center in Birmingham, Alabama. We toured the ramshackle little house where Jim researches and writes, located beside railroad tracks where, in a previous nonviolent campaign, they tracked the nuclear “White Train.” Sitting at one of the many desks overflowing with books and papers, Jim patiently yet passionately explained (yet again) why JFK’s life and death matter.

The book argues that Merton’s *Unspeakable* is pre-eminently incarnated in the CIA’s doctrine of “plausible deniability,” which lies behind half a century of covert operations (not least JFK’s murder), and which remains a lethal threat to our democracy. Douglass’s greatest contribution to the formidable corpus of JFK literature is his persuasive account of how the president, shaken by the apocalyptic implications of the Cuban Missile Crisis, slowly abandoned his Cold War worldview. Because he subsequently dared to try to end the de facto rule of bipolar politics, endgame militarism, and the National Security establishment, this “peacemaking president could not survive the warmaking State.”

It is, insists Douglass, “a story that encircles the earth ... whose telling can transform a nation.” *If*, that is, it animates us to embrace the work of nonviolent revolution that alone can secure a future. I commend this book to *Tikkun*’s readership. It could not matter more. ■

Obama: The Fear of Assassination and What You Can Do About It

by John Perkins

Change has come to America.

—President Obama, November 2008

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA HAS OCCUPIED THE OVAL OFFICE FOR MORE THAN one and a half years. The passing of the baton from a conservative Republican to a liberal Democrat raised high hopes among people longing for change, people who dreamt of an America that walks its talk of “government of, for, and by the people,” deals compassionately with the world’s downtrodden, and offers a model for a sustainable and just society. As those hopes meet the reality of an escalated war in Afghanistan, oil spills, corporate bailouts, CEO pay raises at corporations with the highest layoff rates, a depressed and declining middle class, and the drama of the last election, many are left wondering what happened to the promise made during that campaign.

Why has President Obama let us down? How come he lied to us? Why has he not kept his campaign promises? These are questions I frequently hear from people who attend my speeches and book signings. There are several geopolitical facts that help formulate the answer:

1. Nations have become almost irrelevant, and the U.S. presidency has been severely weakened. It’s naive to think that a new president is in a position to reverse the trend of

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the last decades of profit-making from war and to escape the stranglehold corporate lobbyists hold on our body politic.

2. The form of capitalism espoused by Milton Friedman and embraced by President Ronald Reagan and every president since—what I call “predatory capitalism”—is based on the single goal that the only responsibility of business is to maximize profits, regardless of the social and environmental costs. Replacing the more compassionate economic theories promoted by John Maynard Keynes, it has now become the global model.
3. We have entered a time of realignment not unlike that when city-states joined together to form nations. Except this time it is global. The emerging rulers are corporate CEOs, members of the corporatocracy.
4. Democrats and Republicans alike, as well as the mainstream media, fall under the thumb of the corporatocracy.
5. Then there is another fact—one none of us likes to contemplate, but that is a major factor in contemporary U.S. politics: President Obama fears assassination.

Historical Perspective

LIKE HUGE CLOUDS SWIRLING AROUND THE GLOBE, MULTINATIONAL CONGLOMERATES reach every continent, country, and village. They are restricted neither by national borders nor by any particular sets of laws. Although many are headquartered in the United States and call upon the U.S. military to protect their interests, they feel no sense of loyalty to any one country. They form partnerships with China and Taiwan, with Israel and Arab nations, with Brazil, Indonesia, and Congo—with anyone who possesses resources or offers markets they covet. As we have seen with Halliburton, they think nothing of relocating to places like Dubai whenever that seems to serve their greed-driven interests.

The leaders of these corporations—members of the corporatocracy—have tentacles that stretch far and wide. They hire a vast army of lobbyists who influence every major politician in Washington and other capitals (more than 30,000 of them patrol the corridors of D.C. alone). They own the mainstream media—either outright or through their advertising budgets. Increasingly, they control the U.S. military, and their privatized armies are now replacing government soldiers in war zones such as Afghanistan.

Political Assassinations

AS JAMES DOUGLASS WRITES IN THIS ISSUE OF *TIKKUN*, PRESIDENT DWIGHT Eisenhower warned America about the “military-industrial complex” but left it to his successor, President John F. Kennedy to take it on, to his ultimate demise. The only modern president whose campaign was financed primarily by his family, Kennedy was not beholden to corporate money and was not afraid to confront big business. It is easy to understand why the corporatocracy wanted to get rid of him—and also to set him up as a warning for future presidents.

Robert Kennedy shared his brother’s passions and also an awareness of what had transpired behind the scenes at the White House. He was determined to follow in his brother’s footsteps. He too was assassinated.

Martin Luther King Jr. defied the FBI, the CIA, and the corporatocracy. He was assassinated.

Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon played it safe. They collaborated. And they survived, although doing so cost them both the confidence of the American voter—and therefore the presidency.

Jimmy Carter was handpicked by the corporatocracy. Knowing that President Gerald Ford would not be elected in his own right and that a Democrat would win the White House, a Democrat was selected who would not pose a threat and probably only last a single term. Carter complied on both counts.

President Reagan, President George H. W. Bush, and President George W. Bush were all three card-carrying members of the corporatocracy. They not only collaborated, they also did everything in their powers to strengthen the military, intelligence, and business communities. Combined, the two Bushes initiated two wars in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, invaded Panama, and expanded U.S. business-fed military operations around the globe.

President Clinton was severely beaten down during his first term when he tried to reform health care and the educational system. After that, he complied with corporatocracy wishes (most notably when the Telecommunications Act was passed and Glass-Steagall was rescinded). However, as Clinton's term drew to a close, it appeared that he might go rogue, that as a private citizen he might turn against some of the policies his administration had supported. Times had changed since the days when JFK could openly flaunt his love affairs with Marilyn Monroe and other celebrities and the only way to take him out was with a bullet. By the close of the twentieth century, a new sense of morality pervaded, and Clinton's assassin came in the form of impeachment over the Monica Lewinsky nonsense. Character assassination had become a viable alternative to murder.

No Surprise

SO, I HAVE TO SAY I WAS NOT SURPRISED THAT WHEN WE VOTED FOR CHANGE IN THE last presidential election, when we took the White House out of the hands of a conservative Republican and handed it over to a liberal Democrat, not a whole lot changed—at least not in the big picture of global power. Today, Gitmo still holds political prisoners, Wall Street executives make out like the bandits they are, and mercenary killers like Blackwater founder Eric Prince escape prosecution by legally fleeing to places like Dubai. Meanwhile, whistleblowers such as Wikileaks founder Julian Assange are threatened with prosecution, even as the perpetrators of the crimes disclosed are praised.

Perhaps no one should be surprised when a nation that obsesses over reality shows that have nothing to do with reality finds itself with a president who appears on *The View* but will not answer direct questions about when the troops will be brought home or how he will reduce the influence of the corporatocracy in Washington.

So what is the real *change* since Obama's election? The biggest change is that we the people have cast off our blinders. We have lost our innocence, and our questions about why Obama hasn't kept his promises have swirled around the 2010 elections.

I am so relieved every time a caller on a radio show or a member of one of the audiences where I am speaking raises questions about Obama. Why? Because I get to elaborate on the good news.

The Good News

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY THIS NEW GLOBAL SYSTEM—WHICH AMOUNTS TO A UNIQUE and clandestine form of empire—has been created not by military force, but through the sale of goods and services. The marketplace is democratic, once we decide to see it as such. It is the ultimate polling booth. Corporations exist only because we vote for them in their stores, at the malls, and over the Internet, or through our tax dollars.

It is up to us to decide which companies will succeed and which ones will fail.



The assassinations of Jack and Bobby Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Malcolm X had incalculable effects.

They were great leaders (opposite page: MLK and RFK). But oftentimes the followers also have to lead, as the Left did in the 1930s, pushing President Roosevelt toward the compromise he called the New Deal. Here the One Nation March on Washington, undertaken by a variety of progressive organizations on October 2, 2010, attempts to do the same for President Obama.

They can kill our leaders, but they can't kill us all.

Politicians will not change the world. They are beholden to big corporations that finance their campaigns and give them jobs when they leave office. And, if that is not enough, they fear assassination.

We the people hold the power.

We can now connect with one another at the speed of a click, a mobile text, or a tweet. We can mobilize through technology that puts us closer to one another than we've ever been before. We can use all these new media tools not for profit-making but for our very real and attainable goal of attaining justice for all.

We must stop believing that electoral politics is the only outlet for our vigilance and activism. We have only to look at our elected leaders to see how they disappoint us by not passing the health care legislation we truly need, by not protecting the environment, and by bailing out the rich while taxing the poor.

About 150 years ago, we as a nation voted for Abraham Lincoln, and then we fought the Civil War to get rid of slavery. Later our women picketed Woodrow Wilson over women's suffrage everywhere he went; they would not allow him to send troops into WWI to defend democracy in Europe until women participated in democracy in the United States. We held teach-ins for Richard Nixon to educate him and the country on the travesty that had become the Vietnam War. We won those struggles, because we the people forced our leaders to change. In recent decades, we forced corporations to stop supporting apartheid in South Africa, as well as to clean up polluted rivers, do away with ozone layer destroying aerosols, open their doors wider to minorities, and remove trans fats and antibiotics from our foods.

Today, we the people are called upon to speak again. The corporatocracy is driven by a single goal—to maximize profits, regardless of the social and environmental costs. We must convince it to change that goal. It is essential that we each walk our talk, that we commit to buying only from companies that are socially and environmentally responsible—and to sending emails to the ones we patronize and the ones we don't, explaining our actions. At the same time, we need to send a clear message that we expect our leaders to lead us out of a fear-based, war-machined economy into one that produces things that enhance life: sustainable energy; equipment that cleans up polluted soil, air, and water around the globe; methods whereby hungry people can grow, store, and distribute organic, local foods; and social systems with health and educational systems that create a world our children will want to inherit.

When we impact bottom lines, we change stock prices and attract the attention of boards of directors. Those boards influence the decisions made in the halls of legislatures.

Some people believe that electing a third-party candidate would provide a solution. The real problem, they feel, has to do with the similarities between the Democrats and Republicans and the fact that they are both so closely linked to the corporatocracy. I agree that a strong third party would benefit our nation, but it is naive to think that a president from such a party would not be subject to the pressures Obama faces, including the fear of assassination. Once in the Oval Office—if not before—he or she would be read the Riot Act.

It is both unfair and unrealistic to look to any president, including the current one, to change the world. We are the ones who will have to do it. I lay out a detailed plan of action on what we can do in my latest book, *Hoodwinked*. We must force those in control to adopt a new goal for the people of our planet: creating a sustainable, just, and peaceful world for all who live on this special space station we call home.

Perhaps President Obama's greatest gift to us will be that he taught us a lesson in democracy. He is vulnerable but we are not. We the people must take charge and be the change. We cannot expect a president to change the world. It is up to each of us to do that. ■

Oscar Grant or LeBron James?

The Systemic Devaluation of Black Life in America

by Josh Healey

BACK IN JULY, A LOS ANGELES JURY announced its verdict in the case of Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) police officer Johannes Mehserle. The officer, who is white, shot and killed Oscar Grant, an unarmed black man, on January 1, 2009. The incident, which was captured on film and viewed online by millions of people, has become the rallying cry of a resurgent national movement against police violence and racial profiling.

I live here in Oakland, only one train station away from where Grant was shot. Oakland is a city of beautiful people often put in ugly situations. In a city with serious racial/class divisions, as well as a great legacy of community resistance since even before the Black Panthers, Grant's killing was a lightning bolt in an area used to its share of storms. In the days following the incident, I participated in large, passionate demonstrations, some of which included property damage by small groups of protestors. At the rallies, and on posters plastered on walls across the Bay Area, we raised our voices for the man who had no breath left: "I am Oscar Grant!"

Feeling the pressure, the Alameda County District Attorney charged Officer Mehserle with murder; Mehserle was the first cop hit with such a charge in California history. The trial took over a year to get started and was moved to Los Angeles, but hopes for justice remained high. Police violence is notoriously common in Oakland, and community activists hoped that a strong conviction would be a signal to cops across the country that enough is enough. Instead, we got another reminder of who has power in America—and who does not.

On July 8, 2010, the jury, which deliberated for only three days and included no African Americans, found Mehserle guilty of involuntary manslaughter—the weakest of the three charges brought against him. His sentence could be anywhere from a maximum of fourteen years to as little as probation and time served. In other words, Mehserle might spend less time in jail for shooting Oscar Grant than Michael Vick did for dogfighting.

When I heard the verdict, I couldn't believe it. Involuntary manslaughter? That is what people get for unintentionally killing someone in a car accident, not for shooting a man while he is lying face down and restrained by the weight of two huge cops. Instead of the celebration of long-overdue justice we had been hoping for, I joined my neighbors and strangers in the streets for one of the most tear-filled, painful protests I've ever attended.

The next morning, I turned on the television, expecting to hear about the verdict and our response in the streets that the police were calling a "riot." But before I could find any



This "Demand Justice For Oscar Grant Mural" in Oakland, California, was painted by the Trust Your Struggle artist collective.

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On Yom Kippur Josh Healey was invited to speak about Oscar Grant and the ongoing movement for justice at Rabbi Lerner's Beyt Tikkun synagogue. He writes, "I honestly struggled with this piece for weeks—what could I say that hasn't already been said? And what perspective could I offer on the day of atonement?" You can read "Let It Not Be In Vain," the poem he recited that day, at tikkun.org/healeygrantpoem.

mention of Oscar Grant, I was bombarded with endless coverage involving the decision of another young black man: LeBron James. I had spent all night trying to find details about my friend wrongly arrested at the protest, so I hadn't heard what was apparently the most important news of the year—LeBron James announced that he was going to leave his hometown Cleveland Cavaliers to join his all-star buddies of the Miami Heat.

This was the media's top story? I'm a huge sports fan and believer in team loyalty, but even worse than LeBron's decision to abandon his faithful Rustbelt fans was the hype and hysteria surrounding it. Months of "Will he? Won't he?" rumors dominated the media, and then to make the announcement itself, LeBron created a one-hour ESPN special, humbly called "The Decision." Whether LeBron's ego is really that big on its own, or a creation of the corporate media, the real question is: what does his spotlight say about *us*?

LeBron James and Oscar Grant never crossed paths. Why would they? LeBron is the most talented athlete in the country, while Oscar was a butcher at a grocery store in Oakland—my local grocery, in fact. Yet on the same day that millions of people watched LeBron announce he was going to Miami, twelve jurors in Oscar's case decided that, unless he can put a ball through a hoop, a black man's life is worth little in America. Two decisions—both resulting from five hundred years of white supremacy.

Here in the twenty-first century, our country invests billions of dollars in two industries that highlight the contradictions of racism. On the one hand is the world of professional sports, which projects a 24/7 image of incredibly wealthy, mostly black athletes. On the other hand, we have a prison-industrial complex and its associate police agencies that violently target and imprison more than two million people per year, again most of them black and Latino. There are only a few LeBron Jameses in the United States who make it to play in the NBA. But there are thousands of Oscar Grants, gunned down by cops not just in Oakland, but also in Detroit (Aiyana Jones), New Orleans (Adolph Grimes), and increasingly along the U.S.-Mexico border (Sergio Huereka). Why do we not know and revere those names like we do Kobe, Dwayne, and Dwight?

On a daily level, I am not Oscar Grant. I am white and Jewish, just a little bit older than Oscar would be now. The only time I have ever been pulled over by the cops was in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. My friend in the passenger seat said it was probably due to my huge Jewfro and license plate from the Chocolate City, because when the officer came up and saw my face, he looked surprised and quickly let us go. White skin is the best get-out-of-jail card you can have in America.

I understand the privilege I have in this city, in this country, but I know that hasn't always been the case. At the turn of the last century, an entire generation of Jewish immigrants was met with suspicion and sometimes violence across the country, including my own family here in Oakland and Berkeley. While American Jews were eventually invited inside the white picket fence of assimilated America, that opportunity was never afforded most black people. In the struggle for racial justice, I strive to participate as a committed ally. So despite our differences, I remember that I, too, am Oscar Grant.

This November, while most the country will be consumed by the midterm elections that some are calling a referendum on our first black president, I will be watching how the two decisions of July 8 play out. The NBA season kicks off early in the month, giving us a chance to see if LeBron's move to Miami will earn him that championship he's hoping for. Meanwhile, over in Los Angeles, the judge is scheduled to announce Officer Mehserle's prison sentence on November 5.

The prison-industrial system is far from a healthy model of restorative justice and community healing, but a strong jail sentence in the case would be a symbolic victory for police accountability and racial justice. Because of the jury's lesser verdict, Mehserle won't receive the life sentence that many activists were initially hoping for—but there is a big difference between fourteen years and getting off on probation. That difference is the space between honoring a man's life and disrespecting his death, between an all-star athlete and a butcher, between our country's claims of equality and justice and the reality of black life in America. Regardless of the judge's decision, it is our job to close that gap once and for all. ■

Iranophobia: The Panic of the Hegemons

by Ira Chernus

Iranophobia (noun): an excessive, irrational fear of Iran, almost always expressed as fear of a nuclear-armed Iran.

ISRAEL'S IRANOPHOBIA MAY IN PART BE TRACED BACK TO DOMESTIC TENSIONS between secular Ashkenazi (European-rooted) and the Orthodox and Mizrahi (Middle Eastern and North African-rooted) communities, according to Haggai Ram, an Israeli expert on Iran. As the Ashkenazim have gradually lost their power and privilege, he argues, they've been stricken with a "moral panic" and have looked for a scapegoat to blame.

Back in 1979, elite Ashkenazi voices condemned the Iranian revolution for the same reasons they condemned and feared the Orthodox and Mizrahim: for promoting traditional religious and cultural values that the Ashkenazim saw as barriers to the advance of Western modernity. They saw in Iran's present a vision of Israel's future. They still do; hence their fear.

That may well be part of the story. But there must be more to it, because Iranophobia is just as intense, perhaps even more intense, among the Mizrahim and the Orthodox as among the Ashkenazim.

We face the same paradox in the United States, where Iranophobia is also rampant. Polls show between 56 percent and 66 percent of the public supporting military action to prevent Iran from having a nuclear weapon. In some liberal circles, the attack on Iranian theocracy echoes fears of America's own religious Right, which may well heighten Iranophobia. But in the United States as in Israel, much of the hawkish fearmongering comes from the Right, including the religious Right. How can the moral panic theory explain that? Moreover, the same kinds of fears now directed toward theocratic Iran were aimed, just a few years ago, at the secular government of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

So the problem goes beyond moral panic. For U.S. elites, the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran symbolizes the more frightening prospect of Iran challenging U.S. hegemony in the greater Middle East. Questions of moral panic pale in comparison to competition for power and oil. In Israel, too, the warnings about an Iranian bomb sound like fears of losing Israel's nuclear hegemony in the region.

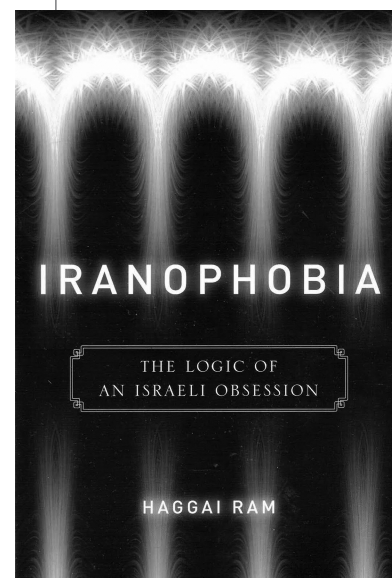
Nevertheless, the kind of discourse analysis that Ram offers is very useful. In politics, language always matters. Control of discourse is a central element in any kind of power. And the elites are not merely cynical manipulators of public opinion. They and the masses are tied together by a common bond of political discourse, as George Lakoff has taught us.

What cultural frame might explain the scope and intensity of America's Iranophobia? We can get some important clues from Israel, if we put that nation's Iranophobia in the broader context of assumptions shared across the Israeli cultural spectrum. Ram offers occasional glimpses of this broader context; for American readers this may be the most valuable contribution of his book.

The Need for a Threatening Enemy

RAM NOTES THAT IRANOPHOBIA FIRST APPEARED DURING THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI PEACE negotiations in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

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*Ira Chernus uses Haggai Ram's book *Iranophobia: The Logic Of An Israeli Obsession* (Stanford University Press, 2009) as a springboard to argue that exaggerated fear of Iran does not reflect "moral panic" so much as American and Israeli realpolitik fears of losing power in the Middle East.*



Ultra-Orthodox boys at a religious school in Jerusalem attend a special prayer calling for the death of Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, February 25, 2007. Yaakov Batsri, of the Sukat David School, said the prayer was linked to the upcoming Jewish holiday of Purim, when Jews overcame an ancient Persian tyrant, Haman, through prayer and fasting.

"To convince Israelis that peace could be made with the Arabs it was, at the same time, also 'necessary' to construct the image of threat from elsewhere," he writes. "Israel *needs* an existential threat."

The Iranian revolution, coming right on the heels of the Begin-Sadat agreement, gave Israel "a golden opportunity" to fulfill that need. In the years that followed, Iran's leaders offered plenty of words that could serve to substantiate Israel's culturally necessary image of foreign threat.

Another key element in Iranophobia is the assumption that Israel has done nothing to provoke such menacing language. In fact, according to Ram, "this rhetoric is part of a long-standing Iranian and Israeli exchange of threats and counterthreats." But that truth is largely ignored in Israeli public discourse. Instead, he writes, the Iranian threat is ascribed to an "unprovoked hatred that 'Islam' nurtures against Jews in general and the Jewish state in particular," which is why Ahmadinejad is so often linked to Hitler.

Iranophobia in the United States also has deep roots in a history of fears of Iran and other foreign nations, accompanied by a firm insistence on U.S. innocence. Unfounded Cold War fears of a communist takeover of Iran in 1953 prompted President Dwight Eisenhower to authorize a CIA-led coup that overthrew the elected government and installed the autocratic Shah as ruler. But all the elements of the Cold War frame were already prominent in the anti-fascist rhetoric of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, even before the United States entered World War II. In my own research, I've found numerous examples of Eisenhower and Roosevelt voicing the same fears in private as in public that the enemy, if not stopped by force, would destroy the United States—and civilization itself.

So the same kind of narrative frame that shapes Israeli Iranophobia has also shaped U.S. foreign policy for at least seven decades. Although these seven decades have been dubbed the era of the "national security state," it would be more accurate to call them the era of the "national insecurity state." And the insecurity that has haunted the general public has pervaded the private discourse of policymakers and elite leaders too.

The National Insecurity State

THE LANGUAGE OF THE "NATIONAL INSECURITY STATE"—A SHARED DISCOURSE BASED ON irrational fear of enemies and a conviction of one's own innocence—is an essential thread in the "special relationship" between Israel and the United States. The view that Israel, like the United States, is an innocent nation facing enemies who would destroy it is widely held by the U.S. public, which may go far to explain the surprising degree of public support for Israel's policies toward the Palestinians.

In the United States and in Israel, political and media elites stir up fear of Iran by emphasizing the theocratic, anti-modern bent of its rulers. That characterization of the Iranian leadership may well be accurate in many respects. Certainly the Iranian regime has kept itself in power by repressive measures repugnant to democracy, which should not be taken lightly.

But the Iranophobic response—the push for ever-tighter sanctions, the covert efforts to destabilize the government, and the constant drumbeat for military attack—is counterproductive. It only strengthens the hold of the current leadership and thereby undermines the forces working for secular democracy in Iran. So despite all the valid criticisms leveled at Iranian leaders, Iranophobia remains a dangerous, unconstructive, irrational attitude, and Americans still have a pressing need to understand its dynamics.

What's the Cure?

A FIRST STEP IS TO POINT OUT THE OBVIOUS: THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL MAINTAIN massive nuclear arsenals of their own, so it's irrational to think they would have anything to fear from a few Iranian bombs, which are currently (and may always be) only figments of imagination. But logic never cured a phobia.

Any real cure for Iranophobia must include a more equitable sharing of economic resources, both in the United States and around the world. If we did not have so many Americans struggling with or worrying about unemployment and all its attendant ills, fear of a nuclear-armed Iran would find a less fertile breeding ground in public opinion. And at the elite level, the American project of globalization—leading the world toward a single, integrated, democratic, capitalist system—has been shadowed since FDR’s day by a persistent fear of foreign enemies who might thwart that project. If U.S. policymakers were willing to undertake a global Marshall Plan and share the earth’s riches with other nations, they would have less reason to spread fear of Iran or any other nation.

Yet the urgency of the problem doesn’t allow us to wait until economic good times return or the aims of U.S. policy fundamentally change. We have to find steps that we can take to alleviate the dangers posed by Iranophobia now. Fortunately, a cultural malady differs from a medical malady in one important way: merely naming and describing the cultural malady as a disease can have significant curative effects. Once the widely proclaimed “Iranian threat” and the purported empirical evidence to “prove” it are recognized as narrative framing, they lose their power to be taken literally. Thus they become far more open to interrogation; it becomes much harder to take the “Iranian threat” for granted as a basis for foreign policy.

Such a change in perception is a slow and hugely difficult task, of course. For three decades, college students have been learning that the traditional hierarchies of race and gender should not be taken as literal fact but as culturally constructed frames. Yet we are still struggling with and against those hierarchical views. But there has been significant progress on those fronts, and it has been spurred by the new way that the old hierarchies are now perceived. Imagine the impact on foreign policy if it were widely seen as motivated by constructed frames rather than literal fact.

This is only one half of the change we need, however. As we’ve learned from the history of science, old paradigms are not abandoned simply because they do not fit the facts; they are abandoned when a better paradigm emerges. Similarly, old narrative frames are likely to persist in foreign affairs, regardless of their dangerously counterproductive results, until a new frame is widely available.

This is the greatest challenge to, and perhaps the greatest weakness of, the progressive peace movements in the United States. Those movements do an excellent job of using facts to debunk the existing frame. But because they, too, are focused on literal fact, they’ve not offered the public a persuasive alternative frame.

A New Frame: Not Hegemony, But a Web of Nations

ANY SUCCESSFUL AMERICAN NARRATIVE WILL HAVE TO INCLUDE A MEANINGFUL SENSE OF national pride (at least for the foreseeable future). But a true alternative will also have to depict the entire world as a web of mutually supportive nations, “woven together in a single garment of destiny,” as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. put it, rather than a competitive battlefield of good guys against bad guys. National pride will have to be measured by success in helping all peoples and all nations in need, serving them in the ways they want to be served, rather than by success in fending off supposed threats through intimidation and force.

Though the United States has been locked in the frame of “national insecurity” for some seven decades, we have a much longer history that provides many resources for this kind of alternative frame. The same is true of Israel and its Zionist heritage. In both nations, there is fertile ground for a new vision of patriotism as *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). It’s time to weave together the separate and often conflicting strands of *olam*, to see the whole world as a holy universe.

This is not a task that can wait for the backing of elite leaders or experts. Across the political spectrum, conservatives and progressives alike contribute to the pathology of language by taking it on a strictly literal level, overlooking the cultural forces that shape every interpretation of the facts. We all share responsibility for beginning to heal that pathology. The analysis of Iranophobia is a perfect place to start. Having a name for the syndrome and making some initial efforts toward an in-depth diagnosis are useful first steps in the healing process. ■

Rilke's America

I.

Tell us, poet, what you do—I praise

Only, instead, the grave rasp of Kohelet
praising *the dead, which are already dead*
more than the living, which are yet alive.
Yea, better he than both, who has not yet been,
nor seen the evil work done under the sun.

The living freeze in fear and turn away,
except the ones who make a vulture's living
perched on others' fear. I spit at both,
but the wind's caprice doubles the spittle back
to my own face. Which, also, has turned away.

2. Chicago 2/15/03

Why are there not a few, three, five, ten, who stand to cry out in
the public squares: enough! and who will at least have given
their lives that it should be enough, while those out there are
now succumbing only so that the frightful thing shall go on and
on and there shall be no taking account of destruction. (RMR
to Ellen Delp, 10/10/1915)

We stood together in the public square
and cried Enough! Of course, nobody shot us—
quite unnecessary. The frightful thing
would arrive on schedule. No one would keep tabs
on foreign bodies mutilated, dead,
or exiled. Nonetheless, in bitter cold,
we mustered for the march along Devon Street,
jamming a Seven-Eleven parking lot.

Across the street, a sparsely-furnished restaurant
full of bearded men. Assured that we,
outsiders, women among us, might come in,
we huddled over tea and asked the owner
what people had to say about this war.
"It's terrible, of course, but he will do it,
he will do it, no matter what we say."
At other tables, talk in another language,
opaque to us. Since everyone seemed careful
not to look at us, we did our best
to look at them without being seen to look.

The march assembled finally, with a banner
the bullhorn said was Urdu (English underneath).
Too many speeches, as we curled our toes
to ward off frostbite. Somebody yelled "Let's move!"

Over the halal groceries, restaurants
named "Ghandi" or "Punjab," and storefronts bright
with vernal saris in the dead of winter,
faces appeared at windows, looking down at us,
a mob of strangers chanting "No Blood for Oil."
Nobody called to us, or smiled or waved.
What they looked was worried, as if some backlash
aimed at us might land, instead, on them.

At intersections, counter-demonstrators
reviled us as appeasers sold to Terrorists.
We didn't answer. Not that they wouldn't listen,
though that was likely, but that we ourselves
were done with listening. Brute repetition
husked our words of meaning, leaving only
three empty syllables: *blood, oil, war.*

The bullhorn asked us what we wanted. "Coffee,"
Somebody answered, spirit chilled with cold.

3.

Then, all at once, in the midst of his thoughts, it seemed that from
the raging storm a voice had called to him. . . . (Princess Marie von
Thurn und Taxis-Hohenlohe, *Memories of Rainer Maria Rilke*)

Leaning into the dark, I listen: nothing.
Thunder lagging the lightning, monochrome rain,
facefuls of drenching wind. Bored and unblessed,
I slam the window shut and read the *Times*.

An airstrike, it reports, blew up a wedding,
and last week, some "insurgents" hit a mosque—
or maybe it said a market? The papers grow
interchangeable, fusing all days to one.
"Unnamed officials" tell us we can't stop
doing the frightful thing, lest worse things follow.

If storms can speak, what this one says is "war."
Not *Who, if I cried, would hear me then among*
The orders of angels, but whether—if there were angels—
I could hear *them*, calling against the wind.

4.

And you, who spent your war years fleeing women
in the arms of other women, writing poems
to A in rooms paid for by B, demanding
exemption from the army, lest a bullet
plug the Orphean fountain of your throat,

would leave the talkative party to stare at darkness,
waiting for angels. When they arrived, their faces,
radiant with annihilating violence,
flashed images of everything you'd fled.

5. # 333 (draft lottery, 1970)

And I, who spent *my* war years writing drafts
of C.O. forms, then tearing them in shreds
because it was not God who would forbid me,
but only my disgust, a human thing—
And what of the "The Good War," for which my father
volunteered (would I have done the same?);

visiting the consulate of Canada
to see about going back; getting my childhood
shrink to write a letter ("Don't be upset,
you're not as crazy as it says you are");
dreading the thought of being put in jail
and really going mad, committing suicide.

The letter didn't work—they said I-Y
(not top-grade cannon fodder, but I'd do);
then came the wait to be excused or chosen.
And then my birthday drew 333—
the only game of chance I've ever won.
Or did I lose? The merely lucky squander
all their winnings, knowing them undeserved.

6. *O breath, invisible poem*

We have devalued air, called spirit once.
Each breath enacts a faith in the invisible,
which speech, though made of breath, will not confess.
All that escapes is talk, which as the adage
illustrates in saying so, is cheap,
but gestures toward an honorable shame
at drawing breath and giving nothing back.
Now shame is gone; articulate speech is going—
what's left is quantity, and we count everything
but this enclosing element, where all
we cherish rises, falls, and vanishes.
Who, in this reeking atmosphere, can tell
our flatus from afflatus? Master, slain
by the tip of a rose's thorn, you'd die halfway
through one of our inchoate childhoods
of coarsened music and confused desire.

7. Excursus Abroad (for Hugh Ormsby-Lennon)

In London's Clerkenwell, the well itself
sits in the basement of a postwar building
filled with clerks, not "clerkes." You'd walk right past
except your friend, who knows it's there, has pointed
to the small sign in the plateglass window. Garbage
swirls on the curb; nearby's the office of a paper
and a data entry firm whose workers linger
outside on summer nights to flirt and smoke.
In Dickens's time, these side-streets were a slum
where desperate children stole their daily bread.
Press your face to the glass. It isn't much,
this pool of ancient water, neatly filed
beneath the corporate decor, almost
hidden in shadow on this August day.
Back in my country, we would pave it over,
or else contaminate its water-table
drilling for oil. Or, finding none, we'd build
a Clerk's Well Theme Park, with a replica,
made from the pulverized wellstones, of the well.

8.

Under this garbage, if we rake away
discarded wrappers of commodities
ephemeral as their packaging; with wire brush
scrub off the shit of birds and dogs built up
since whenever it was we first decided
we had rights but no attendant duties;
if we blend mortar to rejoin the stones
and match their edges till the fit is just,
restore the shaft to its original depth,
shall we have built a dry memorial,
or is there water still that seeks a way
back toward the surface, where we live and die?

9. *Nowhere, beloved, shall world be but within*

What's in us leans on what sustains us—
Which we have slighted. Even you forgot
your manners, calling it an emptiness
to be flung away. Now "it" is losing patience.
Somehow, we took a vote to kill ourselves.
Of course, the ballot called it something else—
all we had lacked and furtively desired
under its many names: deliverance
from every jail of false identity
and bodily limitation, to become

whatever the self we loathe would rather be.
 And you, with your exquisite Old World scorn
 for such experiments, somehow agreed:
 no world, you said, except the one within us.
 What do we eat and drink there? How shall we breathe?

IO.

The figure cast from the mold of emptiness . . .

At the seam where heaven and hell are joined, Master,
 you meet our President, who, with his cleaver-
 heavy tongue, dissects words from things.

The contrast seems absolute: your short, slight body
 dwarfed by the benchpressing Texan, his eyes void
 of the least memory of what they've seen,
 while yours are burdened with too much remembrance.

No ground of meeting but your shared contempt
 for mere embodiment. Everted, upside-
 down, he mirrors you; his anti-poem
 is corpses shoved into abstract nouns
 that vaporize them, as if they never were.
 The vapor screens our eyes from what is done.
 He clothes what the eye sees in glozing names;
 things appear that are not, and, terrified,
 the people leap to strike at apparitions.

Nirgends, Geliebte, wird Welt sein als Innen—
 Be careful what you wish for: it isn't art
 our entrails seethe with, it is fear and war.

II. Coda

he, who so recently
Considered a hundred voices, not knowing which is right . . .

When I was ten, we took the California
 Zephyr as far as Denver, late in August.
 Out in the dark beyond my sleeper window,
 the fields rolled by, with hovering fireflies,
 while Swan and Eagle flew the whole night westward,
 pacing our gliding train. During our sleep,
 the Rockies slowly built their jagged wall.
 Next morning, I climbed to the "vista dome":

Above the plain, so far I saw it sideways,
 an anvil cumulus hung down its rain
 in curtains, ripped by the bright claws of lightning.
 Then two weeks in the mountains, where we climbed
 to streams where you could cup your hands and drink,
 and lakes, carved by departed glaciers, clear
 to depths where sunlight disappears in blue.

My parents were still married. Two years more
 before the need to touch a girl would bring inside
 the lightning I'd been watching at a distance.
 Then the humiliations came, as thick
 as rain, and what went wrong inside and out
 seemed all one thing. My father, between his breakdowns,
 said the Northern Hemisphere was fouled
 by nuclear testing; I could come with him
 (bringing my first girlfriend) to New Zealand.
 Was saying that to his son, just turned fifteen,
 insane? Hard to tell, when fewer and fewer
 among the sane are drinking from those streams.
 He thought the world was poisoned, and the world,
 its deserts swallowing farms, both ice caps breaking off
 in splinters larger than Connecticut,
 begins to wonder if it might be so.

Standing on Twin Sisters' taller peak
 (shorter by four Chicago blocks than Long's,
 but all my half-grown legs were up to then),
 could we hear angels speak American?
 Would they still mutter dark, implosive quatrains
 shrinking all life's terror to a fly,
 or praise the slow arc of a gliding hawk
 the wind has carried, and depart as air?
 By now, they must have learned, with Caliban,
 our *politesse*: "Fuck you." "Up yours." "It sucks."

If, instead of the voice that is great within us,
 I'm channeling my foul-mouthed teenage self,
 should I say, "get lost, kid," or ask him in
 (already lost, and yet unlosable)—
 he might be tinged with angel, *sang-mêlé*—
 to spew obscenities that purge his rage
 at who he is and must become, until,
 all anger spent, he falls asleep inside
 the child we were, who thought the world was whole?

— Paul Breslin



SCIENCE & SPIRIT

Introduction:

A Spiritual Approach to Evolution

by Michael Lerner

DON'T WORRY, WE ARE NOT ABOUT TO JOIN THE CREATIONISTS WITH THEIR rejection of evolution and insistence that God planted all those dinosaur bones to test your faith. The set of articles you are about to read are written by people who accept the notion that the earth evolved in the past five billion years in roughly the ways that current evolutionary biologists describe it, but some of them argue that the force driving evolution is not adequately described within the terms of contemporary scientism.

We don't expect that reading these essays is going to be easy on you. The fact is that most liberals and progressives, in fact, most people who have completed high school, have been heavily indoctrinated into the dominant religion of this historical period, the religion of scientism, and as can be expected, will feel deeply uneasy—if not feeling that they are outright disloyal—if they consider the possibility that another worldview is not only possible but plausible.

Why We Strongly Support Science

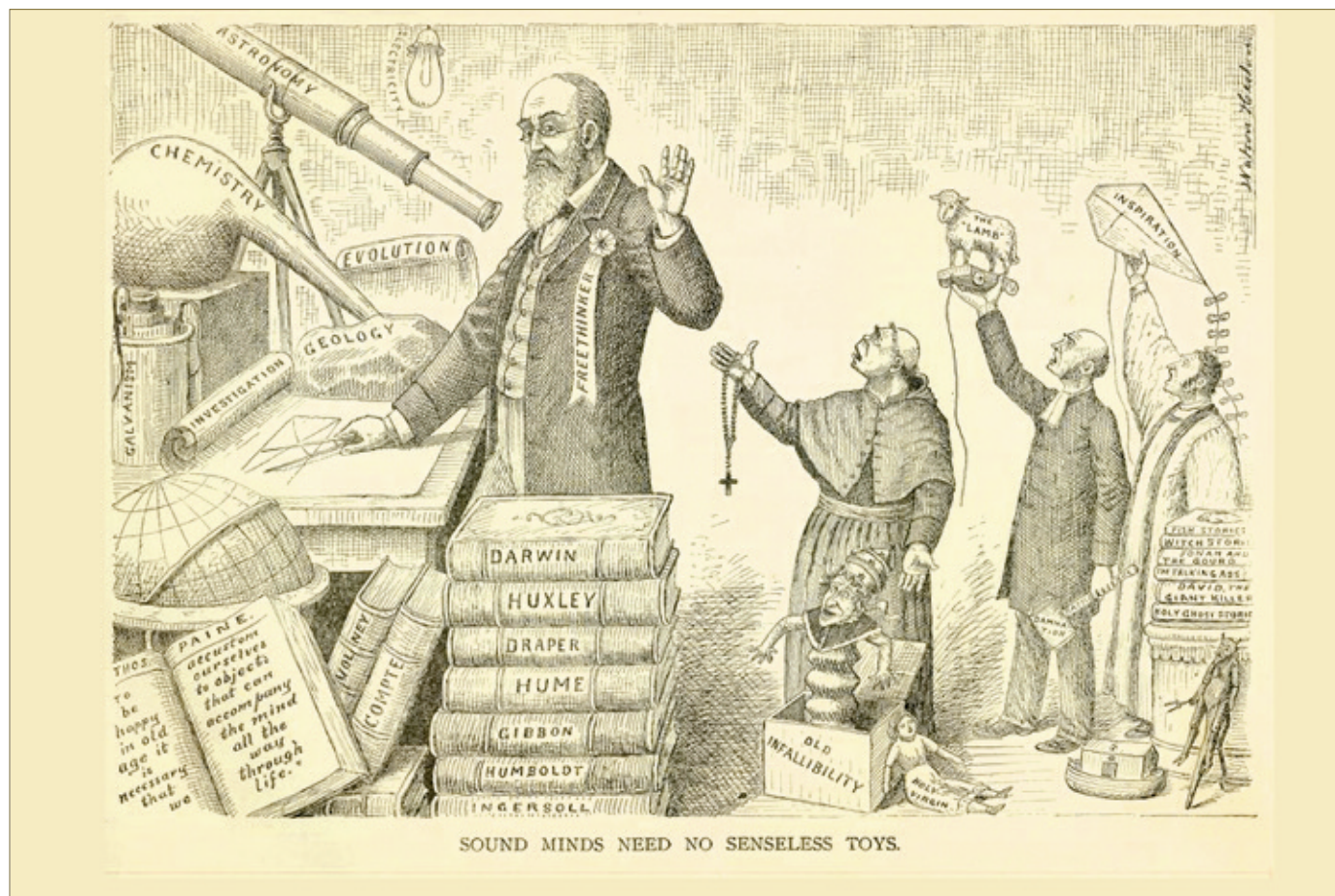
BUT PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT WE ARE STRONGLY SUPPORTIVE of the enterprise of science itself. Science is one of the great advances in human history, and the information it has produced through careful empirical observation and measurement has allowed us to cure many diseases, improve the material conditions of our lives, and gain insight into the complexity of the universe. Science offers us a degree of control over the natural world and hence a heightened sense of security in the face of real dangers.

We are strong believers in the need for increased funding for science and for freeing science from its current subservience to military ends (to which our government deflects scientific research by offering funding from the bloated defense department budget) and from the capitalist marketplace (which often deflects scientific research toward the needs of corporations to make short-term profits without regard to the well-being of the earth or most of its inhabitants). We advocate for more monies dedicated to environmental science, which has already helped us understand the irrationality of the current ways we treat the earth, and toward health promotion and illness prevention (including prevention of the environmental impacts by corporations that increase susceptibility to a wide variety of illnesses, including cancer and Alzheimer's disease).

Taught correctly, science can also be a stimulus to a heightened sense of awe and wonder at the grandeur and beauty of the universe. Read *The Faith of Scientists* by Nancy H. Frankenberry (Princeton University Press, 2008) to get a sense of the range of scientists who have developed an inner spiritual life. As Einstein famously quipped, "Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind." One can be a passionate advocate of science, as I am, and yet be a strong opponent of scientism, just as I am a strong advocate for the right of Jews to a state in the Middle East and yet a strong opponent of creating a religion of Zionism. It is similar to how one can be a strong advocate for egalitarianism and democratic control of the economy without being a communist in the sense that existed in various totalitarian societies of the twentieth century, or a strong lover of the United States without being a believer that our current economic and political system is just or desirable.

Scientism: When Science Becomes a Religion

SCIENTISM IS THE BELIEF THAT NOTHING IS REAL AND NOTHING can be known in the world except that which can be observed and measured. A person who adopts a scientistic perspective believes that science can in principle answer every question



This cartoon appeared in *The Freethinkers' Pictorial Text-Book* (1898 edition).

that can be answered. Any claim about the world that cannot be validated, at least in principle, or at least falsified on the basis of empirical data or measurement is dismissed as meaningless.

So, take a claim that we at *Tikkun* and the Network of Spiritual Progressives, our education arm, frequently make: “Caring for other people is an ethical imperative.” From a scientific perspective, this claim cannot be verified or falsified through any set of observations, so it really isn’t a claim about the world at all but merely a statement of our personal tastes, choices, or proclivities. Similarly, claims about God, ethics, beauty, love, and any other facet of human experience that is not subject to empirical verification—all these spiritual dimensions of life—are dismissed by the scientific worldview as inherently unknowable and hence nothing by which we can ever agree to run our civilization, or they are reduced to some set of observable behaviors (sexual love gets measured by erections, vaginal secretions, orgasms, or changes in brain states; and all ethical and aesthetic claims are treated in a similarly reductive way).

Scientism thus extends science beyond its valuable role as a way to understand those parts of our world that are subject to empirical verification: it makes claims that are either dismissive or reductive of those aspects of our lives that are not subject to empirical verification or measurement. Scientism makes a power jump, appropriating the honorable associations of the word “know” to a narrowly constructed definition and thereby excluding all kinds of knowledge labeled as “merely subjective,” which it deems inappropriate for public discourse. Over the course of several centuries of modernity, scientism not only redefined knowledge, it also built economic, educational, and political institutions that accepted this understanding of knowledge. These institutions proceeded to impose the religion of scientism on most thinking people, leaving resistance to it in the hands of those who had little respect for intellectual life and who could thereby be ridiculed as fundamentalist know-nothings.

Thus scientism became the dominant religion of the contemporary Western world, and increasingly of the entire world. Yet it is a belief system that has no more scientific foundation than any other religious system. Consider its central religious belief: “That which is real and can be known is that which can be verified or falsified by empirical observation.” The claim sounds tough-minded and rational, but what scientific experiment could you perform to prove that it is either true or false? The fact is that there is no such test. By its own criterion, scientism is as meaningless as any other metaphysical claim.

Secular people frequently respond by saying that scientism is simply what it is to be rational in the modern world. But spiritual people respond by saying: Why should we adopt that particular standard of rationality? Is there some scientific test that can prove that this is indeed the rational

way to think? *Absolutely not.* Even the view that “one should not multiply entities beyond necessity”—a view that early scientists took from William of Occam, whose famous “razor” makes the correct point that, when doing science, one should seek the simplest possible explanation of a phenomenon—has no empirical foundation beyond the enterprise of science. It is not a guide to how to live or to define rationality.

If scientism appears intuitive to many, it is largely because we live in a society where this is the dominant religious belief. In fact, we even describe ideas that are of no intellectual value as “non-sense” (that is, without foundation in sense data) and ideas that are obvious to everyone as “common sense” (as though all that can be shared knowledge comes from our sensations). We don’t notice these peculiar usages, because that’s what it means to be part of a religious system—its peculiar ideas suddenly seem so obvious that we can only shake our heads in disbelief that anyone would think something else.

I actually don’t believe most scientists are believers in scientism. But like the rest of us, they live in a society in which scientism predominates, so only the most reflective of them tend to make a point of distinguishing themselves from the dominant religion, and then usually only when they’ve achieved tenure or financial success and don’t worry about being dismissed as a kook. For many of them, as well as for other intellectuals and members of liberal and progressive circles, the fear of the know-nothings taking over and imposing their fundamentalist perspective drives them into a vigorous piety about scientism.

Scientism and the Left

THE VIGOROUS ADHERENCE OF MANY ON THE LEFT TO THIS religion is explained in detail in my book *The Left Hand of God: Taking Back Our Country from the Religious Right*. What is important to say here is that this dominant religion leads to a marginalization of ethical and spiritual values in the public sphere. Since those values are not verifiable through scientific criteria, we get a bizarre distortion in our society in which professionals who bring radically caring values into their work are seen as subjective, moralizing, unprofessional, and inappropriate “ideologues” who may rightly be subject to dismissal from their work. In contrast, we spiritual progressives want a change in the public sphere so that the values we articulate as part of a New Bottom Line do in fact shape our public life together. That New Bottom Line seeks to define rationality, progress, and productivity not only in terms of things that are easy to measure or observe (money and power) but also in terms of those that cannot be measured through empirical science: love, kindness, generosity, ethically and ecologically sensitive behavior, awe and wonder at the grandeur of the universe, and caring for all people.

In *The Left Hand of God* I try to explain why so many men in liberal and progressive circles, and the women who are trying to become like them, eschew anything “soft” like values or spirituality



because it makes them feel too vulnerable to the assault of right-wingers. Having grown up in a culture that validates “real men” as being tough and dominating others, these liberal and progressive men retain in their unconscious the traumatic experience of being put down as kids and called “sissies” when they showed caring for the powerless or eschewed fights and aggressive behavior. So as adults, they feel the need to show that if they are championing something “soft” like caring for others around the planet or eliminating poverty or war they will again be subject to humiliating put-downs unless they can show that they are “tough-minded”—and that translates into rejecting anything spiritual or the language of love, caring, generosity, or awe and wonder. They reject anything that can be dismissed as soft because it is not verifiable through the “hard data” of empirical science. Ironically, right-wing men have no such problem, since the policies of war and supporting the interests of the rich are already seen as tough-minded, so they have the psychic space to embrace spiritual or religious language without fear of being dismissed as “girly men” (the ultimate put-down in a male chauvinist culture).

It’s an easy step from this pathological fear of softness to the head-oriented and heart-averse and religiophobic language of the Democratic Party liberals and much of the independent Left. That’s why they need spiritual progressives so badly.

Once we open the door to other approaches to the world than the one based on scientism, it becomes possible to understand the relationship between mind and body in a different way. Scientism led to two opposing views: first, the idea that the mind is nothing more than a particular arrangement of material reality; and second, a kind of dualism that radically separates mind from body and sees consciousness or mind as some kind of separately existing reality—perhaps a very ghostly reality that has nothing to do with the “hard” category of matter.

What the World Really Looks Like

I, ON THE OTHER HAND, VIEW MATTER AS A MATERIALIST construct that has no application in the real world, though it may be useful for certain approaches to science. In the real world, matter, spirit, consciousness, awareness, nous, and mind are all one integrated whole. Matter never exists without some level of awareness, consciousness, or yearning. All matter yearns for greater levels of interconnectedness, freedom, awareness, consciousness, love, generosity, cooperation, and beauty, and what moves evolution is this yearning of all being to be more fully actualized. Matter seeks this actualization by playfully exploring every possibility and intentionally seeking to enjoy itself through this play. And it is through this intentional play that matter ultimately discovers how to fulfill this deepest yearning. God is the totality of this process: the yearning, and the growing awareness, and the self-awareness of the universe as a whole. This view does not posit God as separate from the universe with a preexisting plan, but rather as the entirety of all that is, because there is nothing else but God—“and you shall know in your heart, that the transformative power is the ruling force of all this creation, there is nothing else” (Deuteronomy 4:39).

This view is derived from the Jewish mystical tradition known as Kabbalah, and the subsequent development of consciousness in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century versions of Hasidism. It is no longer mainstream in contemporary Judaism, because so many Jews have abandoned God to worship the State of Israel. But it is the direction emerging from many of us in the Jewish Renewal movement, which originally played a central role in the development of *Tikkun* magazine. Jewish Renewal is also the movement in which I received my rabbinical ordination. I articulated a version of this view in my book *Jewish Renewal* (Putnam, 1994), when I described my relationship to God as analogous to a liver cell’s relationship to the totality of a person’s consciousness. The liver cell is not separate from the person (i.e., God), who can at times become aware of it, and the cell can receive communications from the person (within the limits of what a liver cell can receive), but the person is more than its liver cells, or any other part of its body: it is the consciousness of the totality, and yet is not constrained by the totality. I’ll get back to this in the next issue of *Tikkun*.

So I strongly agree with Arthur Green that evolution of species is the greatest sacred drama of all time. But what I am adding to Green’s argument is this: that what drives evolution is the spiritual

yearning of all being that is manifest in every particular and that comes together as the consciousness of the entire universe. It is a yearning for greater consciousness, love, generosity, complexity, cooperation, playfulness, gratitude, and forgiveness. Of course this is a faith statement in the same way that scientism is a faith statement—because no amount of data is ever going to conclusively prove either this view or a more materialist and mechanistic view of what drives the evolutionary process forward.

Most of the authors in this section on evolution are not rooted in that particular tradition, but some do share with Jewish mysticism this commitment to a fundamental unity of all being and a rejection of the radical disjunction between matter and spirit. As Christian de Quincey insists, consciousness (or mind or awareness) is part of every aspect of being “all the way down” to the tiniest component of being, despite the fact that such a claim is so counter to the “common sense” of post-Enlightenment thought (though not to what Dave Belden imaginatively describes from the future as the second Enlightenment in which scientism has been abandoned). It is Peter Gabel, my close friend for the past thirty-five years, and *Tikkun*’s indispensable associate editor, who takes

this position and most forcefully defends the notion that evolution can best be understood as powered and directed by this spiritual aspect of all being.

I hope you’ll carefully read these essays and allow yourself to imagine what the world would look like if the perspective being developed here were in fact as true as I believe it to be. And imagine how much more powerful a progressive movement would be if it considered challenging global capitalism on the grounds that it stands in conflict with the developing evolutionary consciousness of the universe and God. ■

SCIENCE AND SPIRIT: ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

Visit tikkun.org/science to read Raymond Barglow’s review of *Science and the Quest for Meaning* by Alfred I. Tauber; Tony Campolo on the ethical implications of Darwinism; David Loye responding to Campolo’s charges of Darwin’s racism; Michael Behe on the question of intelligence in nature and the origins of the universe; and Dan Levine on the sacred brain, neurobiology, free will, and the story that evolution doesn’t tell.

The Responsibility of Theology to Science

by Joan Roughgarden

ARTISTS WHO CREATE ICONS AND SACRED MUSIC often describe their activity as a form of prayer. I think too that if nature is understood, in some sense, as the work of God, then seeking to discover the ways of nature through science might also be experienced as a form of prayer. For this reason I felt drawn to applaud one assertion in particular made by Rabbi Arthur Green in *Tikkun*’s March/April 2010 issue: “The evolution of species is the greatest sacred drama of all time.”

I thank *Tikkun* for inviting me to join the conversation on God and science that Rabbi Green, Peter Gabel, and others started here this spring. I write as an evolutionary biologist and will begin by offering my response to Rabbi Green’s piece on “Sacred Evolution.”

I agree that religious teaching might prosper from reinvesting stories of origin (or creation) with new meaning rather than having religious teachings continue to be, as Rabbi Green puts it, “over-involved with proclaiming the truth of our own particular stories” from the sacred texts of our several denominations.

Yet, I demur from his recommendation that we should instead “understand the task of the theologian to be one of reframing, accepting the accounts of origins and natural history offered by the scientific consensus, but helping us to view them in a different way, one that may guide us toward a more profound appreciation of that same reality.” Or, as a later commentary in *Tikkun* by Bruce Ledewitz puts it, accepting a framework of “science first and religion adapts.” This framework places great, even unquestioned, faith in the ability of scientists to offer a correct account of the

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Is this a happy family, as many people might think, or a “cauldron of conflict,” featuring sibling-sibling, parent-offspring, and parent-parent conflict” as today’s biological orthodoxy has it? Or are both views human projections rather than good science? Theologians have a responsibility to critique scientists’ ideological assumptions.

processes in nature, a faith that will seem misplaced the more one delves into what scientists actually conclude from the evidence they actually possess.

I do not challenge the scientific method, of course, nor doubt scientists’ ability, in principle, to deliver accurate and correct knowledge of what happens in nature. Experiments, tests of alternative hypotheses, and new technologically enabled probes of the microscopic and of outer space do objectively reveal the state of nature—that is, when scientists actually bother to do all the experiments, bother to entertain alternative hypotheses, bother to use the latest technology, and so forth. And who is to demand that the science informing theological inquiry be the best available science? We will get (eventually) the best available science on matters such as molecular motors and global change because much profit depends on the results. But who cares about the quality of the science informing theological reflection? Hardly anyone. And so those few scientists who do venture into offering summaries of what their science means for religious and ethical concerns are free to make up nearly any story they want. The problem is not so much a question of personal recklessness by individual scientists, although that happens too; the problem is mainly the ideological uniformity of scientific peer groups.

The subdiscipline of evolutionary biology that pertains to how family life is organized in birds, mammals, and other vertebrates, teaches—according to Geoff Parker, an evolutionary biologist in the United Kingdom—that family life is now understood as a “cauldron of conflict,” featuring sibling-sibling, parent-offspring, and parent-parent conflict. A diagram of all the routes of conflict presumably present in any family is called a “battleground.” But it emerges that the word “conflict” enjoys a special meaning in this area of science. Conflict is assumed to remain present, by definition, regardless of whether it has been “resolved.” That is,

suppose you buy a car from a dealer. There is an initial conflict of interest, wherein you (the buyer) want to buy the car on the cheap, and the dealer wants to take you for a ride. But after haggling, you drive away with the car and the dealer pockets the cash—conflict resolved; matter settled. In evolutionary biology, however, the conflict is assumed to remain present even once the deal has been struck. Because of their peculiar understanding of “conflict,” evolutionary biologists—mostly those at Oxford, Cambridge, Bristol, and Imperial College, who talk primarily with one another and review each other’s manuscripts—can confidently declare in a private language that conflict in family life is universal and unceasing. And Rabbi Green can then accept this narrative, writing:

We will not understand our own human nature without taking into account the fierce struggle we underwent to arrive and to achieve the dominance we have over this planet ... [we need a] reformulation by a new and powerful harmonistic vision, one that will allow even the weakest and most threatened of creatures a legitimate place in this world and will call upon us not to wipe it out by careless whim. This is the role of today’s religion.

Clearly, the project of reformulation will be quite different, perhaps even unnecessary, if the scientific account of the universality of conflict is incorrect.

So, I do not agree with Rabbi Green that science is first, and religion adapts. I do not agree that the task of the theologian should now be one of reframing what science says in order to guide us to a more profound appreciation of science’s reality. I do not agree that the task of theologians is to provide a reformulation of contemporary science featuring a new harmonistic vision.

Indeed, I think that Rabbi Green's plans for a future theology abdicates the humanistic responsibility to critique science. Instead, I think the task of theologians (and ethicists, more generally) should be to hold scientists' feet to the fire, to insist again and again that the scientific account of nature supplied by scientists be true and accurate. This will require a new generation of theologians trained and experienced in the ways and content of science, and a new generation of scientists drawn from different backgrounds from those that have traditionally supplied the exclusionary corridors of academia.

Rabbi Green reveals a progressional view of evolutionary history and emphasizes the distinctness of humans from other animals with a focus on the mind. He refers to "the entire course of evolution, from the simplest life-forms millions of years ago, to the great complexity of the human brain" and adds:

It would also be disingenuous of me as a human to say that the emergence of human consciousness, even the ability to be thinking and writing about these very matters, is nothing more than a small series in the unfolding linear process wrought by natural selection. Yes, that is indeed how we came about. But there is a different meaning to human existence that cannot be denied. The self-reflective consciousness of humans, combined with our ability to take a long bio-historical view of the whole unfolding that lies behind (and ahead of) us, makes a difference. Yes, all creatures are doing the "work of God" by existing, feeding, reproducing, and moving the evolutionary process forward. But we humans, especially in our age, are called upon to do that work in a different way.

I see no grounds for a progressional view of evolutionary history. I see no justification for singling out any species-specific character such as the brain in humans, echolocation in bats, and the wingspan of the wandering albatross. I deny there is any different meaning to human existence compared with that of other species.

To the contrary, our sense of emotion has a much longer evolutionary history than our brain, and is more tried, true, and refined. We have less risk of error when listening to our body and feelings than to our minds, and I suggest the most reliable route to God is through sensation rather than thought. Indeed, I suspect that most, perhaps all, people of faith are drawn to companionship with God by a shared feeling of community rather than by theological reflection.

Turning now to the March/April 2010 essay by Peter Gabel, I find I'm at once inspired, yet puzzled, by his call for "sacred evolutionary biologists." Mr. Gabel writes:

To understand the sacred drama of the evolutionary process, we need the help of evolutionary biologists who are not neutral observers in the classically liberal sense, but who connect the sacred within themselves to the sacred dimension of what they observe in the natural world.

I would like to think that I could help answer this call. Yet, I wonder what this call might mean in practical terms. After all, whatever is in nature, simply is. My own sense of the sacred cannot change what is actually happening in nature. A sacred perspective might supply a disposition to propose hypotheses during the course of scientific research that might not occur to, say, an atheist scientist, especially hypotheses that pertain to a ubiquity of sharing, cooperation, and negotiation. Widening the variety of hypotheses for evolutionary phenomena beyond those that typically occur in a strictly secular perspective would surely improve the chance that scientific investigations yield an accurate and reliable account of nature. And the picture of nature that emerges might be more appealing than a purely secular account provides. I hope this assessment of what the call for sacred evolutionary biologists will produce is consistent with what Mr. Gabel has in mind. ■



Sharing and cooperation in nature ...

Top: Among vampire bats, hunger is rare because bats that find blood share it with bats that don't. If a colony didn't share food, four out of every five bats would die each year. But by cooperating, the death rate is slashed to one in four. Bottom: A white-spotted puffer fish is being cleaned by a bluestreak cleaner wrasse.



The Secret Life of Plants

by Raymond Barglow

IS THERE A SPIRITUAL DIMENSION TO THE STORY OF THE universe that biological evolution tells?

In “Creationism and the Spirit of Nature” (*Tikkun*, November/December 1987), an essay reprinted in *The Bank Teller and Other Essays on the Politics of Meaning*, Peter Gabel has elaborated an answer to this question. He believes that “spirituality” is “manifested in every life-form as both presence (or existence) and desire.” To illustrate this idea, Gabel cites the tendency of a plant to arch toward the sun:

We have all seen this many times—the upper leaves and branches seem to stretch in a sensual way up toward the warmth and the light, while the lower leaves and branches do the best they can and curl around toward the sun with the same apparent desire and intention. A scientist would tell us that it is mere sentimentality or personification to think that the plant is leaning toward anything, that what is “really” going on is “phototropism,” the first phase of something called “photosynthesis,” a process by which the chlorophyll in the plant combines with light to produce oxygen.... Ascribing intention or desire to the plant’s movement attributes an immanence or inner life to the

plant that is not observable by objective, impartial methods, and therefore cannot qualify as “knowledge” according to science.

Rejecting this particular scientific paradigm, Gabel recommends a new scientific method—one that enables us to “free ourselves to see the plant as a presence like ourselves, desiring the nourishment of the sun’s warmth and light and undergoing vibrant physical transformations as this desire is realized.”

I believe that this is a misreading of the natural world we inhabit. Gabel is searching here for intentionality in a domain—botany—where it cannot be found in the form he discusses. Yes, there is something deep in the wellsprings of our nature that seeks connection—something that opens up and reaches out. Out of that, idealism is formed: we look for the light in others and ourselves, hoping to redeem a world largely thrust into darkness. Gabel himself has written very eloquently about such yearnings, which indeed resonate with a leaf opening, a vine spiraling, a seedling inclining toward the sun. I agree that recognition and expression of these longings may be essential to our future on the planet. But are we really reconnecting with and respecting our natural surroundings when we

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ascribe desire as widely as Gabel does? Let's reconsider his botanical illustration.

According to the scientific account, plant movement toward light results from the action of certain plant hormones. Such movement was investigated by Charles Darwin and his son Francis, who published their findings in *The Power of Movement in Plants* (1880). They hypothesized that an internal biochemical signal accounts for the growth of seedlings toward light. Their observations would later lead to the discovery of plant hormones called "auxins" that induce plant cell change.

An auxin migrates to the shady side of a plant, where it modifies cell division and growth. As a result, shady-side cells stretch out more than illuminated ones, and that causes the plant to incline toward the source of light. The detailed interactions of auxin with cells is also increasingly understood, involving alterations in cell wall rigidity, gene expression, facilitation of ion transport, etc.

I'm simplifying a story here whose wonder lies in its intricate biochemical complexity. The relevant point is that there is no "explanatory gap" here, and hence no explanatory role for intention to play. Given the biochemistry of plant phototropism, and given any plausible definition of "intentionality," it seems evident that the leaning of a blade of grass toward the light has nothing to do with any "intention" or "desire" on the part of the plant.

Do our immediate experiences tell us otherwise? Do they really affirm the presence of intentionality—preference, desire, volition—throughout nature, including the plant world? Let's note that, although experiences are of course relevant to understanding our surroundings, they do not speak with only one voice, and their revelations call for interpretation. Experiences are as diverse, and sometimes as contradictory, as the persons who have them. Peter Gabel, like European Romantic poets two centuries ago, perceives in a plant desire and intentionality. Eckhart Tolle, drawing differently upon the same tradition, finds instead stillness and peace: "Look at a tree, a flower, a plant. Let your awareness rest upon it. How still they are, how deeply rooted in Being. Allow nature to teach you stillness."

It does not make the inclination of a seedling to the light any less lovely to recognize that its way of moving is not our own, i.e., not intentional. To be sure, some human actions are, like plant movements, driven by hormones. But in our affairs, motivation and purpose play an explanatory role that has no counterpart in the botanical world. This is a point that philosophers such as Daniel Dennett and Tyler Burge have made persuasively in their writings over the past two decades.

Indeed, not all truth is scientific. In our experiences of nature's many dominions we find resonances, parallels, and kinships that lie beyond the purview of science. Wordsworth, Dickinson, and Frost give expression to an understanding as profound—and as relevant in an era of ecological crisis—as anything that science

tells us. Music too—e.g., the Ashanti talking drums, Brahms's Requiem ("For all flesh is like grass"), Stevie Wonder's homage to the "Secret Life of Plants"—invokes and interprets nature.

But we err if we base our explanations of nature's ways upon a literal-minded reading of metaphors. A snow bank builds when layers of flakes "find a bed" upon those that have preceded them, but they do not do so because they are tired and want to sleep. Salt dissolves in water because water is an ionizing agent, not because the crystals have a death wish. And a blade of grass inclines toward the sun not because of a desire to do so but thanks to auxin-plant cell interactions.

Is there mystery of a kind in the myriad ways of nature? There is, but it seems to me that we misunderstand that when we project human ways into botany or physics or astronomy. Must we find our own features reflected back to us everywhere we look? This is akin to the hubris that Spinoza noted when he considered doctrines of intelligent design. Intentionality is one way of being in the world. Why universalize it? Spinoza views as self-centered and fallacious our inclination to cast G-d and nature in our own, human image.

I don't mean to dismiss here an essential task that lies before us: establishing a sustainable "partnership," so to speak, with a planet whose life forms are amazingly prolific, but often endangered. The terms of that partnership aren't understood in the same way by all of us, however. I welcome this diversity, and appreciate this opportunity to share what I take to be a scientific perspective. ■

SAGA OF A BLADE OF GRASS

ELONGATED CELLS

SUN

NORMAL-SIZED CELLS

The hormone auxin, released on the shaded side of the shoot, stimulates cells to elongate on that side, thereby arching the shoot toward the sun.

The Presence of Living Organisms

by Peter Gabel

RAY BARGLOW CRITICIZES MY ATTRIBUTION OF AN in-dwelling presence to plant life by saying, essentially, that my attribution is wrong because science has demonstrated that the movement of plants can be explained by purely material factors. He cites a passage in which I appeal to the reader to agree that when plants turn toward the light, we sense their presence as living beings. Barglow rejects my appeal, saying that scientists have shown that “hormones” called “auxins” cause this turning, by stimulating cell division on the shady side of the plant, causing the plant to bend away from the shady section and toward the light.

But if we look more carefully at the way the scientist develops his or her knowledge about auxins, we can see that the scientist has simply *redescribed* the plant’s behavior solely in terms of the plant’s material elements. The scientist first looks at the plant as an “object,” then takes note of the behavioral fact that the plant bends toward the light, then examines biochemical processes that are visible under a microscope that accompany this bending, and then invents certain concepts to name the biochemical elements in the plant that make the bending possible (in this case, the scientist uses the Greek-derived concept “hormone,” meaning “stimulate,” and the similarly Greek-derived concept “auxin,” meaning “grow,” to describe the empirically observed gooey stuff that appears to be associated with increased cell division in the plant). The scientist has not by this process explained what causes the plant perceived as an “object” to bend; he or she has simply redescribed the bending process itself in terms of the visible, material processes that are associated with the bending.

The great error of “scientism,” as we refer to it in *Tikkun*, is to mistake this material redescription for an explanation. Since the scientist may believe, as a matter of conviction, that all that can be said to be “real” is what is visible to the objectifying, detached gaze, the scientist may a) notice the plant’s bending behavior in the presence of sunlight; b) invent certain concepts like auxins to describe the biochemical correlates of the behavior; c) “reify” the concepts, meaning treat the gooey stuff he or she has named “auxin” as if it were a real thing called auxin; and d) assume that this production of auxin is the “true cause” that explains the bending behavior. He or she may assume—“Well, there’s nothing else going on that we can see.”

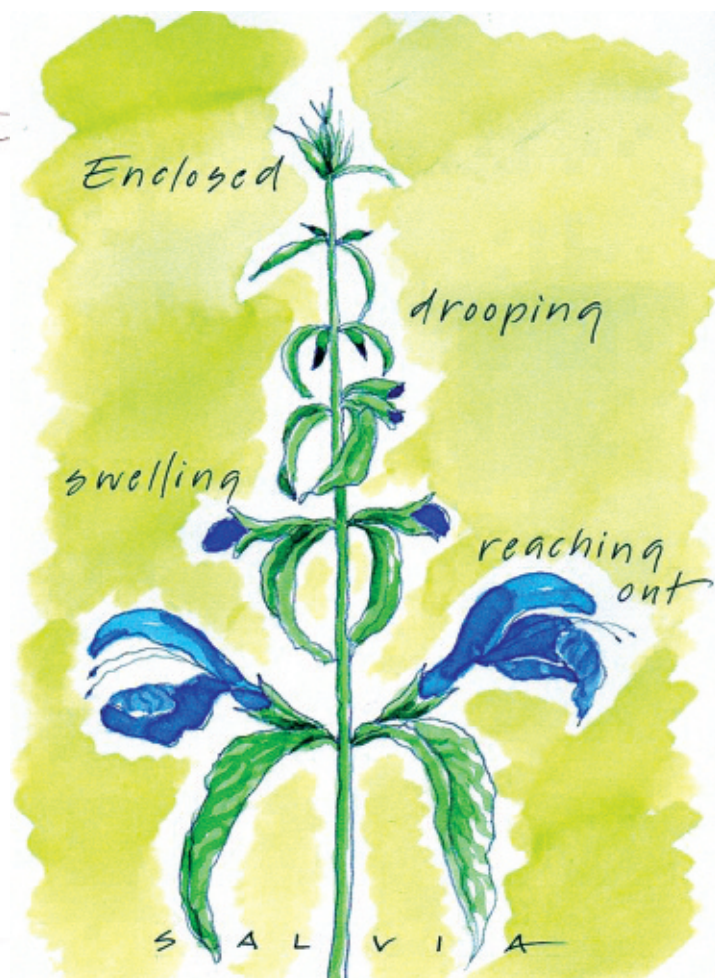
I acknowledge that it is possible that there is “nothing going on” except a mere physical process—that sunlight stimulates the tip of a plant to spur the production of auxins that cause the plant to bend. But it is also possible that the plant as a living and vital presence responds to the warmth and radiance of the sunlight and turns toward it responsively, with the production of auxins being merely the biochemical, material correlate of that turning process. This latter interpretation, which I favor, understands the plant as a spiritual-material unity rather than reducing the plant to the materialist dimension that is visible to the detached, scientific eye. To see the spiritual element requires that we trust our intuitive response to the plant’s outreaching tendrils, that we “let ourselves go toward the plant” rather than “standing back” and looking “at” it. I say to the scientist: “If you let go of your standing back and if you instead ‘go forward,’ and if you then spontaneously sense the plant’s responsiveness to the sun, you will see it is reaching toward the sunlight, and you have helpfully showed the material means, the biochemical correlative process, by which it has enabled itself to do this. Amazing!”

By “standing back” I do not mean that biologists are detached people or that they don’t greatly appreciate nature. I know lots of them do and that’s why they become interested in the natural world. By “detachment” or “standing back” I’m referring to the epistemological stance of empiricism itself, a detachment that is the very basis of its claim to objectivity and neutrality as regards its own conception of “validity.” I’m saying as long as you take that stance, you can’t perceive the spiritual/invisible dimension of the world. On the other hand, when you “go forward” or let go of that neutral distance, you become one with the spiritual dimension, a spiritual dimension that is actually self-evident to the engaged intuition that comprehends life moment to moment. I’m also claiming that that engaged intuition can approach its own objectivity through communal discourse and reflection, in a way that’s analogous to but yet completely different from the natural science method—namely, by serious reflective discussion in a peer community in which intuitively grounded perceptions are tested discursively and corrected for biases such as anthropomorphism, projection, and other common interpretive distortions.

But please note that I am not merely saying that the spiritual

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And then there is the Flower
supported by everything below—
a brief and glorious
organization—of beauty.



way of seeing exists alongside the scientific way. Rather, I am saying that the spiritual dimension—the dimension of the life-world accessible to intuition—is the ontological ground of the total epistemological enterprise. This ground is Being itself, and to “know” the life-world, the knower must travel a pathway from one’s own interior to the interior of the known. One must “go forward” via intuition and empathy into the heart of the known, which is composed of the same Being, the knower’s own Being.

For specific purposes, the knower may make use of an ingenious special practice that we now call the scientific method, with its techniques of detachment, objectification of phenomena, correlation of sense data, experimentation including altering of material conditions, and the formulation and testing of hypotheses. This specialized practice produces information that may be useful and “valid” according to its own terms but is not true in an ontological sense, nor does it aspire to truth in this sense. There is a possibility that what we now call inanimate matter is in reality just dead, inert matter, in which case the existing disciplines of physics and inorganic chemistry might actually be producing truth because there may be no ontological commonality between the knower and the known, and the known may in fact be nothing but a passive material object, although this is doubtful considering the vitality of what we call energy and the relationship of mass to energy. But as regards animate matter, the use of what I’m calling the scientific method can produce no more than provisional verification of hypotheses

pertaining to the known phenomenon when we pretend that the phenomenon is a mere object—when we treat it as if it were an object for some useful purpose. It can’t be “true” in an ontological sense because an animate phenomenon *exists*, is *alive*, is a portion of the Being of the knower.

In the context of evolutionary theory, the scientific determination to exclude the “invisible” from what is “real” has led to an unfortunate aspiration to explain the entire unfolding and development of life by the “standing back” approach. Like my plant scientist, the evolutionary biologist seems to want to “stand back” from the fossil record, examine parts of objectified bodies as they change over time, and then invent a concept that can explain the entire process without recourse to anything “invisible.” The main explanatory concept since Darwin has been “natural selection.” By “standing back” the scientist can “observe” that some plants and animals have survived and others have not, that adaptive changes have facilitated survival, and since no other mechanisms of evolutionary progress that satisfy the requirements of “visibility” have been sufficiently supported by empirical evidence, the scientist proposes that natural selection explains all of evolution. With the growth and development of the science of genetics, adaptive changes themselves have come to be explained by genetic mutations that are presumed to occur randomly and accidentally (a purposeful alteration would depend on an “invisible” influence that the “standing back” method has declared to be nonexistent, or at least unknowable).

As in the case of the plant scientist interpreting plants' turning toward sunlight, the Darwinian evolutionary biologist uses the "standing back" method of looking to develop very useful and helpful-to-humankind knowledge about the material world—in this case identifying the very existence of evolution itself—but then goes too far and allows his or her method of looking to box him/her in to a closed and self-referential explanatory narrative that is a matter of belief rather than proof or demonstration. By adhering to the a priori conviction or belief that only what is visible to the standing-back eye, the detached eye, is real, the biologist locks him/herself into an explanatory hypothesis that says: "All that is visible is survival. Therefore accidental adaptation furthering survival is all there is."

Here are four problems with this proposal:

1. It suggests that the vast unfolding of life across time and through the extraordinary manifestations of the various species of plants and animals can be accounted for by a single, essentially passive factor: survival. It declares a priori based on the "visibility-to-the-detached-eye" requirement that there is no interiority or forward motion to the ascension from microscopic bacteria to human life.
2. Because the natural sciences method excludes all but the empirically visible—because it erases by epistemological fiat the influence of Being or Spirit on the evolutionary process—the theory of natural selection can be entirely "correct" on its own terms and yet be false in relation to reality. The fact that evolution *can* be explained by natural selection does not mean that it *is* explained by natural selection, and even if there were a perfect fit between the hypothesis of natural selection and the empirical data provided by the fossil record and other sources, that would only make the theory the more deceptive if the excluded aspect of reality, the spiritual dimension, is in truth at the heart of the matter.
3. As Christian de Quincey emphasizes in "Nature Has a Mind of Its Own" (page 45 in this issue), the theory of natural selection simply cannot account for the appearance of consciousness or the evolution of consciousness because to call consciousness an accidental adaptation in the service of survival suggests that non-conscious matter could somehow, by an accidental mutation, make an ontological "leap" into becoming sentient, then conscious, then conscious of itself.
4. Even apart from the problem of accounting for the appearance of consciousness, because of the visibility-to-the-detached-eye requirement, the theory of natural selection and all other materialist theories of evolution reduce the totality of the evolution of existence to its objectified physical manifestations. This means that as I, a sixty-three-year-old man typing on a computer in the year 2010, sit here and think about the

prevailing natural-selection theory of evolution from microorganisms to me, there is no possibility of any interior, existential relationship between me as an actual living person and all the life-forms that have preceded me and that have been evolving "toward" me. By an unconscious trick inhering in the method itself, inherent in the visibility-to-the-detached-eye requirement, the evolutionary biologist has both erased his own existence as a living existential being from the evolutionary process and "canceled out" the Being of everything from the entire upward movement of the evolutionary enterprise. To put this another way, Mr. Darwin is not *in* his own theory and neither is any *one* else. As the Talking Heads put it, "lights on, nobody home."

What I am proposing is not that we reject the contributions of Charles Darwin or of the great naturalist field of evolutionary biology, but that we open ourselves to the possibility that Darwin and his successors have made an error in radically separating spirit (or consciousness) from matter and that we must take a new approach if we are to grasp the spiritual-material unity of the life-world in its true unfolding through its manifestations in plant, animal, and human life. This requires that we adopt a new method of gaining knowledge based upon a new conception of the Being of living manifestations (there are no "living things"). This we do by beginning with our own Being as living presences inhabiting and co-constituting a meaningful life-world suffused with desire and intention, including both material projects (the desire not merely to survive but to achieve full vitality or health) and inter-subjective social projects (the desire to give and receive nurturance and love, to complete ourselves through transparent mutual recognition, to together transcend ourselves toward some ultimate unity or Oneness). Beginning with the recognition of this spiritual essence at the heart of his or her own Being, the scientist then must "go forward and comprehend" rather than only "stand back and observe"; he or she must embrace the teeming life-world as a universal spiritual presence manifested uniquely in every embodied living organism. The central medium of investigation in this approach to the pursuit of knowledge is not detached analysis of empirically visible sense data, but rather intuition of meaningful manifestations of embodied social consciousness. In other words, we must anchor ourselves in the self-evident knowledge that Being has of its own presence and intentionality, and engage in empathic apprehension of the other forms of life that surround us in our own time, or past forms of life accessible through meaning-revealing artifacts that both point backward toward shaping material and social conditions and forward toward the projects that these earlier life-forms were at their moment on earth seeking to realize. This is the path by which we can come to grasp the evolution of the species as the upward movement of Being that it self-evidently is, worthy of the vast intelligence manifested in every living form and worthy of the immanent bond that unites us to every living form. ■

Nature Has a Mind of Its Own

by Christian de Quincey

THE GREAT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST WILLIAM James had just finished a lecture on the nature of reality when a little old lady approached him. “Excuse me, Professor,” she said, “but I’m afraid you’ve got it all wrong. The world is really supported on the back of a great big turtle.”

The venerable professor, being a gentleman, decided to humor the woman: “Tell me, then, what is holding the turtle up?”

Quick as a flash, the old lady snapped back: “Another turtle, of course.”

“And what’s supporting *that* turtle?” James asked, trying gently to get her to see her mistake. The conversation went on like this for another round or two until the little old lady interrupted with a noticeable tremor of exasperation:

“Save your breath, sonny. It’s turtles all the way down.”

At least so the story goes (though some associate it with Bertrand Russell instead of William James). True or not, the “turtle” incident illustrates a fundamental intuition we all share about the nature of reality: Something can’t come from *nothing*. *Something* must “go all the way down” or all the way back. Even the Big Bang must have had some kind of “fuse.” (Religions, of course, say it was God.)

James was teaching around the turn of the last century, but the little old lady’s point still carries force. In the modern-day version, turtles are replaced by consciousness. The question now is not what is holding the world up, but where did mind or consciousness come from? In a purely physical universe, the existence of mind is a profound puzzle. And if we are to believe the standard scientific view on this, then mind emerged from wholly mindless matter. But just *how* this occurred remains a complete mystery. In fact, in *Radical Nature*, I make the case that it couldn’t happen without a miracle. And miracles have no place in science. Instead, our best option is to revive the old lady’s insight and proclaim that “consciousness goes all the way down.” Mind has always existed in the universe. Cosmos—the world of nature—has a mind of its own.

Searching for the “Soul Line”

WHAT’S THE GREATEST MYSTERY FACING EVERY PERSON ON THE planet? Ultimately, it’s some version of the age-old “Where do I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?” And these questions, which lie at the heart of all philosophy and religion, can be summed up as: “How do I fit in?” How do we humans (with our rich interior lives of emotions, feelings, imaginations, and ideas)



fit into the world around us? According to science, the world is made up of mindless, soulless, purely physical atoms and energy. So far, no one has a satisfactory explanation for the existence of nonphysical minds in this otherwise physical universe.

We lack an explanation because our questions already assume something quite disturbing. We assume we are split from nature. We assume that humans are somehow special, that we have minds or souls while the rest of nature doesn’t. Some of us draw the “soul line” at higher animals and some of us draw it at living organisms; few of us draw no line at all. Ask yourself: Are rocks conscious? Do animals or plants have souls? Have you ever

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wondered whether worms or insects might feel pain or pleasure? Can trees feel anything at all? Your answers will reveal where you are likely to draw the line.

In philosophy, this is called the “consciousness cut.” Where, in the great unfolding of evolution, did consciousness first appear? In contemporary philosophy and science, the cut-off is usually made at brains—if not human brains, then the brains of higher mammals. Only creatures with highly developed brains or nervous systems possess consciousness, so the scientific story goes.

Because of our assumed “specialness,” because of the deep fissure between humans and the rest of nature, and because of the mind-body split, we need a new understanding of how we—ensouled, embodied humans—fit into the world of nature. Our current worldview, based on the materialist philosophy of modern science, presents us with a stark and alienating vision of a world that is intrinsically devoid of meaning, of purpose, of value—a world without a mind of its own, a world without soul. And this worldview has had dramatic and catastrophic consequences for our environment, for countless species of animals and plants, and for the ecosystems that sustain us all. To be more specific, here’s an outline of just some of those consequences.

Ecological crisis: Our environment is being rapidly destroyed. We are right now experiencing a widespread, global crisis of unprecedented proportions involving climate disruption, global warming, and the destruction of rain forests, along with their precious biodiversity. We are now in the midst of the sixth major species extinction since life began on our planet. According to some experts, 50 percent of species currently alive will have disappeared by the end of this century.

Technologies of mass destruction: Through science and engineering, our civilization has developed awesome technologies of destruction (some intentional, some not). Potent nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons threaten the survival of our species, and much of the rest of nature, and many “benign” technologies produce unexpected side effects that pollute and degrade our atmosphere and environment.

Deep alienation: People are alienated from nature. To grasp just how divorced we are from the natural world, imagine trying to find your way home from another town, or even just across town, using only natural landmarks (without following maps or street signs). How sensitive and attuned are you to the natural landscape in which you live? How much has been blocked out, even obliterated, by the constructed environment of tarmac, concrete and steel?

Such alienation leads to all kinds of personal and social problems—for example, people feeling split from their own bodies and from other people, often unable to integrate their emotions and feelings with their rational minds, often becoming (or at least believing themselves to be) some kind of social misfit. How many people feel at home in their own bodies or feel comfortable at work, with their families, and with strangers? Millions struggle to search for meaning in a meaningless universe.

Where Do We Turn for Answers—Science or Religion?

UNFORTUNATELY, MODERN SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY ARE A major source of the problem: their basic story or worldview is “materialism” and they understand the world as made up of “dead atoms.” According to science, human consciousness “emerged” from dead, insentient matter. Nature itself is without any intrinsic meaning, value, or purpose because it has no consciousness. For science, there is no spirit in nature. Humans are at odds with the rest of the world—we are intelligent; nature is dumb. By an accident of nature, we are special.

However, science may be seriously mistaken when it asserts that consciousness is a product of complex brains, and that the rest of vital nature is a product of mindless, purposeless, unfeeling evolution. *We may not be so special.*

And, as for religion, conventional doctrines promise a reward in some afterlife. They do not teach us to look for meaning in nature. God is supernatural, transcendent, above and beyond the world. Yet we are all conscious beings, aching for meaning. We want meaning in *this* life.

In times of crisis, such as the Hurricane Katrina catastrophe or the Gulf of Mexico fiasco, people are much more likely to wonder about God’s relevance and participation in natural events. The idea that nature has a mind of its own means that the natural intelligence of the world—unlike a remote God of the skies—is not preoccupied with exclusively human concerns. Larger forces are at work in the world, and it serves us to pay attention and recognize that we are integral parts of nature, that the divine is all around us, and that humans do not get any special treatment.

According to many forms of religion, we are special by divine fiat. God gave us souls, so that we may survive and transcend the inevitable corruption of the flesh. Human consciousness, spirit, or soul is separate from the physical body, and the path to meaning and salvation is through prayer to a remote, transcendent God. Attention is focused elsewhere, either toward the heavens or toward priests, rabbis, or mullahs.

But the path to the sacred may not be through clergy or churches. In my experience, the sacred is all around us in nature—I experience it while watching a sunset, playing with animals, walking through a forest or on a beach, swimming in the ocean, climbing a mountain, planting flowers or vegetables, filling my lungs with fresh air, smelling the mulch of rich nourishing soil, dancing through crackling autumn leaves, comforting an injured pet, embracing a loved one, or holding the hand of a dying parent.

The most direct way to God, I believe, is through touching and *feeling* the Earth and its inhabitants—being open to the expression of spirit in the most ordinary, as well as in the most awesome, events of daily life. The way to meaning in our lives is by reconnecting with the world of nature—through exuberant participation or through the stillness of meditation, just *being present* and *listening*. And when we do so, we hear, we feel, and we learn: *we are not alone—we are not uniquely special.*

CREATIVE COMMONS/ROBERT FLUDD

I FIRST BECAME FASCINATED WITH CONSCIOUSNESS AS A SEVEN- or-eight-year-old kid in Ireland. The trigger event was discovering an entry on “evolution” in my father’s tattered encyclopedia. An old line drawing of a dinosaur caught my attention: not only was I descended from my parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on, but the entire human race evolved from some ape-like ancestors, who came from even more primitive mammals, who came from reptiles, who came from amphibians, who came from fishes, who came from jellyfishes, who came from clumps of cells, all the way down to bacteria-like single-celled “infusoria,” as they were called in the encyclopedia (which tells you how old it was). I was astounded to learn that my earliest relatives were *bacteria*!

Then something astounding grabbed me: not only was I mesmerized by images of descending species culminating in this young fella sitting there at that moment reading a big, dusty old book, but somehow that stupendous unfolding also managed to produce the ability to *look back and contemplate the process of evolution itself*. Somehow, somewhere along the line, evolution had become aware of itself.

I grew up puzzled. Not that such questions burned in my thoughts every day; but from time to time I would think back on those dinosaurs and infusoria and wonder about evolution, wonder about the feelings and thoughts pulsing through me and other creatures.

IN THIS ARTICLE, AND IN MY BOOK *RADICAL NATURE*, I CALL FOR A radically new understanding of nature. By “radical,” I mean a view of matter radically different from what we learn through science and philosophy. I mean intrinsically *sentient* matter. “Radical”



comes from the Latin *radix*, meaning “root,” the foundation or source of something. Etymologically, “radical” is related to “radial,” which means branching out in all directions from a common center or root, and to “radiant,” which means, variously, filled with light, shining, sending out rays of light, emanating from a source, manifesting well-being, wholeness, pleasure, or love. “Radical Nature,” therefore, implies nature that is sentient to its roots, composed of matter that *feels* something of the nature of wholeness and love all the way down, and that radiates, or moves itself, from the depths of its own being.

The standard scientific view, by contrast, is that nature is composed of “dead matter”—so that even living systems consist, ultimately, of unfeeling, purposeless, meaningless atoms or quarks embedded in equally unfeeling, purposeless, and meaningless fields of force. I challenge this materialist view, and claim that not only is it incoherent but that it is also very dangerous.

The notion of human specialness lies at the core of our civilization's dominant stories. In the grand narratives we tell ourselves—in our cosmologies, and scientific and religious worldviews that try to make sense of the fact that we are here at all—humans are typically the central characters. *(continued on page 72)*

The New Theory Versus the Old Story

by David Loye

ARE HUMANS AN ORGANISM PRIMARILY RULED BY the inescapable biological dictate of “survival of the fittest” and “selfish genes”? Or do we have the inbuilt drive and ability to choose to live by an ethos of mutual aid, caring for others, ultimately love?

A number of recent articles in *Tikkun* have set in motion a vital new probe of this question, which I believe is the single most important query facing our species at this pivotal juncture in human evolution: Peter Gabel’s call for sacred biologists, Art Green’s call for sacred evolution (*Tikkun* March/April 2010), and David Belden’s earlier review of Joan Roughgarden’s book *The Genial Gene* (September/October 2009). I am happy to join the conversation and share my perspective as an evolutionary systems scientist.

The idea of an inbuilt drive to care and love is really nothing new, of course. It’s been the underlying message of Jesus, Gautama, and countless other practical visionaries over the ages. It’s only new to us in trying to scientifically grope our way out of what became the prison of the old scientific mindset into the liberation of a new world allied as friend rather than enemy to spirituality.

The other thing that sadly comes across for me is how we could have been a century ahead, rather than a century behind, in the evolution of both our psyches and our social policies had we been able to understand, teach, and celebrate all that Darwin really believed and wrote. It’s not as if his ideas were lost in some obscure place like the Dead Sea Scrolls. Rather, there they have been staring us in the face for over one hundred years, laid out clearly, and at length, in *The Descent of Man*, in his early notebooks and letters, and in his own highly moral, cooperative, and loving family life.

Go with an open mind to the book in which Darwin specifically tells us he will deal with *human* evolution, *The Descent of Man*, and here is what you will find: in the 828 pages of this book—into each of which on the average 980 words are crammed—you will find that Darwin wrote only twice of “survival of the fittest,” but ninety-five times of love.

You will find that of selfishness—which he called “a base principle”—he wrote only twelve times, but ninety-two times of moral sensitivity.

Yet after more than one hundred years, if you ask someone what

they think or know about evolution, odds are you’ll get something about “survival of the fittest,” “selfish genes,” or what a CBS/*New York Times* poll in 2004 confirmed: that of American respondents, 55 percent believed “God created us in our present form.”

This is after a century of billions spent on science and education in the wealthiest and once supposedly most advanced country in the world.

What Did Darwin Really Believe?

WHAT I FOUND STILL ASTOUNDS ME. BEHIND THE ARRESTING word counts for *Descent* is the baffling reality of “two Darwins” that have divided Darwinians into three irreconcilable camps. On one hand is the “hard” Darwin of racist, sexist, and imperialist quotations. This for one camp is the ugly image for the man that comfortably fits the celebration of selfishness and “survival of the fittest” at the core of the traditionally “hard” Darwinian theory. It is also the Darwin who has provided the Creationists with a bogeyman, an excuse to bog down the mass mind in abysmal ignorance for over a century.

On the other hand, staunchly defended by the well-entrenched official camp—e.g., Dawkins, Dennett, Wilson, Pinker, and the Super Neo-Darwinians of sociobiology and evolutionary psychology—is the mystifying image of a really nice guy who somehow also happens to be the bloody patron saint for the traditionally “hard” Darwinian theory.

On still another hand, however, is what began as hardly a camp at all—just growing numbers of puzzled people able to read past the barrier of what we’ve been told to what in fact Darwin did both think and write of extensively.

It may seem inconceivable, beyond belief. But what I found is the Darwin whose other great contribution was in providing the scientific grounding for the “love thy neighbor” ethos of Jesus. Indeed, he does this, as a whole, for progressive religion and progressive philosophy.

In other words, in the “lost Darwin” one finds a carefully reasoned, empirically grounded scientific expression of the supremacy of love and moral sensitivity, with even a good word for what we know today as progressive religion!

Yes, in this man reviled as the enemy of religion, you will find that, although he firmly decided it was not for him, he approved of

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the practical, evolutionary effect of “the ennobling belief in God” that others held.

Even bolder, you may glimpse what I have come to see as the central driver for the *Tikkun* mission. In the “lost Darwin” I found ground for the vision of the task that progressive science, religion, philosophy, politics, and economics hold in common: fighting the regression in all its fields and forms that now places our species and our planet at risk.

Uncovering a Buried Treasure: Darwin's Picture of Who We Really Are

FOR OVER A DECADE I HAVE WRITTEN A STREAM OF ARTICLES, edited two books with essays by others, written four more books myself, formed The Darwin Project with a Council of fifty leading American, European, and Asian scientists and educators, built three websites, and formed a publishing company (Benjamin Franklin Press) to report what can only be glimpsed here, most all of it still in grim fact generally ignored.

Why such massive resistance? At age eighty-five, in one last big whack at it, I've set out to try to break the prevailing stranglehold of the disastrous old “survival of the fittest” and “selfish genes” mindset on us with three more books. In the forthcoming trilogy, *Darwin and the Battle for Human Survival*, I place the new Darwin within the step-by-step context of major works in the development of evolution theory, and the battle of progressive versus regressive politics, economics, education, science, and religion throughout the twentieth century.

What emerges not just out of the lost Darwin, but out of hundreds of corroborating studies (e.g., Maslow, the brain research of Paul MacLean and Karl Pribram, the biology of Lynn Margulis, the moral psychology of Freud, Piaget, Fromm, Kohlberg, and Gilligan), and skirmishes between pro and con (the volley and thundering of the so-called Darwin Wars) is this picture of who we really are:

- Unlike what we've been brainwashed over many centuries to believe, we are basically good—that is, far more often than we are aware of, we are driven by moral sensitivity.
- Though selfish, we are also driven by love to transcend selfishness.
- Though of necessity fiercely motivated to survive and prevail, we are also driven by the transcendent need to respect and care for the needs of others.
- Though in part or even throughout much of our lives we may be

the captives, victims, and even slaves of forces larger than ourselves, above all we are driven by a brain and a mind with the hunger and capability for a choice of destiny in a world in which choice of destiny is an option.

I have written this trilogy to bring to life not only the lost Darwin but by now countless others who wrote and write not just in speculation but in reasonably well-grounded conviction of *where we are going*.

They write not of how we are driven blindly, witlessly, through a life with no predictability—which has convinced far too many of us that we are but sheep in need of the wolf as leader—but of how we are driven by a brain that demands of life a sense of meaning and purpose, and by the vision of a better future.

In the concluding pages of *The Descent of Man*, Darwin wrote the following for all with open minds and eyes to see:



This street art of Charles Darwin captures a major truth about him.

Important as the struggle for existence has been and even still is, yet as far as the highest part of our nature is concerned there are other agencies more important. For the moral qualities are advanced either directly or indirectly much more through the effects of habit, by our reasoning powers, by instruction, by religion, etc., than through natural selection.... But the more important elements for us are love, and the distinct emotion of sympathy.... The birth both of the species and of the individual

are equally parts of that grand sequence of events that our minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance. The understanding revolts at such a conclusion.

If we date the scientific case for these conclusions from the year in which Darwin first sketched the higher order completion of his theory in his early notebooks, around 1837, I feel that here we have 173 years of scientific support for Peter Gabel's call for a “sacred biology,” Art Green's call for “sacred evolution,” and Joan Roughgarden's case for the “genial gene”—which notably provides the biological grounding for cultural evolution theorist Riane Eisler's partnership-versus-domination-system cultural transformation theory.

Time to Live by a New Story

HOW DO WE STORM THE BARRICADES OF MIND TO ADVANCE THIS essential revolution? What must we do to build the bridge to a better world?

We live by story.

Most of us would agree with this statement, as intuitively it

seems to make sense without further elaboration. But then add this: we live by story—and the story we are living by is driving our species toward extinction.

I've sorted through it all, over all of these years, looking for the answer, and I am convinced that what falls in place is this picture of new versus old theory, story, and paradigm.

The old way insists we are merely the willy-nilly playthings of random variation and natural selection, or of blind chance, fate, or Karma. The new way says what matters is the power of our vision of the better world and of our desire to journey there.

The old way was and is to outfit a comparative handful of kings, priests, scientists, and politicians to board the ship to the future, leaving the rest of us in ignorance behind. Historically we were and are to be left behind until they run the ship aground, then suddenly we become of value—suddenly gone from peon to cherished helper status, we are called up to help push the ship they've grounded from the rocks.

The new way is to bring us *within the process*. By widening our minds and enlisting our energies, the goal is to help drive the ship of state faster and more surely toward the better future not just for the few, but also for us all.

The old theory of *Origin*, misapplied, tells us we're inherently, predominantly, and indeed overwhelmingly selfish and aggressive. Emergent in *Descent*, the new theory tells us that, unless we've been unnaturally and disastrously warped, both over the short term and the long term we can be—and generally are—more powerfully driven by concern for the regard of others and by love.

The old theory tells us we are primarily driven by the need to perpetuate our own genes or the genes of our kin. The new theory tells us that we are also driven by the need to transcend ourselves, resonating to the whole of humanity and to the whole of life.

The old theory tells us that we are alone in the universe. In the phrase picked up in simultaneous book titles by biophysicist Stuart Kauffman and physicist John Wheeler, the new theory tells us we are “at home in the universe.” It tells us we're linked to one another and to the universe by something that's just “out there,” whether we call it spirituality, God, the cosmic connection, the Akashic Record, or the quantum vacuum.

The old theory tells us that our destiny is whatever chance and forces larger than ourselves select for us. The new theory offers something immeasurably more difficult to understand, but immeasurably hopeful once we understand it: it tells us that although we are massively constrained by all that really is larger and more powerful than ourselves, we are also driven by self-organizing and self-regulating processes that open up within the constraints a surprisingly large leeway, or “window of opportunity.” Given then our capacity for the *will* to shape it, the choice of destiny *to a vital degree is ours*.

The old theory tells us there is nothing inherent within us to help us tell good from bad or right from wrong—that throughout our lives from birth to death “moral sense” must always be hammered into us by self-appointed authorities who know better. The new theory tells us that moral sensitivity has been embedded within us over at least one billion years. It tells us

that, by providing an inner voice of basic guidance, it has escalated upward, level by evolutionary level, to reach the culmination of choice within ourselves.

The old theory encourages us to sit back and enjoy the medium, for supposedly the message is settled. Seeing that it has been scientifically worked out and certified by people much smarter than we are, who are we to question what we have been told and will be told again and again?

Oh, sure, the message may not be what we want to hear, but the old theory affirms this is the grim reality we must not only learn and teach but that each of us—as best we can—must *adapt* to.

The new theory and the new story tells us that the message is open-ended and eternal, stretching out of the dim past into the mists of the future for our species. It tells us that we have a voice in the shaping of the message—but that this message needs a great deal more nurturing, and understanding, and the assignment of much more financing for its R&D, and much more of the power of updated schooling and updated media to its spreading.

Above all, it tells us that we are not just what we more or less dutifully adapt to. Much more importantly—standing with the best of minds and hearts over the ages—we *are what we refuse to adapt to*.

The old theory tells us with scientific precision why we are driven by what used to be called our vices. The new theory scientifically accounts for, and offers hope and encouragement for, the expansion of the kind of values that used to be called our virtues.

Darwin's lost completion of theory accounts for and offers hope for our gaining more of such virtues as the courage of a Gandhi, the compassion of an Eleanor Roosevelt, and the perseverance and self-discipline of a Helen Keller or a Stephen Hawking in the face of debilitating handicaps.

It celebrates the virtues of cheerfulness and friendliness that lighten the life of others, which distinguished Franklin Roosevelt, Will Rogers, Darwin himself, or the Dalai Lama today. It further explains the helpfulness that psychiatrist Robert Coles pointed to in Dorothy Day's leadership of the Catholic Workers Union, or the all-too-often unappreciated responsibility that the all-too-rare best political leaders take on in giving of themselves to look after the rights, livelihoods, and betterment of others throughout the world.

These “virtues” are not just “nice” things for embroidery on Victorian walls or the Boy Scout or Girl Scout Manual. In terms of their evolutionary function, all the virtues I identify here are among those either experientially defined by Darwin in the development of the theory of *Descent* or empirically defined by psychologists Milton Rokeach, Abraham Maslow, and Darwin's other modern successors in psychology.

Most of all, the theory of *Descent* accounts for the majesty of mind—for the virtues of the intellect, of logic, of imagination, of “broadmindedness,” and of wisdom embodied in an Einstein, Freud, Marx, in Darwin himself, in the legendary Hypatia, or a Marie Curie, or a Maria Montessori.

The theory of *Descent* also begins to (*continued on page 74*)



Editor's note: We have received this article from the future! Our thanks to anachronismus.net—slogan: "Out of time? We deliver!"—for this article from the next century, dated July 2111.

How Science—and Civilization—Survived the Twenty-First Century

by M.L.K. Patel, translated from the future-speak by David Belden

POPULAR BIOLOGY'S REQUEST FOR ME, THE OLDEST biology prof they could find, to reflect on "Science in the Century since 2010" has found me on retreat among my beloved lichens on the site of the former Siachen glacier in the Himalayas. As you know, nothing remains of the glacier as it existed in 2010, a century ago, before the great melting and inundations. The request came slowly by yak, of course, so I have little time in which to reply. We have no satellite coverage here, in common with about half the world now. And I have no files with me, having sworn off electronics for the duration up here. The worldwide backlash against science that followed the disasters of the twenty-first century has faded now, but not always in remote regions like this. Only last year Professor Kandaswamy was beaten to death when she pulled out her Geiger counter. So I am pretending to be on religious retreat. This is all

by way of apology: I have an old man's poor memory, no way to consult sources, and am sending these thoughts back by painfully handwritten note. Handwriting is a skill the young have nowadays of course, but nothing us old types raised on voice recognition software ever thought we would need.

When I think that a century ago some 40 percent of Americans—and don't forget the United States was the dominant country in those days—did not accept the idea of evolution, I hardly know where to begin. Polls show that only pockets of resistance like the one here remain in North America today. But the evolutionary theory the majority accepts is both the same and different from the one their forebears rejected. It is the same in the sense that it is the same good science—better science now than then of course, because amazing progress has been made. But it's different in that the context of that science, as of all science, has

changed. And thank goodness it has. This, no doubt, is what the editors wish me to reflect upon.

The Horrors that Science Enabled

WHAT CAN I SAY ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF THIS SCIENTIFIC revolution that you don't already know? Science hit its nadir when we started to lose the great sea-level cities—Kolkatta, Dhaka, London, New York, Shanghai, Cape Town, and all. There were high-tech dreams of building sea defenses to save them: a world of Venices. But we had hundreds of millions of refugees to resettle: the two-meter sea rise inundated much of the rice-growing areas of Asia. We had the pandemics. We had the Siberian, Canadian, and other cities to build. We had millions of square miles of tundra to convert to permaculture and vast global belts to shift from one type of agriculture to another. We had to end fossil fuel use in short order, and renewables simply didn't replace them adequately.

In this turmoil, the public wasn't about to go on funding science—there simply were no resources for such luxuries. Big Science peaked with Big Oil and Big War, and we had to reinvent how science is done. We can only dream of things like Grandiose Hadron Colliders, Extremely Large Telescopes, or Moon Rockets (forgive the cynicism in my capitalizations). Campus-based universities with large science faculties may return one day, but I'm not counting on it.

Worse than that, science became a scapegoat. One of many, but a major one. Scientists were lynched, science campuses torched.

And with some reason! Without Galileo, Newton, Darwin, Einstein, and the entire Enlightenment, we would never have had Darby's coke smelting and cast iron, Ford's assembly lines, and the fossil fuel revolution; nor the revolutions in agriculture and medicine. But also not—and here's the rub—the population explosion they enabled; nor the proliferation of untested chemicals in use, the nuclear waste, the dead rivers; you know the litany. Barbaric, superstitious, premodern people could never have destroyed human civilizations and innumerable other species as utterly and swiftly as a scientifically empowered people did.

Science Then: Both Sacred and Value-Free!

OF COURSE, IT'S WELL UNDERSTOOD NOW THAT OUR FOREBEARS of a century ago were ignorant. The problem with science then was not that it had gone too far, but that it had not gone far enough. It had gone too fast in directions that people would fund for profit and power and in the "easy" disciplines where science could make rapid headway, like physics and chemistry. But it was way behind in the research least conducive to scientific certainties, such as human motivations and culture. So science had enabled seriously big magic like automobiles, penicillin, the Internet, air and space travel, nuclear power, and mega-cities, and handed them to mammals whose level of self-knowledge and self-restraint was barely adequate for handcars and swords. It was like letting children play with loaded guns—but worse:



The bombing of the science campus at Arctic University in 2063 wasn't the most destructive example of scapegoating science for the disasters of the century, just the most dramatic.

armed children can't drown major cities.

Some scientists excused themselves from responsibility by saying they were innocently pursuing pure knowledge, which must be a good in itself. And so it is, but even good things have a social context that can make them dangerous. Other scientists preached social responsibility, while themselves feeling only contempt for "irrational" people like religious believers—as if they themselves were rational people! The idea of a "rational person" itself was only just coming under scientific scrutiny in 2010. The absurdity of "rational man" economic theory was finally getting some attention, but it was neuroscience that by then was starting to clarify that all reason is itself based in emotion, that the two are not separate, let alone opposite. The central roles of empathy in all animal and human thought and action, and of cooperation in evolution, were not yet established, though pioneers were laying the groundwork.

But all this was slow to filter into the culture. The problem was that for large swaths of the secular and liberal religious worlds, science had acquired the sacred mantra that once adhered to religion. Scientific hubris, common at the time, held that only scientific knowledge was "real," because it was based on objective, quantitative data. It was thought to be the only thing that people could agree on—though they manifestly didn't as the rise of fundamentalist religion and other kickbacks against science and modernity showed. It was especially thought to have a higher status value than any "knowledge" (the quotation marks would have been obligatory at the time) of values, moral imperatives, and paths to compassionate understanding. As a result, "value-neutral science" proved impotent against the values of the money- and war-makers, and their fundamentalist religious enablers. So conservative politicians eagerly referred to values, but liberal politicians found themselves lacking an adequate language or authority to do so.

It was a crisis in the legitimacy of ideas. Absurd though it was, there was very little discussion a century ago about this topsy-turvy status elevation of scientific knowledge above values and knowledge of the Dharma, of the way of wisdom, in its widest sense.

The latter kinds of knowledge—that we are interdependent, the cosmos awesome, the effort to transcend (*continued on page 74*)

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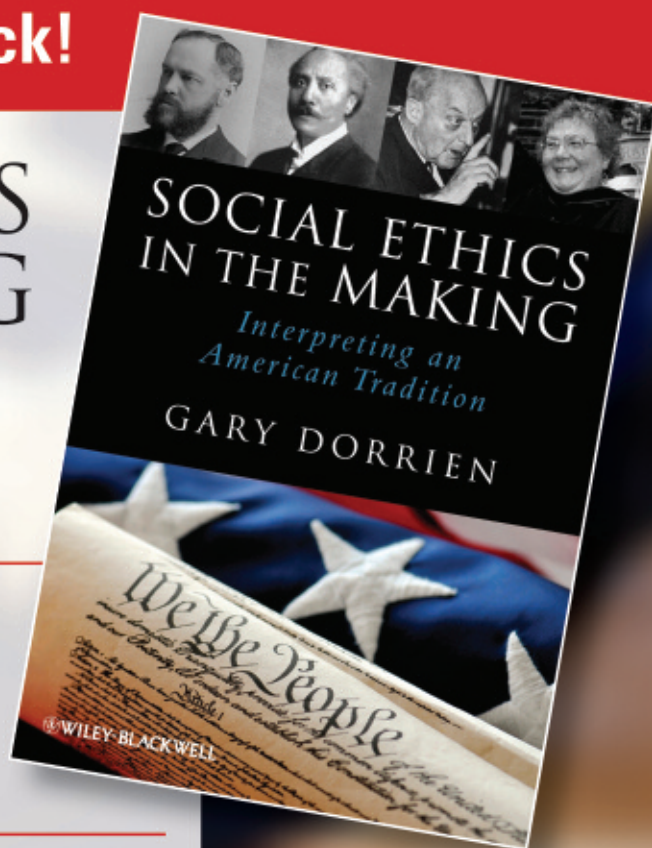
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Elements of a Philosophy for Diaspora Judaism

An Introduction to Rabbi Aaron Samuel Tamaret's
"The Exile of the Presence and the Presence of the Exile"

by Everett Gendler

WHY BE JEWISH? WHY JOIN TEMPLES? WHY BOTHER TO INTRODUCE OUR children to Jewish ideas and practices? Answers to these questions vary from person to person and from age to age, but the questions persist. Perhaps there are periods of remission but not of resolution. The questions seem as perpetual as the Jewish people itself.

In recent decades, many Jews have answered these questions by referring to the Holocaust or the State of Israel as primary reasons for remaining involved in Jewish life and for exploring Judaism. With the passage of time, the Holocaust grows more remote. To preserve the memories of it seems still a worthy goal, but the immediacy and urgency of it have diminished with time. And as Israel has transformed from an immediately endangered society to a regional military superpower, the shift in its identity has opened the way for many Jews to question specifics of its policies and its claims upon us. Territorial policies, the steady growth of settlements from the post-Oslo period into the present, military actions in Lebanon and Gaza, the blockade of Gaza, and the flotilla episode have caused many Jews to feel increasingly remote from Israel as a moral or spiritual center for their lives.

Once again the question of Jewish purpose, of Jewish mission, asserts itself afresh. Rather surprisingly, a chapter from an essay written in 1920 seems directly relevant to the question that we address today. Its title? "The Exile of the [Divine] Presence and the [Divine] Presence of the Exile." My translation of this text—the fourth chapter from *The Community of Israel and the Wars of the Nations* by Rabbi Aaron Samuel Tamaret/Tamares—appears on page 56 of this issue of *Tikkun*; I am offering this short essay as an introduction to it.

Many readers will recognize the term "Divine Presence," an English rendering of the Hebrew word *Shechinah*. Referring to God's presence within the sanctuary of the community of Israel (Exodus 25:8), the term is central to contemporary discussions of the renewal of religious experience and to seeking the felt presence of God during prayer and ceremony. As the central expression within Jewish mystical thought and practice for the feminine presence of God, it is a frequent point of reference in feminist theology as well. The centrality of the term in Tamaret's affirmation of God's felt presence within Diaspora Judaism contributes to the sense that, despite the ninety years since its composition, his essay sounds surprisingly up to date.

An Unassailably Jewish Critique of the Nation-State and Jewish Nationalism

RABBI TAMARET/TAMARES PASSIONATELY AFFIRMS DIASPORA JUDAISM AS THE TRUE, NECESSARY purpose of Jewish existence, even as he expresses a severe critique of nationalism. Not prone to Jewish exceptionalism (as in "a 'Jewish' nation-state will be different"), he offers a searching criticism

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that extends both to the independent Jewish kingdoms of biblical times and to the Temple itself, as well as to modern political Zionism.

Many Jews are uncomfortable with criticisms of Zionism and of Israel as a state. Even thoughtful, sympathetic Jewish critics of policies of the State of Israel are often dismissed as ignorant about Jewish matters, inauthentic, or self-hating. Such charges can hardly be directed against Rabbi Aaron Samuel Tamaret/Tamares, 1869–1931, known as the prodigy (*ilui*) from Maltsh. In addition to being an author and philosopher, Tamaret served as rabbi to the village of Mileichich (Grodno district) from 1893 until his death. He is aptly characterized in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* as “an Orthodox rabbi who fought against the fossilized halachah in a completely original style and who attacked nationalism and political Zionism as anti-Jewish phenomena.” Reassured by these Jewish credentials, perhaps we can, with less discomfort than would otherwise be the case, give reasoned hearing to Tamaret’s searching, searing critique of Jewish nationalism.

His essay begins with some reflections on the ever-changing fortunes of nations engaged in realpolitik domination and subordination. He then turns to the example of the traditional Jew rising at midnight to chant prayers of mourning (*Tikkun Chatzot*) for the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the Jewish people from its land. Often cited by detractors of Judaism as evidence for God’s remoteness now from the Jewish people, the exile is presented in a totally different light by Tamaret, who argues skillfully and vigorously that the exile in fact represents the continuity (through purification and intensification) of the intimate relation of the community of Israel to the Divine. For this, a prime example is Sabbath observance, providing clear evidence of the gifts of spirit, and the consequent joy, that this day bestows upon Jews.

Tamaret explains in detail why this exile is necessary: it serves in the fulfillment of God’s desire to be made known to the entire world as truly the one who would redeem all peoples from “the tight trap of materialistic nationalism,” thereby freeing all persons to experience intimately the presence of the Divine—a profound liberation theology. In Tamaret’s view, the example of living “not by might, not by violence, but by Divine Spirit,” the basic mandate of the community of Israel, was seriously compromised by the power political intrigues that characterized the policies of all the kings of Judah and Israel. Even the construction of the Temple represented ambiguities that threatened the purity of the intimate personal relationship of the individual to the Divine. The nationalistic desire “to be just like all the nations”; the tendency to value routine, external sacrificial acts above the intentional inwardness of Torah study; the growing tendency to regard sacred scripture as primarily a governmental constitution—these were among the corruptions that could be cured by exile. The combination of exile and the origin of the “house of study” enabled the community of Israel to serve once again as fresh witness to the possibility for other peoples to live fulfilled communal and personal lives without the increasingly lethal costs of traditional nationalism. As Tamaret notes, “When Torah and Exile are joined, great wonders are born in the soul of their bearer.”

“Departure of the Israelites,”
by David Roberts, 1829.



Published English Versions of Other Writings of Rabbi Tamaret/Tamares

"Politics and Passion—An Inquiry into the Evils of Our Time," *Judaism*, Volume 23, Number 1, Winter 1963, pp. 36-56

"Passover and Non-Violence," *Judaism*, Volume 17, Number 2, Spring 1968, pp. 204-210

"Ancient Visions, Future Hopes—Rabbi Aaron Samuel Tamaret's Objection to Zionism as We Know It," *Tikkun*, July/August 2003, pp. 25-30

"Ancient Visions, Future Hopes: Recalling a Religious Objector to Jewish Nationalism" (longer version), *Issues*, Fall 2003

The Relevance of the Jewish and Tibetan Diasporas to Humankind

AT THIS TIME OF RENEWED SOUL-SEARCHING AMONG JEWS—WITH FAITH IN ISRAELI nationalism severely shaken following Israel's attacks on Lebanon and Gaza—attempts to base Jewish identity upon identification with the political entity called the State of Israel are increasingly called into question. As ethnic identity becomes steadily weaker, the need for a renewed sense of purpose becomes all the more urgent.

It seems evident that the ethical sense remains strong among younger Jews today. Their disproportionate involvement in movements for peace, justice, and social change is one testimony; their seeking after the transcendent, manifested in their interest in Eastern spirituality, is another; their sympathy and activity on behalf of the Tibetan community, both under occupation and in exile, still another. Many younger Jews have been particularly inspired by the dedication of the Dalai Lama—and with him Kalon Tripa Samdhong Rinpoche, the first elected prime minister of the Tibetan Government in Exile—to a self-determining Tibet as a nonviolent Zone of Peace, whether as a genuinely autonomous region of China or as a fully independent state. Echoes and associations with the Jewish example of exile are rich, resonant, and strikingly reminiscent of Yochanan ben Zakai (circa 30-90 CE) establishing the Academy at Yavneh; resemblances to Rabbi Tamaret's principled yet practical sense of nonviolent mission may also be discerned.

Tamaret might well be understood as articulating a vision of nonterritorial communal survival and post-nation-state existence. At a time when numerous conventional national boundaries are being challenged by both ethnic strife and transnational globalization, and large numbers of humans are becoming refugees in alien lands, Tamaret's declaration of the relevance of the Jewish Diaspora to humankind as a whole deserves fresh consideration. This sense of broader purpose and wider mission may well enlist the idealistic energies of many Jewish youth today.

Though Tamaret wrote the following piece almost a century ago, it is surprisingly contemporary and compellingly relevant to all Jews concerned with the meaning of our lives and the broad human significance of being Jewish. ■

The Exile of the Presence and the Presence of the Exile

by Aaron Samuel Tamaret,
translated by Everett Gendler

THE EVENTS OF HISTORY MOVE RAPIDLY IN THIS WORLD: NATIONS DECLINE and nations arise. Every nation in its heyday holds the world firmly in the palm of its hand: it plucks the wool without tiring, devours the flesh ravenously, and at the same time tries to breathe in its soul and spirit, believing absolutely in the just merits of this procedure. Widely engaging in these two estimable practices—exploiting and plundering all men, and "teaching" and "guiding" all men—every ascendant nation for a certain time manages to boast and behave foolishly until finally it descends from the pinnacle and its place is taken by another nation, also half despoiler and half "guide."

Rabin Sz. A. Tamres, a rabbi in Milejczyce, published an expanded version of this essay in Hebrew as chapter four of the Knesset Yisrael u-Milchamot Hagoyim, Zydzi I walka narodow (The Community of Israel and the Wars of the Nations) in Warsaw in 1920. Thanks to Rabbi Everett Gendler for producing this compressed English translation for Tikkun.



"The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem," by David Roberts, 1850.

Persistence of the Jewish People

THROUGH ALL THIS LONG HISTORY OF THE SUCCESSION OF NATIONS, ONE NATION IN THE world trailed in the wake, Israel by name. Time after time it was cast about and driven from one country to another. Its rucksack, always ready at hand, was filled largely with books—books for the study of the Torah. Within the bundle of books were found also a small Siddur and a small wax candle. As soon as the wanderer had located a night's lodging, just so soon would he arise at midnight, find some corner in the inn, seat himself on a low stool, light the dim candle, open his tidy Siddur, and recite *Tikkun Chatzot* (Midnight Prayers of Lamentation). In his reciting he would, half hungry and half shattered, cry and bemoan his physical sufferings. But mainly he would pour out his heart because of his spiritual travail, because of "the Exile of the Presence." He would gasp bitterly and recite:

Then was I his only beloved
And the Glory of the Most High was I called;
Now to the depths have I descended,
And my Most Beloved to the heights has ascended.

Calumnies about the Exile

THE "SEVENTY NATIONS" AND THE MOCKERS SEE THIS TRAGEDY AND ARE CONTENT TO explain it lightly and cynically: "For you, accursed Jew, it is fitting indeed to bemoan and bewail 'the Exile of Presence,' for you are plagued, smitten by the Lord and afflicted, having neither Presence nor God." Thus do they deprecate and dismiss the life of the Jew in exile, scornfully spitting on "the Galut" by presenting it as the cause of "the lack of spirituality" and denying to the Jew in exile all possibility of the finer life.

The Spiritual Reality of Exile

YET ANYONE WITH EVEN A BIT OF A BRAIN IN HIS HEAD SURELY UNDERSTANDS THE MATTER in quite the opposite way: the sorrow of our people over the Exile of the Presence is an indication, not of its remoteness from God, but precisely of its nearness to him. The solitary beloved, sitting and shedding tears of great longing for her lover who for the time being is separated from her, surely does not prove by this that her lover has rejected her or forsaken her forever.

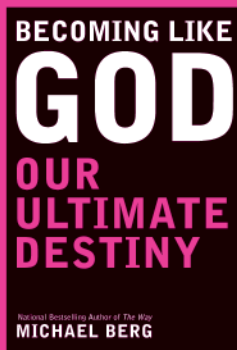
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And how much less does it provide even one shred of evidence that she, the beloved, has rejected her lover. Just the reverse.

“Those who love me do I love, And those who seek me earnestly will find me” (Proverbs 8:17).

Seated on the ground at midnight, the tears that “his only beloved” sheds night after night for “her Most Beloved who to the heights has ascended,” are a clear indication of the intense nearness and the burning love that exists between the beloved and her lover.

But he who lacks the sensitivity to recognize the nature of the tears shed by the grandfather over The Exile of the Presence at the time of Tikkun Chatzot each weekday night—let such a one kindly take the trouble to observe the tears of this very same grandfather at the time of *Kabbalat Shabbat* (Prayers for Welcoming the Sabbath). Let him but take the trouble to enter the synagogue on the Sabbath Eve and see the tears of joy and ecstasy that the grandfather sheds as he welcomes the arrival of “Sabbath the Queen,” the arrival of the Divine Presence. Then his error will become apparent to him, his error in so misapprehending the tears shed by the elderly Jew each weeknight over the Exile of the Presence. For surely now he must be convinced that

this mourner is not anywise forsaken by the Presence, but quite the contrary, the Presence is very near unto him, so near that he actually receives and welcomes it each and every Sabbath. Let him note, please, that her lover who wandered so far off, even ascending to the heights, returns to her dwelling time after time to rejoice with her in the delights of love.

This joy and ecstasy—which even in exile seizes the Jewish people each Sabbath and Holy Day Eve by means of the glorious and exalted prayers and hymns through which it expresses its soul—is the true mark of the sublime exilic creativity of the Jewish people. For although the Jew in exile was not especially creative in the material realm, for reasons independent of him, he was, despite this, most creative in the spiritual realm. And his true joy in this creative task the exilic Jew expresses in his hymns and prayers concerning the tranquility he finds through his most pleasing mate, the Sabbath.

With these words we have laid the foundation for the assumption, readily assented to by all the initiated among our people who have penetrated to the inner spirit of people and its sacred literature: that not only did the Exile not remove from our people its exalted task and mission, to bear witness to the Providence that in the first instance established it as a people, but on the contrary, it has in fact assisted it in this task, easing its work in assuming this mission.

This discussion has been in general terms. We shall now proceed to portray the exilic creation in greater detail.

The Mission of the Jewish People

TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO, AT THE TIME OF THE RENOWNED REVELATIONS AT MOUNT Sinai, the hour had arrived for the Creator of the universe to give to the world his Torah, i.e., to give to the world below the divine emanations of faith in and cleavage to God (*Emuna* and *D'vekut*).

The Jewish people responded to his call by hastening to express its willingness immediately in these words: “We will obey and we will hearken.” Therefore the Torah was conveyed to the Jewish people, creating a firm bond and covenant between the people and the Holy One, blessed be he. For the people the covenant had as its goal their becoming “a kingdom of priests and a holy people,” i.e., their becoming a people each of whose individual members would have within his heart purity and nearness to God to such a degree that it would be, as a whole, a kingdom all of whose members were priestly and holy—every (*continued on page 76*)

Strange Land, New World

by Jonathan Shefa

I AM THE FIRST JEW TO LIVE IN THIS CLOISTERED BENEDICTINE monastery. I don't blend. I wear a *kippah* everywhere I go, and I observe the Sabbath and all Jewish holidays. I'm studying to become a rabbi, and I live here in this remote community of Catholic monks vowed to chastity and obedience.

I didn't come here because of any personal interest in their religious practice. I came here to resolve a question I've been living with for a decade, since spending a year of contemplation in a matchstick hut on a hilltop in the Galilee. A lot of things happened that year, but there are three in particular that have become central features of my life: Shabbat, *hitbodedut*, and the *Yovel*. The first two are practices; the third, a quest.

Shabbat is Hebrew for the Sabbath, and I've been keeping it—no computer, phone, TV, car, or money from Friday sunset to nightfall on Saturday—ever since. *Hitbodedut* is an ancient practice of walking out into the fields, the forest, the hills ... wherever you can be alone, and talking out loud—to God, the source of all being, Allah, whatever you want to call it. It's my central daily ritual; I don't know who I'd be without it. The *Yovel* is the Jubilee Year, and I first truly noticed it that year in the Galilee. I was immediately taken.

I had spent the previous four years working to end hunger. During that time I encountered no one who had the answers I was looking for. I decided to find my own. Israel—the land, the region—had been, in a sense, the source of an idea—the idea of one God—that swept the globe. It seemed to me we needed a new idea, not to counter that one but to move us forward as a species, to lead us to change the way we relate to one another so as to move beyond the eminently avoidable crisis of hunger. I decided to go and find out what it was that had given that first idea such legs.

That's when I came upon the *Yovel*. If you don't remember it from the Bible, the Jubilee Year is the fiftieth year of the economic cycle, when all property and productive resources are meant to be redistributed equally to ensure, among other things, that disparities in wealth do not balloon out of proportion, and to firmly establish economic justice as a core feature of life in the Promised Land. It's God's holy reset button. After spending so much time applying Band-Aids, it was refreshing to come across an approach that was boldly idealistic, that addressed the problem in a fundamental, structural way. Here was the Torah, the Hebrew Bible, wearing its social justice boldly on its sleeve. I wondered how it could be that as a people we can get so caught up in the particulars—so bent out of shape if someone uses a light switch on the Sabbath or blends linen in a wool garment or, God forbid, enjoys a little bacon—yet when it comes to something so obviously relevant to *this* world, so clearly beneficial and spelled out in black and white with no room for misinterpretation, we hardly even acknowledge it, let alone practice it, not once.



Though recently defrocked, Jonathan still considers himself a Jewish monk. He now lives in Jerusalem, where he continues to work on Global Sabbath. He holds degrees from McGill and Harvard. Visit www.globalsabbath.com.

So I began to look into it, and I've been doing so ever since, delving deeply into the dimensions, meaning, and practice of this ancient commandment that seemed embedded in my consciousness. At one point, I began working with an Orthodox rabbi to study all of the commentaries and super-commentaries on the section of the Torah dealing with the Jubilee Year. I quickly went from one to three mornings per week. I'd get up at dawn to make my way through the slush and snow so we could pore over the texts. If you knew me, you'd be all too aware that nothing in my life has ever gotten me up at 6:00 AM, especially not voluntarily, and certainly not regularly. I was hooked.

I was especially inspired by Nachmanides's interpretation of Leviticus 25:2, which changed my life. Nachmanides (known in Orthodox circles as the Ramban, from Rabbi Moses ben Nachman) remains, nearly 750 years after his death, one of the most authoritative interpreters of the Torah of all time. His commentary is breathtaking, betraying a command of traditional texts that would put any modern scholar to shame. He was a scholar, a

doctor, a philosopher and a deeply accomplished kabbalist and Jewish mystic. It would be hard to overstate his influence. In his commentary on Leviticus 25:2, the Ramban, normally quite abstemious with his words, goes on at length to say that he can't actually say what he's about to say, but he'll say what he is permitted, and if you "bend your ear," you may merit comprehension. Here, he refers to the Yovel as the "great secret of secrets of the Torah": a secret he claims, with amazing chutzpah, that Moses himself did not know.

This is the secret I have been pursuing ever since, and it led me here, to this band of Catholic hermits in the forest. Not, as I say, because they're Catholic. I came here specifically for two things: time and space. I wanted to cut out all distractions, to focus all my energies on figuring out just what the Yovel means, and what I'm supposed to do about this secret that has marked itself so indelibly on my soul.

In considering this move, I expected to pore over books, consider commentaries, and build an argument, theory, or plan. Over time I realized that when the Ramban wrote that he couldn't say what he was about to say, his statement wasn't hyperbole, it was literal. According to Jewish tradition, Moses wrote the entire Torah from beginning to end. Whether or not that's factually accurate is unimportant; the idea is expressive of a spiritual, rather than a material truth. To say that there is something within the Torah that Moses didn't understand is a big deal. It means there was something that he, as holy stenographer, was called to transcribe but not transmit. It means that there is something God wanted us to know and do for which Moses and his generation were not ready; God knew that someday, somehow a generation would be ready. This is no simple secret. What I discovered was it wasn't enough for me to bend my ear—I had to bend my heart, my soul, my self.

I had come to the right place, and my few months' sojourn in the forest wound up lasting two and a half years. It's impossible for me to

fully describe my journey here, but it's fair to say that it's the furthest I've ever traveled while staying in one place. These two years have been extraordinary. They began with a serious outpouring. Within the first six months I recorded well over a hundred hours of ideas as I wandered about the property.

The hermitage rests on about a thousand acres of redwood, oak, maple, and eucalyptus forest. Deer use the cloister as a safe haven. The ocean spreads below our hilltop in infinite witness, while the stars press so close the Milky Way seems like low-hanging clouds, rather than a band of distant light. I walk the trails as if on stage before eternity—the universe present, watching, listening, here.



God repose on the Sabbath day. Illustration by Vasily Koren from the first Russian engraved Bible, 1696.

In those first months I was alight, charged with possibility. The silence, space, and freedom from un-chosen demands on my time uncovered a well-spring that lay hidden within me, and I poured myself out. This uncovering process didn't end after the initial honeymoon—it deepened. Life became, in a way, an ongoing meditation. Soon after my arrival, I moved into an old silver trailer on the edge of the forest. It's cozy, with blond wood-paneled walls and large bay windows looking through the woods toward a creek bed at the base of the hill. When I'm not wandering the property talking to God, this place is my fishbowl, where there's only so far I can go before coming up against the edges of my self. Here, I am constantly confronted with my state of mind; there's no escape, and little distraction. I bought front row seats to the life of Jonathan and there's simply no intermission.

We have no living monastic tradition in Judaism. I had to come here to find this. I've always known, on some level, that this would happen. Even twenty years ago, when I was just entering university, I remember asking my girlfriend, "How would you feel if I took six months to live at a monastery?" I wound up practicing Zen for years, and even spent a fair amount of time on retreat at Zen monasteries. But at this stage of my life I chose to come here, to a Benedictine monastery that holds no spiritual resonance for me at all save the monasticism itself. Since there's no mold within my own tradition into which I can pour myself, I came here to create my own.

The choice to come here, and to stay, hasn't been easy. At first, the solitude would often transmute into loneliness. But the biggest cost has been the time away from my own people, from a community that shares the same way of relating to the divine and imagining the future. Community is an essential feature of Jewish life, and for me this is especially the case when it comes to learning, envisioning, and inspiring together. I've missed that.

Yet I recognize that this was entirely necessary. A central part of the uncovering process has been a profound stripping away of the voices and identities I no longer need, a paring away of inherited notions of who I am. I've taken Occam's razor to my self. For this, distance has been essential, especially distance from those who most directly shaped my sense of identity—such as my father, who as I was growing up told me again and again that I could do anything I wanted, and then, as soon as my choices became clear, told me over and over, "You can't do that." This schizophrenic approach has helped to foster deeply warring factions within me—on the one hand, unbounded hope and aspiration; on the other, paralytic doubt.

Living in my fishbowl, grappling with my own fears and doubts full-time, I came face to face with how deeply embedded they are. I came to see that fear is a core feature of the ego itself: it's the fuel that keeps the ego going. Fear isn't just something that strikes now and again; it is built into the system, a kind of energetic white noise that helps perpetuate the illusion of separateness and keeps me from living here, now, in total equanimous surrender to what is. As one teacher of mine recently put it, "fear is the glue that binds the ego together." This, I discovered, is one of the hidden lessons of Eden. The story of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is the Torah's symbolic representation of what's holding our species back from living in a world of peace, freedom, and justice, where we share the earth's bounty as beloveds, rather than hoarding it as enemies. It's an attempt, in spiritual terms, to capture the central ongoing error of humanity. The first thing that Adam says to God after eating from the tree is, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I am afraid." This isn't a statement of passing emotional distress; it's Adam conveying to God the nature



Global Sabbath's first major campaign will be to organize a global day of rest for humanity, the earth, and all its creatures: a day of rest from violence, hunger, and the destruction of the natural world.

of the shift, what it was now like to be alive, to be human. The world we see around us—the world still plagued by war, poverty, and ecological destruction—is a world based in that fear. Though it's hard to characterize exactly what the object of that fear is, one way might be to say it's a fear that everything isn't just as it's supposed to be, and that things will not be okay just as they are. The result of this fear is the impulse to control, either literally through action, or psychologically through repetitions of the past and ongoing mental projections of the future in our minds.

The opposite of this fear is trust. And this, it turns out, is one of the deeper secrets of the Yovel: it's an economics of trust. The Yovel seems impossible from where we stand because it is impossible from where we stand. It's meant to be that way. It stands as the antithesis to a world based in fear. Unlike mixing wool and linen or holding the cheese on that burger, the Yovel is not a commandment that can be performed by rote. To fulfill the Yovel—to let go of our own narrow self-interest to such an extent that we could actually start over and share this planet—requires nothing short of evolution. To fulfill the Yovel requires taking the next step in our journey as humanity: spiritual transformation. The reason we've never kept it is that we've never been ready.

This radically antithetical quality has made my task here all the more challenging, since my objective has been not only to understand the Yovel, but also to explore what steps we might take to bring it into reality; my true aim is to bridge the spiritual and the practical. Indeed, almost every time I talk with someone about the Yovel, one of the first questions they ask is: "How? What are people actually supposed to do?" Responding to this has been especially perplexing since the deeper wisdom of the Yovel suggests that the remedy to the ills we see on this earth can be much better characterized not by what we need to do, but by what we need to stop doing. Keeping the Yovel requires not simply doing things differently, but being different.

But how do we *do* that? How do we start the process of stopping?

The culmination of my efforts thus far is Global Sabbath—a movement, organization, and campaign designed with the aim of helping humanity move toward manifesting the deeper principles of the Yovel in this world.

The Yovel is the ultimate expression of a system. The system begins with the cycle of weekly Sabbaths: on every seventh day we briefly step back from the world, let go of control, and experience a taste of peace. It's a weekly spiritual retreat. The next stage of the system is the Sabbatical Year, during which the outward (and correspondingly inward) practices of the Sabbath find even sharper expression. The Torah's vision of the Sabbatical Year is one where every seventh year food becomes free and the earth is allowed to rest completely, where debt is released and servitude is nullified. In the agricultural world of the Torah, this means a year dedicated entirely to pursuits of the spirit, for everyone. After seven cycles of seven years, the system culminates in the Yovel, when everything goes back to the beginning.

This entire system of Sabbaths can be seen as a training program, in which we develop, day by day and year by year, the spiritual muscles and stamina necessary to engage in ever more advanced expressions of spiritual development—within ourselves and in relation to one another and the earth—personally, politically, economically, and socially.

I founded Global Sabbath with the aim of capturing this system's inherent emphases on orientation, direction, and taking things step by step. Our first major campaign will be to organize a global day of rest for humanity, the earth, and all its creatures: a day of rest from violence, hunger, and destruction of the natural world. Why only one day? The Talmud teaches us that if humanity were to experience one day of true Sabbath, it would change the course of history, that it would be the beginning of a new world. Tasting our true potential, all together—knowing that around the globe people are experiencing peace, that the earth is receiving its due rest and that we are sharing this world—would shift something within us, giving us a new sense of what is possible, our true capacity. We'd come to realize that if we can do it for one day, we can do it for two; and if we can do it for two, we can do it for good. (*continued on page 79*)

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Culture

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[BOOKS]

Racial Justice: New Structures and New Selves

THE MACHINERY OF WHITENESS, by Steve Martinot, Temple University Press, 2010

CATEGORICALLY UNEQUAL, by Douglas S. Massey, Russell Sage Foundation Publications, 2007

THE ART OF HAPPINESS IN A TROUBLED WORLD, by the Dalai Lama and Howard Cutler, Doubleday Religion, 2009

Review by john a. powell

IN HIS FAMOUS MARCH 2008 speech in Philadelphia, then-candidate Obama asked us to move beyond a racial politics that demands a perpetrator and a victim and instead to begin to embrace the full complexity of race in this country. He called for us to acknowledge the extent to which our fates are interwoven, our problems shared, our futures interdependent. Yet, as we enter the winter of 2010, this rhetoric of hope and change has given way to an administration that has been disappointingly silent on race, as well as milquetoast in its policy prescriptions, even as multiple populist movements stir up white fear and anger.

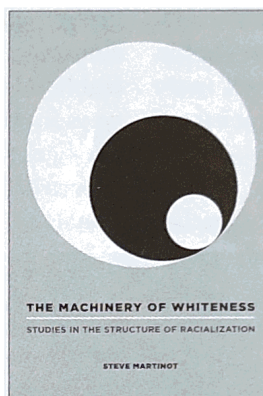
The Machinery of Whiteness author Steve Martinot would be the first to point out that the ugly, racialized overtones of the calls to “take America back,” the outrage over the location of a progressive Islamic Center, and the explicit demand for racial profiling in Arizona’s SB 1070 are neither new nor surprising. In his occasionally heavy-handed book, he expands on his earlier work in *The Rules of Racialization* and demands of the reader that

we not only accept that race is socially constructed but that we “describe the contours of this structure,” that we come to terms

with “the bulldozing machine of white supremacy” and ask the hard question about “the nature of whiteness ... [why] even in the face of the pro-Democratic ethics of the civil rights movements, it must keep coming back.”

The essays in the book are somewhat repetitive, and Martinot’s language can tend toward the overwrought vocabulary of cultural studies departments; for all its shortcomings, however, the book is unflinching in tracing the reconstitution of whiteness throughout history. Martinot is at his best when he is examining the way a white identity has been continually reconstituted through domination in the United States: the symbolic function of fugitive slave patrols and anti-miscegenation laws, the way women’s bodies and sexuality were “weaponized” as instruments of whiteness, and the ways that U.S. foreign intervention has been about shoring up a fragile whiteness at home.

Martinot’s book not only moves us beyond the class-dominant realm of many neo-Marxist historiographies, it also turns our attention on what is inherent in whiteness: its paranoia, its will to power, its demand for impunity.

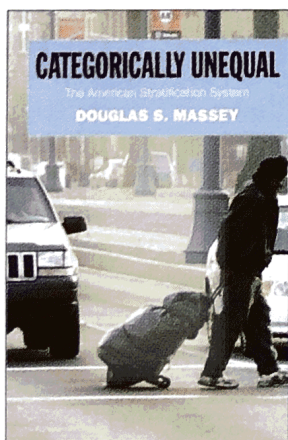


While he runs the risk of turning every social problem into a nail that can be explained by the violent hammering of whiteness, placing racialization back into the central spot in the history of the United States is a cold shower on the dominant narrative of racial progress in this country. Martinot’s recognition that equity will

not be brought in through the back door, that there can be no private renunciation of whiteness, nor a “race-neutral” multiculturalism, nor any side-stepping into simple class-focused policy remedies should be noted by all those working for social justice.

While the book does an excellent job in looking at the jagged and bloody edges of whiteness, it only touches on the more banal structures that reproduce racial hierarchy and racial disparities. It is here where we turn to Douglas Massey.

Massey’s work with Nancy Denton on *American Apartheid* (1993) remains one of the few indispensable books for understanding racial hierarchy in the United States, and the centrality of spatial segregation to racialization. In *Categorically Unequal*, he turns his sociological gaze onto stratification across race, gender and class, but his work around race (chapter 3) remains the strongest section of the book. In contrast to Martinot’s prose, Massey’s style is easy, and in fifty pages he weaves the



story of the institutionalization of racism in the North post-Jim Crow and highlights the network of reinforcing mechanisms that allow whites to “hoard opportunity” with “plausible deniability.”

It is not the edges of whiteness that Massey is exploring here, but its devastating center. It's the wealth gap created by excluding African Americans from buying homes with Federal Housing Administration loans—a gap that builds upon itself. It's the fragmentation of metropolitan areas into suburbs that wall off their tax bases from the central city, the segregation of our schools and neighborhoods, the disparities in health insurance that are a result of employment-based coverage, and of course, mass incarceration. He concludes, “not only did the Civil Rights legislation ... fail to end racial stratification in the United States, but in some ways it gave birth to even more pernicious and intractable mechanisms of categorical inequality.”

Though Massey mainly gives us a strong overview of the structural mechanisms of racialization and the policy choices (some intentional, some not) that have resulted in racialized disparities, he also introduces us to the neuro-cognitive underpinnings of prejudice, a subject also taken up at length in *The Art of Happiness in a Troubled World* by the Dalai Lama and Dr. Howard Cutler.

Cutler engages with the Dalai Lama on a wide range of topics, including prejudice, racism, and neuroscience. One of the important insights that arises from this dialogue is the difference between conscious prejudice and unconscious (or implicit) bias. Cutler points out that “according to some estimates, 80 percent of Western[ers] ... will say they have no prejudiced views.... However, research reveals that even those who consider themselves to be totally unbiased are often shocked to find that they hold subtle biases.”

The warning here is not that racism is inherent, but that it is built on the

scaffolding of very old parts of our brain that function faster than thought while, “in contrast, the ‘thinking’ area of the brain, the neocortex ... takes more time. Thus, by the time we are consciously aware of the person ... our emotional reactions have already occurred.” Furthermore, when we understand our consciousness this way, it becomes clear that we all have a multiplicity of conflicting beliefs/schemas operating within us—both at the conscious level and the unconscious—that can be called into being with very real consequences (see Claude Steele and others’ work on stereotype threat).

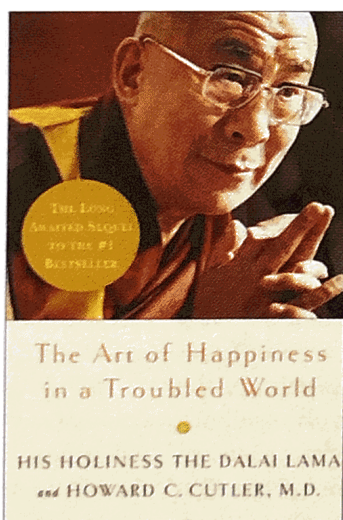
Massey and Cutler both emphasize that while social grouping and evaluation may be hardwired into the brain, racial groupings are socially constructed, subject to historical processes, and malleable. Martinot points us toward the ways in which whiteness has provided the background for these racialization processes to occur, inverting our traditional understanding of the relationship

between whiteness and race, and Massey examines the policy choices we have made or failed to make that have inscribed them into our landscape.

However, what the Dalai Lama’s book points to is that displacing white supremacy with a new racial landscape will be both a relational process and a spiritual process, not simply a political one.

We are called to build new identities, groups, and communities that nurture our differences and interact in non-exploitative ways. At a time of great inequality, global problems, and intense polarization, we need to be building the new social and political structures that can support the transformation of our very selves. ■

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A GREAT YEARNING FILLS THEM ALL ...

GHOSTS OF HOME: THE AFTERLIFE OF CZERNOWITZ IN JEWISH MEMORY

by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer
University of California Press, 2010

Review by Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi

“THESE FRAGMENTS I HAVE shored against my ruins ...” The conclusion of T.S. Eliot’s poem “The Waste Land” (1922) gave voice to what would become an entire century’s experience of ruins. It

was matched, seventeen years later, by Walter Benjamin’s image of the angel of history who moves toward the future while staring at the “wreckage” of the past. The search for an aesthetic and epistemological language of representation out of the shards of lives that were destroyed first by “progress” and then by two world wars becomes increasingly elusive and desperate. *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz* by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer is one of the most eloquent culminations of that search and a powerful indicator of the physical and cultural traces that survive into the twenty-first century.

Of all the places that came under the sign of the swastika—with the possible exception of Warsaw—Czernowitz seems to have produced the most lasting cultural monuments. This book encompasses the story of a city that changed its national, cultural, and linguistic identity four times in the twentieth century alone: it entered the century as *Czernowitz*, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1774–1918) but was later incorporated into Romania as *Cernăuți* with the collapse of the empire; invaded by the Soviets in 1940; overrun by the Nazis in 1941; recaptured by the Soviets in 1944 and incorporated into the USSR as *Chernovtsy*; and claimed by the Ukrainians as *Chernivtsi* with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989.

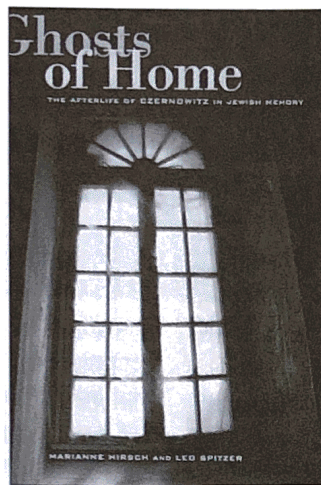
The story within the story is even more dizzying: since most of the survivors who identify themselves as “Czernowitzers” were born after 1918, the city they treasure was already something of a ghostly

presence even in their own childhood. What the authors come to call “the idea of Czernowitz” is a place that “cannot be found in any contemporary atlas.” Like so many other centers of Jewish culture—Prague, Budapest, Galicia, and of course Vienna itself—the Austro-Hungarian Empire had left its architectural mark on the landscape and its linguistic mark on the Jews who had become enfranchised into bourgeois European culture through their allegiance to the German language. Even if some of the most important Jewish writers and poets who hailed from Czernowitz and the surrounding region of the Bukovina would exchange their German for Yiddish, the language of

the folk (as did Itzik Manger), or for Hebrew, the language of collective asylum and “rebirth” (as did Dan Pagis and Aharon Appelfeld), it is the German of Paul Celan or Rose Ausländer that most embodies the primordial loyalty to and struggle within the language that Ausländer calls her “motherland.” As Celan (who wrote early postwar poems in Romanian and would live out his last decades in French) said publicly in 1958, when he travelled to Bremen to receive a literary prize, “there remained in the midst of the losses this one thing: language.... But it had to pass through its own answerlessness, pass through frightful muting, pass through the thousand darknesses of deathbringing speech.... Passed through and came to light again, ‘enriched’ by all this.”

Still, the enduring “idea of Czernowitz” is not only the well-deserved afterlife of a multilingual and multicultural city that had been incubated under the benign gaze of Franz Joseph. It is also due to one unlikely act by one man, a bureaucrat even more obscure than Oskar Schindler or Raoul Wallenberg, who just happened to be in the right place at the right moment with the right qualities of heart and mind. The intervention of the city’s mayor, Traian Popovici, with the Romanian fascist

authorities in October, 1941, was the single most determining factor in the survival of nearly half—some 30,000—of Czernowitz’s prewar Jewish population, including Marianne’s parents. Compare that with a survival rate of less than 30 percent of the Jews of Eastern and Central Europe as a whole.



But this is a story that can be stitched together from the extant testimonies and histories. What makes *Ghosts of Home* so unique is that it combines, almost seamlessly, the perspective of a historian (Leo) and a literary scholar (Marianne) with the first-person testimony of Marianne’s parents, Carl and Lotte, who were born in Czernowitz between the wars and who accompa-

nied their daughter and son-in-law on their first trip to the city in 1998. It also binds in the perspectives of other survivors, their children, and the voices that emerge from the archives. I say “almost seamlessly” because the ostensibly ragged juxtaposition of discourses is self-conscious and reflexive, and literally breathes life into the story. Lapses of personal memory are allowed to exist alongside bursts of recollection and carefully researched documentary evidence; “impersonal” photographs of hapless Jewish deportees thronging the banks of the Dniester in 1941 share these pages with a tiny photograph of Carl and Lotte as newlyweds walking arm-in-arm on the Herrengasse. The photo is marked “Cz. 1942” and gives a deceptive sense of normalcy, except for that tiny white smudge on Carl’s lapel. Is it the yellow star? The reckless space where the star is supposed to be?

In their role as guides to the city in 1998, Carl and Lotte convey their own brands of emotional immediacy along with a sense of the burden and privilege of history, producing, at times, revealing conflicts: as Carl is telling the story of the compliance of a majority of the residents of the Ghetto with the deportation order (to, as it turns out, the desolate region of Transnistria, where tens of thousands of

Jews would perish), Lotte interjects that a “Romanian soldier came to our door and said, ‘Ok, now you have to go.’” Carl, impatient, says: “We all knew. We have to tell the same story. The soldier is beside the point. The Jewish Council said, get ready.” Then Marianne picks up the thread and ruminates: “Did a soldier come to the door to summon them to get out, or were they already prepared to do so anyway? Did it really matter? These were things we would have to sort out later, I knew.”

She never really sorts it out. What we have here is a rare glimpse into the process of historical reconstruction, along with a self-conscious interrogation of agency and of both its world-historical and its very personal results. *If* Mayor Traian Popovici had not insisted to the governor that certain Jews were too important to be left to an uncertain fate; and *if* a neighbor hadn’t come along while Carl and his extended family were waiting with their bundles to be transported to their yet-unknown destination, pulled Carl aside, and told him the rumor that some professionals were going to be allowed to stay in Czernowitz; and *if* Carl hadn’t acted on impulse and taken the eleven members of his family back into the ghetto, where they would eventually return to their homes and survive the war; and *if* he had followed his best friend and sought refuge deep inside the Soviet Union instead of staying in Czernowitz ... would Marianne have been born?

Before dismissing such questions as trivial, please stop to search yourself: what are the contingencies that have shaped *your* life?

In many ways this is a book not about the inevitabilities of history, but about its contingencies, its impossible but fateful choices and its myriad small acts of *chesed*.

Like the last, technicolor scene in *Schindler’s List*, but without the kitsch, this book is a story of the present. As the current Ukrainian administration put together its version of the city to celebrate, in 2008, the six-hundred-year anniversary of a place now called Chernivtsi, with very little room designated to represent the story of the Jews, and most of that devoted to religious relics, it is the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of Carl

perspective of the commercial industries, youth are a “target” market, to use their own militaristic metaphor, valuable only in terms of how they might be exploited as a source of wealth creation for corporate CEOs, shareholders, and advertising executives. From the perspective of the prison-industrial complex, young people (particularly young people of color) are viewed as threats to be managed and controlled, both in overcrowded and inhumane public schools, which are increasingly modeled after penal institutions, and in overcrowded and inhumane prisons and jails themselves.

This is not a flattering picture of contemporary conditions, but Giroux is unflinching in his criticism of the abuses of both the commercial industries and what he calls the “youth control complex.” For example, of the former he writes:

Under the neoliberal regime, an intense battle is being waged through a public pedagogy of consumerism designed to influence, shape, and produce future generations of young people who cannot separate their identities, values, and dreams from the world of commerce, brands, and commodities.

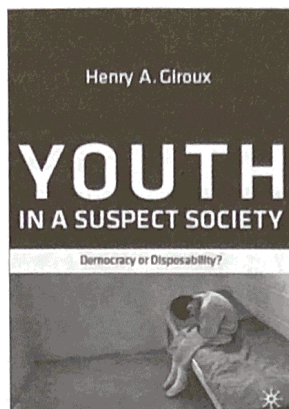
Giroux is unwilling to back away from his intense criticisms, as he believes this is truly a battle for not just the “hearts and minds,” but also the bodies of young people. Here’s the cold logic of neoliberalism: control what young people wear, what they eat, how they display their sexuality, and, if that fails, throw their bodies into jail cells where they will join hundreds of thousands of other noncompliant subjects. However, unlike many commentators in the popular press, Giroux refuses to place the blame for the degraded status of youth in market societies on young people themselves. His is at heart a structural analysis, one that clearly distinguishes the exploiters from the exploited.

Giroux is also highly critical of one of the last bastions of hope for reclaiming democracy from neoliberal market fundamentalism, the sphere of higher education.

Here too, his clear-eyed analysis forces him to confront a bleak landscape. Higher education, like public schooling, is under attack from both commercial and ideological warriors. While administrators are increasingly buying into a vapid “student as consumer” metaphor that seeks to turn education into just another profit-oriented commercial ven-

ture, ideologues from the right, having won the battle to construct a hegemonic myth of the liberal media, are now hard at work building a myth of liberal academia that seeks to paint all critical pedagogy as left-wing propaganda. The ultimate consequence of these twin assaults is to limit dissent and to limit educators’ ability to expose students to challenging ideas and the type of critical analysis and discourse that is crucial to democracy.

A bleak picture indeed. But Giroux saves his fiercest attack for the final essay, tying all of these threads together by focusing on the cruelty of neoliberalism and market fundamentalism that has led to the degraded systems of culture, education, and justice exposed in the earlier sections of the book. Here, he draws on the philosopher Zygmunt Bauman in describing the culture of hyperconsumerism, hyperindividualism, and disposability that Bauman has dubbed “liquid modernity.” The hallmarks of this state of affairs are greed, self-absorption, lack of compassion for others, and fear of others, all of which has led to the massive inequality that marks contemporary societies in North America and abroad. In his final essay, Giroux also utilizes Foucault’s notion of “biopolitics” in order to reveal how the very bodies of youth, people of color, and the poor and disadvantaged have become mere fodder for the forces of corporate globalization, militarization, and incarceration, while most of us blithely go about our hyperconsumptive ways:



Neoliberalism as a pedagogical practice and a public pedagogy has succeeded in reproducing in the social order a kind of thoughtlessness—a social amnesia of sorts—that makes it possible for people to look away as an increasing number of individuals and groups are made disposable, relegated to new zones of exclusion marked by the presupposition that life is cheap, if not irrelevant, next to the needs of the market and biocapital.

Yet Giroux demands that we *not* look away. The forecast is indeed cold, but Giroux insists that resistance is possible and this, in fact, is the whole point of his challenging book. Early on he states that criticism alone is not adequate, that what is needed is a politics of resistance:

Simply criticizing the market, the privatization of public goods, and the commercialization of children, while helpful, is not enough. Stirring denunciations of what a neoliberal society does to kids does not go far enough. What is equally necessary is developing public spaces and social movements that help young people to transform themselves into engaged social actors.

These essays thus embody the Gramscian notion of “pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will.” The forces of hypercommercialism, anti-intellectualism, militarization, and corporate globalization are powerful but they are not omnipotent. We need voices of dissent such as Henry Giroux’s to identify, analyze, and resist the culture of disposability wrought by neoliberalism. The time is long overdue for intellectuals to return to Marx’s notion that “philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.” ■

Dr. Bill Youssman teaches media studies and critical thinking at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He is the author of Prime Time Prisons on U.S. TV: Representation of Incarceration (Peter Lang Publishers, 2009).

[FILM]

LATIN AMERICA'S RISING LEFT

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

Jose Ibanez/Cinema Libre Studio

Review by David Kane

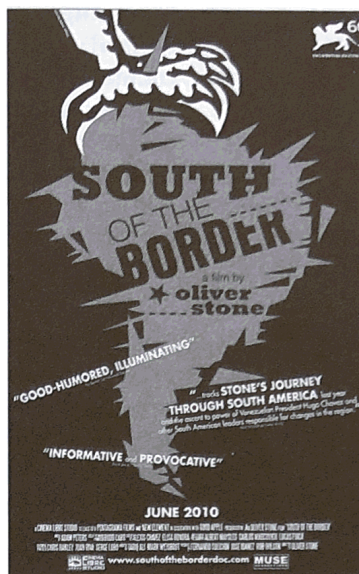
OLIVER STONE HAS PROVIDED a great antidote to mainstream U.S. media coverage of Latin America with his latest film, *South of the Border*. People in the United States who get most of their international news from broadcast shows and cable news programs need this counterweight to the appalling spin they receive on the political changes currently taking place south of the border. For those living in Latin America, the film offers a refreshing opportunity to hear local protagonists of these changes tell their story and explain their motives.

The past decade in Latin America has been inspiring for those of us who work for social justice, and the film does a good

job of portraying that energy. Since Hugo Chavez's election to the presidency of Venezuela in 1998, many other Latin American countries have voted for leaders who, as Argentine president Cristina Kirchner says in the film, "for the first time in the region ... look like the people they govern." A soldier in Venezuela (Hugo Chavez), a metal worker in Brazil (Lula da Silva), an indigenous leader in Bolivia (Evo Morales), and a liberation theology bishop in Paraguay (Fernando Lugo) were all elected by significant margins and proceeded to create very different economic policies aimed at benefiting the long-forgotten poor of each of their countries.

The film shows the failings of *neoliberalismo*, the term used in Latin America (and most of the world) to describe the economic policies that the United States has worked to spread throughout the world through the International Monetary Fund and "free trade" agreements. These neoliberal strategies have been an abysmal failure in Latin America, where people refer to the 1980s and 1990s as two "lost decades" due to the economic stagnation brought on by the policies pushed by the IMF. While the idea that governments should play a minimal role in the economy and allow corporations to act as freely as possible continues to hold sway here in the United States even after the recent collapse, in the rest of the world, especially Latin America, it is clear that those policies have failed and other options need to be tried.

Stone spends close to half the movie focusing on Chavez's rise to power and the short-lived coup against him in 2002. He does a good job of showing how Chavez is far more legitimately democratic than portrayed in U.S. media, and how much of an inspiration he is to others in the continent, but it still felt like too much time was spent on Chavez and Venezuela.



Unfortunately, I think that many who see the film will simply dismiss it as propaganda. For example, when Stone says the IMF has 186 member countries "but is controlled overwhelmingly by the U.S. Treasury Department," many could see that as a biased statement. It would have been more convincing to simply point out that the United States is the only country to hold veto power in the IMF—a power it uses to heavily influence that institution's policies. The scene of Chavez in the backyard of the house where he grew up also seemed a little too manipulative and fawning.

Unfortunately the filmmaker did not interview Michelle Bachelet of Chile, Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, or Mauricio Funes of El Salvador, other components of the political shift in Latin America, though I imagine that Stone would have liked to as well if he had had the time or money. More interviews with people on the street would have more clearly shown the excitement behind these governmental changes.

I hope Stone will take advantage of the DVD format to include a significant "extras" section with the full interviews with the presidents and some of the "on the street" interviews in each country. Bonus features could also include more details about the inner workings of the IMF and some statistics to show the notable economic improvements brought on by these new governments. Also, the subtitles are fine for a larger screen but are too small for a small television or computer monitor.

Despite its minor flaws, *South of the Border* is a must-see for all who are interested in better understanding the significant changes occurring in Latin America today. ■

David Kane, a Maryknoll lay missionary, served for nine years in Joao Pessoa, Brazil, and currently works in Maryknoll's Office for Global Concerns in Washington, D.C., covering Latin American and economic issues.

JFK, OBAMA, AND THE UNSPEAKABLE
(continued from page 19)

but in a direction opposite to Kennedy's. Obama has become an obedient servant to his national security state, and as a result, a source of despair to many of his supporters.

The critical background to President Obama's June 2010 firing of General Stanley McChrystal for his outlandish *Rolling Stone* interview was McChrystal's close relationship to the man Obama named to replace him. The president's newly appointed Afghan commander, David H. Petraeus, was McChrystal's boss and mentor. In September 2009, in a more significant subversion of Obama's authority than the later interview, McChrystal had been Petraeus's point man in a Pentagon threat of revolt unless the president escalated the Afghan War.

Heavily supported by Republican leaders, McChrystal pressured Obama publicly by a series of statements questioning the president's initial resistance to the general's recommendation of 40,000 more troops. Petraeus also went public, telling a columnist the United States would fail in the war unless the president gave them the troops they needed. Obama's generals were conducting a media war to force him into a decision they had chosen for him. As Secretary of State Colin Powell's former top aide, Col. Lawrence Wilkerson, observed, "Petraeus and McChrystal have put Obama in a trick bag."

As Bob Woodward reported in *Obama's Wars*, the president was blocked at every turn by his war cabinet, as he sought alternative troop options and an exit plan from the war. However, the generals wanted their troop surge and an open-ended strategy. They provided no exit plan.

"You're not really giving me any options," Obama told them. "You agreed to go back and work those up." Instead they kept pressuring him for the same troop increase, under different guises, in a war without end. "It's unacceptable," he said.

Obama told civilian advisers that the military heads were "really cooking the thing in the direction they wanted. They are not going to give me a choice."

The president finally gave them 30,000 more troops, while setting a shaky,

condition-based date of next July for a beginning withdrawal. The generals claimed victory. Petraeus was pleased. His counterinsurgency strategy was alive and well. As he let Woodward know, "If the president had told him at the beginning that it would come out with this strategy and 30,000 troops, Petraeus would have taken it in a second."

Moreover, Petraeus said privately, he continued to see no end in sight in Afghanistan: "You have to recognize also that I don't think you win this war. I think you keep fighting. This is the kind of fight we're in for the rest of our lives and probably our kids' lives."

When Obama replaced McChrystal half a year later by the more subtle, more controlling Petraeus, it was a further submission to the military authorities that the president was elected to command.

After JFK was set up by the CIA (with the Pentagon's support) at the Bay of Pigs, that new, young president bucked his national security state by firing his main adversary, Cold-Warrior-in-Chief Allen Dulles. When Obama was set up by General Petraeus, General McChrystal, and their colleagues to escalate the war in Afghanistan, our new, young president, after (to his credit) months of deliberation, reluctantly went along. His later insertion of Petraeus as his new Afghan commander put the most likely GOP candidate for president in 2012, General David Petraeus, in an ideal running position. Because Bush's "surge" of occupying troops in Iraq (under Petraeus) has somehow been judged a "win," Obama will be scapegoated with the "loss" if a proxy government in Iraq fails after his troop withdrawal.

In August General Petraeus warned, "If the U.S. loses [in Afghanistan], there would likely be a bloody civil war followed by a takeover by extremists." He added, "If the U.S. succeeds and Afghanistan stabilizes, the country could become the region's new Silk Road with the potential to extract trillions of dollars worth of minerals."

If Petraeus fails in his counterinsurgency war to pacify that new road to corporate profits, he can keep on saying he needed more troops and more time to "win" there—preparing the political ground for another Obama "loss." Petraeus can then

return home for a GOP draft to run for president. Obama, by surrendering to his generals, has been trapped in the same kind of plotting Kennedy had the insight and courage to resist.

**Can a Peacemaking President
Take On the Pentagon?**

BARACK OBAMA IS A VERY SMART AND sometimes courageous man. Why did he submit to his generals by widening a disastrous war? Did he think he could at least use his waning power to improve the domestic state of the union, while hoping he could eventually find a way out of our downward spiral of war in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq?

If so, he will finally have to say no, for the sake of us all, to his generals and the powers behind them. They will always want the troops to fight more battles "for the rest of our lives and probably our kids' lives" toward the end of "trillions of dollars worth of minerals" on a new Silk Road.

Can any president of the United States turn toward peace without being threatened, set up, and "if necessary" (from the standpoint of our national security state), assassinated?

Because of our unwillingness to connect the dots of Dallas with those of Washington, U.S. citizens have been unable to raise that post-JFK question to consciousness. In the Washington of Barack Obama, where some speak of a president's assassination casually and others deliberately, it is time that we dealt with the question in a serious way. John Kennedy did. From his frequent remarks anticipating his own death, friends said he was obsessed by it. He seems rather to have seen his death in a remarkably detached way in a time of darkness, accepting his own demise "if necessary" (from the standpoint of his conscience) as the simple consequence of doing his duty.

Once we face the why of Kennedy's assassination, never really mysterious and now a story documented by the mass of files made public by the Assassination Records Review Board, we can deal with an obvious question that has likely passed through the mind of Barack Obama: can a peacemaking president survive a warmaking state? A conscientious president's survival, and the carrying out of peace

initiatives against the grain of his government and corporate power, is entwined with the survival of every human being on earth. The president's vulnerability, while he tries to turn a massive Washington warship toward peace and disarmament, is an unspeakable fact of our politics.

But the other side of the unspeakable is ourselves. Our sense of despair, when we see a president's reluctance to choose what may kill him, raises questions about ourselves.

King's Global, Nonviolent Vision

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. SAID IN HIS last testament, *Trumpet of Conscience*, a little book published after his death: "Can a nonviolent, direct-action movement find application on the international level, to confront economic and political problems? I believe it can. It is clear to me that the next stage of the movement is to become international."

King envisioned an international movement of massive, nonviolent civil disobedience, bringing the business of London, Paris, Washington, and Ottawa to a halt until such centers of autocracy addressed the real questions of democracy. He said we needed to shut down our marketplaces by nonviolent action until business as usual was opened up to the needs of us all, beginning with the poorest, most exploited people on earth. The way our greatest prophet addressed the military-industrial complex was to think and act beyond it.

That is why he planned the Poor People's Campaign for Washington. He was initiating it in Memphis in April 1968, supporting the sanitation workers' strike there, when he was shot to death. He wanted those who had nothing to lose to come together in D.C. that spring and summer—however long it would take—to shut down the government by nonviolent resistance until it agreed to shut down poverty and war. Martin Luther King Jr. was saying that Washington and Wall Street did not have the final say. There was—and is—a world out there, from the heartland of the USA to the heartbeat of the Congo, from those suffering in Appalachia to those struggling in the Amazon. If we are willing to struggle, suffer, and die together nonviolently, anything is possible for our world.

King's global, nonviolent vision is waiting to be realized if we're willing to carry it out, paying the price just as he did.

King, like the prophets before him, knew the towering powers that overwhelm us when we think small, are themselves small-time. He reminded us that our Pentagon generals and Wall Street barons are not in ultimate charge of reality any more than we as individuals are. "The arc of the universe," he said, "bends toward justice."

So let's not give up on our brother, Barack Obama, or on ourselves. And let's not give up on our brothers and sisters in the Pentagon and on Wall Street. Nonviolence is the most powerful force in existence. We can all become part of its movement.

How a President Can Practice *Satyagraha*

ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, SEPTEMBER 8, 2009, at Wakefield High School in Arlington, Virginia, a ninth-grader named Lilly asked President Obama, "If you could have dinner with anyone, dead or alive, who would it be?"

The president said his first choice for a dinner companion would be Gandhi, "a real hero of mine," adding:

If it hadn't been for the nonviolent movement in India, you might not have seen the same nonviolent movement for civil rights here in the United States.... He ended up doing so much and changing the world just by the power of his ethics, by his ability to change how people saw each other and saw themselves. [Gandhi was able to] help people who thought they had no power realize that they had power, and then help people who had a lot of power realize that if all they're doing is oppressing people, then that's not a really good exercise of power.

Maybe we all need to sit down for a meal with Gandhi, one that would be, as President Obama told Lilly, "a really small meal because he [like the impoverished people he represented] didn't eat a lot." What Gandhi would say to us over that small meal he did say at the end of his life to a U.S. writer, Vincent Sheean, who traveled

half-way around the world to question him on vital matters, anticipating that Gandhi was about to be assassinated—as he would be, in Sheean's presence, three days later.

As the two men paced a room together, Gandhi told his American visitor, with reference to World War II culminating in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, "Your ends may have been good but your means were bad. That is not the way of truth."

If Gandhi's earnest conversation partner were Obama, not Sheean, and the time today, perhaps the next question would be: "What is the way of truth in Afghanistan?"

For Gandhi, truth was God. "Truth-force" was his term for nonviolence, *satyagraha*. Gandhi acted on the belief that there is nothing we as human beings can do that is more powerful, more transforming, than to live out the truth as we know it at the deepest point in our conscience.

In dialogue today with a powerful man who knows that "oppressing people is not a really good exercise of power," Gandhi would say that hearing the truth and acting on it, regardless of the consequences to one's power and one's self, would be the way of truth in Afghanistan and in Washington. As politically confining as the White House is, it is for that very reason an ideal place to live out the truth, as President Kennedy did.

Why It's Up to Us, the People, to Practice *Satyagraha*

THE ULTIMATE REACH OF LILLY'S question is a challenging one for us all, and President Obama's mention of Gandhi is a seed of hope. The month before his election as president, Barack Obama also invoked Gandhi as an inspiration, on that occasion Gandhi as the community organizer of a massive, nonviolent revolution. President-to-be Obama said Gandhi's portrait "hangs in my office to remind me that real change will not come from Washington—it will come when the people, united, bring it to Washington."

Obama's pre-election Gandhi statement included a reference to the war in Iraq: "We've watched our standing in the world erode as we continue to lose American lives in a war that should've never been authorized and never been waged."

Candidate Obama's words on Iraq apply with equal urgency today to the war in Afghanistan and a threatened war in Iran, in the context of a global strategy of war on terror that, as Gandhi would say, "is not the way of truth."

John Kennedy recognized that the wars he was pressured to wage on Cuba, Vietnam, and the Soviet Union, all claimed as strategic parts of a global war on communism, were not the way of truth. With great courage, he turned away from those wars, and from the false ideology of war that justified them, to the truth of peacemaking. Had he not done so in the Cuban Missile Crisis, our planet would now be a nuclear wasteland. We can give thanks for the courage that took him to Dallas.

Yet the vision of Gandhi and King, and the words of Obama, remind us that the impetus for the kind of nonviolent change that is the condition for our survival "will not come from Washington—it will come when the people, united, bring it to Washington." To the powers that dominate the president and the world, the most unspeakable reality of all would be our discovery as a people, all over this country and this globe, of a force more powerful than war.

The arc of the universe bends toward justice on earth, if we can believe in it and act on it. Let it be. ■

NATURE HAS A MIND OF ITS OWN (continued from page 47)

But, as I argue in *Radical Nature*, humans (or even animals) are not the only creatures with minds. The entire world of nature tingles with consciousness. Nature literally has a mind of its own. It feels and responds to our presence.

Consciousness All the Way Down

CONTRARY TO WHAT IS TAUGHT IN SCIENCE today, consciousness is not produced by brains. In fact you don't even need a brain to have a mind. All animals, all plants, even bacteria have something we would call "mind." I'm saying that all bodies of any kind—all matter—has consciousness "all the way down" to atoms and beyond to quarks, or quanta or whatever lies at the root of physical reality. In this view, all of nature, all bodies—from atoms to humans—tingle with the spark of spirit.

This is an uncommon view, called "panpsychism," and it presents a radical and controversial account of the relationship between bodies and minds, between matter and soul. To be sure, the nature of mind remains a deep mystery for science and philosophy. But success at healing the mind-body split so characteristic of our age depends, I believe, more on a revised understanding of the nature of *matter*.

In the view I'm proposing, all matter feels, is sentient, and has experience. Matter is adventurous—as it probes and directs its way through the long, winding path of evolution. From its first appearance after the Big Bang—from the first atom, molecule, and cell—to the magnificence and glory of the human brain, the great unfolding of evolution is literally the story the universe is telling to itself. The cosmos is enacting the greatest epic drama imaginable. Truly, it is the greatest story ever told. And we are just one of the storytellers. In the evolution of the cosmos, matter itself is the prime storyteller.

A "New" and Ancient Philosophy

PANPSYCHISM (OR WHAT I CALL "RADICAL naturalism") tells us that matter itself, from the very start (the Big Bang, perhaps) arrived on the scene already tingling with consciousness. Consciousness is not something separate from matter (as dualism tells us), nor is it produced by matter in the form of brains or nervous systems (as materialism insists). Instead, panpsychism tells us that matter—all matter—has its own interiority, an ability to feel, to have a point of view, and the ability to move itself from within. In everyday street-speak, we might say, "matter has a mind of its own." In its most primitive form matter is (and always was) sentient, "alive."

This, then, is the "new" story of the universe and the stuff it is made of. If we are to feel at home in the cosmos, if we are to be open to the full inflowing and outpouring of its profound creativity, and if we are not to feel isolated and alienated from the full symphony of cosmic matter—both as distant as the far horizon of time, and as near as the flesh of our own bodies—we need a new cosmology story. We need a new way to envision our relationship to the full panorama of the crawling, burrowing,

swimming, gliding, flying, circulating, flowing, rooted, and embedded Earth. We need to be and to feel, as well as to think and believe, differently about nature.

Actually this is a very ancient idea—one of the oldest worldviews, predating Plato and the ancient Greeks. In my book, I trace the lineage of panpsychism back to before the birth of philosophy—to the ancient tradition of shamanism, in fact. And then I show how, throughout history to the present day, some great philosophers have also shared this view. The philosophy of materialism that dominates our world today is, by comparison, a late arrival—a kind of detour that has run its course.

Minds from Brains?

MODERN SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY ARE in the dark about consciousness. They cannot even begin to explain how consciousness could emerge from the brain. Materialists such as Berkeley philosopher John Searle simply claim it as a given, obvious "fact." But it is not at all obvious. As it turns out, science is utterly at a loss to explain how this could happen. Indeed, getting spirit-like consciousness from the stuff of the physical brain would require a miracle. But miracles are exactly what scientific materialism denies are possible. In short, for materialism to be true, it would have to be false! Now *that's* a real dilemma. As soon as science begins to pay attention to consciousness it runs into a dead end. It draws a blank.

When pressed, neuroscientists typically say: "We don't have all the facts just yet. One day we will, and when that day arrives, *then* we can give you the full explanation." In the meantime it's "just obvious" that mind or consciousness arises from the immense complexity of the brain, or as Searle puts it, the brain squirts out consciousness like the liver secretes bile. But that's not science, it's "promissory materialism." Materialists would like us to believe their promise that one day they will have "all the facts" to explain the mystery. But asking us to believe without any evidence is "faith," not science.

And then they point out that science is always progressing, always gaining more knowledge. Isn't it possible, then, that one day they will have "all the facts"? I don't

think so. And here's why (I'll try not to get too technical): According to scientific materialism all of reality is ultimately *physical*. Reality is objective—wholly and thoroughly. If so, the challenge facing science is to explain how it could be possible—even in principle—for one kind of reality (completely physical and objective) to suddenly (or even gradually) jump to an entirely different kind of reality (one that is *subjective* and *nonphysical*): consciousness. That's where the miracle is required—an ontological jump from an utterly cold, lifeless, unfeeling, and unknown universe to one that now possesses creatures sparkling with life, with feeling, with consciousness. What could possibly account for that “reality jump”?

In philosophy, we call it the “ontological gap” between two radically different kinds of reality. No amount of complex feedback loops in the brain or nervous system can make that jump because all those loops in the brain are themselves still objective—they can be observed, they can be measured, they are physical. Consciousness is notoriously non-physical (you cannot observe or measure it). In short, you cannot get subjectivity (a state of reality with feeling and sentience) from a state of reality that didn't have the slightest trace of consciousness to begin with. You can't get something from nothing, as James's little old lady was at pains to point out. If you begin with “dead” matter, it stays dead—no matter how complex and twisted it becomes.

Philosopher Colin McGinn put it this way: “Somehow, we feel, the water of the physical brain is turned into the wine of consciousness, but we draw a total blank on the nature of this conversion.... The mind-body problem is the problem of understanding how the miracle is wrought.”

The Most Terrifying Story Ever Told

SO WHAT? WHY SHOULD ANYONE, OTHER than philosophers, care about the mind-body problem? What difference does it make in real life? I think it makes a big difference. As novelist Daniel Quinn noted in *Ishmael*, we don't just tell our stories, we enact them. In other words, we live our stories, and we change the world accordingly. In my book, I make the point that all our

worldviews, philosophies, cosmologies, mythologies, and so on are ultimately nothing but stories (despite their fancy names). They are ways we have of telling ourselves who we are, how we came to be, and where we're going. We tell ourselves these grand stories to make some sense of the fact that we are here at all. But we don't just *tell* these stories. We live them, we enact them.

Today, we live in a world dominated by the story called scientific materialism, where nature is believed to be made up of “dead” stuff, of lifeless atoms and molecules. Nature has no consciousness, no feelings, no intrinsic value, meaning, or purpose. And so we relate to nature without sufficient respect for its inherent sacredness. We plunder and rape and exploit it, and the consequences are not at all pretty. We face looming crises in ecology, in social systems, and in our personal lives as we struggle to make sense and meaning out of a world made up of cold, mindless, meaningless stuff. In such a world, all life—including human life and consciousness—is just a fluke, an accident. This is an alarming story, and it has drastic consequences.

Bertrand Russell, one of the most respected and influential philosophers of the twentieth century, wrote:

That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand.

This may be the most terrifying story ever told—nevertheless, it is the one we are

born into. It expresses the terrible poetry of a meaningless universe, rolling along chaotic channels of chance, blind and without purpose, sometimes accidentally throwing up the magnificence and beauty of natural and human creations, but inevitably destined to pull all our glories asunder and leave no trace, no indication that we ever lived, that our lonely planet once bristled and buzzed with colorful life and reached out to the stars. It is all for nothing.

Such is the plot and substance of modern science boiled down to its bare essentials, a legacy from the founders of the modern worldview, such as Bacon, Galileo, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Newton, and Darwin.

Even if we have faith in a deeper spiritual dimension, somewhere in our nested system of beliefs that story lurks, ready to rob our visions, dreams, loves, and passions of any meaning, of any validity beyond the scripted directions of a blind, unconscious, purposeless plot maker. If something in our experience stirs and reacts to this with disbelief, even with a question, it is surely worth paying attention to because the possibility that that story is wrong or incomplete makes a real difference.

What if that sweeping materialist vision leaves something out? What if there is something other than an “accidental collocation of atoms” at work in the universe? What if, for instance, the experience or consciousness that contemplated the world and discovered the atoms was itself real? What if the ability of “collocated atoms” to purposefully turn around and direct their gaze to reflect on themselves was more than “accidental”? What if consciousness participates in the way the world works? What if consciousness can dance with the atoms and give them form and direction? What if the atoms themselves choreograph their own dance? What then?

In *Radical Nature*, I explore an alternative story—one where the atoms do choreograph their own dance—a worldview that tells us consciousness matters and that matter is conscious.

Nature Is Sacred

THE ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHER Thales said, “Nature is full of gods.” Today,

we might say it is full of spirit, full of consciousness. Nature literally carries the wisdom of the world, a symphony of relationships among all its forms. Nature constantly “speaks” to us, and feels and responds to our stories. Simply breathing in rhythm with the world around us can be a potent form of prayer. We can open our hearts and pray to the “god of small things,” for God lives in pebbles and stones, in plants and insects, in the cells of our bodies, in molecules and in atoms. And by connecting with the God of small things, we can discover this is the same as “the god of all things,” great or small. Yes, God is in the heavens, but God is also in the finest grain of sand.

I don’t believe we need priests or churches, rabbis or synagogues, mullahs or mosques, to connect us with some transcendent, supernatural God. In the religion of nature—of a natural God—clergy become shamans, the whole Earth, and the vast cosmos itself, becomes our temple of worship. In nature spirituality, “priests” do not act as intermediaries between Heaven and Earth. Rather, like shamans, our leaders and elders become guides teaching us to listen to the sacred language of nature—helping us open our minds and bodies to the messages rippling through the world of plants and animals, rocks and wind, oceans and forests, mountains and deserts, backyards and front porches.

We need to develop a deep respect for nature because it is the source of everything we are. Like us, all of nature has a mind of its own. And this is because matter is not at all what we normally think it to be. Matter is not dead stuff. *Matter feels.* The very stuff of our bodies, the very stuff of the Earth tingles with its own sentience. It is time for us as a worldwide community to rediscover the soul of matter, to honor and respect the flesh of the Earth, to pay attention to the meaning, purpose, and value embedded in the world beneath our feet and above our heads. Maybe then, we will save ourselves from the otherwise inevitable ecological and civilizational collapse that faces us within our lifetime. I think we can do it, but first we have to learn to listen. ■

NEW THEORY (continued from page 50)

account for the love of beauty of a Mozart, Chagall, or Schubert, for the passion of a Van Gogh, and for how Isadora Duncan could throw herself into dance or how Sarah Bernhardt could throw herself into drama.

It certainly accounts for the virtue of self-transcendence that Darwin writes of in the human rescuers of others from fires and from drowning. It is also clearly what he had in mind elsewhere in development of the rest of his theory of human evolution. It is this virtue of self-transcendence that he saw emerging among prehumans: the rabbits that stamp their feet, the sheep that whistle, the monkeys that cry out to warn others.

Hopes for a Higher Level of Evolution

IN SHORT, WHAT DARWIN SET OUT TO do as a young man, and then returned to as an old man, is what everybody who hungers for intelligence, decency, stability, and hope in our world today is seeking. It’s also what countless progressive successors have since worked (and fought against the always better-financed powers that be) to give us.

Darwin gave us the vision of a *completed* theory of evolution, where out of the truncated first part—in which the educated mind of the twentieth century got bogged down—rises the thrust of what used to be called heart and soul as well as mind into the vast hopeful expansion of a higher level for evolution.

We live by story—but must the story we are living by drive our species toward extinction?

How do we end the old story and begin the new one?

After a century of seeing and all too often personally experiencing the social and personal devastation that only half a theory or the wrong or inadequate theory of evolution can lead to, surely we’re ready for what seems to me the main point of Darwin’s life and of our own: that the story we live by is shaped by the prevailing theory of who we are, what we are here for, and where we are going.

If we change the theory, we can change the story, and thus the old pattern to our lives, opening the way to the better world. ■

SCIENCE AND CIVILIZATION (continued from page 52)

our delusions of selfhood glorious and imperative, and so on—are always arrived at by a holistic sense: a combination of rational argument with emotional yearning, experiential learning, communal practices, intuition, and transcendent insight.

To have imagined, back in 2010, that we could within a mere century have switched our basic cultural orientation, worldwide, from seeking profit and power to seeking empathy and interdependence and to constructing the social systems that would embody these noble truths, would have seemed like absurd utopianism. A man like me would never have entertained them. More fool me. Facing the death of civilization can wonderfully concentrate the mind, it turns out.

The Second Enlightenment

I AM TALKING OF COURSE ABOUT WHAT the popular media like to call the Spirituality Revolution, but which I prefer to call the Second Enlightenment. Perhaps out of reaction to my mother and for other reasons I have written about in my *Memoirs of a Neo-Neo-Darwinist*, I have never liked to use that word “spiritual.” I know that puts me in a small minority now in the scientific world, let alone the wider society. It puts me in a small minority even among my fellow atheists, but there it is—the words “spirituality” and “spiritual” stick in my craw. To me they smack of pious ladies in thrall to a guru with bad breath and a penchant for feeling up prepubescent boys. Just my personal hang-ups, no doubt. But “spirituality” is also fatally infected for me with the old antagonistic dualism of matter and spirit.

That doesn’t mean I reject the Second Enlightenment, though. Far from it. Without that revolution in thought, values, and practice, I shudder to think where science would be today. The Second Enlightenment dethroned scientific knowledge from its preeminent place in the status hierarchy of knowledge, and thus enabled its survival. Repentant scientists did not make such good scapegoats, and after all much of our science was still useful. Where scientism had enthroned Science and

Rationality, the Second Enlightenment enthroned the Dharma, the Tao, the Way.

How do I describe this way without using the spirituality talk so common today?

It is as much an experiential as a cognitive path. A way forward can be agreed upon in any given situation, including the worst of conflicts, if it is based in mutual discovery of what gives deepest meaning to life and action for all parties. While for all I know this may happen spontaneously at times, mostly it only happens through time-consuming and difficult processes. The world is now full of disciplines that were only coming into use slowly a century ago: methods of conflict resolution—and that rather different pursuit, nonviolent conflict (of the kind my namesake, MLK, and countryman M.K. Gandhi, pioneered)—plus methodologies for restorative justice, teamwork, radical participatory democracy, and so on. People say that scientific research is elaborate and tedious, and it often is, though of course it pays off. But the creation of this necessary human culture of mutual recognition, understanding, and transcendence of self is often even more elaborate and tedious, as any serious practitioner could tell you, and aren't we all at some level serious practitioners today? For some of us it moves fast, for others so slowly. The accumulated pain and defenses of the millennia do not dissolve to order, but by much labor and much grace, many hours of sitting in circles and listening to others' deepest needs and expressing our own. But this great work pays off even more handsomely than scientific research, not least because it is what allows for scientific understanding to be used for the needs of all.

How different is this culture that we are painstakingly building today from the fatally destructive culture of a century ago, so infected by the fundamentalisms of the day. Scientism was not merely one of those fundamentalisms, it was arguably the most destructive of them, because it was the orthodoxy held by the most powerful people of the day, the neoliberal corporate, academic, and political elites.

There was much talk in that era of freedom and empowerment. But insofar as we are selfishly motivated, any increase in our

freedom and empowerment—by scientific or any other knowledge—is going to make us more dangerous to others. When everyone has the freedom to abuse the environment as thoroughly as a third of the world's people—and especially North Americans—had a century ago, then the damage becomes unendurable. Even so, the answer is not external controls, though those have been necessary, but internal shifts of meaning, so that we come to desire the well-being of others and of the whole, and thereby accept the limits on freedom in some areas that are needed to maximize freedom for all in more areas.

There were religious liberals at that time who hated to criticize scientific culture and shunned any talk of scientism. They thought the rift between science and religion was bad enough already. Some taught that the creation story elaborated by science was so transcendently glorious it should be celebrated as part of any spiritual worldview—as indeed it should—but they resisted criticizing the sacredness of science. That was unrealistic. Too many people were treating science, which is a fine servant, as master—and that needed the critique and transformation that finally came to it. An intellectual critique of scientism, though, would never have been enough. What was needed was what began to happen, the building of a mature culture of communal interdependence.

Today science is once more a largely amateur pursuit, as it was in Darwin's day. But now it is not just gentlemen who pursue it, but vast numbers of people who are seeking the best way to grow new crops in old lands, to generate renewable energy most effectively, and to do myriad other tasks. Many of us even manage to do pure research, which sometimes pays unintended dividends. Who knew that my study of lichens would add the last critical piece to the creation of artificial photosynthesis? That dream is now ours: to make the fuel for life in the way that the plants do. I would be terrified at the idea of humanity having access to this free source of unlimited energy—pulling carbon dioxide from the air, where it has done so much harm, and combining it with water, sunlight, and trace minerals to create burnable, buildable carbon—if it were not

that I think we are now set on this more mature course charted by the Second Enlightenment. Think of the damage an unreflective, self-centered, personal-profit-seeking humanity could do with artificial photosynthesis! Think what a mature civilization, oriented toward meeting mutual needs, could do with it! I trust we will continue building the latter, even after the threat of our complete destruction is gone. I think we will. After all, the research says people are much happier working for compassionate interdependence than they ever were striving for one-upmanship. Maybe it took near destruction for us to learn that. Drunks generally do have to bottom out before they sober up. Up here in the mountains I have even found myself praying that this will be so, praying to everything-that-is. ■

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PRESENCE OF THE EXILE
(continued from page 58)

member serving nobly in the divine sanctuary and comporting himself with the holiness befitting such ministering. The people had just escaped from the burdens of Egypt and had seen, with its own eyes, the absolute collapse into nothingness of material might and “national,” “sovereign” pride; and it was itself situated in the midst of a dry, barren desert with neither “national territory” nor an established army. These factors made the hearts of many people ready to welcome the covenant. Their total removal from the tight trap of materialistic nationalism well prepared them to respond, “We will obey and we will hearken,” to proclaim ecstatically their complete readiness to become “a kingdom of priests and a holy people.”

Corruptions from Sovereignty Over the Land

BUT AFTER THIS, WHEN ISRAEL CAME TO the land of Canaan, seized it, spread itself like a leafy tree in its native soil, and established for itself a sovereign political life “like all the nations,” there began hovering over its head the danger that Moses our teacher had warned against: “lest when thou hast eaten and art satisfied, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein ... then thy heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord thy God, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

The Holy Spirit began to be driven away and separated from them by the gross spirit of “political nationalism” that took their hearts. And as the Holy Spirit fled from the people, the imprint of the Torah also faded, the trace of the divine ordinances they had received at Mount Sinai. Rather than the Torah eventuating in an immanent godhead dwelling in the midst of the children of Israel, a divinity whose abode was the heart, the heart of every individual Jew—rather than this, the children of Israel began viewing the Divinity as exclusively external, with its abode in the midst of political protocol and propriety.

From that point on, the children of Israel became “political,” and the Torah

became merely a kind of constitution, similar to those constitutions from “cultured nations” that we today know all too well: on paper, drafted and signed, but in practice, the complete opposite.

The Jewish people fulfilled its intention to be “like all the nations” and performed its part: it saddled itself with kings. And the kings performed their part: they involved the nation in cruel wars though absolutely nothing required them (“optional wars” in rabbinic terminology), and thus the people were killed and killers, slaughtered and slaughterers, “felling with axes of iron,” “measuring among the wounded one to be rescued and two to let die.” All of it, the whole business, was exactly as carried on in the surrounding nations.

The Father in Heaven, the Holy One, blessed be he, sat mourning the straying of his sons in the paths of the nations, but, as is his wont, he granted them freedom to follow their own hearts to the very end. But with the passing of time, the kings had their fill of the delicacies of “the nations,” of the dainties of war, and then there came to their minds the memory of the God of Israel. One king especially was mindful of the Holy One, blessed be he, one who in his childhood was a shepherd in the desert, after that a refugee hiding in the forests, and who carried within him two souls: one “kingly” and mighty, fit to “lift up his sword against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time,” and one saintly, which cleaved to the Presence and “did sound the harp at midnight, busying himself with the Torah.” This king did remember the Holy One, blessed be he, and decided to build a house in his honor.

At that point, when the “king” began concerning himself with a “house” for the Lord, the Holy One, blessed be he, was no longer able, as it were, to contain the wrath long pent up in his heart due to the vain mockeries committed by his people through kingship, and he immediately rejected the idea: “Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars; thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight” (1 Chron. 22:8). The reason for the rejection, according to

scripture, is this: it is not for kings, wagers of war, to build houses for the God of Israel, for his ways and attributes are the complete opposite of kings’ sovereign ways and wars.

The Building of the Temple

THE WORK OF BUILDING THE TEMPLE was taken out of the hands of the king who had engaged in the work of kings, i.e., the active waging of war, and was transferred to his son, the “peaceful king.” But a king, even if he be peaceful, is still a king. And if, by virtue of the numerous victories already won by him or his forefathers in subduing all the neighboring nations, he be slack in waging new wars that would demonstrate further the prowess of his sword (a process indeed very tiring and troublesome)—even so, that characteristic desire of royalty, to expand over all the surroundings, in no wise abandons him. But he can express it, now that the nations are subjugated, in more gentle ways: by extending a “humble” hand to his submissive neighbors and by going about with them “like a brother.” He pays them a visit on their feasts and festivals and invites them to his own feasting and celebrating.

This dwelling, and everything connected with it, was arranged just the opposite of how it should have been were it to realize its purpose, that of being a dwelling place for the Presence in this earthly sphere. This ideal of the Presence, resting upon and influencing the earth despite its being high and uplifting, great and wide, embracing the entire universe—despite and precisely because of this, the realization of the ideal requires a contraction and a joining to a people chosen for this end. For, since this ideal Presence is high above the heavens and wide beyond the earth, the hearts of men are too small to encompass it. Thus it requires for itself one people that will concentrate on it, cherish it, and absorb it within themselves; then, from the splendor of that people, light will emanate to all peoples. But in the Temple that Solomon built, just the opposite happened. The ideal itself became so confined and debilitated that it, itself, required fattening by thousands of cattle and sheep; and despite this and because of this,

the arms of the ideal family stretched and extended until it, too, embraced all the nations and went forth to join in the dance with them ...

Exile as Primarily Purification, Not Punishment

THUS FARED THE TORAH OF MOSES ALL the while that Israel sat upon its land, its king upon its neck, and the Temple atop both: famous throughout the world, its true followers now as if one of many nations. In that measure to which the Torah extended over the superficies of the earth, to that degree did it become more superficial within the camp of Israel. In that measure to which some of its customs with external glitter—those suitable for political officials—made their way in the world, to that degree did the Inner Spirit flee from the Jewish nation itself; and the materialistic craving for the tastes and temptations of the nations grew apace.

The prophets, men of great souls and inspired intellects, the teaching of the Lord in their mouths, their hearts filled with the Intimate Presence from Mount Sinai—great was their sorrow over the foolishness of their people, and they stood warning the children of Israel that they were drawing ever nearer the precipice beyond which lay nothingness.

Not for this had the Holy One, blessed be he, selected the children of Israel when he brought them forth out of Egypt and gave them the Torah at Mount Sinai, and certain it was that he would not tolerate forever their backsliding and turning aside from the mission assigned to them. Certain it was that he would soon lay hold of severe means to drive his people toward the goal he desired, shattering and destroying in wrath and fury all the crude contrivances and paraphernalia of alien “nationalism,” from which were issuing influences damaging to and destructive of the Torah. That is, the Holy One, blessed be he, would raze the palaces of kings, pull down the Temple, and exile Israel from its land.

Then, in those first days after the catastrophe, the children of Israel would suffer terribly; but from that darkness would shine forth a great light for them: from their bodily woes would be raised and

established their spiritual world. Then would the Torah return to its proper lodging: in a parched desert was it given, and to the desert of exile it would return. And there, in its traditional home, it would once more blossom forth in the hearts of the people. The nearness of God and the intimacy of the Presence would return to them as in the days of old, as in the days of their departure from Egypt. In these words of warning the prophets expressed most pronouncedly the purpose of the destruction of the Temple and the exile, of which events they did forewarn Israel continually. It is clear from this that exile was not exclusively or even primarily a punishment for the past, but rather, and essentially, a constructive measure for the future: the return of the Presence to “her place”—the hearts of all who are in a state of loneliness and solitariness.

The prediction of the prophets came to pass.

Reclaiming the Mission

THE CESSATION OF THEIR PRIDE IN national sovereignty on the one hand, combined with strong feelings of loathing and rejection for the neighboring nations of those times, stirred within the children of Israel powerful longings for the God of their ancestors. At these times of longing there was born a strong urge to return to their source. The returnees from exile built the Second Temple by a scheme completely different from that used by Solomon in building the First Temple. Solomon stood inviting the nations from everywhere to come and take part in the building of the Temple, while the returnees from exile made every effort to keep the nations far removed from all aspects of the project.

Even the idea of setting a portion of the subjugated Jews building a Temple “to whatever God promenades there in Jerusalem” originated entirely with the King of Persia himself (“the Lord awakened the spirit of Cyrus”); for it had not occurred to a single Jewish leader to appeal to the “gracious king” that the house of God might be rebuilt with the help of an alien king. The kind offer of the king—the head “arranger” in the matter of rebuilding the Temple—to provide them

with soldiers and horsemen for their protection on the way to Jerusalem was refused by the exilic leaders with apparent humility but hidden sarcasm: “The hand of our God is over all those who seek good from him; but his wrath and fury is upon all those who forsake him.” And to the other foreign volunteers who offered their services in the project, they replied simply and without further explanation: “It is not for you but for us to build a house for our God.”

The contrast was felt most of all in the matter of the study of the Torah. For Solomon, the sacrificial worship was the principal activity of the house erected to God, and within it he offered such quantities of cattle and sheep—thousands upon thousands—that “the altar was too small to contain them all.” For the exilic leaders, the sacrifices were merely incidental (a fact that will emerge clearly obvious to anyone who takes the trouble to inspect the spirit of the scriptures with a perspicacious eye). It was practically a case of having to comply with the expectations of the Persian king, the inspirer and supervisor of the whole matter, who instigated the practice and also contributed toward it from his treasury. For the leaders of the people, the main purpose in erecting the Temple was that they might thereby create a center for the study of Torah and the observance of the commandments. For when the Jewish people concentrated within itself, craving to live in intimacy with the Presence through the study of the Torah, the original intent of the Torah earned itself permanent residence in the midst of Israel, and Torah study became a decree never to be transgressed, neither during that period of the Second Temple, nor in the time immediately after, nor for all time to come.

This is the ideal that was widely realized in the days of the Second Temple through the study of the “Oral Torah,” the Oral Torah being both the partition that separates Israel from the other nations and that which strengthens its covenant with the Holy One, blessed be he. The Oral Torah, diligently studied and practiced, is the means whereby the Presence is brought to rest upon the heart of the individual Jew; and the giving to the Jew of this most

precious gift for meditation—this wonderful, wise, and inspired collection of laws and legends in the Talmud—is also the expression of both the intimacy and affection of the Presence for him.

Cleansing from National Sovereignty

THIS PRINCIPLE—THE PRESERVATION OF Jewish integrity (*yihud*)—was placed in the very foundation of the Second Temple, and because of it the vocation of the Oral Torah held the chief place in the spiritual life of the people; so much so, in fact, that the whole business of the Sanctuary and its sacrifices was reduced to second rank before it. “Greater is the study of Torah than the daily sacrifices” (Erubin 63a). And how indescribably less still was the value placed on the alien pleasure of “national sovereignty” as compared with the satisfaction of Torah.

Consequently, at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, the scholars were disinclined to wage a stubborn, all-out war, either for their political status or for the Temple—knowing full well that these possessions, which could be taken from them by the power of others, could not stand without such bloodshed, whereas no power on earth could succeed in taking from them their everlasting inheritance, the Torah. And when Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai was given the opportunity to salvage something by his influence, he asked for no national concessions, but only for “Jabneh and its scholars”—a refuge for the Torah. He asked nothing from the besiegers, for the granting of such a request would have been an act of grace on their part, and so would have created the expectation of perpetual gratitude. Instead he requested from them something that, whether or not they were willing to grant it, would in the final end remain in our hands.

Take note. The Second Temple was destroyed. The Higher Providence had found, apparently, that the good influence that dwelling in the land had on the spirit of the Jewish people—its being sanctified by the commandments connected with the land, as well as its taking upon itself the promissory seal of the “Covenant of the Parts” (Gen. 15:13-16), in these ways

strengthening the bond between the Jewish people and its Heavenly Protector—such influence had already done its maximum to ensure that, even though far from the land, the good effects of the land should not thenceforth cease among the people. The sacred memories of the land, and the turning toward it at the hour of prayer, would suffice to preserve its influence upon their hearts. And their further actual dwelling upon the land as a “kingdom” would bring, from that point on, greater spiritual loss than gain. For even those few remnants of the gross outer shell, those mere fragments of the material paraphernalia of “nationalism”—i.e., even the dimmed example of the realpolitik-oriented life that still held sway at the time of the Second Temple—served to prevent the true inner substance of the people from being revealed, the exemplification of intimacy with the Divine that was its mission from the time of Mount Sinai. Therefore did Providence cast down even the vestiges of the paraphernalia of that “nationalism” and sweep them from the path.

Then did the Jewish people sprout wings truly free, rising to the uttermost heights, building for itself in the great, spacious heavens a buttress on the skiffs of the wind, far from the reach of the earth-dragon—that dragon which stands ever ready to make spectacles of the nations and monarchies: spurring this one against that one, stirring that one against this one, establishing “countries” and overturning them, enlarging “nations” and swallowing them.

At the hour when Titus the wicked packed all the vessels of the Temple for transfer to Rome by “ships of the sea”—then did our people take the inner substance of those vessels, the Holy Spirit, and carry it to its ships plying the air of the heavens and establish there “the Heavenly Jerusalem.”

Wherever Israel was exiled, wherever the people were sent, even though thousands of parasangs from Jerusalem, two images accompanied them: the image of Jerusalem, the holy city, which the people would engrave on the tablets of their hearts, sealing therewith the memory of “the love of her espousals” with the Holy One, blessed be he, in earlier times, in the

days of her youth (Jeremiah 2:2); and the image of “the Academy of Jabneh,” which provided a living copy for every place of settlement as they established, everywhere they went, a house of study in which they could continue their life with the Holy One, blessed be he. In these tiny academies the life of the couple, the Holy One, blessed be he, and the Jewish people, was established in most wonderful fashion.

“When Torah and Exile Are Joined, Great Wonders Are Born in the Soul”

THUS WERE “EXILE” AND THE “HOUSE OF study” two wonderful catalytic agents for the Jewish people, for by means of them it progressed in the task that the Lord had assigned it at Mount Sinai. And these two catalytic agents were interdependent. Academy without exile would not have survived, for its light would have been extinguished by the thick shadows of sovereignty and state; and exile without academy also could not have existed, for its subject, the people in exile, would not have survived. That is to say, a people without a Torah—and many such peoples suffered exile—yields to the indomitable power of its conqueror and becomes assimilated within the invincible ruling nation. With this the exile ceases, and with it also the correction and purification of exile. The result of such an exile is merely that the exiled people is removed from its own Molech idolatry and transferred to the Molech idolatry of another. When Torah and exile are joined, great wonders are born in the soul of their bearer.

Justly, therefore, does the midrash say, in reckoning the ethical balance of all that happened to us as a result of our losing our land: “Said the Holy One, blessed be he, ‘When it was destroyed’”—i.e., when the kingdom was destroyed and the root bearing gall and wormwood plucked out—“you raised me for me righteous men; and when it was established, you raised me wicked men” (Song of Songs Rabbah).

The Secret of Survival

AND THUS IT WAS THAT BETWEEN TWO fires—the flaming light of Torah within our houses of study and the flaming eyes of the wolves outside—for two thousand

years there was ceaselessly cast a singular and unique culture, one without parallel anywhere in the world: a culture soft as wax in material interests and hard as iron in matters of the soul. And this culture grew and developed, and presented before the whole world a people wondrous and legendary in its very surviving and wondrous and legendary also in the quality of its soul and its way of thinking: a nation with ears attending and senses awake to every good idea; a nation that, if humanity sometime be ordered to make an ethical journey to bring redemption to the world, shall without doubt march at the head.

The purification of the soul of our people in exile, and its being made receptive to every inspired idea—through which came about the possibility of understanding the previously proclaimed prophecy of our prophets, “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore,” not as prose resounding in the air but as compelling and perceptible logic—this purification was itself the exilic creation of our people, and this was the very secret of our survival in exile.

The sublime hymn, “Awake, awake, for your Light has come,” sung ecstatically on the Eve of the Sabbath in synagogues wherever Israel is dispersed, is the spirit-in-song of our people’s exilic creation; and as night approaches to elevate the seventh day to its station as the Sabbath, the crowning glory of all Jewish creations, the hymn proclaims of its creator, the Jew, that he has not stopped making his divine creations from the material of the commandments and the Torah of his God, nor will he stop such creating.

May the erring in spirit now realize that the lament of our people over “the Exile of the Presence” is no proof whatever of our people’s having been, in exile, emptied of the Holy Spirit; but, on the contrary, it is an indication of its being abundantly filled by the flow of the Holy Spirit. Thus even while our people laments the Exile of the Presence, and fervently longs for its extension over all the world, it at the same time rejoices and takes great pride (for in this it may well take pride) in its Exilic Presence. ■

STRANGE LAND, NEW WORLD (continued from page 62)

In practicing what it’s like to be our highest selves for one day, we’d also develop a much more intimate understanding of what it will actually take to live in a world of peace, freedom, and justice. I can’t say exactly how it will unfold, but a central emphasis of Global Sabbath will be on personal responsibility, globalized. It is increasingly clear that we cannot rely on our political leaders to create the world we’d like to see. If we want the world to change, we must change—we cannot wait for someone else to do it for us. Global Sabbath is designed to help us take the necessary steps to change together.

Once we’ve organized one day of rest, in alignment with the wisdom of the Yovel we will organize opportunities for all of humanity to experience ever-deepening expressions of our potential. Is Global Sabbath even possible? I have no idea, but I take comfort in the words of an old Hassidic Rebbe: “Ask not if a thing is possible. Ask only if it is necessary.”

From a Torah perspective, it would be difficult to argue that anything is more necessary than manifesting the deeper lessons of the Yovel in our world. Keeping the Yovel, and the system of Sabbaths leading up to it, is set down as the Torah’s precondition for meriting life in the Holy Land. It’s the clause that was added to the second covenant after the first tablets were destroyed during the fiasco of the Golden Calf at Sinai. It became our part of the bargain. Without the Yovel, there’d be no Torah at all, and it’s made clear that should we fail in our responsibility, the earth will “vomit” us out. It seems apparent that the planet is now suffering from serious nausea.

The Golden Calf was built out of fear. Tradition tells us that Moses had told the people he would be back from the mountaintop in forty days, but they got confused; on the fortieth day they couldn’t figure out if he had meant to count from the day on which he said it, or the first day of his absence. And on that thin pedestal of doubt, the Calf was built. It seems the same with us today. We live in an abundant world,

where there’s more than enough to go around if we share, yet our deep-seated fear and our doubts about what might happen if we were to let go of control lead us to choose a world of scarcity instead.

The philosopher John Rawls suggested that a just society should be designed from behind a “veil of ignorance.” He meant we should choose the way our society will work without knowing where we might find ourselves within it; we choose which system to follow knowing we could be anybody. Looking at the world today, where a few have so much while the remainder get shafted, would anyone reasonably, from behind a veil of ignorance, choose to keep things as they are? To do so would be to all but guarantee you’ve chosen a life of hardship. The Yovel, on the other hand, seems a lot closer to the kind of system we might choose without knowing which card we might draw.

I’m a different man than when I first came here. Though my journey from fear to trust is not over, there is one thing I’ve learned beyond a shadow of a doubt: Our true potential as human beings so outstrips the way we live day-to-day, it’s as if we have the capacity to become different beings altogether. We have everything we need to live in a world of peace, freedom, justice, and abundance. One of the core teachings permeating the Torah is free choice. A central expression of this is the way we choose the times; the celebration of festivals, when they fall, is not set by God, but by us. The same is true of the Yovel. Today, possibly more than ever in history, we have the tools to choose a new way. To do so, the great challenge is to move from fear to trust. Though this may sound pretty straightforward, the reason the secret of the Yovel cannot be spoken is it’s not about simply understanding this conceptually; rather, it’s about knowing it, about cultivating a trust so complete all fears and doubts give way. To truly grasp the secret of the Yovel is to glimpse another world. This is why the Yovel is a precondition for living in the Promised Land—were we to transform ourselves to the extent necessary to choose it, to develop a trust that unshakable, then we’d look around to find we’re already there. ■



Fasting for Tom Zipper

BY JOSH KORNBLUTH

SENT A TEXT TO MY RABBI, ASKING whether I would have to give up coffee for Yom Kippur—but my cell phone “corrected” my message, assuming that “Yom Kippur” was my typo-laden attempt to thumb-type “Tom Zipper.”

My rabbi texted me back, asking (reasonably enough) why this Tom Zipper fellow would want me to give up coffee.

I had just started going to temple, at the age of fifty, for the first time in my life—and the wonderful young rabbi and I were just getting to know each other. So, as far as he knew, maybe I was the kind of weak-willed person who would allow someone else to dictate my coffee-drinking habits. Or perhaps the gentleman I was referring to was a Dr. Tom Zipper, and his reasoning was purely medical.

I was about to send my rabbi a second text, in which I would make sure that he knew I was asking about *Yom Kippur*, and not *Tom Zipper*—but then I was struck by a curious thought: what if a “Tom Zipper” did ask me to quit drinking coffee? Anyone who knows me even moderately well is aware of my deep and abiding addiction to coffee; I drink it pretty much all the time, from when I get up in the morning to the moment before I lay down my head at night (I’m an excellent sleeper—it’s my only real skill). To ask me to give up coffee—well, it would be like asking Michael Jordan to give up basketball. (And if you’ll remember, Jordan actually tried to do that several times, and failed.) I found myself getting indignant about Zipper’s hubris: who did he

think he was, anyhow?

Now, let me just say here that the rational part of me understood that it was somewhat weird to get worked up about a fictional person who’d only hypothetically asked me to do something. And yet, for some reason, I felt myself getting more and more disquieted by Zipper’s intrusion into both the spiritual and caffeinated areas of my life.

Why? Was it, perhaps, because somewhere, deep down, I sensed that Tom Zipper had a point? Maybe coffee *had* become a chemical/emotional crutch for me—in which case, going without it for a day might actually give me some perspective on my deeper self.

I began to think a bit more highly of this Tom Zipper guy. Who was he, and what gave him such insight into my character and foibles?

Perhaps he himself had gone through similar challenges to the ones I was now facing in middle age: the heavy sensation that, after years of leaving me pretty much alone (aside from some gray hairs and the occasional backache), time was now insistently pushing me toward the finish line; the knowledge that my young son was rapidly becoming a man (not to mention a *mensch*), and would be needing less and less of my involvement in his life; the deep pessimism about our species’ chances for peace, shared prosperity, or even survival, that kept gnawing at me, despite my best attempts to remain a Pollyanna... Maybe Tom Zipper had experienced all these things—or at least something like them—and had discovered,

through the temporary self-denial of delicious coffee, a way to find a bit of perspective, or even relief.

My cell phone beeped. It was my rabbi, with another text: “*Hey, did u mean ‘Yom Kippur’? If so, sadly I must tell u that coffee is indeed verboten - also, all food & drink, even water!*”

Alas! So I had suspected. And, as a newly (and still somewhat tentatively) observant Jew, I might have decided, on the spot, to give the whole thing up. Why suffer unnecessarily? Wasn’t there enough loss in life already, without relinquishing food, drink—and, especially, coffee—for a whole day? In fact, to be honest with you, that was indeed my first impulse: to abandon faith for the relative comfort (and caffeine) of secular life—to acknowledge the seemingly obvious fact that I didn’t have the right stuff to get through Yom Kippur.

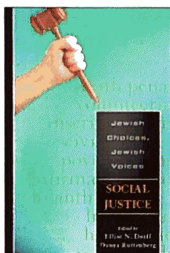
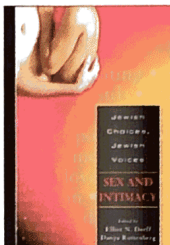
But something influenced me to stay the course—and that something, or someone, was Tom Zipper. Tom Zipper had gotten through to me. I don’t know how. I’m even pretty sure that there is no Tom Zipper, other than as a magical creation of the collective human imagination. But I *believe* in Tom Zipper, or I’m beginning to believe, or I *want* to believe. And for now, apparently, that’s enough. ■

Josh Kornbluth is a monologist who lives in Berkeley with his wife and son and their cornsnake, Snakey. His latest solo show is Andy Warhol: Good for the Jews? You can follow his doings at JoshKornbluth.com.

SEX AND INTIMACY SOCIAL JUSTICE

Edited by Elliot N. Dorff and Danya Ruttenberg
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PERHAPS INSPIRED BY THE SUCCESS OF JEWISH LIGHTS publishers, the Jewish Publication Society has moved to address the growing hunger for Jewish relevancy to the problems facing Jews in daily life. Perhaps the most exciting of their efforts is the series called "Jewish Choices, Jewish Voices" which started in 2008 under the editorship of Elliot Dorff and Louis Newman and produced a book on *Body*, another on *Money*, and a third on *Power*. Each contains short articles from both classical sources and contemporary Jewish writing. Now Dorff is working with Danya Ruttenberg, and they've produced the two volumes featured above.



Sex and Intimacy addresses questions about dating ethics: What kinds of secrets are and are not appropriate in a dating relationship? Is it ever OK to lie to one's partner about sleeping with someone else? What values should govern our sexual behavior and how do they get applied in the real world? Do sex workers make real or coerced choices? And what kinds of sexual agreements are appropriate? *Social Justice* addresses issues concerning poverty, health care (and our responsibility to provide health care for all), discrimination law, and the nature of our environmental responsibility. It also takes on criminal law, considering the value of incarceration vs. education and posing questions about the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the death penalty.

These books provide an excellent jumping-off point for discussions about how Judaism should evolve in the twenty-first century.

BOB DYLAN IN AMERICA

Sean Wilentz
Doubleday, 2010

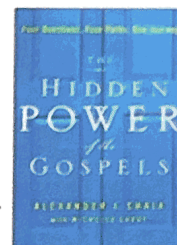
BOB DYLAN'S LATEST TOUR HAS BEEN A DEEP disappointment to many of his fans. As one person put it after Dylan's San Francisco appearance in September 2010, the performer appeared to be an aging Jewish man pretending he once was a hippie/hipster who knew how to sing. So Sean Wilentz's brilliant retelling of the 1960s iconic songwriter and tradition breaker is a welcome reprieve for Dylan as culture hero, at least for those who took from the young folk singer an inspiration that may have transcended Dylan's own consciousness or capacities. Wilentz has a keen understanding of the dynamics of American society and of the particularities of Dylan's own uneven career from the early sixties to the present moment. Always reinventing himself but rarely explaining why, and always somewhere between a huckster and an idealist, Dylan continues to perplex and annoy, all the while illuminating and shaping elements of mass culture. At times he also seems to be shaped by these elements in ways that he, and sometimes Wilentz, fail to note. As much a commodity to be consumed as a prophetic voice, Wilentz's Dylan provides us with an important vista from which to observe and at times pierce the legend that Dylan has so carefully fostered about himself.



THE HIDDEN POWER OF THE GOSPELS

Alexander J. Shaia, with Michelle Gaugy
HarperOne, 2010

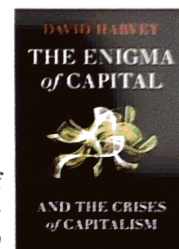
JESUS, THE JEWISH PROPHET, HAS MUCH TO TEACH future generations, and according to the creative reading given the gospels by Alexander Shaia, so too do his disciples who created the four gospels. Shaia's close reading of the gospels uncovers many psychological and spiritual truths and a path to spiritual transformation. He argues that "we are not so different from the first-century Christians" in our longing for a quick solution or a flash of insight or some heavenly intercession that would solve our problems or cure a crisis. Shaia teaches that the resurrection stories teach Christians about "our ability to renew our vitality and stay present to the divine in our lives." Through breaking bread, sharing our stories with others, staying with wonder and curiosity, and cultivating a positive attitude, we may, he says, be able to stay connected to the hope that Jesus the Christ can inspire. To do so requires adherence to eight essential and continuing spiritual practices, which Shaia lays out in his final chapter.



THE ENIGMA OF CAPITAL AND THE CRISES OF CAPITALISM

David Harvey
Oxford University Press, 2010

WE PRETTY MUCH THOUGHT WE HAD HEARD THE END of the economic Marxists whose predictions of doom for capitalism have been falsified by the experience of advanced industrial societies throughout the past hundred years, most recently in the conversion of China to the capitalist road. But the recent near-collapse of the global economic system has added new plausibility to Marxist analysis, and David Harvey is certainly its most elegant and persuasive spokesperson. It's easy for those in the West whose ideas of "what is happening" are shaped by the media to resist awareness of the massive impact of global economic arrangements on daily events. It's easy to believe that what really counts is whether any given candidate or party will win the next election—ignoring the ways in which global capitalism constrains the choices available and the likely outcomes.



Harvey's latest book reminds us of the fundamental instability of the capitalist system, despite its remarkable innovations. Harvey also recognizes, as did Marx, that ideas themselves can become "a material force" in challenging capitalist relations of production. Unfortunately, he never reaches the insight that drives *Tikkun*: that the fundamental contradiction of advanced capitalist societies, and thus the one most likely to produce the capacity for a revolutionary movement, is the deprivation of meaning in life, the deprivation of love and mutual recognition in human relationships, and the turning of our alive and spiritually vibrant planet into a narrowly construed "resource" to fulfill human material needs shaped by the marketplace, in the process marginalizing our need for beauty, awe, wonder, and radical amazement at the grandeur and mystery of Being. Spiritual progressives have much to learn from Harvey's work, but Marxists have much to learn from spiritual progressives!



The NSP protests at the White House, June 2010.

The Perfect Holiday Gift for Christmas or Chanukah:

A membership in the Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP),
which comes with a free subscription to *Tikkun* in print or online!

The NSP is the education/activism outreach arm of *Tikkun*. Co-chaired by Cornel West, Sister Joan Chittister, and Rabbi Michael Lerner, the NSP amplifies the voices of those who know that America needs a New Bottom Line of love, kindness, generosity, ethical and ecological sensitivity, and caring for each other and the earth to replace the Old Bottom Line of money and power. You don't have to be religious or part of a spiritual community to be part of the NSP—our definition of spiritual includes anyone who supports this New Bottom Line. For those who are part of a religious community, the NSP offers a progressive vision that unites people globally across all religious and spiritual lines into a movement to build a world safe for love, kindness, and generosity! Joining helps spread that vision in the public sphere—and helps support *Tikkun*. You can join using the envelope at page 32 inside, or at spiritualprogressives.org.

Read more there about our Spiritual Covenant with America and our campaign for a Global Marshall Plan. Also check out the NSP's proposed Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (ESRA) to overturn Citizens United, get money out of politics, and stop corporations from destroying our planet.



The NSP conference in Washington, D.C., June 2010.