

Tikkun

POLITICS+SPIRITUALITY+CULTURE

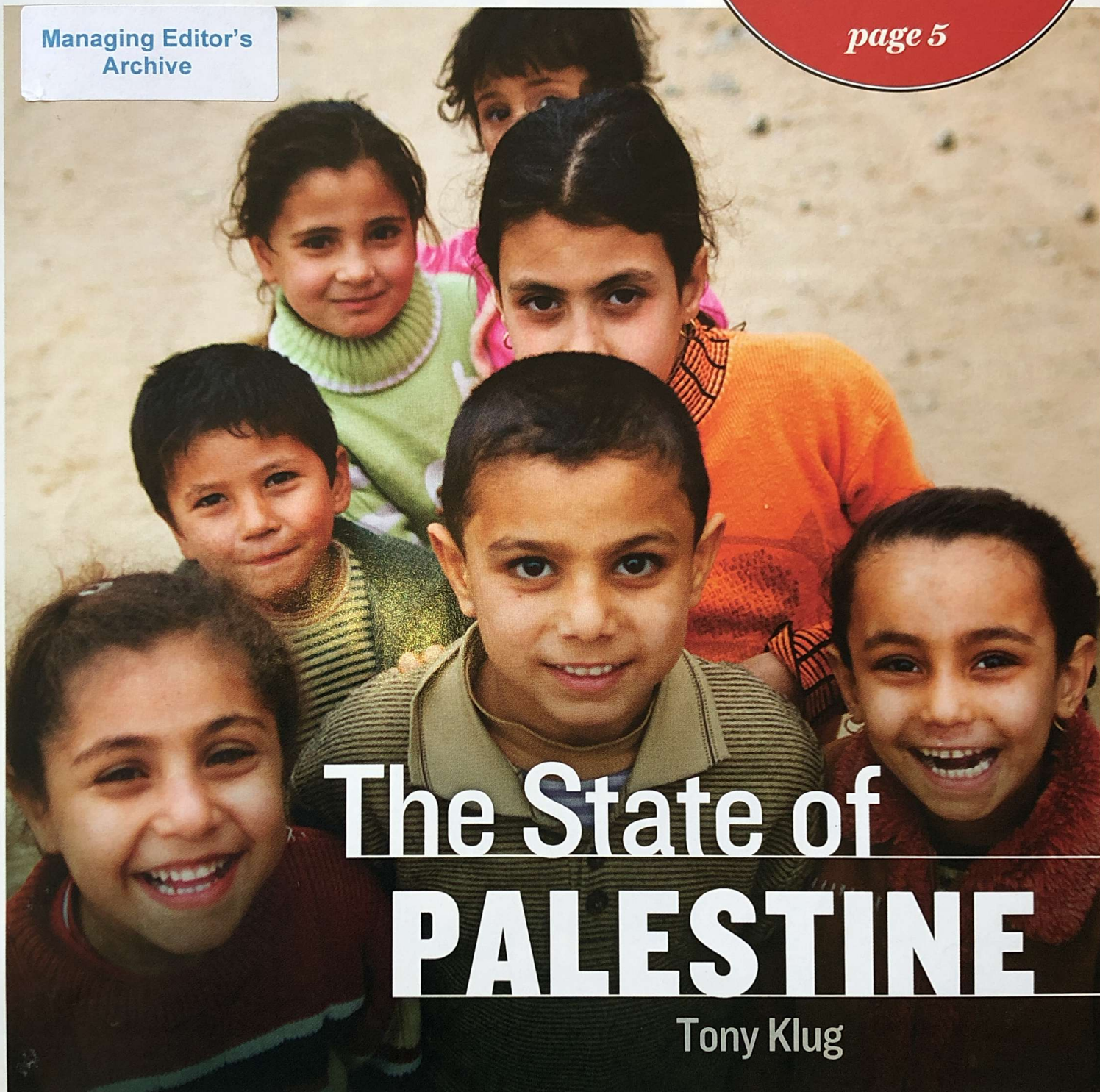
(tē·kūn) To mend, repair, and transform the world.

FALL 2011

**ECONOMY:
OBAMA'S BIGGEST
CAPITULATION**

page 5

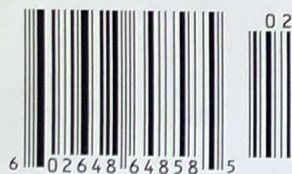
Managing Editor's
Archive



The State of **PALESTINE**

Tony Klug

\$5.95 U.S. \$6.95 Canada



**Is Addiction Really a Disease? | Twelve-Step Healing
Heschel's Brilliant Legacy | Dr. Seuss's Progressive Politics
One Nurse's Life | Sword and Plowshare in Jewish Thought**



A form of nonviolent protest that has long galvanized social justice movements is now illegal in Israel. A new Israeli law makes it a civil offense to call for an economic, cultural, or academic boycott of individuals or institutions for political reasons. The ban extends to targeted boycotts against companies that produce their products in West Bank settlements. From Jerusalem (above) to Tel Aviv (below), Israeli activists took to the streets following the July 2011 passage of this anti-free speech measure. One of their signs reads, "We will not let them shut us up." Another says, "Banning boycotts puts democracy at risk."

Photos courtesy of Hagit Ofra of Peace Now (top) and ActivistStills.Org (bottom)



Editorials

5 **Austerity as Spiritual Depression: The Current Economic Assault on the Middle Class**

Why even rational capitalists are running America in irrational ways.

8 **We Are Staying In Print**

With support from a new publisher, we are delighted to continue publishing a quarterly print journal alongside our lively web content.

9 **Recognize Palestine! Recognize Israel!**

Even after the United States vetoes UN recognition, a balanced resolution could change the equation.

Rethinking Religion

10 **High Holiday Workbook** by MICHAEL LERNER

It's not just Jews who can benefit from repentance and atonement.

11 **The Legacy of Abraham Joshua Heschel** by ROBERT ERLEWINE

Susannah Heschel's new collection of her father's writings gives us an opportunity to re-immense ourselves in the wisdom of the twentieth century's greatest Jewish religious thinker.

Politics & Society

15 **The Arab Awakening and the Israeli-Palestinian Connection** by TONY KLUG

The Arab Spring has opened new possibilities for peace in Israel/Palestine—possibilities that the Israeli leadership has yet to fully understand.

19 **Fresh Tactics and New Voices in the Movement for Justice and Freedom in the Middle East** by RAE ABILEAH

Thanks to energetic activism and new social media tools, the movement against the Occupation is coming alive.

22 **Is Addiction Really a Disease? A Challenge to Twelve-Step Programs** by NICHOLAS GRANT BOEVING

The disease model has great therapeutic impact. But is it really telling the truth about addiction?

25 **Twelve-Step Healing: Beyond Disease Metaphors and God-Talk** by SHERINE KAUFMAN

There are deeper reasons why twelve-step programs have been so successful in healing people.

28 **Dr. Seuss's Progressive Politics** by PETER DREIER

Behind the cute drawings and catchy rhymes, there is a deep ethical message in Dr. Seuss's children's books.

Culture

FILM

31 **From the Beginning of Time to the End of Days**

The Tree of Life by Terrence Malick/Fox Searchlight Pictures

Review by DAVID STERRITT

BOOKS

32 **The Work of Healing**

Beautiful Unbroken: One Nurse's Life by Mary Jane Nealon

Review by KATHRYN RHETT

34 **Sword and Plowshare in Jewish Thought**

The Peace and Violence of Judaism by Robert Eisen

Review by ARTHUR WASKOW

POETRY

48 **Magpies** by DON BOGEN

Connect With Us Online

Keep up with online-only magazine articles, art exhibits, editorials, and action alerts. Join our email list at tikkun.org/mail.

Sign up to read posts from the Tikkun Daily blog at tikkun.org/dailydigest.

Are you on Facebook? Join our page at tikkun.org/facebook.

Follow us on Twitter:
twitter.com/tikkunonline.

Join the Network of Spiritual Progressives: tikkun.org/join.



Cover Image: Andreas H. Lunde

Readers Respond

A NOTE 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.

JFK'S ASSASSINATION

JAMES DOUGLASS'S NOVEMBER/December 2010 article in *Tikkun*, "JFK, Obama, and the Unspeakable," is powerfully written, filled with a generosity toward both JFK and President Obama, and challenges us to be accountable for the actions of our leaders. However, I find it disturbing to treat the assertion that the "national security state" assassinated JFK, and similarly threatens Obama, so cavalierly.

Douglass states, "Kennedy's assassination [was] never really mysterious and [is] now a story documented by the mass of files made public by the Assassination Records Review Board." This is an assertion of high treason made without even a footnote of reference and posited as being beyond reasonable doubt.

I am concerned that the reputation of *Tikkun* is compromised by allowing such an assertion without requiring citation of evidence in the story. If the case leading to that assertion could not be made in the available space of the article, then it may not be as strong as Douglass believes and would best have been framed as an interpretation of events rather than as a proven fact.

IRA CHALEFF
Kensington, Maryland

Michael Lerner replies:

PLEASE DO READ DOUGLASS'S BOOK *JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters*, which provides the evidence on which he bases his article in *Tikkun*. You might also

get some backup for some of his thesis in Peter Dale Scott's *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK*. Ira Chaleff is right on one point: we are a journal of opinion and allow our writers to make claims that we ourselves cannot substantiate with the tiny staff that we have. Our task is to provide our readers with perspectives that they cannot obtain from the establishment media, and we trust our readers' intelligence to come to their own conclusions about how much they agree with any given article.

LUTHER'S ANTI-SEMITISM

IN HIS SUMMER 2011 *TIKKUN* article, "Luther's Call to Resistance: 'Not with Violence, but the Word,'" Thomas W. Strieter wrote, "When I first read Luther's anti-Semitic diatribes in my younger years, I initially wished that he had died before he wrote this stuff." If Strieter's wish had come true, Luther would have to have died before he began any of his theological writings. It trivializes Luther's deeply rooted anti-Semitism to ascribe it to his later writings in *The Jews and Their Lies* (1543) as if it were merely the old-age rantings of a man in his waning years, or to ascribe it to his medical problems ("kidney stones"). Dr. René Süß (the Jewish Dutch author who unmasked Karl Barth's anti-Semitism in 1991) convincingly shows in *Luther's Theological Testament* (2006, in Dutch) that on the contrary, based on his earlier writings, Luther's aversion to the Jews was constitutive of his Christology throughout. "A number of years ago,"

Strieter tells us, "the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America rightly asked Jews for forgiveness for Luther's racist writings." This does little, in my opinion, to neutralize the wrongly placed admiration given to this virulent anti-Semite Martin Luther. Nothing less than a complete distancing from his kind of theologian by, for example, rejecting the Lutherans' church identification as Lutheran (I know this is a Jewish fantasy), can ever convince Jews of the eradication of the poisonous effect that this man has had on his Christian followers. How can real reconciliation ever take place between religions when such spoors of hatred continue to inform one of the dialogue partners?

RABBI DR. TZVI MARX
Vught, Netherlands

Thomas Strieter replies:

THE LEGITIMACY OF RABBI MARX'S pain and anger is unquestionable. The fact that the whole Jewish people have been scapegoated for the death of Jesus is one of the great crimes of history.

When Rabbi Marx, however, says that Luther (and Barth) are anti-Semitic because of their Christology, he is speaking to a highly complicated and neuralgic issue. Jesus, by the very nature of his message, created intra-Jewish conflict. Add the cruel Roman occupiers to the mix and the charge "he stirs up the people" is historically accurate. New Testament so-called "anti-Semitism" actually reflects a struggle between practicing Jews and Jews who were followers of Jesus.

MORE LETTERS

We receive many more letters than we can print!
Visit tikkun.org/letters to read more.

The Jesus movement, after his death (and Christians say resurrection) initially continued to be primarily Jewish, and textual studies show that hostility and alienation were expressed by both sides.

This tension is handled both positively and negatively in New Testament texts. The apostle Paul, writing to Jewish/non-Jewish mixed communities, insists that Jews were, are, and always will be God's covenant people, and Christians are grafted into the tree of Israel. Matthew's Gospel (a creation of primarily Jewish Christians in conflict with practicing Jewish communities) scapegoats the whole Jewish people because of Jesus's death. Both Paul's irenic and Matthew's condemning spirit have been the ambiguous hallmark of "Christology" and New Testament scholarship throughout later history. To paint this tension with the broad brushstroke of anti-Semitism is not totally accurate.

Ever since Emperor Constantine, who brutally practiced "religious cleansing" toward both "heterodox"

Christians and Jews, ruling powers and the institutional church have perpetrated odious persecutions. History is a tragic bloodbath of oppressors wreaking havoc on the oppressed.

If we were to disavow the name "Lutheran," then we must also disavow the name "Christian" because of the heinous sins of the past. To do so would, however, deprive us of centuries of solid Christian scholarship, theology, the arts, and contributions to the betterment of humanity. In spite of Luther's unquestionable flaws, he liberated the laity from legalistic ecclesiastical power and made Scripture available in the vernacular, among other substantial contributions.

But this is now. Please accept our repentance for Luther's anti-Semitism in the spirit in which it is given. We can neither deny nor undo the past, but must commit ourselves never to repeat its evils. We can be enriched in our diversity and reconciled in our sister-brotherhood, working together for peace, justice, and care of the earth.

THE 2012 ELECTION

WE MUST VOTE INTO OFFICE ONLY liberal progressives and the president and get out the Democratic vote in 2012, because the complaining non-voters are the ones who allowed sixty Democrats in the 2008 Senate to fall to fifty-one, and the president to go right. We must, like Wisconsin, be constant in striving to get our demands successfully met.

JANICE BOTSZKO
Delray Beach, Florida

Michael Lerner replies:

THE COMPLAINING NONVOTERS are more likely to be motivated by decent actions of the president like ending the war in Afghanistan; taking action on the environment (see Gore's statement in the *New York Times* criticizing what Obama has not done); and demanding that Congress pass an emergency jobs bill like the New Deal's WPA. That, not fear about the "evil" Republicans, is what will bring those complaining nonvoters back into enthusiastic support for him.

Tikkun

EDITOR	Michael Lerner
EDITOR AT LARGE	Peter Gabel
MANAGING EDITOR	Alana Yu-lan Price
ASSISTANT EDITOR	Ashley Bates
ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN	Design Action Collective
POETRY EDITOR	Joshua Weiner
ASSISTANT POETRY EDITOR	Lindsay Bernal
FILM CRITIC	David Sterritt
LITERARY EDITOR	Julian Levinson
WEB DESIGN	Craig Wiesner and Derrick Kikuchi
FULFILLMENT	Natalie Wollner

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

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

INTERNS AND EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

Zena Daniela Andreani, Sarah Stafford, Mia Sullivan, Martha Woolverton, and Sandra Yolles (editorial); George Altshuler and Antoinette Siu (web); Laura Beckman, Sayaka Merriam, and Natalie Rogers (art); David Ehrens, Christina Honde, Nancy Kleban, Sara Roffino, and Siddarth Sehgal (archive); and Arienne Calingo, Meghan Foley, Dylan Kaufman, Melissa Leela, and Robert Zeuner (editorial and community organizing).

PUBLISHER Michael Lerner

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send your letters to the editor to letters@tikkun.org

EDITORIAL BOARD

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

ADVERTISING & PERMISSIONS

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

TC OR NSP MEMBERSHIP

Natalie Wollner at 510-644-1200 or natalie@tikkun.org

Tikkun (Vol. 26, No. 4, ISSN 0887-9982) is published quarterly by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. © 2011 *Tikkun* magazine. All Rights Reserved. *Tikkun*® is a registered trademark of the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Tikkun*, P.O. Box 460926, Escondido, CA 92046. Periodical-rate postage paid at Oakland, CA and additional mailing offices by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Publications mail agreement number: #1549111. Canada mail distributor information: Express Messenger International; P.O. Box 25058; London BRC, ON N6C 6A8. Subscription price for 4 issues: U.S. residents \$29.00; U.S. institutions \$40.00; Canadian residents \$39.00; all others \$43.00. Payment in U.S. dollars required. Printed in USA. ♻️ Printed on recycled paper.

Austerity as Spiritual Depression: The Current Economic Assault on the Middle Class

THE WISHY-WASHY SWINGS IN THE OBAMA administration's approach to job creation and debt reduction reflect a deeper division and debate among U.S. elites about the future of our society and the American empire.

At the moment, the pessimists seem to have the upper hand. As a result, President Obama and other leaders of the Democratic Party are joining Republicans in championing austerity measures under the polite title of "debt reduction." Obama's latest plans for generating employment are deeply inadequate when compared with the actual needs of the American people. Comparisons with the more visionary programs developed by FDR in the 1930s render current proposals almost ridiculous. Framed as part of a program of reducing the national debt—and painfully constrained by that goal—Obama's program for jobs is pathetically deficient.

By accepting the Republican agenda, which puts debt reduction as the highest goal, and by actually repeating the conservative debt reduction mantra for the past several years, Obama has helped create a majority in support of shrinking government services. Even people who will suffer from cuts to government services more than they will benefit from whatever tax cuts are enabled, including Democrats who claimed to be representing middle-income working people, are now voicing support for these austerity measures. If debt reduction is not achieved by a booming economy (as happened in the 1990s under the Clinton administration), and if Republicans hold firm on their commitment to protect wealthy elites from even tiny tax increases, then the debt can only be reduced through dramatic cuts in government expenditures. Such cuts will inevitably cause increased unemployment and the erosion of public education, health care subsidies, social security, state and national parks, environmental protection, food safety, and even fire and police services, all of which are particularly vital to the middle class and the poor.

How is it that the pessimists in our government have gained so much power?

The Capitulation of America's Rationalist Capitalists

AMERICA'S ECONOMIC ELITES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN UNIFIED IN their desire to preserve the capitalist system and to isolate or



Obama reviews his fiscal policy speech with advisers in the Oval Office on April 13, 2011.

crush those who seek fundamental change. Yet they have long debated the best way to achieve that goal.

On one side are the short-term profiteers who argue that the appropriate role of capitalists is to make as much money as possible, as quickly as possible. Capitalists, they say, must disregard the needs of middle-income working people and instead struggle against those who organize themselves to put restraints of any kind on capital. These are the people who have sought to destroy the labor union movement from the start, who fought bitterly against the New Deal legislation that provided federal funding for employment, and who resist the imposition of safety and health regulations at the workplace, in agriculture, in health care facilities, and in pharmaceutical production. These are also the people who oppose or seek to limit unemployment benefits and any form of welfare for the poor, and who fight mightily against serious environmental programs. Traditionally, this group was politically organized around the Republican Party.

On the other side are the rational capitalists who argue that the capitalist system would best be served by accommodating the needs of middle-income workers and offering subsidies to the poor. The goal of this approach is to avoid "class war" and give everyone a stake (however unequal) in the flourishing of the capitalist marketplace. This approach—which shaped the

New Deal of the 1930s and the Great Society legislation of the 1960s—has historically found widespread support among the corporate leaders involved in shaping the modern Democratic Party. In their view, it is important to put restraints on the greatest excesses of greed, to create regulatory bodies that make capitalist enterprises more responsive to the needs of middle-income and poor people, and to project the image of a democratic society that supports human rights and is “the best country in the world.” Though the short-term profiteers have always had a foothold in both major political parties, the rational capitalists often predominated in shaping the policies of the Democratic Party.

When elected president, Obama was perfectly situated to promote the agenda of the rational capitalists because the short-term capitalists had been in power for eight years, dismantled restraints on capital, and produced a huge deficit, as well as escalating levels of unemployment. Almost from the first moment in office, however, Obama and the Democratic Congress acted as though they had no mandate or as though they had lost the election: they framed their domestic and foreign policy as though they had an obligation to be responsive to the very forces that had led the country to the brink of disaster.

In light of three disastrous years of this approach, it seems as if the rational capitalist forces have lost their own sense of direction and purpose—they have lost faith in their belief that caring for each other will produce a social good. As a result, the Democrats who represent the rational capitalists have been capitulating to the logic of the short-term profiteers. Rather than believing that they can build a rational future for America, the Democrats now are as likely to mix a rational capitalist perspective with a short-term, selfishness-oriented, capitalist perspective. The outcome is a kind of Tower of Babel in which the Democratic message sounds like meaningless babble.

Obama's Lost Opportunity

IT WAS NOT NECESSARY FOR OBAMA TO HAVE ACCEPTED THE position of the Republicans. A serious Democratic president representing the perspective of the “rational capitalists” would have followed the analysis developed by Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman and former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich. Krugman and Reich have repeatedly argued that the best way to solve the United States’ debt problems is through a massive investment in rebuilding our domestic infrastructure; a reduction in military spending realized by ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as closing the thousand or more U.S. military bases around the world; and the restoration of rational constraints on capitalist greed.

Though faced with implacable opponents in Congress who might have prevented him from winning approval for such a program, Obama has also had daily opportunities to shape public debate and popularize a worldview that could eventually have isolated the Republican obstructionists. If the president tries to revive a populist discourse now, as he nears


the next presidential election, he will encounter much deeper resistance than he would have had he consistently put forward a pro-worker, pro-middle class agenda and helped people absorb the intellectual foundation for such a program.

Instead of focusing on how Obama has betrayed his progressive base—whom he is now seeking to win over again in order to win reelection (fool us once, shame on you; fool us twice, shame on us)—we need to look at what has happened to the rational capitalists. What has happened to these rational elites, who have normally sought to protect their long-term interests by urging the government to invest in the country’s infrastructure? These capitalists used to fight for measures to reduce the suffering caused by the normal behaviors of the capitalist system. In the past, they pushed the government to support those hit worst by the system and to expand employment for everyone.

Economic Decline, Neoliberal Hegemony, and Climate Change Paralyze U.S. Elites

SEVERAL FACTORS ARE LIKELY AT PLAY IN WEAKENING THE power and resolve of rationalist capitalists worldwide. First, there is the decline of the American economic and military empire. Instances of successful resistance to American power and control—first in China and Korea, then in Cuba and Vietnam, then later in some Islamic countries, and now in parts of South America—have made it harder for American elites to believe that their economic system, dependent as it has always been on expansion and unlimited access to raw materials and markets, has a bright future.

Second, the globalization of markets and production through neoliberal trade agreements has enabled shortsighted capitalists to exploit the resources and labor of other



**HUMAN NEEDS.
NOT CORPORATE GREED.**

Join us for massive nonviolent civil disobedience beginning on October 6, 2011, at Freedom Plaza in Washington, D.C. We are determined to stay until we see action being taken to end corporatism and militarism and move toward a peaceful, just, and sustainable society.

We are the October 2011 Movement, composed of individuals and groups who advocate for peace, human rights, and social, economic, and environmental justice. Already thousands have taken the pledge to join us at <http://october2011.org>. People are arranging carpools and buses from across the country. All are welcome. Some will arrive on October 6 and some will arrive when they are able.

countries without concern for creating long-term sustainable relationships. As a result, the U.S. economy has become hooked to the instability of other economies dependent on loans that rapacious bankers are not willing to forgive. The IMF, determined to impose austerity in order to ensure that bankers get their interest paid back in an orderly fashion, has created economic circumstances that have generated pre-revolutionary conditions not only in the least developed countries, but also in Europe.

Third, there is a growing recognition, particularly among rational capitalists, that the combination of global warming, expanding populations, declining food supplies, and short-term capitalists' resistance to rational global environmental planning is likely to produce catastrophic environmental crises sufficient to undermine economic well-being in the advanced industrial societies. It's hard to believe in a long-term future when it seems more realistic that our children and grandchildren will face the local effects of global environmental devastation.

Finally, there is a growing fear that the short-term capitalists have unleashed fascistic forces in the advanced industrial countries. These forces threaten to manipulate populist and religious yearnings for power. Moreover, they are acting even more irrationally than other right-wing forces the system has seen in recent decades—just listen to many of the current candidates running for the presidency in 2012.

Put these factors together and you get a growing psychological and spiritual depression. It is this dejection that is crippling many rational people's will to act—particularly the will of rational economic elites in Western societies.

This depression has been mightily reinforced by a loss of faith in the possibility of counting on each other, trusting each other, and believing in the fundamental decency, goodness, and rationality of others. Ironically, this is the result of a systematic offensive that members of both factions of America's ruling elites have engaged in ever since the 1960s scared many into believing that they might be in danger of losing their control over politics and the economy. The huge upsurge of hopefulness that is now recalled as "the Sixties" was so threatening to our ruling elites that they have made stamping out its resonance a key strategy to retain their power. As a result they have been willing to undermine the labor union movement, blame social problems on the alleged narcissism of the Sixties, and support cultural offensives against the most hopeful and utopian elements of any liberal or progressive thinking. They have started describing what used to be the political center as "the Left," thereby renaming the actual Left as "far Left" or even "left-wing extremists"). And they have encouraged people to believe that human beings are naturally selfish, materialistic, and uncaring about each other. In this worldview, people only care about others to the extent that they can be used instrumentally to satisfy their own needs. This worldview also promotes as leaders and sages those who have been successful in the capitalist market, while

marginalizing or ridiculing those whose lives were dedicated to caring for others (not least by denying them ways of making an adequate income for living).

Our ruling elites believed that it was necessary to squash all hopeful, prophetic, or visionary discourse. They attacked our ability to imagine people caring for each other rather than focusing narcissistically on themselves. Now, however, the loss of faith in each other that generated our society's emotional and spiritual depression has managed to cripple the rational capitalists as well. Without the capacity to believe in each other, the rational capitalists became voiceless. Ironically, this happened even as Barack Obama, who has the potential to be a powerful spokesman for this segment of the ruling elite, is positioned to articulate the rational capitalists' ideals, if only they or he still believed in them.

Time for a Politics of Care

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT MOMENT FOR "SPIRITUAL progressives"—those of us who are interested in creating a politically progressive society oriented around universal, spiritual, and ethical ideas of care and love—to enter the political dialogue with a fundamentally different perspective. We ought to hold a progressive convention to draw up a shared platform that speaks to the heart and doesn't simply repeat the thirty-nine flavors of past coalitions. And then we ought to have progressive candidates running for the Democratic nomination for the presidency, and maybe even for the Republican and Green Party nominations. Different candidates in different states all committed to the same program would make it harder for the media to focus on the flaws of any given person. And since the goal is not to win the nomination but to give voice to a progressive worldview—a perspective that has been silenced by Obama as much as by the media—having several different candidates serves the goal. This could happen if we convince the rest of the liberal and progressive forces to recognize that what is needed most today is a politics that speaks to the hearts of Americans, that regenerates their faith in each other, and that proposes fundamental transformations of orientation. For concrete examples of such a politics, see our Global Marshall Plan (spiritualprogressives.org/GMP) and Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendments to the U.S. Constitution (tikkun.org/ESRA). For progressives to reshape public discourse, they must be willing to see the fundamental decency and goodness of all Americans and not write off those who have momentarily been attracted to the Right.

Unfortunately, liberals and progressives show few signs of waking up to the challenge and opportunity facing us. Progressives could raise awareness about what a genuine progressive worldview would entail by launching a challenge to Obama in the Democratic primaries or by creating a new political party that embodies a politics of meaning. But most progressives remain so focused on protecting their own organizational or political turf that they can't even get together to hold a national convention to determine a shared direction

or strategy. Instead, they mouth empty slogans about local organizing without seeming to notice that much of what has been organized or achieved in the past decades is rapidly being dismantled by the emotionally depressed Democrats succumbing to the radical know-nothing-ism of the Republicans. Why? Because all those years of organizing took place without a unifying spiritual/psychological worldview. We've been limping along without a way to understand the spiritual and psychological dynamics of hope versus fear and how they actually function in the political world.

All the more reason to revitalize *Tikkun's* Network of Spiritual Progressives. We actually have a worldview and a program that could play an important, possibly even decisive, role in giving leadership and direction to secular liberal and progressive forces. But our own members have themselves not been immune to the larger level of emotional/spiritual depression that is paralyzing liberals and progressives. Many of our members shifted their focus from the long-term visions of the NSP to the short-term victory they could achieve by giving their money and time to Obama in 2008. When they succeeded and then Obama turned out to be such a huge disappointment, they began to retreat into the same cynicism, despair, and emotional/spiritual depression that has impacted everyone else. Instead of developing a comprehensive understanding of what Obama's betrayals meant and what spiritual progressives should do, many NSP chapters folded. Others persisted only by turning inward, becoming more focused on learning communication skills or narrowing activities to a single issue, rather than using the moment to educate people toward a spiritual progressive worldview.

So that task falls upon you, dear reader. But you don't have to do it by yourself. Now is the time for you to return to the NSP, rebuild or create a chapter in your own location, and adopt a project such as the ESRA, the GMP, or the campaign

to urge the United Nations to recognize Palestine while also recommitting to the safety and security of Israel. If those don't inspire you, create your own project. Run as a candidate in the party of your choice—so what if you don't get a lot of votes; you can still use the opportunity to put forward a spiritual progressive worldview that most people in your party will have never heard about before. It costs almost nothing to run, and you'll get invited to forums at which you can present your ideas. Your example will radiate through the community and strengthen others who need such an example in order to get out of their own emotional/spiritual depression. Never seen that happen? Well, just review the recent events of the Arab Spring and you'll see how a very small group can set off a spark that turns things around against overwhelming odds in ways that no one would have believed to be realistic!

Or try this: call a meeting at your own small apartment or home and invite people who want to be part of a *Tikkun* discussion group. Use our editorials and other articles in the magazine to spark some energy or to inspire an ongoing monthly study group on American politics and spiritual transformation. If you're willing to send out a postcard inviting people to such a gathering, and willing to make this as an official *Tikkun*/NSP group, we'll put you in touch with subscribers in your area so you can invite them along with others you know who might hunger for a new approach to our bleak political situation. Contact natalie@tikkun.org for that information. Don't worry that you won't have enough space in your home—the first meeting will likely fit around your kitchen table, even if you send postcards to dozens of people.

Meanwhile, please share this editorial with everyone on your email list, and with other friends and colleagues. Chances are that it might help them better understand the cloud of depression around everyone, and thereby get an idea of what to do next. ■

We Are Staying In Print

GREAT NEWS: WE'VE NEGOTIATED AN ARRANGEMENT for *Tikkun* to join the family of academically and intellectually serious journals published by Duke University Press. The little details are still being worked out, but we expect to have a formal agreement in place very soon. We'll be printing a seventy-two page magazine four times a year.

Though our publisher is changing, our content is not: you'll find the same beloved mix of articles on politics, culture, society, theology, Judaism, Israel, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, earth-based spiritualities, atheism, philosophy, and science, along with thoughtful reviews of books and films.

We're happy about this development because we know many of our readers aren't ready to switch to the web. But

please don't forget that we also have a powerful website where subscribers and NSP members can access all our articles, and which also publishes online-only articles, making it a vibrant web magazine. Check it regularly to see new headlines every day from our *Tikkun* Daily blog (tikkun.org/daily), along with links to articles shared by Rabbi Lerner in his "Political Vision and Spiritual Wisdom" section, and weekly updates of Torah commentary, not to mention new articles, poetry, and fiction.

None of this can continue, however, unless you join our Network of Spiritual Progressives (tikkun.org/join) or at least subscribe to *Tikkun*, and beyond that, make a yearly tax-deductible donation to *Tikkun* at (tikkun.org/subscribe). Our future is in your hands. Please help us survive. ■

Recognize Palestine!

Recognize Israel!

THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ARE SEEKING recognition at the United Nations, now that Israel's ultra-right-wing government has refused to freeze settlements and is refusing to negotiate with the Palestinian Authority so long as Hamas is part of the Palestinian government.

The Network of Spiritual Progressives, *Tikkun's* political action arm, is both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine. We are hopeful that UN recognition of Palestine would persuade Israel to freeze its expansion of settlements in the areas that were part of pre-1967 Palestine. We also hope that UN recognition would lead Israel to negotiate in good faith to create a Palestinian state and reach a just settlement of all remaining issues, ensuring security for Israel and Palestine. These arguments are made in more detail in Tony Klug's article in this issue of *Tikkun*.

Mindful of the ways that the UN has in the past been perceived as one-sidedly anti-Israel, we believe that its recognition of Palestine should be accompanied by a statement reaffirming Israel's right to security. Even though the State of Israel has enormously more power than the Palestinians, the inner experience of Israelis (and of Israel's supporters around the world) is one of insecurity and fear—a feeling reinforced by the attack on an Israeli bus near Eilat in late August. It's important to acknowledge that fear by offering Israel, one of the greatest military powers in the world, real reassurance while supporting Palestinian recognition and membership in the UN.

This speaks to a key strategic issue: we are not going to get Israel to end the Occupation until Israelis feel less traumatized and less fearful. It doesn't help to say, "Discussions of Israeli feelings of trauma are just an excuse for continued colonial domination," unless the goal is merely showing how morally righteous we can be and how screwed up the current Israeli leadership is. But *Tikkun's* goal is to end the Occupation, not just be right about how bad it is. And to end the Occupation, we have to have Israel not just being safe (which it has been for a long time) but feeling safe, which requires the kind of transformation—in Israel, Palestine, and the West—that I describe in my forthcoming book *Embracing Israel/Palestine*.

Yet we also want to acknowledge the suffering of the Palestinian people under Israeli Occupation, and for that reason we are no longer willing to watch passively as Israel continues into its forty-fourth year of the Occupation of the West Bank, as well as its four-year-old blockade of Gaza. So in the hopes that UN recognition will be a stepping stone toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict, we encourage you to sign the petition that we will deliver to the U.S. government and to



Viki Jan mourns the death of her parents, Dov and Shula Karlinsky, who were among the eight people killed August 18, 2011, when Arab gunmen crossed into southern Israel from the Egyptian desert and launched a series of attacks against Israelis.

the UN on September 22, and then again next year when the UN convenes in 2012.

Sign online at tikkun.org/recognizepalestine, download the petition from our website, or ask us to send a copy for you to take around to friends and co-workers! ■

Embracing Israel/Palestine

If you are interested in learning more about the two-sidedness of the struggle, or know people who would benefit from hearing the story told in a way that is sympathetic to both sides and also critical of both sides, or who might be interested in the long-term strategy that we believe is necessary to bring a lasting peace, please read Rabbi Lerner's newest book, *Embracing Israel/Palestine*. It will be in bookstores in late November and can be ordered in advance from Barnes & Noble or Amazon. To order it directly from us, send a check for \$20 (which includes mailing costs) to *Tikkun*, 2342 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley, CA 94704. It's a perfect gift for the holidays or for any other joyous occasion.

Repentance and Atonement Are NOT Just for Jews

A Note to Our Non-Jewish Readers on How This High Holiday Workbook Can Be of Use to You

Tikkun is not just for Jews—it is interfaith as well as Jewish. This High Holiday workbook is an invitation to all people to join with the Jewish people in using the period from September 28, the evening of Rosh Hashanah (the day of both celebrating the birthday of the Universe and of remembering who we have been this last year), until nightfall ten full days later on Yom Kippur (the Day of “At-one-ment” on October 8), to rethink our personal and communal reality and engage with the process of *teshuvah* (returning to our highest selves and turning away from the ways we’ve missed the mark in this past year).

בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִפְתָּבוּן. וּבֵיּוֹם צוֹם כְּפוּר יִחְתָּמוּן.

High Holidays 5772 | *Yomim Nora'im* (The Days of Awe)

America Needs Repentance

REPENTANCE IS PARTICULARLY NEEDED IN THE United States at this historical moment, given our society’s problems.

We are painfully aware that somewhere between 16 percent and 18 percent of Americans are unemployed or underemployed, and that this causes huge suffering not only to them and their families, but also to a large part of the rest of the population, which finds itself unable to count on those who are unemployed to purchase goods and services or to donate to the nonprofit sector. Yet we’ve watched as our own elected representatives have voted for an austerity program instead of trying to convince the American public of the urgent need for a massive jobs program. Such a program could match or exceed the New Deal’s WPA program of hiring the unemployed to rebuild the crumbling infrastructure of our country.

Meanwhile, we’ve turned our backs on the two most pressing problems of the planet: the increasing destruction of our global environment and the unmet needs of many people worldwide facing poverty, starvation, and a lack of housing, food, and adequate health care. And we continue to squander hundreds of billions of dollars on a useless war in Afghanistan and on close to a thousand military bases around the world to protect American corporate interests.

Instead of building a political movement to provide genuine alternatives to the two branches of the pro-corporate party of the wealthy, we’ve fallen back into the “lesser evilism” rut of backing the least bad branch of that party. Instead of creating a genuinely pro-people and pro-environment political party, we sit around bemoaning our bad fortune for having elected a president who almost immediately abandoned all that he promised to do, and consoling ourselves that he’s not as bad as the extreme reactionaries being put forward by the other branch of the pro-corporate party. Yet it is this strategy that has created the space for the emergence of right-wing quasi-fascist forces and a deeply reactionary mood that is now shaping public discussions and may soon shape our national government as well.

Moreover our government empowers the most reactionary government Israel has ever had. Our leaders have vetoed every UN effort to give some measure of support to the occupied Palestinians, making purely token statements of opposition to Israel’s escalating campaign to build settlements in East Jerusalem and other parts of the West Bank.

This is only one dimension of the atonement our society needs; Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur is about inner transformations, as well as the societal transformations we need.



READ THE REST ONLINE:

We invite you to read the full version of our Guide to Repentance at tikkun.org/repentance and to participate in the process.

If you are able to come to the San Francisco Bay Area, you are also welcome to spend Rosh Hashanah and/or Yom Kippur with Rabbi Lerner at Beyt Tikkun. Pre-registration is necessary. For more information, visit beyttikkun.org.

The Legacy of Abraham Joshua Heschel

by Robert Erlewine

ABRAM JOSHUA HESCHEL WAS A SINGULAR FIGURE in American Jewish history and, indeed, in Jewish thought. Born in 1907 and reared in the world of Polish Hasidim, Heschel studied philosophy and Biblical criticism in Berlin before becoming a pivotal figure in American Jewish and non-Jewish religious life, galvanizing Americans on issues of social justice. The conditions that produced a figure capable of such depth and breadth of traditional Jewish learning and secular studies seem no longer possible in our age, focused as it is on hyper-specialization. Heschel shared a vision of Judaism at once profoundly rooted in tradition and simultaneously subversive of the status quo. He offered a vision of Judaism that did not espouse separation from the larger society but rather demanded critical engagement with it. His theological commitments undergirded his courageous, outspoken efforts on behalf of the Civil Rights Movement, his protests against the war in Vietnam, and his work to improve Jewish and Christian relations. Given the singularity of his vision and the strength of his character, it should not be surprising that—nearly four decades after his death—his legacy remains towering and majestic in the consciousness of the American Jewish community and beyond.

In the wake of the centenary of his birth, a flurry of conferences and publications made clear that many find him to be a source of inspiration. And yet, while many claim discipleship and loyalty, there continue to be wide-ranging differences concerning his legacy and its relevance for our contemporary concerns. How fortunate then that Susannah Heschel has given us a new edited collection, *Abraham Joshua Heschel: Essential Writings*. Not only does this remarkable collection provide a sense of the breadth of Heschel's interests and writings, but the ordering of the selections and the insightful introductions highlight the deep coherence of the different dimensions of his work. This volume brings together particularly rich and striking passages from Heschel's oeuvre sure to draw readers into fresh and thoughtful conversations with this remarkable figure in modern Jewish thought.

Abraham Joshua Heschel: Essential Writings is perhaps the single best introductory text to the work of Heschel. There are six sections, which can stand alone or be read together. Passages from well-known works such as *The Sabbath*, *Man's Quest for God*, *Man is Not Alone*, *God in Search of Man*, and *The Prophets* rub shoulders with lesser-known works such as *Who is Man?*, *The Insecurity of Freedom*, and *A Passion for Truth*, as well as previously unpublished works. In this context, with passages from various texts juxtaposed thematically, we see how Heschel's philosophical theology undergirds his politics and his groundbreaking strides toward improving Jewish-Christian



"Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel" by Pamela Chatterton-Purdy (chatterton-purdyart.com). Based on a photo from March 21, 1965, this mixed-media piece shows Heschel arm-in-arm with Rep. John Lewis, Ralph Abernathy, Martin Luther King Jr., Ralph Bunche, and Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth during the march from Selma to Montgomery.

Robert Erlewine, author of *Monotheism and Tolerance: Recovering a Religion of Reason* (Indiana University Press, 2010) is an assistant professor of religion at Illinois Wesleyan University. He writes on German and American Jewish thought and philosophy of religion.

relations. Susannah Heschel's substantial introduction to the volume provides an excellent biography of Heschel filled with insights into his life and thought. Additionally, she provides a helpful essay to introduce each section. The rich introductions and the previously unpublished material make this work of significant interest for scholars; the thematic focus and the editor's guidance make the work accessible and relevant for students and thoughtful people interested in Judaism, Jewish-Christian relations, and American religious history. Moreover, the anthology illuminates the deep coherence of the different dimensions of Heschel's work.

A Philosophy of Wonder

HESCHEL'S WRITINGS ON PRAYER, RACE, JEWISH EDUCATION, AND THE PROPHETS all find their roots in his theocentric, or God-centered, vision. Heschel's theocentrism does not simply challenge, but rather uproots and disrupts, our sensibilities. We moderns are accustomed to distancing ourselves from that which we think about; we

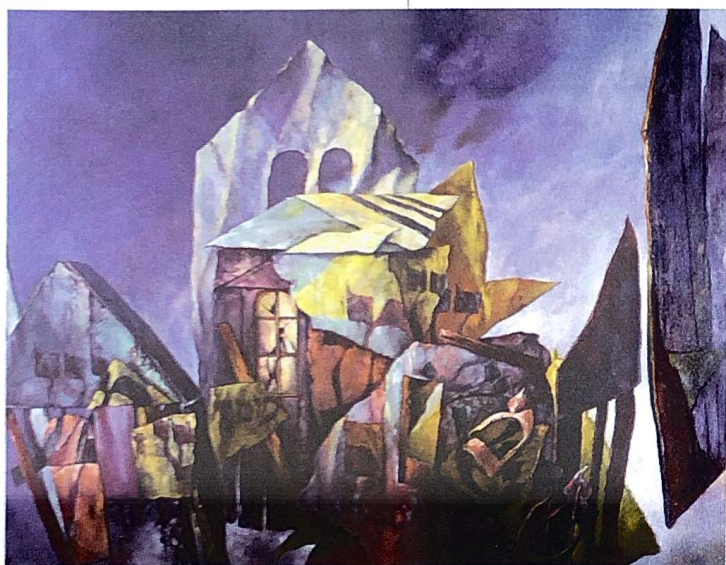
believe that detachment or disinterestedness is the key to thinking carefully and critically. However, when it comes to matters of ultimate concern, Heschel charges that this mindset leads us astray. When it comes to religion, rather than doubt and disinterest, authentic thinking begins with "wonder or radical amazement." When in the grip of wonder, we face a "state of maladjustment to words and notions," because our ability to reason, our capacity to think and to judge, reaches its limits.

As a philosopher of wonder, Heschel offers a distinctly critical vision of modernity. Juxtaposing reason and wonder, Heschel explains that through reason "we try to explain or to adapt the world to our concepts," while through wonder "we seek to adapt our minds to the world." Reason assumes that we can grasp the world, that we can understand all that there is. However, as Heschel repeatedly asserts, there are levels of reality that cannot be brought into the "discursive levels of the mind" that we "see more than we can say." Wonder and awe, dispositions that open us to the vastness of the universe, make us receptive to aspects of reality that lie beyond the categories of reason. The modern West has done a wonderful

job cultivating the capacity to reason. Yet, as Heschel points out time and again, we have all but lost our ability for wonder and awe, and as a result, we have faced—and continue to face—a spiritual crisis.

The privileging of wonder and awe as opposed to reason can be seen throughout many aspects of Heschel's work. He critiques philosophy of religion for viewing God as an object to be known, subject to proof and validation. He suggests that from the point of view of the pious person, the point of view proper to religion as such, "God is the subject." The key is "not to know Him but to be known by Him; not to form judgments about Him but to be judged by Him." Heschel also advocates an inversion of our "common sense" in which we, as knowing selves, bestow meaning upon the world through our minds. For Heschel, it is not the act of knowing, or cognition in general that gives or creates meaning. Rather, according to the pious person, religion celebrates humility before the divine, the awareness that God's overwhelming priority decenters us and puts us in our proper place. Religion involves humility, which means that we recognize that God is the true subject and we are but objects, "dust and ashes" who hope to be known to God. Heschel's evocative language does not mean that he is literally denying that we have subjectivity; rather, he claims that human beings are situated in much grander horizons than many might think. There is a judge and center of meaning apart from and beyond our own minds.

Indeed, Heschel thinks that the forfeiture and loss of the sensibilities of piety, awe, wonder, and humility have been disastrous for Western civilization. In light of the atrocities of the twentieth century—the Shoah prominent among them—Heschel emphasizes that the public and private spheres, i.e., religion, politics, and ethics, are



"Shema Israel" by Samuel Bak.
Oil on linen, 40 x 39 1/2", 1992.

intimately interwoven, and any separation is artificial and dangerous. Religion is a public concern because it is inherently concerned with justice. However, Heschel is far from a conservative who turns to religion as a source of salubrious authority and legitimacy in civic life—although some of his disciples later take this path.

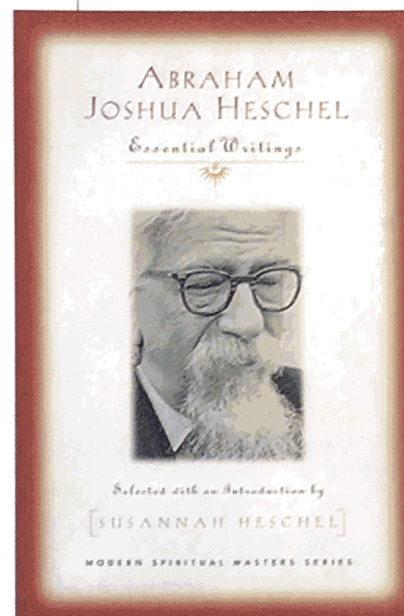
A Prophetic Call to Political Action

FOR HESCHEL, THE EXEMPLAR OF THE CONJUNCTION OF RELIGION AND POLITICS is the prophet. The prophet is a human being seized by God's pathos and through whose voice God's concern, "God's sense of injustice," is expressed. The prophet does not celebrate but rather brings to light the guilt of an entire culture. Heschel writes, "Prophecy is the voice that God has lent to the silent agony, a voice to the plundered poor, to the profaned riches of the world." Anywhere injustice takes place it is the case that "few are guilty, but all are responsible." We are all responsible for evil because only a world indifferent to suffering will tolerate injustice and systematic inequality. Thus, the prophet teaches, "indifference to evil is more insidious than evil itself."

The prophet and his intolerance for indifference is central for Heschel because he roots his ethics in *imago dei*, the concept that all human beings—regardless of race or religion—are created in the image of God. If one properly recognizes God's radical priority to one's self, and one accepts that the only legitimate image of God is the human being, then one cannot remain uninvolved in political action. As Heschel bore witness to with his life and in his more politically explicit works, to continue to conduct business as usual, including the business of religious worship, when segregation is the law of the land or when one's country conducts an unjust war is inexcusable, morally and religiously impossible.

And yet, we do all too frequently countenance injustice unmoved by what we see, as if nothing calamitous were happening. This is a result of our spiritual crisis, our loss of awe and wonder. Heschel writes, "The root of sin is callousness, hardness of heart, lack of understanding what is at stake in being alive." When we lose sight of God's priority to our very selves, of our proper place in the order of things, when we lose a sense of scale, we become callous and indifferent to our fellow human beings. Indeed, in his celebrated speech from 1963, "Religion and Race," Heschel provocatively asks, "The Negro's plight, the blighted areas in the large cities, are they not the fruit of our sins?" He suggests we are accessories to crimes by our indifference, our failures "to demand, to insist, to challenge, to chastise," which true religion demands that we do. The problem of evil—whose manifestations include the Holocaust and the terrible poverty and racism that beset the United States—is a result of human failure. It is human beings who bring about evil, who close off the world to God and force God into hiding.

Heschel often reflects upon prayer and suggests that it is both an essential component of religious life and a key element in social action. Prayer, for Heschel, is an exercise of exorcising ourselves of callousness, of recognizing our failures before God. For Heschel, prayer causes "a shift of the center of living—from self-consciousness to self-surrender." In prayer we realize God is the supreme Subject, and this demands that "humility is a reality ... [that] humility is truth." In prayer we recognize that God is the ground of all value and that our worth, like that of all things, derives from God. Prayer decenters us and places everything under much wider horizons, breaking our egocentrism, thus both forcing and allowing us to see the world from this new perspective. Prayer allows us to recognize our own vanity, our tendency to make ideologies absolute, and the fact that we never cease to fail, even in our efforts to be good. Prayer allows us to break down the walls of our own self-righteousness and approach the world with fresh eyes, lest easy and convenient answers appear sufficient. Prayer is both a consolation and a demand. If we pray properly, so Heschel avers, we will be unable to live indifferently to what is going on around us. And what is going on around us cannot be separated from how we pray. Indeed, in a remarkable anecdote that Susannah Heschel includes in her introduction, Heschel explains to a rather flummoxed journalist that he is attending a protest against the Vietnam War because while it is going on, he cannot pray.





Rabbi Heschel's input helped shape the Second Vatican Council's 1965 "Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions," a major turning point in Jewish-Christian relations. Here, Heschel (left) talks with Cardinal Augustin Bea at a March 1963 meeting in New York.

A New Take on Jewish-Christian Relations

PERHAPS IT WAS THE PRIORITY OF A GOD-INFINITELY-GREATER-THAN-OUR-minds-can-grasp over that which the finite human mind can know or formulate into creeds and dogmas that enabled Heschel to offer a groundbreaking vision of Jewish-Christian relations. As Susannah Heschel points out, "My father did not consider it helpful to discuss with Christians those issues that divide us, such as Christology, but to focus instead on the dimensions of faith: 'sharing insights, confessing inadequacy.'" Heschel's vision for inter-religious dialogue was "mutual enrichment and enhancement of respect and appreciation." He said that it was time to forsake "the hope that the person spoken to will prove to be wrong in what he regards as sacred." Focusing on depth theology, that level beneath or beyond what can be put into language and creeds, religious leaders can fruitfully discuss issues with one another without diminishing or disrespecting each other. While acknowledging the importance of doctrinal differences, Heschel's focus on the self-as-God's-object, where the affects become a site where more happens than can be said, allows a common ground to develop while preserving difference between religious traditions. Given the level of Jewish-Christian dialogue today, it is hard to recognize the radical nature of this teaching and indeed the way Heschel embodied it in his life full of encounters and friendships with Christians.

Heschel's view marked a sharp break with past Jewish thinking about Christianity. Unlike German Jewish liberal philosophical theologians like Moses Mendelssohn, Hermann Cohen, and Leo Baeck, Heschel attempts neither to read Jesus as a Jew nor to invert the dominant German trope of viewing Christianity as rational and universal at the expense of an irrational and particularistic Judaism. He also does not follow either Buber or Rosenzweig, who turn to highly stylized readings of the Bible or abstract philosophical systems to provide perspective for the disagreements between Jews and Christians. Of course, there were important historical circumstances that underlay, or at least were conducive to, Heschel's rather significant divergence from his distinguished predecessors. As Susannah Heschel points out, unlike in Germany, where the antagonisms between Christians and Jews were poisonous, in the United States, many of Heschel's closest friends and associates were Christians who deeply appreciated what he had to say. Undoubtedly, the United States provided a more hospitable environment for such discussions and diplomatic efforts, but it would be a mistake to underestimate the tactical brilliance and moral courage on Heschel's part, which brought these efforts to fruition.

While Heschel was critical of the critics of religion, he was also critical of its practitioners. Although deeply tied to Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Judaism, Heschel claimed allegiance to none, and criticized all. Judaism was not finished, but in constant need of innovation: "Human faith is never final, never an arrival, but an endless pilgrimage, a being on the way." On the one hand, too many observant Jews, Heschel charged, are satisfied with the Halachah and thus feel that no creative thinking is needed. On the other hand, too many liberal Jews simply do not know enough about Judaism to be able to innovate at all. Innovation requires "creative dissent," but the very ability to dissent creatively seems endangered by the conditions of Judaism in the United States. That is, there are no longer those who are deeply knowledgeable about Judaism, rooted in deep learning, and have the courage and love to bring about change. Deeply critical of Jewish education in the United States, Heschel saw it as too often rooted in "obsolete liberalism or narrow parochialism" and often simply "insipid, flat, and trivial." In various writings and speeches, he urges rabbis, cantors, and educators to have concern with the inner lives of Jews and not just the survival of the Jewish people as a whole.

Perhaps given the singular conditions that produced Heschel's sensibilities, it should not be surprising that Heschel has produced a rather variegated legacy. Heschel's presence is indubitably felt in contemporary theology, not only in the sense that many leading contemporary theologians were his students, but also in that these same figures claim *(continued on page 36)*

The Arab Awakening and the Israeli-Palestinian Connection

by Tony Klug



Pro-democracy marchers in Alexandria, Egypt, celebrate their victory on February 18, 2011.

THE STUNNING FAILURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARIAT TO foresee the seismic shifts that are engulfing the Arab world is reason enough to be guarded about what commentators are now telling us about the causes and meaning of the uprisings.

Until events proved otherwise, many self-appointed experts confidently—sometimes arrogantly—explained that the global movement toward democracy had been spurned by the Arab world simply because liberty and equality were “not part of the Arab makeup.” So it must have come as quite a shock to them that the Arab people turned out to be not so different from the rest of the human race!

While the future course of events is not yet clear, there are certain tentative deductions that I believe we can risk making even now.

The first is the self-evident observation that there are opportunities and there are dangers, including, as witnessed in Libya and, potentially, in Syria, the ominous prospect of prolonged civil wars in countries where the ruling powers decide to fight anti-government protesters to the bitter end. It is, perhaps, telling that the regimes that have always regarded themselves as “revolutionary” are among the last to come to terms with the new revolutionary mood.

Second, autocratic regimes plainly cannot be depended on to deliver “stability.” This

Dr. Tony Klug is a special adviser on the Middle East to the Oxford Research Group and a long-time writer on Israeli-Palestinian issues. Email: tonyklus@compuserve.com.



The mass pro-democracy uprisings that have spread throughout North Africa and the Middle East—including those in Tunisia (top), Yemen (middle), and Syria (bottom)—may leave Israel without its favorite trump card: its claim to be the “only democracy in the Middle East.”

is not altogether surprising, as there is usually no mechanism to change these brittle regimes that does not involve bringing down the whole system.

A third deduction is that nonviolent mass action is not the poor relative of an armed uprising but can often be more effective in achieving and sustaining change. Had the popular rebellions in Tunisia and Egypt been commandeered by men and women of the gun, they would probably have invited instant and overwhelming counterviolence by the respective regimes, which would have gladly seized the opportunity to crush the incipient protests.

Fourth, while the grievances of the Arab street may be similar, the contexts are different in each country. So it is not surprising if the revolutions—and the responses they provoke—take divergent paths.

Fifth, no one faction—religious, nationalist, or ideological—owns the revolution, except maybe the Arab youth, male and female, who have broken through the fear factor and are not prepared to swallow the old slogans, put up with a life of oppression, and suffer the alienation, hopelessness, and humiliations of their parents’ generation. However, this is not to say that there may not be an attempt by this or that political grouping to hijack one or another of the revolutions. Eternal vigilance on the part of the young revolutionaries, coupled with strong constitutional safeguards, will be vital to forestall such an eventuality, particularly during transitional phases.

Sixth, the new social media have revolutionized the way people communicate with each other and the potential for rapid mobilization. To the ruling old guard, putting down armed uprisings and attempted coups must have seemed like child’s play compared with the challenges presented by Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Seventh, unlike the revolutions in Eastern Europe in 1989 that, in the main, aimed to transform their despotic governances into Western European-style liberal democracies, the Arab uprisings seem not to have very clear models other than generally wanting to change the political systems. Whether this is a strength or a weakness is yet to be seen.

Finally, although there is undeniably a pan-Arab dimension to the unrest, as evidenced by its contagious quality, it seems clear that in each case the protests are essentially about the internal affairs of state rather than about Israel or Palestine.

However, if freedom truly spreads in the region, the denial of Palestinian rights and their lack of statehood will appear ever more anomalous even if, in the short term, copious media coverage of the Arab revolutions has largely knocked the Palestinian issue off the front pages, and the open brutality of the responses of some of the Arab regimes has diminished the common portrayal of Israel within the region as a uniquely repressive force.

How the Arab Revolutions Could Affect Israel/Palestine

WHAT THE REGIONAL EXPLOSIONS HOLD FOR THE FUTURE ARE NATURALLY OF DEEP concern to the Palestinians, just as they are to the bewildered Israeli leadership, which seems unsure about which Arab horse to back. Prime Minister Netanyahu—seeing only the dangers—has donned his King Canute hat and tried to keep the tide at bay while President Shimon Peres—spotting the opportunities—has urged support for what he has termed a “great moment for the region” that could dramatically improve Israel’s circumstances.

Among the dangers that might preoccupy Netanyahu is the threat to one of Israel’s trump cards—its claim to be “the only democracy in the Middle East.” If the Arab world is genuinely on the verge of joining the club of democratic nations—at a time when the right-wing Israeli parliament is introducing decidedly undemocratic legislation, and as the Israeli state has entered the forty-fifth year of its military

occupation of a neighboring people—Israel could end up as the illiberal joker in a more enlightened regional pack.

Israel does, though, have a genuine concern that the long-standing peace treaties with two of its four immediate neighbors, Egypt and Jordan, could be at risk. So far, there is no indication of any moves being made to nullify these treaties and, barring the improbable takeover of these countries by extreme ideological factions, or possibly another prolonged Israeli bombardment of Gaza that causes widespread casualties, it is unlikely to happen, at least not formally.

If the treaties were to be unilaterally terminated on the Arab side, this could be the first hazardous step on the road to a full-blooded war. But war is not what the youthful rebellions are about. More in keeping with their spirit are the themes of peace, harmony, justice, and dignity, echoes of which may be detected in the similarly astonishing social protest movement suddenly taking Israel by storm.

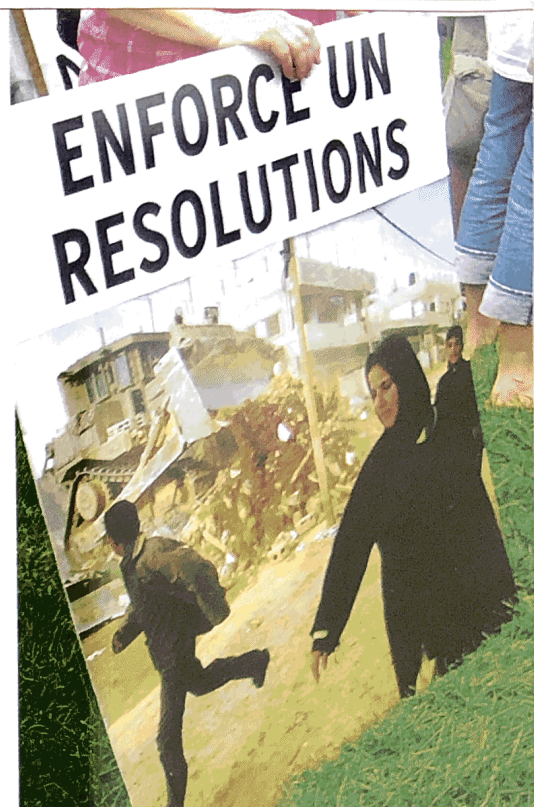
Prime Minister Netanyahu's early public boast that "there is only one country in the whole of the Middle East that has no troubles, no protests—that's Israel" speaks again not only to the myopia of his leadership but also to the growing, if ambivalent, realization that Israel is part of the Middle East. One of the slogans of the Israeli tent protestors, "The people demand social justice," has an obvious resonance with a popular slogan across the Arab world: "The people demand the fall of the regime." Another Israeli slogan was even more blunt: "Mubarak, Assad, Netanyahu!"

Although the demands of this burgeoning youthful movement, while broadening, are still relatively modest and inward-looking, there is no knowing how far the Israeli awakening may go. It could fizzle out in the face of a few concessions, or it could be diverted by real or fabricated external threats. Most likely, there will be attempts to divide it from within. But if it stays the course and starts to make the connections between unaffordable housing and pockets of poverty in Israeli towns and generously subsidized living in the settlements of the West Bank, it could mature into an authentic political movement with consequences as far-reaching as the youthful uprisings elsewhere in the region.

Such a development could have the effect of boosting the reputation of Israelis everywhere. President Peres is not mistaken in observing that the potential now exists for all the peoples of the region, including both Palestinians and Israelis, to aspire to a better, more hopeful life. But the potential for Israel to become ever more isolated also exists. The destiny of the Jewish state now depends to a large extent on how the Israeli government chooses to play its cards in the face of the new challenges. Above all, there is a compelling need for Israel to bring its occupation of Palestinian territory to a swift end, making way for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. If the Palestinians do not gain freedom in their own independent state, there is no prospect at all for Israel being accepted into the region.

This is not a new observation—it has been around for decades—but now time is seriously running out. Beginning in September, when the UN General Assembly holds its annual meeting, the exasperated Palestinians—frustrated by U.S. reluctance or impotence—are preparing to turn their backs on the protracted farce of bilateral negotiations. Barring an improbable dramatic breakthrough between now and then, we are likely to see a new face to Palestinian strategy and tactics as the Palestinians seek to "internationalize" the issue on the one hand and simultaneously "Palestinianize" it on the other.

Why September, exactly? For one thing, it marks the anniversary of the aspiration voiced by President Obama at the General Assembly last September to secure a Middle East deal "within a year" that would lead to a new member, Palestine, being welcomed into the world organization. For another, it coincides with the end of the two-year period of infrastructure-and-institution-building proclaimed by Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, who heads the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, in preparation for the declaration of a Palestinian state.



The Arab revolutions have focused almost exclusively on internal affairs of state, with anti-Israel sentiments surfacing only rarely in signs such as this one from Tahrir Square in Cairo (bottom). But, the author argues, as Israeli violations of UN resolutions continue to draw international outrage (top), Israel may be increasingly marginalized as the "illiberal joker in a more enlightened regional pack."



Israel's international legal position could shift dramatically if Palestine won a seat such as this at the United Nations. At least 130 of the UN's 193 member states are expected to support the Palestinian bid for statehood recognition this September.

SUPPORT THE ESRA AND GMP

Ask your representatives to cosponsor two resolutions currently before Congress: the ESRA (the Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution), which Congressman Dennis Kucinich has introduced as House Res. 156, and the Global Marshall Plan, which Congressman Keith Ellison has introduced as House Res. 157. Please contact your representatives in D.C. and ask them to sign on as well!! Info: tikkun.org/ESRA and tikkun.org/GMP.

UN Recognition of a Palestinian State?

DESPITE THE PRESSURE AND THREATS FROM THE ISRAELI AND U.S. GOVERNMENTS, THE Palestinians, with the backing of the Arab League, appear set to overcome any misgivings of their own and to persist down this path by calling on all countries to recognize a Palestinian state within the pre-June 1967 boundaries, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and for the new state to be granted full UN membership. Not less than 130 of the 193 member states—many of them not at all hostile to Israel—are expected to support this proposition.

The positions of the twenty-seven members of the European Union are uncertain as this piece goes to press in early September, but if France and the United Kingdom choose not to exercise their vetoes at the Security Council, that would leave the United States exposed once again as the sole backer of the Israeli position. For the second time in less than a year, the United States would find itself in the unenviable position of vetoing a resolution whose sentiments it is on record as supporting (the previous occasion was in February 2011 when it voted against a resolution on Israeli settlements).

Facing the prospect of further isolating itself internationally at the behest of a recalcitrant Israeli government—which itself ostensibly supports two states—the Obama administration may be tempted at the last moment to abstain (although don't hold your breath). Should this happen, the resolution would almost certainly then be approved by the General Assembly with the requisite two-thirds majority (requiring 129 positive votes). This would leave Israel, with its military bases in the West Bank, in the invidious position of being in daily violation of the sovereign territory of an independent UN member-state. In many respects, Israel's legal position would be a nightmare.

Additionally, or alternatively, the Palestinians could call for an international protectorate or custodianship to take control of the occupied territories for a transitional period pending actual independence. Such an interim arrangement might be seen as less confrontational and enable the Israelis to hand over occupied territory in the first instance to an authority it might view as less threatening.

They could also adopt, as official policy, a vigorous campaign to isolate and boycott Israel internationally, and systematically use the panoply of mechanisms available under international law to prosecute the Israeli state and its agents.

A Renewed Push for Palestinian National Unity

A COMPLEMENTARY "PALESTINIANIZATION" STRATEGY WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON the recent efforts between Fatah and Hamas toward national unity—brokered by the new Egyptian government—not collapsing.

A strong challenge to both Palestinian factions to stop the internal squabbling was issued by the youthful March 15 movement, following demonstrations by tens of thousands of young Palestinians earlier this year in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Additionally, Fatah was conscious of the loss of patronage of the *(continued on page 39)*

Fresh Tactics and New Voices

In the Movement for Justice and Freedom in the Middle East

by Rae Abileah

“**Y**OU CAN’T HAVE THESE PROTESTS IN THE farcical parliaments of Tehran or Tripoli; this is real democracy,” bellowed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, responding to a Jewish woman who stood up to disrupt his speech at a joint session of Congress this past May. The activist was shouting about equal rights for Palestinians and an end to the Israeli Occupation. She was assaulted by members of the audience in the congressional gallery, rushed to the hospital, treated for a neck injury, arrested, and taken to jail.

I know all this because I was that woman.

From the chambers of Congress to the shores of the Mediterranean, nonviolent protesters are rising up against the Israeli Occupation in surprisingly innovative and effective ways. There’s a buzz, and it’s stirring the hive of the American Zionist establishment like never before as we, young Jews, apply our democratic values to the situation in Israel and Palestine.

Young Jews are organizing within the Jewish establishment across the country to speak out against the Occupation. Last fall a new youth outcrop of Jewish Voice for Peace emerged at the annual Jewish Federations of North America conference in New Orleans, where fourteen young Jews held their own leadership summit and penned a “Young Jewish Declaration,” which states (in part):

We are punks and students and parents and janitors and rabbis and freedom fighters. We are your children, your nieces and nephews, your grandchildren.... We will not carry the legacy of terror.... We commit to re-envisioning “homeland,” to make room for justice.

Five members of this new group, dubbed Young, Jewish, and Proud, then disrupted Netanyahu’s keynote address to the Federation with messages about what really delegitimizes Israel—the settlements, the Occupation, the siege of Gaza. The video of this action went viral and again broke the silence surrounding the Occupation in mainstream Jewish communities. Jewish youth are redefining an old adage to say, “Progressive includes Palestine!” As one of the founding members of Young, Jewish, and Proud, I have found in this organization a place to be “out” about my views on the Occupation while being fully present in my religious and spiritual life.



Rae Abileah disrupts Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech before Congress on May 24, 2011. Her banner reads, "Occupying Land Is Indefensible." She was later attacked by onlookers, rushed to the hospital, and then taken to jail.

Rae Abileah is a national organizer with CODEPINK Women for Peace and a member of Jewish Voice for Peace. She lives in San Francisco, California, and can be reached at rae@codepink.org. She will speak at Beyt Tikkun High Holiday services in Berkeley, California, in September 2011 (beyttikkun.org).



From international boycott efforts such as CODEPINK's protest of Ahava cosmetics (top), to young Palestinians' weekly demonstrations in the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh (bottom), nonviolent struggles against the Occupation are mobilizing a new generation of activists.

The international movement we are part of takes inspiration from the leadership of Palestinian civil society groups, village popular committees, and their Israeli allies as they organize against land theft, home demolitions, settler violence, and inequality before the law. Every Friday the West Bank villagers in Bil'in and Nil'in hold peaceful demonstrations against the encroaching "apartheid wall." At Friday demonstrations in the village of Nabi Saleh, residents challenge the illegal theft of their land and natural springwater by the settlement of Halamish since January 2010. In an attempt to silence dissent, the Israeli army uses banned high-velocity tear gas projectiles, rubber-coated steel bullets, and at times live ammunition against unarmed civilians. Speaking on behalf of the European Union, Ambassador András Dékány stated, "The rights of Israeli and Palestinian human rights defenders protesting peacefully against settlements and the separation barrier are severely curtailed."

In a speech prepared for his appearance in Israeli court regarding the blanket charge of incitement brought against him because of his work as the coordinator of the Nabi Saleh Popular Committee, Bassem Tamimi stated: "Land theft and tree burning are not just. Your military laws are not legitimate. Our peaceful protest is just. I organized these peaceful demonstrations to defend our land and our people." Despite the jailing of their leaders, Palestinian villages continue their nonviolent struggle against the theft of their land and resources. But how much longer will the global community countenance Israel's imprisonment of Palestinian Gandhis?

The Power of Boycotts, Divestment, and Sanctions

HERE IN THE UNITED STATES, WHILE LOBBYING CONGRESS IS IMPORTANT, IT'S UP TO THE grassroots to lead, seeing as our elected representatives are still in thrall to the far-right Israel lobby—the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) specifically.

Boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaigns offer a way for people to help take the profit out of the Occupation and to focus attention on Israel's flagrant violations of international law. The demands of BDS are threefold: a withdrawal from the Occupied Palestinian Territories; the right of return for Palestinian refugees (in accordance with UN Resolution 194); and an end to legal discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel. Taking as models the successful boycotts against South African Apartheid and the Jim Crow South, this new movement is moving from strength to strength.

Whether via CODEPINK's Stolen Beauty campaign against Occupation profiteer Ahava cosmetics, Jewish Voice for Peace's TIAA-CREF Divestment Campaign, or Adalah-NY's creative protests against diamond dealer and settlement-builder Lev Leviev, BDS offers activists a way to support human rights without waiting around for the U.S. government to broker a peace deal.

BDS is working. After major pressure from European activists, the French transportation giant Veolia is pulling out of an Israeli light-rail project to connect Jerusalem to the settlements; Veolia continues to lose business from European municipalities unwilling to support a company that runs settler buses in the West Bank. Deutsche Bahn, the German railway operator, has pulled out of a new fast-train project, built between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and crossing the Green Line border twice. Belgian bank Dexia announced that it would sell its Israeli subsidiary in order to make sure it does not

finance construction projects in illegal settlements. Ahava's flagship U.K. store is being forced to move out of London's trendy Covent Garden after two years of fortnightly demonstrations. And at the end of 2010 the major Dutch pension fund Pensioenfonds Zorg en Welzijn, which had investments totaling 97 billion euros, announced that it had divested from almost all the Israeli companies in its portfolio.

Israel Criminalizes Nonviolent Activism

SO SUCCESSFUL IS THIS NONVIOLENT TACTIC OF EXERTING economic pressure that the Israeli Knesset responded in mid-July 2011 by passing a bill against supporters of boycotts against Israel. The new law makes calling for boycotts a civil tort. In a widely disseminated op-ed titled "It Can Happen Here," Uri Avnery, leader of the Israeli peace movement Gush Shalom, wrote:

According to the law, any settler who feels that he has been harmed by the boycott can demand unlimited compensation from any person or organization calling for the boycott—without having to prove any actual damage. This means that each of the 300,000 settlers can claim millions from every single peace activist associated with the call for boycott, thus destroying the peace movement altogether.

Gush Shalom immediately appealed to the Israeli Supreme Court. Boycott from Within, an Israeli group that supports the Palestinian-led BDS movement, immediately vowed to continue boycotting and resisting.

Interestingly, even organizations that tend to decry BDS, such as the New Israel Fund and the Anti-Defamation League, issued statements condemning the anti-boycott law as undemocratic. Whatever the outcome of the anti-boycott law, one thing is clear: as occurred during the 2008 Israeli assault on Gaza and during the 2010 attack on the flotilla, yet another onion layer has been peeled back, exposing the Israeli regime's violence and its repression of dissent. The veil of "real democracy" is finally wearing down.

The Jewish Federation has budgeted 6 million dollars over three years for a campaign aimed at undercutting the growing U.S.-based BDS Movement. Activist writer Alex Kane documented how the Jewish Federation and its partner, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, appear to be "following the recommendations of the Reut Institute, an Israeli think tank with close ties to the Israeli government, who called on the Israeli government to 'sabotage' and 'attack' the BDS movement in a February 2010 report." It remains to be seen what the impact of this funding will be, but it will likely not make a dent in the decentralized and rapidly growing BDS movement.

The Jewish Federation claims to fundraise for "social welfare, social services, and education" and to enhance "the well-being of Jews worldwide through the values of tikkun olam (repairing the world), tzedakah (charity and social justice) and Torah (Jewish learning)." But it is hard to see how destroying a nonviolent movement for justice could help "repair the world." That's why members of Young, Jewish, and Proud felt so compelled to be at the Jewish Federation's conference with messages like "Tikkun Olam for Gaza Too" and "The Settlements Delegitimize Israel."

President Obama, in his speech to AIPAC in May, said, "You also see our commitment to Israel's security in our steadfast opposition to any attempt to delegitimize the State of Israel." This reference to "delegitimization" is code for the BDS movement, but the truth is that BDS campaigns are not delegitimizing Israel. Rather, Israeli policies, supported by AIPAC, that deprive Palestinians of basic human (continued on page 41)



Started in Chicago by the Committee for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine, this billboard campaign has spread across the country, from Albuquerque, New Mexico, to the Park Street subway station in Boston (above).

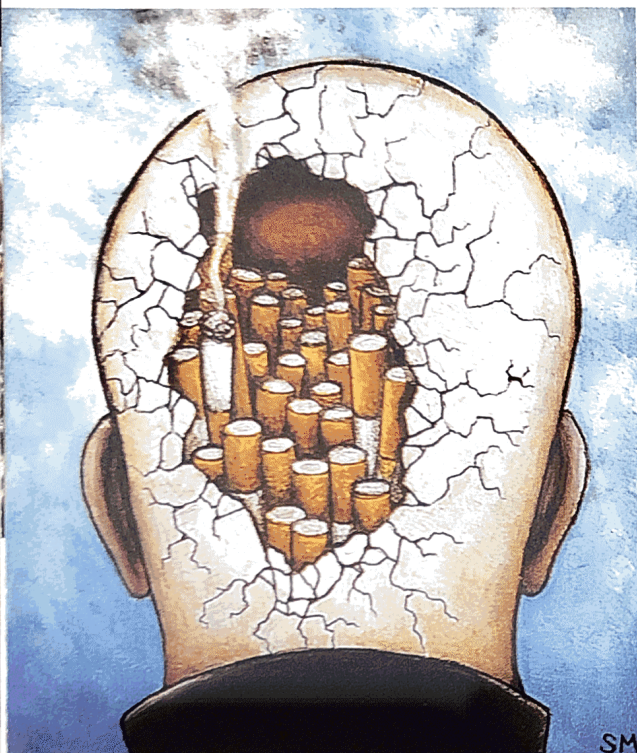
FICTION EDITOR WANTED

We are now publishing high-quality fiction on our web magazine site. We need a volunteer editor who knows the literary scene, can attract the best writers of fiction relevant to *Tikkun*, and feels fine about rejecting the rest! Applicants should also have the skills to proof and format the pieces online.

Is Addiction Really a Disease?

A Challenge to Twelve-Step Programs

by Nicholas Grant Boeving



Can metaphors make us sick? Do we harm ourselves by imagining addiction as a foreign body assuming permanent residence in our biological tissue?

ADDICTION IS EVERYWHERE, IT SEEMS, AS IS THE DEVASTATION wrought by this disease. But does it even make sense to call it that? Modern medicine thinks it does. What used to be considered a moral deficiency is now called a biological condition, and every twelve-step program from Alcoholics Anonymous to Overeaters Anonymous is predicated on this principle. But in different cultures diseases look different and, more importantly, mean different things. I believe that in digging into the metaphoric landscape of addiction and disease in the American soil we can get at the grit of where we are in our public perception and how we got here. What follows is both an intellectual and personal unpacking of the following question: what does it mean to be an addict in America?

Let me preface this by saying that I write as someone who has struggled with these issues both as an academic and as someone who has lived in the prison of chemical dependency. I have experienced the despair of finding out I had an “incurable disease,” as well as the despair of being told it could only be arrested by a Protestant-by-proxy twelve-step program. I know as well the process through which disease-identity is cultivated within the walls of Narcotics Anonymous. I experienced firsthand how the disease of addiction is a cipher for all sorts of projections and even, to a certain extent, a symbolic transformation of the Devil himself into the language of medical discourse, echoing the ancient struggle of God, or a “Higher Power” with the Devil, or “the disease of addiction.” This crypto-Christian theology is still very much alive in the treatment of addiction. And for the still-struggling addict who doesn’t subscribe to or is alienated from the Judeo-Christian tradition, this can prove to be very problematic. And although these programs encourage each wayward addict to define his or her “Higher Power” as he or she understands Him (it can be a doorknob, a doll, or the twelve-step program itself), all of the literature and even the verbiage used within the “rooms” themselves point to a Judeo-Christian concept that turns the addict into a spiritually devastated individual who can only be saved by developing a more intimate relationship with a “Higher Power.”

The Harmful Power of Misplaced Medical Diagnoses

LIKE DICTIONARIES, WHICH JETTISON WORDS EVERY YEAR, MEDICINE DISPOSES OF diagnoses that are no longer tenable. Such was the case with both hysteria and homosexuality in the early and mid-twentieth century. These diseases then become historical curiosities like so many of the comically absurd laws of the nineteenth century. Obviously, homosexuality

Nicholas Boeving is an independent scholar whose research interests include the psychology of religion, new religious movements, and comparative addictionology. He would like to thank Ann Gleig and Claire Villareal for their support and insight in the process of writing this article.

is *not* a disease, and it never was, regardless of what medicine thought; the *experience* of being gay, however, for many people *was* one of living in illness. For some gay people, this damaging self-conception prevented actualization of a healthy sexuality and nurturing of an authentic self. In other words, this misdiagnosis was damning. Fortunately, this particular vestige of Levitical law has been abandoned by the medical community.

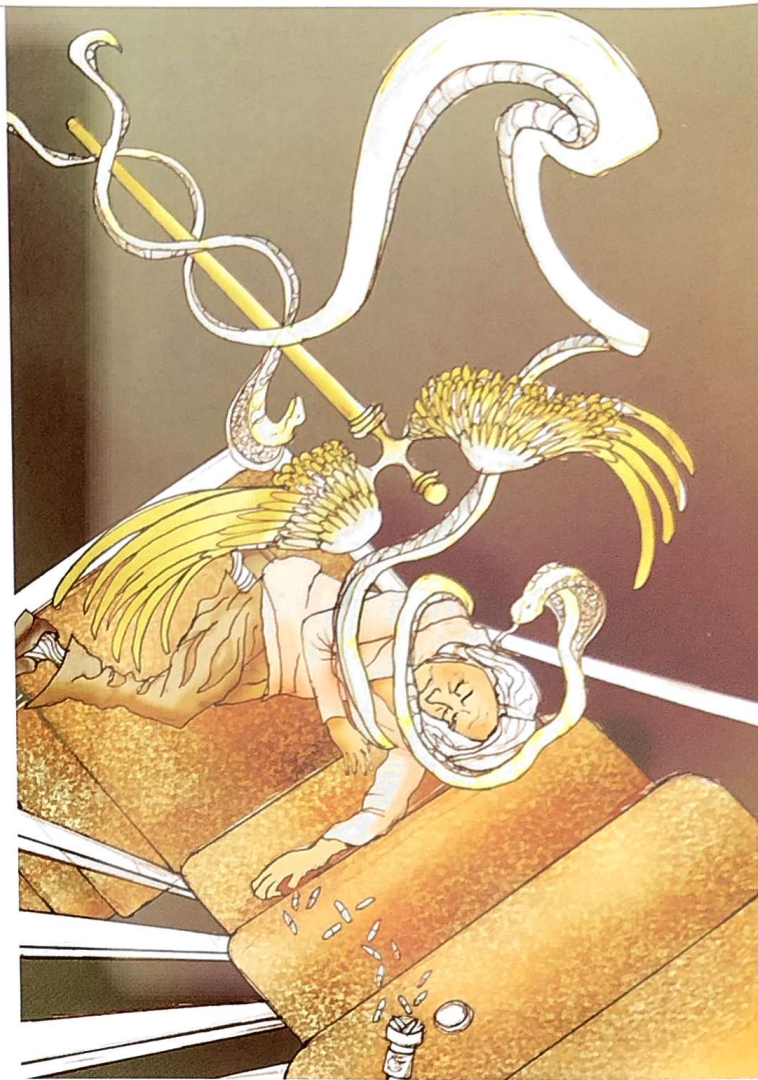
The metaphor of addiction as a disease is equally damning. And yet, with some procrustean acrobatics, medicine has been able to fit chemical dependency under this rubric. After all, the life of the addict is often characterized by “disordered or incorrectly functioning systems of the body,” which are the hallmark of any disease. But again, the ways we think about disease today are neither similar to how they were a thousand years ago, nor to the way they are envisioned in holistic paradigms today. What I suggest is a radical return to the way we thought about diseases of the body and of society in antiquity: as imbalances that need to be brought into equilibrium, rather than as insidious interlopers to be destroyed. The truth is, the current medical model of addiction is fundamentally modern and just doesn’t work; what we need is a metaphoric rewrite that understands the disease of addiction not as a discrete illness circumscribed by the skin of the individually afflicted, but as a societal condition reflected in the sinews and psyches of the chemically dependent. This would require quite a transformation of the clinical dynamic, but such a transformation would open it up to a more individualized and democratic environment.

For most of America, having a disease means having a foreign body assume residence in the biological tissue, multiplying itself and attacking the surrounding healthy tissue. This idea is a direct result of the discovery of microscopy and the bacterial origin of many afflictions. The metaphor here is war, and all good doctors are on the front lines, battling leukemia, eradicating AIDS and other serious illnesses. Sometimes we cause the war ourselves and sometimes we are simply invaded. But where is the infection in addiction? To what can we actually point? Carl Jung famously diagnosed addiction in a letter to Bill Wilson as “a thirst for wholeness” and prescribed analysis, creative activity, and the formation of meaningful relationships to fill in the gaps where absence has encroached. I’m not sure about the analysis part, but as for the formation of meaningful relationships, I am 100 percent convinced.

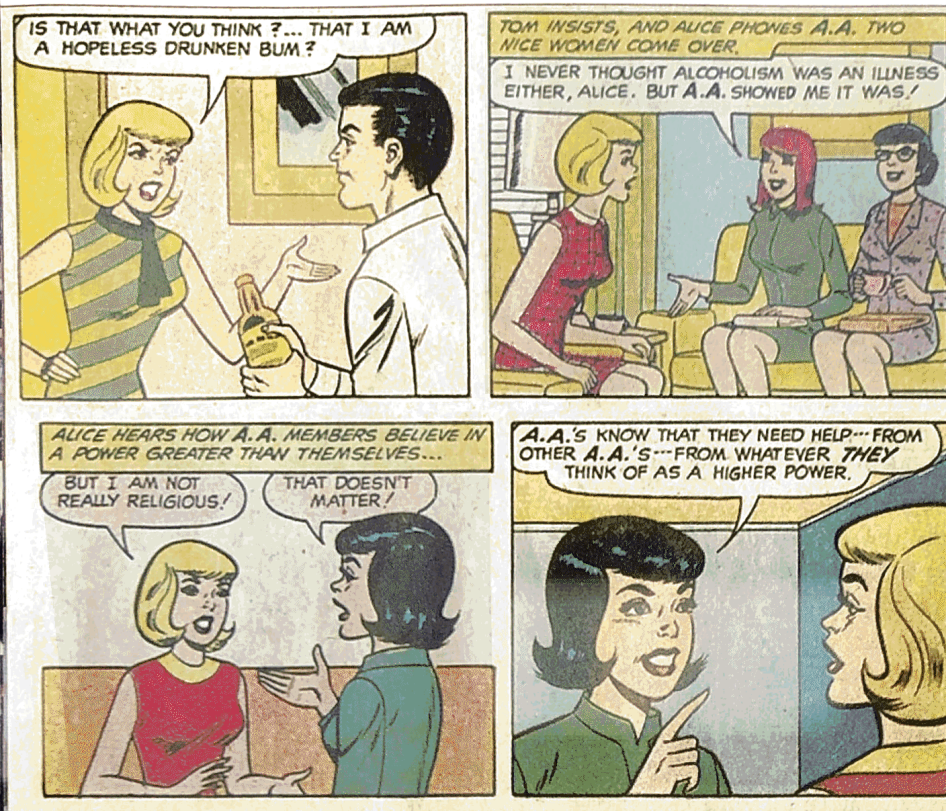
While a minority of addicts find the idea of having an arrestable, albeit incurable, condition empowering (at least according to the twelve steps), most addicts, myself included, do not. And the monopoly of the twelve-step ideology precludes the possibility of finding out about alternative therapies such as those I will discuss. It also occludes the societal etiology and responsibility for a collective condition.

Twelve-Step Programs’ Christian Underpinnings

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS—WHICH WAS REALLY THE FIRST ORGANIZATION TO articulate the disease theory of addiction—has influenced many in the medical community to adopt its perspective, Christian underpinnings and all. And it’s no secret that Bill Wilson, co-founder of AA, was a Protestant and that his organization rose from the ashes of the Oxford Group, a Christian recovery initiative, thus lending the entire project a biblical perspective replete with a Job-like narrative structure and Levitical ideas of contamination and purity. Indeed the entire culture of most twelve-step programs is one of paranoid avoidance of contaminated objects and reverence for the accoutrements of the program itself—the literature, the litany, and the group of “believers.”



The medical establishment has persuaded many that chemical dependency fits under the rubric of disease. But what if we instead saw addiction as “a societal condition reflected in the sinews and psyches of the chemically dependent”?



Many in the medical community have adopted AA's disease theory of addiction and now support treatment plans based on AA's concept of a "Higher Power," the author writes. Geared toward addicts' friends and families, these 1960s-era comics illustrate the importance of both concepts to the twelve-step approach.

Let me be clear here: the twelve-step programs have many profoundly wonderful qualities. They encourage open acknowledgment that the life of chemical dependency is an unhealthy one; they provide an environment that nurtures the relationship of sponsors and sponsees; and they also encourage making amends. What I am attacking, instead, is the cultivation of a disease identity that I believe to be anathema to health. I am also critiquing the fact that in our society, most addicts can only find recovery groups of a Christian persuasion.

Non-Christian Rehab Alternatives

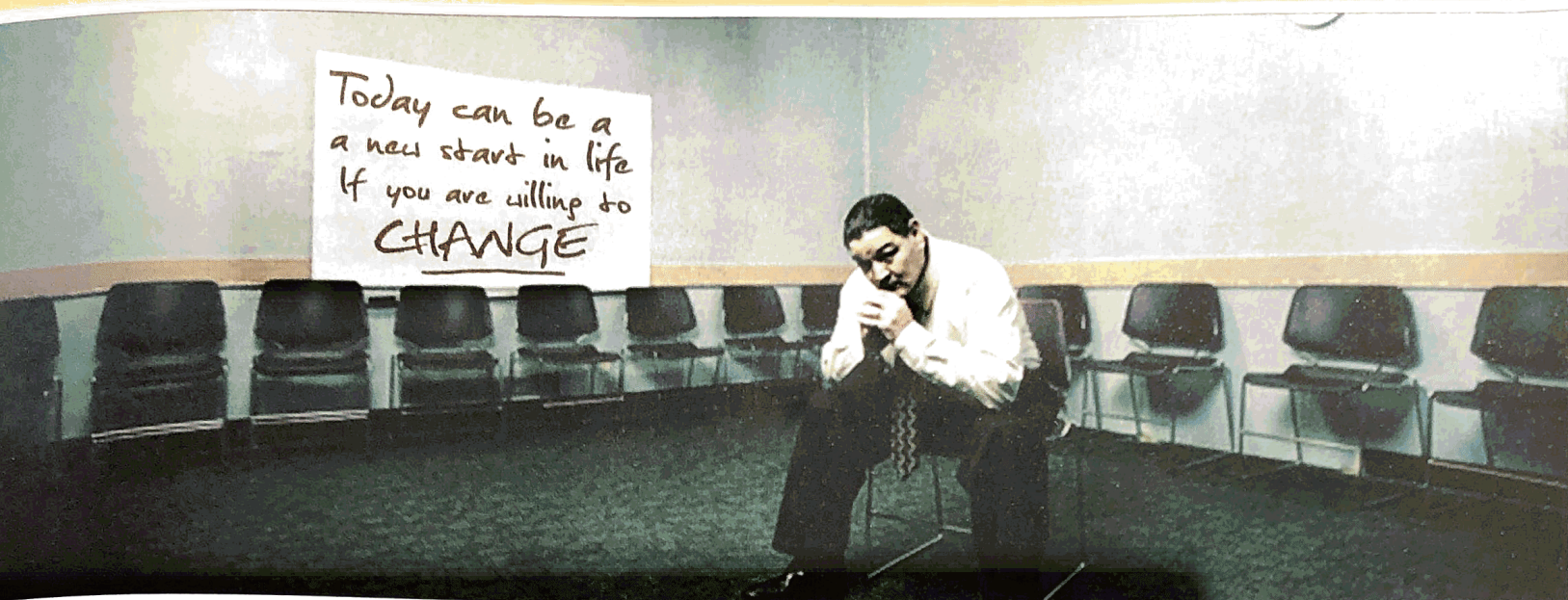
AA'S CRYPTO-CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF A spiritual condition may work for some, but a variety of alternative theologies are available to those for whom it doesn't. In Peru, for example, entheogenic intervention is allowed, and a

local rehab program funded by both the French and Peruvian governments employs a shamanic narrative. Rather than using the imagery of arresting a disease process, this treatment program uses the ritual structure of spiritual sickness, departure, an encounter with some sort of spiritual realm, return, and finally reintegration into society.

In Thailand, one of the most successful treatments, which has attracted hundreds, including many Europeans every year, takes place at the Thram Krabok monastery. The treatment's narrative structure suggests that when we ingest poisons (i.e., drugs) we make ourselves sick, but through the process of purification we can awaken a karmic commitment to harm neither ourselves nor any other beings. Although this is also a religious model of disease, the Buddhist cosmology is very different from the Christian: there is no disease with a mind of its own, and such statements as "my disease told me to do it" are unheard of. However, statements like this are common in twelve-step meetings.

Instead, the novice monks at Thram Krabok are taught that all desire is, in the end, harmful and counterproductive to attaining enlightenment. And that is exactly what addicts become: novice monks who rise before dawn and spend the day in meditation and service. The program only asks that participants pay three dollars a day to cover food expenses; although Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous memberships are free, this is incredible when compared to the prohibitively expensive treatment centers in the United States. The monks teach that we are all addicts in our way, that we all experience cravings for more of a good thing. But the way to overcome this, they say, is through a complete reorientation of values. Again, while an integral component of the twelve-step recovery process includes the making and maintenance of a moral inventory, as well as significant lifestyle changes, the color of the process itself is resoundingly Protestant.

While to a certain extent we are all addicts—afflicted with the insatiable desire for more—to the "addict," "more" is a mantra to the exclusion of all others. Nothing exists beyond this need for more. My own experience was one of losing, in stages, everything that mattered in my life, from my relationships, to my sense of worth, to finally, my career. When I sought help I was confronted with the poverty of treatment alternatives. Thailand was too far away and the waiting list for Peru promised a delay of well over six months. I went, instead, to a Catholic treatment facility, which, in spite of being staffed with wonderful, compassionate, competent people was still, well, (continued on page 44)



Twelve-Step Healing: Beyond Disease Metaphors and God-Talk

by Sherine Kaufman

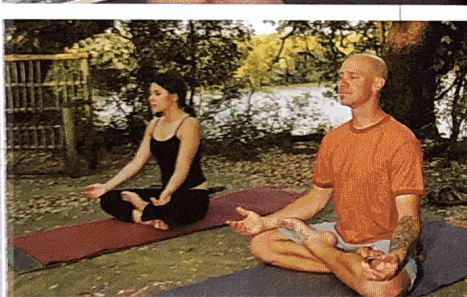
WHILE IT MAY BE TRUE, AS NICHOLAS BOEVING STATES IN THIS ISSUE of *Tikkun*, that recovery (the blanket term used to describe twelve-step programs) works for only a minority of addicts, that minority is a rather large number: millions around the world. And because recovery is such a large and growing movement, Boeving's criticisms—which for the most part are valid—only speak to a certain aspect of the twelve-step paradigm.

As a recovering addict and a member of Narcotics Anonymous (NA), I should first state that I speak for myself only and do not in any way represent NA. That's one of the brilliant aspects of "the program," as we sometimes call it—no one represents or decides what it's about for anyone else. So, protecting my anonymity with a pseudonym, I will speak here of my own experiences in recovery in hopes that doing so will make it accessible to people who, hearing Boeving's arguments, might otherwise take a pass.

The First Step

IF I COULD HAVE FOUND SOME OTHER WAY TO STOP DESTROYING MYSELF, I GLADLY would have. I *hated* Narcotics Anonymous when I first started going to meetings. I went grudgingly and sparingly because I had promised my family that I would "get help," but meanwhile I kept up my pill addiction on the sly. I was getting a Ph.D. and had managed to stay in school by the skin of my teeth, and because I didn't let any of my friends in too close, I had maintained the appearance of a pseudo-functional adult. My father had died after a long illness and the experience had been so obliterating to me that I stopped coping with my life. I didn't know how. My family was screwed up, but I didn't know

Sherine Kaufman (a pseudonym) is a clinical psychologist in Northern California. She is a member of both Narcotics Anonymous and Adult Children of Alcoholics.



"We want 'more' of something whether it's sex, food, money, spirituality, respect, Apple products, frozen yogurt, or literary knowledge," the author writes. "Many of us act out our suffering and become addicted to whatever that thing is that soothes our poor little souls."

CREATIVE COMMONS (TOP TO BOTTOM): KEITH RAMSEY, MARCO PERRY, STEVEN DEPOLO, DAVID INGRAM, JONATHAN CROWE

that yet, and since family was where I went for help, I was helpless. (One definition of an addict is "someone who doesn't know how to ask for help.") Whether the inheritance is genetic, environmental, bio-psycho-social, or all of the above, when the shit hit the fan in my life, the sleeping monster woke up. I went from being someone who rarely used drugs or drank to someone who would lie, cheat, and steal to get my hands on whatever I could get.

I had been a super high achiever all of my life—a good girl, an excellent this and that, someone everyone wanted to be friends with, yadda yadda. The depression I had carried deep in my belly since childhood was compartmentalized and only emerged when I was safely alone (or in the very few romantic relationships I had with people, making them so very painful). I developed a "winning personality" so that people would love me—and they did—but I could not feel their love. I felt wretched and alone, "other," left out, shameful, ugly. I had lots of friends but I tended to be a caretaker and focus on them, since I literally did not know how to share my internal world with people. Too scary. Too shameful. Too confusing.

And then the bottom just dropped out. It was like a switch flipped internally and I could no longer control myself. I wanted to consume and then pass out. In retrospect I wanted not to be alive. I wanted to die because life was too hard and it seemed like nobody else was struggling like I was (the narcissism of self-loathing). People around me were getting married and having babies. They had family inheritances. They got their work done on time. They paid their bills. I was stealing pills from people's cabinets, shoplifting, spending endless hours online spaced out on opiates, missing appointments, showing up late everywhere. I got caught stealing from a grocery store and not three weeks later had a withdrawal seizure there. I dyed my hair a crazy color. I was screaming for help in all the wrong ways. And I was angry. I didn't know at whom, but boy was I pissed at my lot. This highly educated superachiever did not like that my life had come to this. I could not get off the suicide train and my only option for survival was to join a weird cult of jargon-spouting lowlifes? And I did *not* like being told that I had a disease. Aside from wanting to be in a constant state of oblivion, I was perfectly healthy.

Addiction: A Social Condition, Disease, or Form of Insanity?

I COMPLETELY AGREE WITH BOEVING'S ASSESSMENT THAT WE ARE LIVING IN AN addicted culture, that our problem is systemic and must be understood and treated as such. And yet, there's a difference between the more mainstream, socially constructed addicts we might all be and the *addict* addicts only some of us are. Most of the former do not steal useless crap from neighborhood stores, gobble down pills like tic tacs, drool in front of the television all night, and then wake up the next day and go, "Let's do that again!" We who become addicted become insane. It may not be a disease but it's definitely a form of insanity. There's just no denying it. But for those of us for whom recovery "works," there's just no denying that, either. There is something of a miracle in it—to be delivered from such excruciating degradation and to find peace in "a new way of life."

Boeving's reflections about the limitations of the twelve-step paradigm were all too real for me initially. The Judeo-Christian undertones, the jargon, and the heavy use of the term "disease" were off-putting and alienating, as they are to most "newcomers" who enter the rooms of recovery. But the truth is that most of us are so alienated from ourselves at that point that it's impossible to have any kind of reliable discernment about our surroundings. Being told that you have a disease can, indeed, feel pathologizing, but it can also help dislodge the stigma that so many addicts feel. And it is possible to feel both at the same time. The idea that there is a genetic-biological component to our addiction, that we have been invaded by a menacing and malignant intruder that seeks to kill us (which is certainly how it felt to me), can give us some space from feeling so utterly and irredeemably responsible for the state of spiritual bankruptcy that brought

us—if we are lucky—to our knees. Because it is only from that humbled angle that many of us are finally willing to seek help.

But conceptualizing addiction as a disease does not preclude us from properly understanding its relationship to modern culture. It is here that Boeving's critique fails to imagine the metaphoric possibilities of the twelve-step paradigm and instead ascribes a kind of personalized, self-involved quality to the process of recovery that reminds me a bit of the critique leveled at Buddhists for being "navel gazers." Sure, it captures a certain aspect of that reality, but nothing of its essence or its potential for both individual and collective transformation.

If we look systemically at the problem of addiction, the miracle of recovery is no miracle at all. Most of us at this time and place in our culture are alienated from one another. We are overworked and under-nurtured, we hate our bodies, we are on diets, we are struggling to pay the bills, we want "more" of something whether it's sex, food, money, spirituality, respect, Apple products, frozen yogurt, or literary knowledge. We want a Ph.D., a Honda Fit, our own website, the perfect dog, the perfect wedding, a new couch, or the perfect beach vacation in Central America. We are in a rush. We are, many of us moderns, depressed. If we are not on antidepressants, then we are off sugar or gluten, we're doing Bikram Yoga or a seven-day "cleanse," or we're meditating our asses off. There is not enough time for us to do all the things we are supposed to do in our short time here on earth and if we stop to rest we may miss something, or even worse, someone may think we are lazy. Many of us act out our suffering and become addicted to whatever that thing is that soothes our poor little souls. And the worst part? We don't talk to each other about our struggles.

Healing in Community

SINCE MOST OF US SUFFER ALONE, IT REALLY CAN FEEL LIKE A MIRACLE TO FIND A PLACE where you are welcomed and loved just as you are. Whether you are homeless, whether or not you have teeth, whether you have murdered someone, whether you are a millionaire, whether you smell, whether you make sense, whether you are the life of the party, awkward, angry, black, white, transgender, just out of jail, a movie star, Mother Teresa, or an arrogant asshole—everyone is equally welcome. It is the only place I know of where there is genuine racial, class, economic, and gender diversity. Addiction is the great social leveler. Your friends—the people you admire for their wisdom, courage and perseverance—range from hookers to housewives. These people share honestly about their suffering and this honesty *is* the language of recovery. It is the language of authentic being, which we begin to feel if we keep going to meetings. We learn that we can share our fears, our shame, or hopes, and our pain in an atmosphere of nonjudgment. No one is allowed to "cross-talk"—to comment on or give advice about anything you share. You can be the CEO of a big firm during the day and come grumbling in your dirty sweats and slippers to your meeting at night, where you know people know you from the inside out.

Some people are not able to get past the "God" language. In my experience, people who rail against God in recovery are usually railing against a God that nobody else believes in either. It sometimes leads them to leave the rooms and seek help elsewhere. Some people are able to find that help; others aren't. The rooms are filled with all types—Christians, Buddhists, Jews, Hindus, Muslims, atheists, pantheists, pagans. Most people keep that to themselves, sharing it only with their sponsor and closest friends. For me, recovery isn't about religion, and the God of my understanding really is just that. No one has ever questioned me about my religious beliefs or tried to proselytize me to theirs. Many people call the fellowship—which is the name given *(continued on page 46)*



INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS WELCOME

Come work at *Tikkun* and the Network of Spiritual Progressives. Everyone from college students to retirees is invited to contact us—we can use your skills!
Info: tikkun.org/interns.



"With their snoots in the air," the Star-Belly Sneetches used to "snort, We'll have nothing to do with the Plain-Belly sort!" But by the end of Dr. Seuss's The Sneetches and Other Stories, the Sneetches have realized the absurdity of their bigotry.

Dr. Seuss's Progressive Politics

by Peter Dreier

WHO HASN'T READ DR. SEUSS? AS KIDS AND AS parents, most Americans know all about the Cat in the Hat, Yertle the Turtle, and many other of Seuss's colorful characters. What some may not know is that despite his popular image as a kindly cartoonist for kids, Theodor Geisel, writing under the pen name "Dr. Seuss," was also a progressive and a moralist whose views suffuse his books. Some of his books use ridicule, satire, wordplay, nonsense words, and wild drawings to take aim at bullies, hypocrites, and demagogues.

In the early 1940s, before many Americans were aware of the calamity confronting Europe's Jews, Geisel—a Lutheran who grew up in a tight-knit German American community in Springfield, Massachusetts—drew editorial cartoons for *PM*, the progressive daily newspaper in New York, warning readers about Hitler and anti-Semitism and attacking the "America First" isolationists who turned a blind eye to the rise of fascism and the Holocaust.

His most popular children's books included parables about racism, anti-Semitism, the arms race, and the environment. But, equally important, he used his pen to encourage youngsters to challenge bullies and injustice. Generations of progressive activists may not trace their political views to their early exposure to Dr. Seuss, but without doubt this shy, brilliant genius played a role in sensitizing them to abuses of power.

Geisel (1904-1991) was, and remains two decades after his death, the world's most popular writer of modern children's books. He wrote and illustrated forty-four children's books characterized by memorable rhymes, whimsical characters, and exuberant drawings that encouraged generations of children to love reading and expand their vocabularies. His books, including his two most popular stories (*The Cat in the Hat* and *Green Eggs and Ham*), have been translated into more than fifteen languages and sold over 200 million copies. They have been adapted into feature films, TV specials, and a Broadway musical. He earned two Academy Awards, two Emmy Awards, a Peabody Award, and the Pulitzer Prize.

Geisel believed that children's books should be both entertaining and educational. He thought, as he wrote in a 1960 article for the *Los Angeles Times*, that writers of

This profile of Theodor Geisel / Dr. Seuss is drawn from Peter Dreier's next book, The 100 Greatest Americans of the 20th Century: A Social Justice Hall of Fame, which Nation Books will publish in early 2012. Dreier is professor of politics and chair of the Urban and Environmental Policy department at Occidental College in Los Angeles.

children's books should "talk, not down to them as kiddies, but talk to them clearly and honestly as equals."

From Insecticide Ads to Children's Books

GEISEL'S CAREER AS A CHILDREN'S BOOK AUTHOR HAPPENED BY ACCIDENT, ONE OF those twists of fate that occasionally change the course of history.

At Dartmouth College, Geisel served as editor-in-chief of the campus humor magazine. After graduating in 1925, he found some success submitting humorous articles and illustrations to different magazines, including *Judge*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Life*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Liberty*, using his pen name, Dr. Seuss. During the Depression, Geisel made his living drawing ads for General Electric, Standard Oil, NBC and other corporations. He achieved some notoriety for drawing advertisements for Flit, a popular insecticide. His Flit cartoons appeared not only in mass circulation magazines but also in newspapers, subways, and billboards. The slogan Geisel had created for the product—"Quick, Henry, the Flit,"—became a popular catchphrase, and the Flit advertising campaign became one of the most successful in history.

In 1931, an editor at Viking Press called Geisel and offered him a contract to illustrate a book of children's sayings, called *Boners*. The book sold well, and soon Geisel produced a sequel. Five years later, returning from Europe on a ship in rough waters and gale-force winds, Geisel began reciting words to the chugging rhythm of the ship's engines. He began saying, "And that is a story that no one can beat, and to think that I saw it on Mulberry Street," the name of a major thoroughfare in his hometown of Springfield. When he got back to New York, Geisel began writing and drawing a book that became *And to Think that I Saw It on Mulberry Street*. Despite his stellar reputation as an advertising illustrator, twenty-nine publishers rejected the book, in part because children's books in verse were out of style. Finally, in 1937, Geisel found a publisher for the book. It earned good reviews, especially for its illustrations, but sold poorly, as did his next several children's books.

Horton Hatches the Egg, published in 1940, was more successful, winning praise for its imaginative rhymes and drawings and its funny story about an elephant and a bird. *Horton* might have given Geisel the commercial boost he was hoping for, but he was preoccupied by the war in Europe, Hitler's Holocaust against the Jews, and America's need to prepare itself for war.

Left-Wing Editorial Cartoons

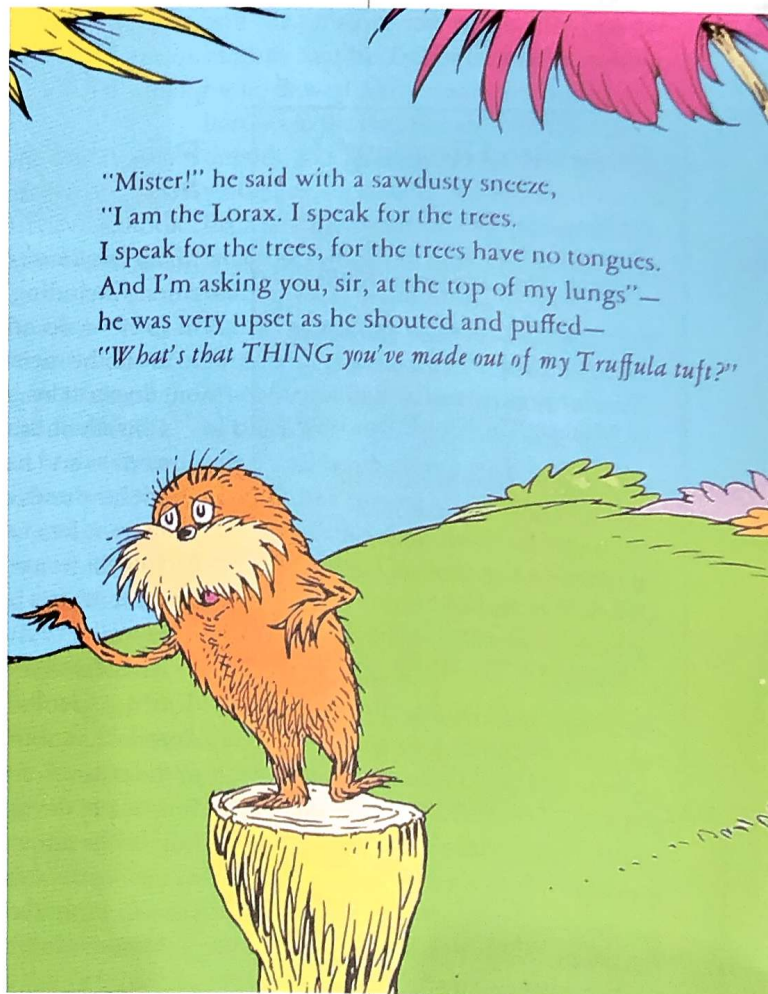
GEISEL PUT HIS CHILDREN'S BOOKS ON HOLD AND BECAME AN editorial cartoonist for the left-wing New York City daily newspaper *PM*, and then a war-time writer and illustrator for the U.S. government and the military, helping make propaganda and training films to support the war effort.

PM was a remarkable anomaly in the publishing world. It refused to accept advertising, included sections devoted to unions, women's issues, and civil rights, and was fervently pro-New Deal. The *PM* staff was filled with radicals, including I.F. Stone, one of the most talented muckraking journalists of the twentieth century. The tabloid paper "was against people who pushed other people around," Geisel explained. "I liked that."

It was at *PM*, where he drew over 400 cartoons during 1941 and 1942, that Geisel sharpened his political views as well as his artistry and his gift for humor. His cartoons viciously but humorously attacked Hitler and Mussolini. He bluntly criticized isolationists who opposed American entry into the war, especially the famed aviator

Dr. Seuss later described The Lorax as "straight propaganda"—a polemic against environmental destruction. Published less than a year after the first Earth Day, the book tells of a greedy manufacturer who regrets having clear-cut a beautiful forest of Truffula trees.

"Mister!" he said with a sawdusty sneeze,
"I am the Lorax. I speak for the trees.
I speak for the trees, for the trees have no tongues.
And I'm asking you, sir, at the top of my lungs"—
he was very upset as he shouted and puffed—
"What's that THING you've made out of my Truffula tuft?"





Theodor Geisel works on a drawing for How the Grinch Stole Christmas.

(and Hitler booster) Charles Lindbergh and right-wing radio priest Father Charles Coughlin—both of whom were anti-Semites—and Senator Gerald Nye of North Dakota, an isolationist leader.

Geisel was one of the few editorial voices to decry the U.S. military's racial segregation policies. He used his cartoons to challenge racism at home against Jews and blacks, union-busting, and corporate greed, which he thought divided the country and hurt the war effort.

Racist WWII-Era Portrayals of Japanese People

DURING WORLD WAR II, AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS WERE, UNDERSTANDABLY, filled with editorials and cartoons using caricature, mockery, and sarcasm to depict Japanese and German leaders and people. But Geisel's cartoons reveal that he was swept up by anti-Japanese hysteria that included blatant racism. He drew a series of cartoons that used familiar stereotypes of Japanese citizens and Japanese Americans, many of whom would be sent to internment camps during the war. As Richard Minear noted in his book, *Dr. Seuss Goes to War: The World War II Editorial Cartoons of Theodor Seuss Geisel*, Geisel's depictions of Hitler are clearly recognizable, drawn with features that give the

German dictator a unique look. In contrast, his cartoons of Emperor Hirohito and General Tojo ignore their distinctive attributes and portray them as Japanese stereotypes with pig snouts, buck teeth, thick glasses, and squinted eyes. Even more troubling is a cartoon published on February 13, 1942, that depicts all Japanese Americans as traitors to the United States. Geisel drew a long line of smiling Japanese Americans, descending down the coast from Washington and Oregon to California, waiting to pick up a package of TNT from a building called "Honorable 5th Column." The caption explains that they are "waiting for the signal from home."

Suggested Reading

Dr. Seuss and Mr. Geisel: A Biography by Judith and Neil Morgan (Da Capo Press, 1996).

Dr. Seuss Goes to War: The World War II Editorial Cartoons of Theodor Seuss Geisel by Richard H. Minear (The New Press, 1999).

"No Matter How Small": The Democratic Imagination of Dr. Seuss" by Henry Jenkins in the anthology *Hop on Pop: The Politics and Pleasures of Popular Culture* (Duke University Press, 2002).

Dr. Seuss: American Icon by Philip Nel (Continuum, 2004).

Parables Against Bigotry, Despotism, and the Red Scare

PROGRESSIVE THEMES SHOW UP LATER IN MANY OF GEISEL'S BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS. Many Dr. Seuss books are about the misuse of power—by despots, kings, and other rulers, including the sometimes arbitrary authority of parents. In a university lecture in 1947—a decade before the Civil Rights Movement—Geisel urged would-be writers to avoid the racist stereotypes common in children's books. America "preaches equality but doesn't always practice it," he noted.

Geisel's children's books consistently reveal his sympathy with the weak and the powerless and his fury against bullies and despots. His books teach children to think about how to deal with an unfair world. Rather than instruct them, Geisel invites his young readers to consider what they should do when faced with injustice. Geisel believed children could understand these moral questions, but only rarely did he portray them in overtly political terms. Instead, he wrote, "when we have a moral, we try to tell it sideways."

After the war, Geisel occasionally submitted cartoons to publications, such as a 1947 drawing, published in the *New Republic*, depicting Uncle Sam looking in horror at Americans accusing each other of being communists, a clear statement of Geisel's anger at the nation's right-wing Red Scare hysteria, which soon spiraled into McCarthyism. But Geisel devoted almost all of his post-war career to writing children's books and quickly became a well-known and commercially successful author—thanks in part to the post-war baby boom. He was popular with parents, kids, and critics alike. First came *If I Ran the Zoo* (1950) and *Scrambled Eggs Super!* (1953).

Next came *Horton Hears a Who!* (1954), which was the first of Geisel's politically oriented children's books, written during the McCarthy era. (continued on page 46)

Culture

BOOKS | FILM | MUSIC

[FILM]

From the Beginning of Time to the End of Days

THE TREE OF LIFE

Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2011

Review by David Sterritt

TERRENCE MALICK, THE wandering auteur, has directed only five features in the thirty-eight years since he scored a major critical success with his 1973 debut film, *Badlands*, an artistic road movie starring Martin Sheen and Sissy Spacek as natural-born killers on a spree. His second picture, *Days of Heaven* (1978), is an elliptical romance; his third, *The Thin Red Line* (1998), is a philosophical war picture; and his fourth, *The New World* (2005), is a Wagnerian retelling of the Pocahontas story. Each is experimental and unorthodox—enough so to forestall profits at the box office—and each opens intriguing, new perspectives on the nature, purpose, and possibilities of cinema itself.

The Tree of Life continues this trajectory in fascinating ways, extending Malick's lifelong project of blending film and philosophy into areas of autobiography and religion. On one level it's a domestic drama and coming-of-age tale, centering on a boy named Jack who's entering adolescence in Waco, Texas, in the 1950s, the place and time of Malick's early years. On a deeper level, it's a study of grief and loss, tracing the effect of an untimely death on Jack's family and on his own still-forming sensibility. And ultimately it's a tale of salvation and redemption, with a story that moves from the earthly plane to the heavenly one in emphatically religious terms. It's a movie of great intellectual ambition, weaving a not-quite-seamless web of images, sounds, and meanings



that stretches from the beginning of the world to the end of days.

With all this going on, *The Tree of Life* is not an easy movie to describe. First comes an impressionistic prologue, with diverse images accompanied by the disembodied voiceovers that Malick uses in every film; here they introduce the themes of love and death, and suggest that every individual must choose between "the way of nature" and "the way of grace" as the correct path to follow in life. This prelude leads to the film's loosely strung story, which begins when Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien (Brad Pitt and Jessica Chastain) receive news of a loved one's death. Extended flashbacks then show the early days of their marriage and the births of their children, including Jack (Hunter McCracken), who becomes the movie's main character. Other sequences place the O'Brien story into the sweeping

contexts of the material cosmos that contains humankind and the spiritual destiny that awaits us.

The film's long middle portion centers on Jack in early adolescence, showing his everyday life and etching his relationships with his warm, easygoing mother and his stern, sometimes belligerent father. Malick sees Jack's development in classically oedipal terms: he's attached to his mom and hostile toward his dad, and his tensions are resolved when he realizes that his father is very much like he is, flawed and frustrated but trying hard to do the best he can. Circumstances outside the home also test the family's resilience, especially when one of Jack's brothers drowns in a sudden accident. Near the end of the film it becomes clear that the story is unfolding in Jack's mind many years later, when he has become a successful professional coping with another family death that brings memories of these bygone events flooding into his mind and heart, along with intimations of a higher power that has played an elusive yet decisive role in his life.

The Tree of Life is stunningly effective in its family sequences, vividly capturing the sights, the sounds, and the very *feel* of what it's like to be a growing boy in a typical American household of the 1950s. I've seen more coming-of-age movies than I can count, and I remember few scenes as evocative as the moment when Jack slightly injures his brother, then apologizes in ways so delicate and understated that they're hard for an outsider to fathom; or when Jack and another boy have a whole conversation

while running down a back road at top speed; or when Jack and his friends stand on homemade stilts that symbolize their dim awareness of humanity's special place in the world; or when Jack steals a piece of lingerie from a neighboring home, then feels overcome by a mysterious mixture of fear and desire. The screenplay is less important here than the breathless cinematography and razor-sharp editing, which blend fleeting and ephemeral aspects of childhood with the timeless and enduring undertones of day-to-day existence. The film is equally authentic in its depiction of the lower-middle-class suburb where Jack's family lives, portraying the environment not as shabby or run-down but as average and ordinary, which is surely how it's seen by the people who live there.

Although the fragmented structure and breathless visual pace of the family scenes have puzzled some moviegoers, they fall into elegant patterns once you accept Malick's approach, which is poetic and allusive rather than linear and commonsensical. The sequences surrounding the story are another matter, and as brilliant as I find *The Tree of Life* as a whole, I don't think Malick got the cosmic episodes quite under control during his three long years of editing the film. The problem lies not in their sensory impact, which approaches sublimity at times, but in the way they're stitched together. Malick evokes the creation of the world (or maybe it's the universe) via cataclysmic collisions between bits of space-borne rock and strands of nucleic acid, attended by planetary alignments that recall Stanley Kubrick's masterpiece *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Then he leaps to the age of dinosaurs (created with computers, a technique Malick normally avoids) and leaps again to the age of humans, omitting eons of evolution along the way. These quantum jumps are elliptical in the extreme, but we get the general idea—the immense and the infinitesimal have equal value in God's omniscient mind—and Malick's combinations of luminous imagery and soul-stirring music pack a majestic wallop at even the most mystifying moments.

I only wish they added up to a coherent creation myth rather than a disjunctive series of cinematic feats.

The film's religious visions are more perplexing. *The Tree of Life* opens with a quotation from the Book of Job, where God asks: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth ... when the morning stars sang together?" In addition to its resonance in Job's story, the word picture of harmoniously singing stars connects powerfully and movingly with the concept of "shining" that Malick adopted years ago from the writing of Martin Heidegger, whose philosophy he taught and translated as a young scholar in the 1960s. Heidegger's influence is especially strong in Malick's earlier film *The Thin Red Line*, where a character says in voiceover, "Darkness and light, strife and love, are they the workings of one mind? The features of the same face? Oh, my soul ... look out through my eyes. Look at the things you made, all things shining." The lesson Jack finally learns in *The Tree of Life* is that all things are indeed shining—with God-given grace and glory—even when human experience seems to be at its most dismal, dark, and distressing.

This gives the film an inspiring message, and Malick underscores it by imagining the characters in heaven at the end, all alive and loving one another in God's eternal kingdom. The odd thing is that Malick depicts this via old-fashioned clichés—glowing skies, rippling water, blissful faces, hugs and embraces everywhere you look—that may be meant as a ringing affirmation of religious tradition but comes off as more hackneyed and naive than many spiritual progressives, much less the secular humanists among us, will feel comfortable with. This problem is exacerbated by Malick's tepid depiction of suffering; in a film that evokes the tribulations of Job, it's strange to find characters who hardly seem to age, who give birth without exertion or pain, and who die sudden deaths with no dread or agony involved. This makes for soothing cinema, but as theology it's facile and simplistic.

These reservations notwithstanding, I want to say again that *The Tree of Life* is a brilliant achievement in almost all respects, bringing the eternal and the everyday, the macrocosmic and the microscopic, and the physical and the metaphysical into graceful convergences that are awesome to behold. Malick has shown great courage, moreover, in organizing such a vast and personal film around theological ideas at a time when Hollywood's idea of religious cinema is limited to propaganda screeds like *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) and superstitious fantasies like *The Da Vinci Code* (2006). He is the one true visionary in American feature films today, and his breathtaking new movie makes up for its theological deficiencies with towering waves of ingenuity, originality, and cinematic splendor. ■

David Sterritt, film critic for Tikkun, has written about Terrence Malick in *Film Quarterly*, *Cineaste*, *Undercurrent*, and *elsewhere*, and wrote the booklet essay for *The Criterion Collection's* release of *The Thin Red Line*.

[BOOKS]

THE WORK OF HEALING

BEAUTIFUL UNBROKEN: ONE NURSE'S LIFE

by Mary Jane Nealon

Graywolf, 2011

Review by Kathryn Rhett

EUDORA WELTY WROTE: "THE events in our lives happen in a sequence in time, but in their significance to ourselves they find their own order, a timetable not necessarily—perhaps not possibly—chronological. The time as we know it subjectively is often the chronology that stories and novels follow: it is the continuous thread of revelation."

Mary Jane Nealon's gorgeous memoir works along that revelatory thread, examining the physical and metaphysical life of a person who became both a nurse and a writer.

"As far back as I can remember," Nealon begins, "I wanted to be a nurse or a saint. I wanted to be heroic." The fact that nurses and saints were her two models for heroism bespeaks her upbringing in a modest Catholic household in Jersey City, as well as her youthful hagiographic reading about Kateri Tekakwitha (an Indian healer), Clara Barton (founder of the American Red Cross), and Molly Pitcher (comforter of Revolutionary War soldiers). Nealon, a middle child born to a policeman and a homemaker, dreamed of college but acceded to a less expensive education at the nursing school four blocks from home. The loss of her younger brother to cancer made her a fellow sufferer as well as a healer:

The year after my brother died I tried to stay in the sphere of the living, but at the cancer hospital, young boys kept lining up in the hall. And I was so good with them. I could help them talk about their fears and I was such a comfort to the mothers, and even when I watched the fathers go back down the hall to the bar or their office I understood and made a bubble of understanding and forgiveness around my host families of death. Outside the hospital I dove into extravagance. I took poetry workshops at the Ninety-second Street Y, where I met strong women in their thirties and a handsome man I slept with and a tall black dancer who would become my first gay friend. I took private Latin disco lessons and wore wild floral dresses, and went dancing at Cachaça, a Brazilian club, and met men from the Brazilian bank. When I wasn't at the bedside of a dying boy I was exploding barefoot in the samba club with gray velvet couches. I called my parents once a week, on Sundays, and made excuses for staying in the city. One night the man from my poetry class called me in the middle of the night to talk about feeding me asparagus and making love in a Pakistani wedding tent. Language was a cave I was dancing

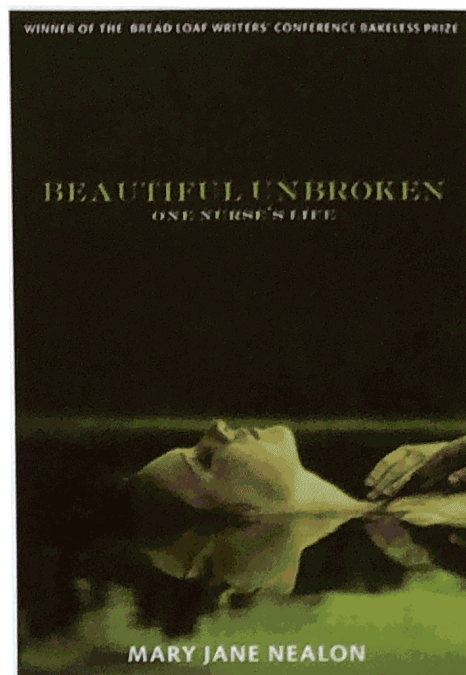
into, a small light and arch of happiness. The boys who were dying hung all around me like bats.

Nealon brings a passionate poetic sensibility to her story of loss and becoming. Her startling metaphors bring light, insight, and transcendence to a narrative grounded in the gritty real.

Never sanctimonious, the memoir is rich with humor and earthbound experience. A traveling nurse for a time, who took temporary assignments in Hawaii, New Mexico, and Savannah, Nealon remarks: "There were always men who wanted to date the traveling nurses. Formula for love: be leaving town in three months." A coming-of-age memoir, too, the narrative thrums with youthful restlessness and the joy of discovery. The body is present for this narrator in every way; the memoir includes and embraces all of the messy and sacred physicality of being human.

Each part of the book's triptych structure illuminates the others. The memoir begins in one particular family's house and neighborhood and then widens as it goes, the narrator becoming a seeker in the world. "Everyone's clotheslines criss-crossed," Nealon writes in the first part. "Mr. Cleary's roses were big white and yellow bombs on the fence." Her brother Johnny became ill as a teenager, and, as with so many family tragedies, the misfortune was attended by guilt: Johnny hid his early symptoms and no one noticed. During what would be his last months, Nealon left home for Virginia to begin her life as a nurse. (By contrast, her father took early retirement from police work, her mother cried every morning, and her sister stuck around to help.) Nealon's guilt over leaving affected her profoundly, growing rather than lessening with time, propelling her a continent away from her family.

The middle of the book traces Nealon's attempted escape from grief into faraway nursing jobs, sensory pleasure and oblivion, and poetry. As an insider's guide to the life of a nurse, the memoir brings the reader along with Nealon as she learns that "many times



there was nothing to say, that sometimes just not turning away from people was the best way to care for them." Her riveting stories of patients' illnesses and injuries give the memoir an atmosphere of frailty in which *carpe diem* would be the only logical attitude. The nursing stories also act as testimony, honoring the suffering of patients and recording that someone saw, noticed, and admired them. "I loved the gift of being with someone as she transcended suffering," Nealon writes. "Of helping her in small ways: turning her in the bed, or placing a blanket over her legs." After death, after "the release of the person's hold on the body," she writes, "The room to me then is as blessed as any church."

In its third part, the memoir undergoes a beautiful transformation, from one kind of story about a lost boy to another kind of story about lost boys.

Unlike many memoirs whose beginnings and middles are stronger than their ends, *Beautiful Unbroken* grows progressively richer and more profound as Nealon recounts her work in the early years of the AIDS crisis. The scale and context of loss grow, and Nealon brings us the story of men who were dying of a mystifying disease without a cure. The memoir made me remember those years when AIDS was a definite and often

rapid death sentence, and I thought of the “last suppers” I attended in San Francisco for men who were sharing their last meal out with friends before succumbing to home or hospice. Nursing has changed along with medicine in the centuries since Molly Pitcher mopped soldiers’ brows, but in this particular circumstance, Nealon’s most important gift was her intuitive, empathetic touch. The heroic nurses she had admired as a child were ultimately the perfect role models, people who expressed compassion rather than fear when faced with suffering.

What matters in this memoir, what is urgent and fierce, is the intense examination of how one grieves and changes. The memoir is a record of the world working a change in Nealon and forming her into who she would become. Patients teach her the importance of family. Artists teach her how to become obsessed with a subject and how to start over when something fails.

It’s an ennobling portrait of a nurse. And I say that from the perspective of someone inculcated with the socioeconomically snobbish view that doctor, not nurse, would be the profession to aim for. Or maybe I say that from the gender-biased view that as a woman coming of age in the 1970s, one aimed for doctor over nurse, the apparent equivalent to boss instead of secretary, lawyer instead of paralegal. But this memoir casts nurses as the people closest to those they care for, who not only give relief and dignity to patients, but learn from patients and are privileged to share an intimate connection with them. Describing the day she met a young man dying of AIDS, Nealon writes, “So I sat in the rocker, and I instinctively took his hand, and in the way it always is with the dying, he expressed no hesitation or shyness and he gave his own hand over to me.”

While the memoir is a confession and expression of repentance, it is also a quest for a new religion after the one she was raised with, Catholicism, failed her. The new religion is alleviating suffering in her role as a nurse, especially the

very human part of nursing that is one person’s relationship to another. Poetry also becomes the new religion; language acts as solace for both narrator and reader, leavening through illumination. “I lived in medicine and poetry, and they were not enemies at all,” Nealon writes. “They celebrated the synchronicity of discovery and hope, of desire and knowledge. I knew there were people all over the world who lived without poetry, but I didn’t know how.”

From a graceful riff on the month of September (“Month of apples and hurricanes”) to surprising knowledge (in a dying person, “It is the hands and feet and eyes that go last”), the memoir gives readers much to savor and contemplate. *Beautiful Unbroken* is compelling, inventive, and whole, its language and connections resonating long after the book is done. ■

Kathryn Rhett is the author of the memoir Near Breathing and editor of Survival Stories: Memoirs of Crisis. She teaches writing at Gettysburg College and in an MFA program at Queens University of Charlotte. Her work is forthcoming in Harvard Review.

SWORD AND PLOWSHARE IN JEWISH THOUGHT

THE PEACE AND VIOLENCE OF JUDAISM

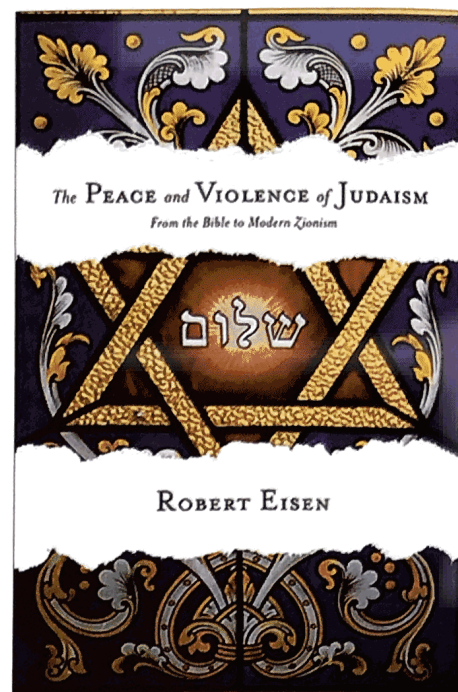
by Robert Eisen

Oxford University Press, 2011

Review by Arthur Waskow

ROBERT EISEN IS A PROFESSOR of religion and Judaic studies at George Washington University. His book seems to promise a full scholarly account of Jewish thought on peace and violence, from ancient Torah to contemporary Israel.

The book is written as a series of dialogues between two voices: one that



believes Judaism accepts and affirms the use of violence, and one that believes Judaism much more strongly seeks and urges peace. Each section of the book—which is chronologically arranged—presents the arguments for one voice and then the other. To assure the reader that for most of the book he is not taking sides between these voices, Eisen begins the biblical section with the voice that promotes violence; the rabbinic section with the voice that promotes peace; and so on, back and forth, for the rest of the book. (The remaining sections are on medieval Jewish philosophy, Kabbalah, and modern Zionism.)

This pattern is useful but could be a lot more useful, were it not for two baffling failings in this review of the multimillennial literature.

The first is that nowhere in the book’s fifty pages on the Bible is there any reference to the midwives Shifra and Puah, who use nonviolent civil disobedience to resist Pharaoh’s command to kill Israelite boy babies; or to the refusal of King Saul’s own bodyguards to obey his order to kill the priests of Nov for sheltering David and his guerrilla band when they were fleeing Saul’s army; or to Daniel’s nonviolent resistance to Nebuchadnezzar; or to the passage in Deuteronomy that forbids an Israelite

King from amassing “horses”—that is, the cavalry necessary for an aggressive imperial war; or to the many outcries from many prophets against the warlike behavior of Israelite and Judean kings.

These blind spots accord with Eisen’s assertion that “wars have always been a primary mover of world events, and therefore violence has shaped world history in a way that peace movements have not.” The well-attested history of the nonviolent and politically successful “secession” of the *plebs* from Rome in reshaping the Roman governmental system is only one example of many occasions when strikes, boycotts, sit-downs, and other uses of assertive nonviolence have in fact changed world history, even before the twentieth-century nonviolent movements in India, the American South, East Germany, the Soviet Union, and the Philippines. The work of Gene Sharp should have been enough to prevent any scholar from making such a mistake.

Perhaps even more important, the book addresses twentieth-century

Judaism only in its section on modern Zionism. Here it presents both the peaceable and warlike faces of the Zionist movement before and since the creation of Israel. Separately from his evenhanded discussion of more violence-ready and more peace-oriented Zionisms (devoting considerable space to both Martin Buber and Meir Kahane), the author makes it clear that his sympathies lie with those contemporary Zionists who seek to make peace with the Palestinian people through a two-state settlement. Yet he does not mention Rabbi Arik Ascherman or Rabbis for Human Rights, exemplars in our own generation of conscious devotion to nonviolence in the name of God and Torah.

Perhaps even more surprising, the reader looks in vain for any examination of warlike and peaceful Jewish ideologies in the twentieth-century Diaspora. Nowhere is there a discussion of the almost entirely nonviolent tactics used by the movement to free Soviet Jewry.

Nowhere do the names appear of any of the leaders in the American

Jewish community who have struggled for peace and appealed to Judaism as the root of their commitment: Rabbis Abraham Joshua Heschel, Everett Gendler, Arthur Lelyveld, Michael Lerner, David Saperstein, and Sheila Weinberg; or Bella Abzug, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Murray Polner, the Jewish Peace Fellowship, the Shalom Center, and *Tikkun* magazine.

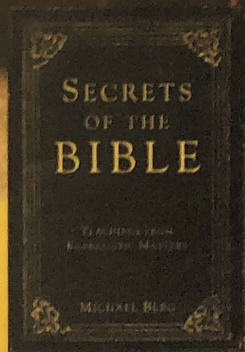
And nowhere do the names appear of those American Jews and Jewish institutions that strongly supported the American wars against Vietnam and Iraq: Norman Podhoretz, Irving Kristol, Elliott Abrams, Douglas Feith, and other so-called neoconservatives often centered in *Commentary* magazine.

Eisen acknowledges that he is leaving aside all the Diaspora expressions of Judaism during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He explains this by saying, “Zionism is such a focal point of recent discussion about the issues of peace and violence in Judaism that it dwarfs all other modern manifestations of Judaism.” Considering the size and political power of the American Jewish community during the second half of the twentieth century and during the twenty-first century, and its influence on American policies of war or peace during that time, omitting that whole history seems astonishing.

By far the largest number of citations in Eisen’s bibliography are to scholars who have studied Judaism. With the caveats noted above, the book can be a useful jumping-off place for other scholars to examine peace and violence in the history of Judaism. It will be much less useful for those Jews who are struggling to shape a Judaism that can shape the future into a world that will be, as Eisen says in his dedication of the book to his children, “more peaceful than the one [they] have inherited.” ■

Rabbi Arthur Waskow is director of the Shalom Center (theshalomcenter.org); author of *The Limits of Defense, From Race Riot to Sit-in, and Godwrestling—Round 2*; and co-author of *Freedom Journeys: The Tale of Exodus and Wilderness across Millennia* (*Jewish Lights*, 2011).

YOU DON'T NEED YEARS OF STUDY TO BECOME A SCHOLAR.



SECRETS OF THE BIBLE is for everyone who has the desire and the ability to study the Bible's coded messages, but does not have decades of research time.

Michael Berg, the first scholar to translate the complete *Zohar* into English, helps non-biblical scholars

understand the profound questions and answers of the Bible. From decades of research he synthesizes difficult concepts into relevant communications for daily life.

ISBN: 978-157189-769-5



HESCHEL

(continued from page 14)

his theological works as significant influences on their own work. However, certain elements have been absorbed more than others. Among contemporary theologians we see that the distinct vision Heschel brought to life has been refracted through different lenses: conservative traditionalism, new age spirituality, and naturalism.

Critics and Admirers of Heschel's Theocentrism

OF COURSE, HESCHEL'S THEOLOGY HAS not been universally celebrated. For example, Neil Gillman has expressed discomfort with Heschel's theocentrism. In his essay "Epistemological Tensions in Heschel's Thought" in *Conservative Judaism*, Gillman argued that this theocentrism is tantamount to "the notion that our experience of God is self-verifying." Such a view, Gillman added, does violence to reason and invites fanaticism (although he does not charge Heschel with this personally). Gillman thinks Heschel had other more philosophically sound options open to him

but that he chose a less philosophically responsible approach in his attempts to capture the commanding nature of religious experience. To be sure, Gillman celebrates Heschel as a premier phenomenologist of religious experience, but he regrets some of the choices that Heschel made as a philosopher.

It is not difficult to find the source of Gillman's dissatisfaction with Heschel. Gillman, more traditionally modern in his philosophical sensibilities, is unwilling to follow Heschel's decentering of the self by a God that cannot be proven but only experienced. While Gillman often uses terms adopted from Heschel, his emphasis (evident in his book *Sacred Fragments: Recovering Theology for the Modern Jew*) is that "all of our human thinking and speaking about God uses our familiar human experience in a metaphorical way." For Gillman, Heschel's attempt to elucidate religious experience, to make people aware of more than they can "know" is simply an exercise in metaphorical language that is, to be sure, inspiring. However, it is ultimately more philosophically responsible to remain within the limits

of human reason and modern sensibilities when talking about God. In short, to the degree Heschel lives on in Gillman's work, it is as a colorful but inadequately rigorous philosophy of religion. Ultimately, where Heschel wants to change modern sensibilities in the direction of his theocentric Judaism, Gillman seeks to adapt Judaism to modern sensibilities.

In sharp contrast to Gillman, David Novak finds theocentrism to be the most outstanding feature of Heschel's work. Novak, who began in the Conservative tradition but who has shifted to what he now terms "Traditionalist" Judaism, eagerly embraces Heschel's theocentrism and his call to disrupt modern sensibilities. Indeed, Novak moves further to the right (at least theologically)

than Heschel, but he appropriates his theocentrism while stripping it of its iconoclasm. That is, Novak uses Heschel's theocentrism as a method more than he follows its substance. He uses theocentrism as a bridge to Jewish traditionalism and a means for rejecting modern Jewish thought, from Baruch Spinoza and Moses Mendelssohn through Hermann Cohen. As Novak sees it, modern Jewish thought, primarily in its liberal cast, proceeds philosophically out of human reason and experience. According to Novak's arguments in *The Election of Israel: The Idea of the Chosen People*, this approach is fundamentally wrongheaded, in that "Torah can never and, therefore, must never be justified by the world or anything in it." In other words, it is not reason that justifies revelation; revelation has validity in and of itself. Reason can help elucidate revelation but it does not possess equal worth.

Novak's theology is anti-philosophical in its nature, whereas Heschel is more ambiguous on this matter. Novak, like Heschel, is quite learned in philosophy but he rejects its ultimate and independent validity. Heschel, however, continually engages with philosophy, trying to subvert its assumptions, to turn conventional thinking on its head by exposing it to categories that are fundamentally incommensurable with its very nature. In a fascinating autobiographical statement about his time as a young man studying in Germany, Heschel explains that to his professors, who "spoke of God from the point of view of man," the questions that concerned him "could not even be phrased in categories of their thinking."

Heschel challenges modern philosophy, trying to expose Western thinking to a religiosity that it has only tried to debunk but never taken seriously in its own terms. Novak, on the other hand, finds in Heschel a resource for rejecting, rather than engaging, the "secularism" of modernity in favor of revelation and the authority of tradition. And like Heschel, Novak also seeks to reach out to Christians, but more on what is shared or overlapping in tradition and text, rather than on "the level of

Here I Am

Using Jewish Spiritual Wisdom to Become More Present, Centered, and Available for Life

Leonard Felder, PhD

Here I Am Quick Centering Methods for Extremely Busy People

The eight simple stress-reduction practices Leonard Felder, PhD, presents here are ones he's been using in his holistic psychotherapy practice for over thirty years. They're about learning to outsmart your anxious, moody brain; about learning to connect with the peaceful place beneath any experience of agitation, and about being open to the infinite possibilities of each moment. This book is a breath of fresh air for anyone overwhelmed by their complicated life.

\$15.95 paperback

Trumpeter

www.shambhala.com

fear and trembling, of humility and contrition, where our individual moments of faith are mere waves in the endless ocean of mankind's reaching out for God, where all formulations and articulations appear as understatements." While Novak values Heschel's critique of secularism, he does not share Heschel's critical distance from the authority of religious tradition—at least as a fixed and established form. While Novak follows Heschel in challenging the secular assumptions of modernity, he does not follow him in also challenging the assumptions of religious authority and tradition.

Heschel's Dissent Undergirds Efforts to Renew American Judaism

OTHER STUDENTS OF HESCHEL EMBRACE his dissenting side—his attempt to reformulate Judaism and his emphasis on social justice. Perhaps the two most notable students who appropriate this element of Heschel's thought are Arthur Green and Michael Lerner. However, neither Green nor Lerner retains the personal God of Heschel's theocentrism, though they do not abandon theocentrism altogether. Green, who frames his recent book *Radical Judaism* as an answer to Heschel, explains his theological differences from Heschel in terms of sensibility. Green writes, "I do not have Heschel's ability to speak unself-consciously the personalist and pathos-laden religious language of the biblical prophet." According to Green, where Heschel offers a "personalist" theology with "mystical overtones," he offers instead a "mystical-panentheist" theology that uses "personalist metaphors." In other words, Green cannot embrace a personal God and instead turns to science and mysticism to formulate a notion of God that is nonpersonal, one which both permeates and transcends the world.

Michael Lerner, like Green, claims deep affiliation with Heschel. Indeed, about his own book *Jewish Renewal*, Lerner writes, "So much of what I say in this book derives from [Heschel's] insights that in some ways I see this whole book as a footnote and update to his thinking." However, while Lerner shares Heschel's insistence that God is

inextricably bound up with the call for prophetic activism, it is an understatement to regard his work as a mere footnote or update to Heschel's. Indeed, like Green, Lerner embraces a naturalistic language instead of Heschel's personalist theology and pathos-laden language. Echoing Mordecai Kaplan but with language infused with kabbalistic references, Lerner's God is "the Force that makes possible healing and transformation." For Lerner, God is that which ensures that the way the world is now is not how it must be; God ensures that there can be change and improvement. Like Green, he too has recourse to the theological category of panentheism. Or as he puts it in *Jewish Renewal*:

God is the totality of all Being and all existence that ever was, is, or will be, and more than that. At any given moment we are part of God and God is part of us, but we are not all that there is to God, nor is God simply the sum of all physically existing things in the infinite universe, though that is also part of God, just as a given moment of our conscious experience is a part of who we are at that moment, though not *all* of who we are at that moment and certainly not *all* of who we are in our totality.

To be sure, both Green and Lerner are keen to take from Heschel an insistence on the role of awe and the ineffable, the reality and power of that which cannot be put into words. However, they avoid Heschel's personalist God, preferring a notion of God refracted through Kabbalism mingled with science and/or psychoanalysis.

There is no question that part of the power of Heschel's work, aside from its profundity and the rightly celebrated prose in which his ideas come to expression, is the fact that Heschel is both a traditionalist and a radical. The tenor of writing is often quite traditionalist, even as it challenges and subverts traditionalism. Despite the breadth of his learning, Heschel speaks to a universal audience from the standpoint of one thickly and

profoundly rooted in traditional Judaism. This is a path that both Green and Lerner do not, and perhaps cannot, follow. Even Novak, a traditionalist, is much more self-consciously rooted in the Jewish tradition than Heschel, who seemed to just embody it.

Heschel's background is singular, whereas Novak, Green, and Lerner are children of a later generation for whom new-age spirituality, science, religious pluralism, and self-consciousness of one's own beliefs in a world of social fragmentation are foregrounded. If Novak embraces a traditionalism to overcome and/or elide the fragmentation of modernity, Green and Lerner are more disposed to incorporate different voices and traditions in their visions of Judaism.

Green, whose religiosity is much more self-consciously modern than Heschel's, thinks that religious thought cannot avoid the scientific developments that have transformed our understandings of ourselves. Green's vision of Judaism begins with universal concerns, which by virtue of their universality involve Judaism. This allows him to relativize Judaism, like all traditions, in the grander narrative of science. It is in the grandeur of science that Green seeks to renew and replenish Judaism, to formulate an account of Judaism compatible with our contemporary pluralistic and scientific sensibilities. As Green writes in *Radical Judaism*:

As a religious person I believe that the evolution of species is the greatest sacred drama of all time.... It dwarfs all the other narratives, memories, and images that so pre-occupy the mind of religious traditions, including our own.

Jews, Christians, and Muslims, Green charges, have been "overinvolved" with their "own particular stories" and have neglected the "infinitely bigger" story that they all share. "How did we get here, we humans, and where are we going?" To be sure, Green emphasizes that "God is not an intellectual proposition" but rather "the ground of life itself." Green turns to a mixture of new-age spirituality, Kabbalah,

and science to explain how a nonpersonal ground of life can still have existential relevance for individuals, seizing us in moments of “radical amazement” (a term he consciously borrows from Heschel). He explores the resources that this “ground of life” can contribute to the renewal of Judaism in an age of ecological disaster, one where the sensibilities of most privilege science.

However, whereas Heschel unself-consciously reinterprets and derives meaning from Jewish tradition, Green is clear that while he finds the “dogmatic truth claims of tradition” unconvincing, the “richness” of the tradition’s language and symbols continue to hold power. That is, where Heschel proceeds from the particular, the Jewish tradition, to matters of universal concern, whether they be God, justice, war, or whatever, Green moves from the universal, the big bang and evolution, to the particular, Judaism. Indeed, where Heschel challenges the secular assumptions of Western modernity with old-world Hasidic sensibilities, Green explains, “I 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 might guide us toward a more profound appreciation of that same reality.” Green offers a profoundly different vision from Heschel, even as he remains in dialogue with him.

Lerner is very close to Heschel in the inextricable link between God, Judaism, and social justice. However, where Heschel grounds his vision for renewing society in traditional Jewish spirituality, in a sensibility at odds with, or one that has been largely lost in, Western modernity, Lerner finds both Judaism and society in need of renewal. For Lerner, Judaism is itself a universal teaching or way of thinking, or as he puts it in *Jewish Renewal*, “a metaphysics of healing and transformation.” That is, Judaism is not simply a culture, ethnicity, and set of religious teachings and practices, but rather a way of viewing the world rooted in *tikkun olam*, healing the world. To live on earth means to be mired in partial truths and misunderstandings in which we

misrepresent, and are misrepresented by, others. That is, as long as we are living, we and our fellow human beings are caught in the mire of misunderstanding, the distortion of failed or inadequate recognition. Judaism in its normative sense (as opposed to its empirical and all too human sense, which is itself filled with such distortions) represents the belief that this state of imperfection and misrecognition is not final and that “God is the Force in the universe that makes possible this process of recognition.”

Like Heschel, Lerner makes use of the notion of *imago dei* (the human being as the image of God), arguing that “part of *what* is recognized is the God within each of us (namely, the way that we are created in the image of God and hence equally worthy of respect and love).” Indeed, God’s presence becomes manifest in this process of mutual recognition. Judaism is then both a particular religious tradition and a way of understanding the world, “the metaphysics of social transformation.” Social transformation is rooted in the nature of the universe, its telos, or so Judaism teaches. Lerner follows Heschel in arguing that we are morally and religiously compelled to improve the world. However, Heschel believes this obligation is rooted in the will of a personal God outraged at injustice, while for Lerner this obligation derives more from a particular reading of *tikkun olam*, which he reads as Judaism’s essence—that the universe can and should be other and better than it is presently.

Green and Lerner attempt to follow Heschel’s own attempts to renew American Judaism. Heschel’s spiritual writings, at once demanding and encouraging, call on the reader to cultivate her sensitivity for awe and amazement as well as charge the reader to change her life. By critiquing the Judaism taught in synagogues in the United States as empty and flat, filled with trivialities, Heschel hopes to bring Jews back to a Judaism filled with wonder and awe rather than banalities. This dimension is not lost on Green and Lerner.

Green agrees that Judaism needs to be revitalized, but his approach is different from Heschel’s. As Green sees it, our

new intellectual horizons dictate a new approach to Jewish theology. In *Radical Judaism* he writes, “As postmoderns we cannot simply appropriate a premodern system and expect it to work for us, even if the terminology and metaphors are updated. We do not, and should not expect ourselves to, believe in the same way as our premodern forebears.” If science has forever changed our intellectual and cultural landscape, it is disingenuous to flee to dogmas and orthodoxies. Rather, he writes, we need to turn to the power of “myth and symbols” that can coexist with “our modern baggage.” We must forge new paths into deeper and untapped states of mind. Thus, as opposed to Heschel, who eschewed reducing religion to psychology and symbol, Green thinks that given the scientific realities facing us, such conclusions are inevitable. And once we embrace this, we can find our life surprisingly rich and spiritually fulfilling.

Lerner’s opening chapter of *Jewish Renewal* incisively explores the spiritual bankruptcy of much of contemporary Judaism and indeed relates the critical role that Heschel played in Lerner’s own life, helping him discover “a Judaism that stood as a radical critique of what was claiming to be ‘official’ Judaism.” Lerner finds contemporary (empirical) Judaism ailing, but this is not simply a modern problem but rather a perpetual one; Judaism is in constant need of renewal. If the true message of Judaism is “*tikkun olam*, the healing and transformation of the world,” there has always been the countermovement in every generation, in which, Lerner writes, “this insight has been muted, avoided, abandoned, or outright denied by many people, including those people who claim to be the official priests, spokespeople, leaders, rabbis, teachers, or orthodox embodiments of Judaism.” To be sure, the situation is particularly grim in the United States due to American Judaism’s spiritual sterility and authoritarianism. Lerner provides an overarching theory of Judaism, of Jewish Renewal, in order to critique contemporary Judaism and offer a more hopeful vision for the future.

Time for a Scholarly Second Look?

HESCHEL'S THOUGHT BRINGS TOGETHER a tremendous array of seemingly contradictory tendencies. While attendant to traditional Judaism, he does not ignore the challenges of modernity; while a giant of rabbinical learning, he demands creative dissent in the name of tradition. At home in all walks of Judaism, tremendously learned in Talmud, and in *Yiddishkeit* generally, he was also fluent in philosophy and modern biblical criticism. His most significant works were popular in nature, their prose beautiful and accessible, and yet their premises are surprisingly sophisticated and complex.

Where Heschel dwelt between Eastern European Hasidism and Western learning, his students are products of the West. From Novak's self-conscious traditionalism to Green's struggles to maintain intellectual integrity and spirituality and Lerner's grounding of Jewish ethics in a metaphysical order, we see the challenges of a later generation struggling to come to grips with the meaning of Judaism in a fragmented world where old authorities no longer hold. Even Gillman cannot refrain from frequent references to Heschel in his attempts to explain Judaism in modernity. For Novak, Green, and Lerner, despite their significant differences, Heschel's thought represents not only a reservoir of learning to draw upon but the challenge and demand to renew an ailing Judaism in the face of a fragmented, pluralist society in which Jewish life and identity are fraught with tensions, and in a world where injustice—whether ecological, economic, or sociopolitical—continues to demand prophetic action.

While Heschel's thought lives on in the work of his students, it has by no means become outdated or irrelevant in our own time. Given Heschel's own fearless and iconoclastic nature when it came to challenging authority, it is fitting that his students struggle to adjust his vision to meet their own concerns. However, we must not conclude from this—and I believe his students would be the first to insist upon this—that

Heschel's work is of mere historical importance, to help us better understand his students. While the work of his students commands attention in its own right, it is by no means time to confine Heschel's work to the dustbins of history. Indeed, while theologians demonstrate a clear appreciation for Heschel's work, academic scholarship has been less responsive to it. In scholarly quarters, with certain exceptions, his work is too often buried under a mountain of praise or dismissed without being addressed with the rigor and care it deserves. *Abraham Joshua Heschel: Essential Writings* provides a fresh impetus for the scholarly community to explore this giant's work anew, to plumb its range and depth, and to carefully elucidate its contours. Only then can we rethink many of the clichés that blunt the force and challenge of Heschel's work. That theologians continue to take him seriously is notable; it is now time for the rest of us to also engage in such challenges. Heschel's writings stretch us, demanding that we rethink how we live and conceive of our place in the world. ■

ARAB AWAKENING

(continued from page 18)

former Egyptian President Mubarak, and Hamas was similarly concerned by the turmoil facing its Syrian benefactor.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas also wanted to present an image of a united Palestinian front before seeking UN recognition. So on May 4 an accord was signed to form an interim government of technocrats to prepare for new elections within a year. But by June the reconciliation had run into trouble—largely because of a dispute over the post of interim prime minister—and further talks were postponed indefinitely, casting doubt over the long-term viability of the unity deal.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu tossed in his own lethal oar by declaring that President Abbas could not hope to forge a peace deal with Israel if he pursued a reconciliation accord with Hamas: "The Palestinian Authority

must choose either peace with Israel or peace with Hamas."

This is, of course, a false choice because peace with Israel is not on offer to the Palestinians on terms anywhere near minimally acceptable to even the most accommodating of them. It is also disingenuous, as Netanyahu knows peace cannot be attained with only part of the Palestinian people, a point he has often stressed himself in the past when it suited him.

We may soon see the pumping of new life and the attracting of a new generation into ossified Palestinian political agencies such as the PLO and its legislative body, the Palestinian National Council. These bodies had been allowed to atrophy after the Palestinian Authority took centre stage in May 1994 under the Oslo Accords, in the thwarted belief that statehood was just five years away. A reinvigorated PLO would embrace a much broader constituency than the Palestinian Authority by seeking to include Hamas and the diaspora Palestinians plus, potentially, Palestinian citizens of Israel.

In addition, a popular campaign of nonviolent civil disobedience may erupt in the occupied West Bank. The protests—likely to be dubbed a third intifada—could take the form of mass demonstrations, marches, sit-ins, strikes, or other innovative actions that may evolve through creative use of new social media. Settlers, settlements, and other symbols of the Occupation would probably be the principal targets of the protests.

A Risky, Last-Ditch Strategy: Force Israel to Govern the West Bank?

A VOLATILE AND DESPERATE OPTION OF last resort might be for the Palestinian Authority to dissolve itself altogether and return the West Bank to direct Israeli rule. That would bring an end to the limited experiment of Palestinian autonomy, but the greater cost might be borne by Israel, if only because the Israeli state would then presumably have to finance all municipal and other services, including the security agencies, from its own coffers, for it is unlikely in such a circumstance that the EU and

other funding sources would continue with their munificence. Such a move could cause mayhem but, in desperation, cannot be ruled out.

However, Israel's capacity to retaliate in the form of unilateral annexations of some parts of the West Bank and unilateral withdrawals from other parts should not be discounted. The annexed areas would, we may suppose, include all or most of the territory on which Israeli settlements have been built—although there may be some consolidation—together with the surrounding infrastructure and modern road system.

The annexed area might also incorporate the Jordan Valley, representing around 29 percent of the area of the West Bank and 47 percent of its total water resources, which Israeli governments have often claimed as the state's vital "security border" to prevent armies or missiles from infiltrating the land from the east to attack Israel. The areas from which Israel pulls out—probably all or most of the heavily populated Palestinian cities—might then be fenced off and left to their own fate, with or without a Palestinian Authority to govern them and represent their interests internationally.

Should Israel move to take such unilateral actions, it would no doubt invite instant condemnation by most of the world. It would be an advantage to the Palestinians in terms of international sympathy and support, but game, set, and maybe match to Israel in terms of creating new and possibly irreversible facts on the ground. For a few years at least, Israel might find itself increasingly isolated as the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement extends its appeal globally and governments around the world vent ineffectual fury. For the foreseeable future, Israel would entrench itself as a pariah state and the Israeli people would be forced to live with the consequences. Jews around the world would not be immune to the effects either. Even the pro-Israel sympathy of the U.S. government and people might steadily erode.

For their part, the Palestinians would have suffered a heavy—maybe mortal—blow in their quest for an

independent state and the exercise of self-determination and might now find their other policy options to be extremely limited, too, apart from possibly enforced absorption back into the Jordanian state. Far from leading to their quiescence, this consequence could be a recipe for perpetual conflict with no winners. The only sure way to avoid such a disastrous outcome is to move swiftly toward the endgame based on two viable states.

Conditions for the Success of a Two-State Solution

IF PRESIDENT OBAMA IS, DISAPPOINTINGLY, not ready, willing, and able to drive a bold two-state peace initiative himself, it is up to other leading members of the UN Security Council, preferably with the fulsome backing of the Arab League, to swiftly initiate a process to determine the shape of a final resolution—what it would broadly look like is not a mystery—and to fashion potent inducements, positive and negative, for the conflicting parties to meet their respective interim targets along a fixed timetable toward the final destination.

As part of this process, and for it to succeed, a range of untenable positions held by the different parties would need to be vigorously challenged. Take a couple of examples:

After September, in the wake of the failure by Israel and the PLO to achieve a negotiated peace, some Western governments may contemplate engaging cautiously with Hamas. There is much to be said for this as Hamas, like Fatah, reflects a major Palestinian political current that cannot be wished away. However, the Islamic movement is likely to find its progress toward international legitimacy severely curtailed so long as it fails to openly purge its Covenant of its virulently anti-Semitic content, crudely reminiscent of the notorious Tsarist-era forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, in blaming Jews for virtually all the ills of the world, currently and historically.

Informally, some Hamas leaders credibly claim the Covenant to be largely dormant and outdated—in three separate places, for example, it refers to

the "Communist East"—but even the most obliging Western governments and civil society groups may be hard-pressed to defend formal relations with a political faction that remains officially associated with the sort of imported racist bilge to which Christian Europe was once committed but from which post-World War II Europe has, in the main, avidly striven to distance itself.

Calls for the eradication of the Israeli state and its predominantly Jewish character, however formulated, also need to be looked at critically by any party that is serious about ending the conflict. The rhetoric alone is enough to revive the Jewish fear of genocide, or minimally of discrimination and persecution, and meet with fierce resistance. In light of their history, it is hard to imagine Israeli Jews of almost any stripe voluntarily sacrificing their hard-won national independence to become a minority again in someone else's land.

These are among the bullets that Hamas needs to bite if it is to be part of the solution. And if it is not part of the solution, probably there won't be a solution.

A Sticking Point: Israel's Demand for Recognition as a "Jewish State"

ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU has repeatedly claimed that there is no peace because the Palestinians refuse to recognize Israel "as a Jewish state." But this explicit Israeli demand is a new requirement and is widely viewed by Palestinians as a deliberate raising of the bar in order to avoid doing a deal, so that the settlement-expansion program may continue unabated. Even if they were to accede to this demand, the Palestinian assumption is that a new obstacle would then be invented.

The same demand was not made of Egypt or Jordan when the peace treaties with these countries were negotiated, nor of the PLO itself when it recognized Israel under the Oslo Accords. Nor for that matter was it made of any other country, although it has always been understood to be implicit (and sufficient). The name "Israel" is itself something of a giveaway.

The situation could be compared with that of the former Soviet Union, which did not insist that other countries recognize it as a “communist state,” but this is what the title “Soviet Union” implied and everyone understood this. Had it insisted on explicit recognition as a communist state, it would have invited refusals. In common parlance, however, people used the terms “Soviet Union” and “communist state” interchangeably as they do today with Israel and the Jewish state, including in the Arab world.

The Israeli government knows—or should know—that the Palestinians cannot explicitly accede to its new demand without appearing to legitimize all that happened to them in the past or what could happen to the million-plus Palestinian citizens of Israel in the future. Maybe this is part of the Israeli intention, as to accept this formulation would be tantamount to the Palestinians acknowledging they are a defeated people. Yet the Israeli government and its international backers seem determined to cite this reluctance as evidence that

the Palestinians—and the Arab world at large—still resolutely deny Israel’s right to exist and seek its destruction, even though the PLO has repeatedly affirmed this right (amazingly, in a way) since at least 1993, and the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 calls for full peace and normalization of relations between Israel and all Arab states in exchange for Israeli withdrawal from the territories it captured in 1967.

It is important to understand that, despite the bellicose claims sometimes made, Palestinian animosity toward Israel stems primarily not from it being a Jewish state but from the huge disruption the creation of that state and its ongoing policies have inflicted on the lives, dignity, and destiny of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination. It would not have been profoundly different had the state in question not been Jewish but, say, Hindu, Buddhist, atheist, or even Muslim.

In the heat of today’s arguments, what is often forgotten is that even asking other states to recognize Israel’s “right to exist” (let alone as “a Jewish state”) has in the past been seen as demeaning. Abba Eban, Israel’s formidable foreign minister from 1966 to 1974, wrote in November 1981: “Nobody does Israel any service by proclaiming its ‘right to exist.’ It is disturbing to find so many people well-disposed to Israel giving currency to this contemptuous formulation.” Menachem Begin, former leader of the same right-wing Likud party that Benjamin Netanyahu heads today, avowed to the Knesset in June 1977: “I wish to declare that the government of Israel will not ask any nation, be it near or far, mighty or small, to recognize our right to exist.”

A formulation that was suggested to me some years ago by a leading Israeli constitutional lawyer would have Israel define itself as “a state of all its citizens, in which the Jewish people exercises its self-determination.” Such a formulation would have the advantage of not contradicting the “democratic” part of a “Jewish democratic state”; it may well be acceptable to the Palestinians who

might be challenged to adopt, *mutatis mutandis*, a similar construct with regard to their own future state—thus ensuring that any settlers who choose to stay and accept Palestinian citizenship are accorded full rights—and would remove an entirely unnecessary obstacle to peacemaking.

So this is one of the bullets that, in turn, the Israeli government needs to bite if it is serious about making progress toward an agreed end of conflict.

When President Obama took office in January 2009, many commentators (including myself) opined that the president had two to three years to cajole the parties into swiftly ending this conflict before he moved into reelection mode. The alternative, it was suggested, was a future of indefinite strife with deeply troubling global ramifications. If this was a petard, we are now well and truly “hoist” with it, as time is almost up. If, as it appears, the fading opportunity is not swiftly seized by the U.S. administration, by the international community, or by the conflicting parties themselves, what hope is there? The answer may lie in the one extraordinary development that none of us foresaw: the Arab awakening—now coupled, it seems, with a similarly extraordinary Israeli awakening. If Israel is to have a future in the region of which it chose to be a part, it is now up to its leaders and the whole nation to join the new tide and seize the opportunities while they remain alive. ■

FRESH TACTICS AND NEW VOICES (continued from page 21)

rights by stealing their land, demolishing their homes, and stripping them of residency permits for Jerusalem, and that blockade and starve the entire population of the Gaza Strip—these are the things that delegitimize Israel.

New Tactics for a New Millennium

BDS ACTIVISTS HAVE BEEN EMPLOYING traffic-stopping, high-energy flash mobs, Twitter culture jams, and YouTube videos to get out their pro-human

Why
on earth
does
God
have to
paint?

Centripetal Art
by RAFAEL CHODOS

Based on Selected Works and Writings of
JUNKO CHODOS

\$35

Art that seeks the center in order to
encounter divine presence there.

CENTRIPETALART.COM

rights message. Lady Gaga's songs are a favorite for flash mob parodies, from "Telephone" (which was revamped to ask people to "hang up on Motorola" and features 86-year-old Holocaust survivor Hedy Epstein), to "Bad Romance" turned "Bad Café," rewritten as an appeal for New Yorkers not to patronize Aroma Café, an Israeli business that has storefronts in West Bank settlements. These short, lively clips are posted to YouTube and then viewed by audiences around the world. Over 50,000 people have watched the "Telephone" parody video.

Another exemplary campaign, started in Chicago by the Committee for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine, has used branded billboards featuring photographs of Palestinians and Israelis saying: "Be on our side. We are on the side of peace and justice. End military aid to Israel." The "Two Peoples, One Future" ad campaign was designed to be replicable in other locations, and groups from Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Washington, D.C., have posted the billboards in their communities.

In May hundreds of activists converged in D.C. for "Move Over AIPAC," a series of workshops, performances, and protests held outside the annual AIPAC Policy Conference to call for an end to military aid to Israel. Unlike the heavy security at the closed conference across the street, organizers of the outdoor Move Over AIPAC rally created an open space for debate and discussion between AIPAC members and protesters. Speakers at the rallies emphasized that prioritizing 3 billion dollars a year in taxpayer money toward bombs and F-16s for a foreign occupying power is not in America's best interest, particularly at a time when schools, parks, libraries, health care, and even Social Security are all on the federal spending chopping block.

During AIPAC's annual evening gala on May 23, five nonviolent activists disrupted Netanyahu, two of whom were badly battered by AIPAC attendees. They carried signs about what is really "indefensible": occupying land, bulldozing houses, starving Gaza, and so

on. The following morning I spoke out during Netanyahu's address to Congress and was badly hurt by assaults from audience members. These were not isolated incidents; whether inside the annual AIPAC Gala, on campus at the University of California, Irvine, or in other public venues, activists are calling out war crimes when Israeli officials come to speak.

Students for Justice in Palestine chapters have sprung up on college campuses across the United States. In Arizona and throughout the country, students are building bridges by combating walls—those built between Israel and the West Bank, and between the United States and Mexico, making "concrete connections" between the immigration reform and justice for Palestine movements.

"The wall in both countries is being built by the same Israeli company, Elbit Systems," said Francesca Contreras, an active member of both Students for Justice in Palestine and the Immigrant Rights Coalition at Brown University. "Motorola, Caterpillar, Boeing and General Electric supply surveillance and military technologies to Israel and to the U.S.," added Contreras, a Mexican-American Jew who spent her childhood

in South Africa and Israel. "The same technology used at the U.S.-Mexico border is being tested and used by Israel and vice versa against Latino and Latina migrants, indigenous peoples, and Palestinians."

Queer activists have organized to counter what they call Israel's "pinkwashing," whereby Israel touts itself as a gay-friendly democracy while committing human rights violations to maintain its illegal occupation of Palestinian communities. A recent delegation to Palestine by North American indigenous and women of color feminists released a statement upon their return denouncing the brutality of the Occupation and announcing their support for the BDS Movement. "As feminists," the statement reads, "we deplore the Israeli practice of 'pink-washing,' the state's use of ostensible support for gender and sexual equality to dress-up its occupation."

Flotillas and "Flytillas"

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS activists converge again and again on boats attempting to break the crippling siege of Gaza in what's come to be a household word: flotillas. A year ago the Israeli Navy attacked a flotilla carrying aid workers and humanitarian aid in



Join us for massive nonviolent civil disobedience beginning on October 6, 2011, at Freedom Plaza in Washington, D.C. We are determined to stay until we see action being taken to end corporatism and militarism and move toward a peaceful, just, and sustainable society.

We are the October 2011 Movement, composed of individuals and groups who advocate for peace, human rights, and social, economic, and environmental justice. Already thousands have taken the pledge to join us at <http://october2011.org>. People are arranging carpools and buses from across the country. All are welcome. Some will arrive on October 6 and some will arrive when they are able.

international waters, killing nine civilians (including one American) and injuring dozens in an incident that caught fire in the global media.

The latest of such expeditions this past summer, the Gaza Freedom Flotilla II, attempted to sail ten boats from Europe, one of which was the U.S. boat to Gaza, the *Audacity of Hope*. Israel sent a letter to foreign journalists warning them that if they participated in the flotilla, they would be denied entry into Israel for ten years and their equipment would be impounded; Israel later rescinded this statement. Two ships were physically sabotaged. American and Israeli pressure on Greece prevented the U.S. boat from leaving; the French ship was able to set sail for Gaza but was seized by the Israelis on the way. Meanwhile a “flytilla” commenced as hundreds of international activists flew to Ben-Gurion airport, where they told border control agents of their intent to visit Palestine and were promptly deported. Every step of the way, the Israeli government exposed itself as unfriendly to international law and equal rights. As boat passenger and CODEPINK cofounder Medea Benjamin noted, “By torpedoing the Gaza Flotilla, Israel sunk its own ship.”

Arab Spring and Israeli Summer

NETANYAHU APPLAUDED THE UNITED States and Israel for the “real democracy” apparently evident to him when I spoke up in Congress, the same “democracy” that resulted in my assault and arrest. Someone should inform him that in a real democracy, free speech is not met with brutality and arrest, as I faced, and as so many Palestinians face daily. Real democracy erupted in Tunisia last December. It surfaced in Tahrir Square on January 25, resulting in the toppling of Mubarak’s dictatorial reign, and spread to Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, Libya, and beyond. The courage of Saudi Arabian women getting behind the wheel to challenge the country’s driving ban may also be attributed to the spread of the uprisings for freedom.

The Arab Spring inspired the Israeli Summer in late July when the revolutionary, populist spirit took hold of

Israel’s middle class in the form of tent cities on Tel Aviv’s exclusive Rothschild Boulevard, where thousands of Israelis camped out, protesting the lack of affordable housing, gas, and food. Hundreds of thousands rallied in Tel Aviv and outside the prime minister’s home in Jerusalem. Settlers trying to latch on to the cause appeared at the mass demonstrations with signs announcing that the solution to the middle-class revolt was to increase settlement construction in “Judea and Samaria” and make Israel a place for “Jews only.” Meanwhile unlikely alliances formed between the Jewish community from Tel Aviv’s Hatikva neighborhood and the Arabs from Jaffa. The Coalition of Women for Peace set up a “No. 1948 Tent” and began leading workshops on the Occupation. And around the tent cities, signs popped up reading “Mubarak, Assad, Netanyahu,” as Netanyahu’s approval ratings plummeted to 32 percent at the start of August.

At the heart of protests happening throughout the region, and even here at home, is what Amos Oz beautifully described as, “the affront and outrage over the government’s indifference to the people’s suffering, the double standard against the working population and the destruction of social solidarity.” The excitement and optimism of the completely decentralized, people-powered tent communities that sprang up in Israel seems to be contagious (I know I for one caught the freedom fever and stay up late reading twitter threads with #J14, denoting the day the protests began in July).

Protesters say they are acting in the name of social justice, but since they are not centrally including demands for rights and equality for Palestinians, their vision of justice is unclear. Israeli journalist Amira Hass predicted:

In the coming months, as the movement grows, it will split. Some will continue to think and demand “justice” within the borders of one nation, always at the expense of the other nation that lives in this land. Others, however, will understand that this will never be a country of

justice and welfare if it is not a state of all its citizens.

Energizing Activists in the United States

AT HOME IN THE UNITED STATES, A KEY feature of “real democracy” is the direct relationship between legislators and constituents, many of whom found out their representatives would not be home in their districts during this past August recess because of trips to Israel with an AIPAC affiliate. In the aftermath of the divisive debt deal and during a critical time for Americans struggling in the recession, eighty-one congressional representatives took the Israel junket instead of returning home to work on domestic needs.

Surely AIPAC and the American Israel Educational Foundation did not give our representatives a fair and balanced view of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. They didn’t observe one of the weekly demonstrations in Bi’lin or Nabi Saleh, or spend time with grieving Palestinians whose homes were demolished to make way for more Jewish-only housing. They likely didn’t spend a few hours at a checkpoint to witness how Palestinians are detained, abused, and humiliated. They didn’t go to Gaza, where 1.5 million people are suffering under an unbearable siege, unable to travel freely, conduct business transactions across borders, or even rebuild their homes destroyed by the Israeli invasion. And visiting the burgeoning tent cities in Tel Aviv was not on their agenda, though perhaps it created some traffic that made our elected officials reflect on the poor economic situation at home. As Medea Benjamin noted in a blog post, “Going on an AIPAC-sponsored trip to Israel is the moral equivalent of using an Anglo-Boer travel company to visit apartheid-era South Africa.”

A far better trip to take is the journey toward justice that American and international activists have commenced. Seeing that an end to the Occupation, oppression, and segregation of the Palestinian people is not only necessary morally and legally, but is also in the best interest of Palestinians, Israelis,

and Americans, more people are increasingly compelled to take action. And with so many ways to creatively affect policy, make waves in the media, and transform public opinion, there's a path toward engagement for anyone seeking to get involved in this movement for equal rights.

Responding to the assault I experienced in Congress, Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, author of *The Torah of Nonviolence* and a frequent contributor to *Tikkun*, commented that physical assault is against both American and Jewish law—"Do not envy a man of violence nor follow any of his ways" (Proverbs 3:31)—and stated that by becoming a bystander and watching a physical assault without making an effort to stop it, one is committing a sin of omission. Being an appalled onlooker is no longer acceptable. Now is the time to join the inspiring and growing movement for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East ... and here at home. ■

IS ADDICTION REALLY A DISEASE?

(continued from page 24)

Catholic. And the other alternatives, none of which aligned with my own spiritual beliefs, were pretty much the same. As open as I am to every religion, I felt a little annoyed by the fact that every AA meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer. I mean, why not an oblation every now and then or a petition to Manjusri? Granted, there are now Buddhist twelve-step programs available, but their paucity is, again, problematic.

Can Metaphors Make Us Sick?

MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF treatment and my research into the alternatives led me to question the extent to which we create our illness. What I discovered was that regardless of one's pet theory, one incontrovertible fact remains: our consciousness impacts our bodies (just look at the placebo effect). Even more interestingly, the consciousness of others can do the same,

as physician and author Larry Dossey has successfully shown. This is gooey ontology, but there is a participatory dynamic at work: one can think/will oneself and others into and out of health.

The wisdom of cognitive psychology tells us that those thoughts strengthened by repetition are the ones that shape our experience. Is it any wonder, then, that addiction has assumed some of the characteristics of a disease? It has a spontaneous remission rate that mirrors that of most other medical conditions (reportedly a staggeringly low 2 percent to 5 percent) and a "genetic" etiology. The genetic neuronarrative is the dominant myth now. But if consciousness affects biology, and even the expression of certain genes as recent research reveals, then it almost seems *de facto* that a cultural agreement on the disease metaphor would create a fertile environment for the expression of those implicated genes and the constellation of characteristics for which they allegedly code. Put differently, I believe it entirely possible that our collective understanding of addiction as a disease may make it act like one (and certainly makes the addictive experience feel like one of disease); it follows, then, that changing the belief that addiction *is* a disease will eliminate some of those experiential qualities.

One of the most illuminating texts on disease is Susan Sontag's evocative little book *Illness and Metaphor*. Here she argues against what she calls the "lurid metaphors" of sickness:

Illness is NOT a metaphor, and the most truthful way of regarding illness—and the healthiest way of being ill—is one most purified and most resistant to metaphoric thinking.... Any disease that is treated as a mystery and is acutely enough feared will be felt to be morally, if not literally, contagious.

I believe we have both crossed this threshold and retreated from it. Allow me to explain:

We valorized and aestheticized the barbiturate suicides of Dorothy Dandridge

and Marilyn Monroe, as if overdose were a passage to a higher artistic plane. River Phoenix, too fearful in his symmetry to be framed by life, died on the sidewalk in front of the Viper Room (vipers being living symbols of potency and death). Our poets knew this long ago, as Shakespeare wrote of he who "dies in his own too-much" and Blake listed among his "Proverbs of Hell" the idea that "the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom."

And we aestheticized absinthe, as well as the madness that it wrought. (Though recent scientific studies have shown just how innocuous wormwood actually is, making me suspect that the green fairy's gift of delirium was in part conferred and constructed by the culture of Romanticism.) And now addiction has also become aestheticized. I cannot and will not speculate on the psychic etiologies of cancer and addiction (yes, some evidence exists in both cases to support this). I also disagree with Sontag that metaphors are never helpful when dealing with illness. We are meaning-making creatures after all, designed by Heaven or Hell to be unable to think outside of narrative.

Helping Others: An Alternative Treatment Strategy

SO HOW DO WE REWRITE THE METAPHOR of disease? I'll get there, but first I suggest that the unconstitutional imposition of twelve-step programs for drug and alcohol offenders be replaced with labor programs coupled with volunteering. Helping others is the surest way to shift the focus of small self. However fascist it may sound (and indeed it does, even to me) something *happens* when we help others. We are hardwired for altruism. It has the added benefit of being secularly ecumenical. We do not need to inculcate the "afflicted offender" with the fact that they are spiritually bankrupt and bereft of a higher power. One of the most beautiful and beguiling effects of selfless labor (even if it *is* imposed) is that it is spiritually corrective *on its own*. Labor programs in Japan have been employed for decades and have demonstrated encouraging results for this method in

combating and even “curing” depression. What hubris to assume that enforcing God as a punishment will work.

For all its talk of secularity, modern medicine is deeply mystical, right down to its symbol, the rod of Asclepius. And why do insurance companies, the *true* guardians of modern medicine, pay for twelve-step rehabilitation facilities that are unabashedly spiritual, if they do not subscribe to the metaphor of a spiritually afflicted individual? We assume the Age of Technology ushered in the era of atheistic imperialism when in fact we have just divinized technology and the idea of progress itself: a second, and deeply ironic, Romantic renaissance. We experience this technologization, however, as profoundly alienating, again, lending force to my point that we must consciously rewrite the myths we live.

I suggest we skip the first eleven steps of Narcotics Anonymous and go straight to the twelfth (“Carry the message to the addict who still suffers”), for the “addict who still suffers” is each and every one of us. The message here—of selfless labor—is that all beings suffer and, in helping, alleviate that suffering: for however short a time, we are shaken, sometimes violently, out of what Einstein called the “optical illusion of consciousness” that we are somehow separate from each other. This approach encourages all addicts to embrace a higher, more integral, perspective—a perspective that is naturally healing to all: to the addict, to those receiving help, to the local community, to the nation, and to the world.

In spite of this need for a more integral community of addicts and those who are affected by their lifestyle, the twelve-step communities are worlds unto themselves. As social creatures, we struggle with identity formation. Teenagers choose, or circumstances choose for them, which alliances to form, which allegiances to offer. And in spite of today’s identity marketplace, we are all born into allegiances to nation and religion (or lack of religion). Those active in addiction form allegiances as well. There is a definite morphology to the distinct identities of heroin and

methamphetamine addiction. The qualities of each are experientially, and perhaps ontologically, participatory. Those “in recovery” abandon individual drug identity to purchase membership in the parliament of the twelve-step theocracy. “We are those who suffer from the disease of addiction,” the literature reads in a near-religious litany.

Twelve-steppers are part of a subculture in which no one understands the uniqueness of the addiction experience except other addicts. This is balderdash. Yes, the twelve steps stress the unity of addictions, the erasure of individual differences in the process of recovery, but they also reify addiction itself. The symptoms of addiction are indeed dramatic, but they are just the most visible of a syndrome we all share, inasmuch as we are members of society. While there are many different support groups for the families of those who suffer through chemical dependency, again, they are restricted to the families and not the community at large. The key here is that we *all* share the etiology, and as such the responsibility to fix.

How Racism and Classism Shape Images of Addiction

LIKE ALL SUCCESSFUL METAPHORS, THAT of addiction has two contradictory sides, and in the case of the “disease of addiction,” the metaphor is, well, loaded. One side is a tubercular aura of spiritual romanticism, a spiritual sickness excused as ethereal, the natural consequence of artistic giftedness. The other side of this dichotomy is that addiction is also seen as the province of the “pestilent ghetto,” the crack-soaked streets of Chicago’s South Side. In other words, the metaphors of addiction are different for the different classes.

Sontag writes that “twentieth-century women’s fashions (with their cult of thinness) are the last stronghold of the metaphors associated with romanticizing of TB in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.” And who can deny the connection of drugs and addiction to the world of fashion and beauty? Kate Moss’s and Naomi Campbell’s very public

bouts with addiction strengthen, at least in the public perception, the connection of privilege and chemical indulgence. Modern metaphors of addiction also partake in the cult of youth. One never hears about the geriatric population’s skyrocketing rates of addiction or how they dwarf the statistics of teenagers. This is because we exalt addiction as an affliction of the privileged and youthful. The efflorescence of the Beat generation, the pavonine splendor of Rock and Roll, the narcotic mesmerism of the blues, the lines between drugs and creativity (and early death) are legendary—and lethal. More public recognition and education about the elderly’s struggle with drug dependence would loosen the grip of this particularly insidious misconception.

The other, uglier side of addiction we associate with poverty and crime and, unfortunately, with skin color. This further strengthens our racial prejudices in our country, while widening the gap between classes. People of color are routinely given harsher sentences for drug-related offenses than their white counterparts, who are routinely offered treatment as opposed to incarceration. These sickening statistics betray our country’s still very real racial divide. Our system coddles the light-skinned and excoriates the darker-skinned, strengthening the supposition that dark skin = poverty = addiction = crime = hopelessness. We need to struggle as a society with the fact of our binary biases before we can move past them. Reexamining the metaphors we deploy for addiction is one way to do this.

Sontag writes about those afflicted with tuberculosis that “sadness made one interesting. It was a mark of refinement to be sad. That is, powerless.” Tellingly, step one of Narcotics Anonymous is to admit powerlessness over addiction. Sontag goes on to say that “the myth of TB constitutes the next-to-last episode in the long career of the ancient idea of melancholy [and] provided a redemptive death for the fallen.” We could easily supplant “TB” with “addiction.” To recover from addiction becomes spiritually redemptive. Robert Downy Jr.’s triumph

has not been merely over substance, but over a spiritual affliction. There is a process of spiritual purification and a glamorous aesthetic associated with recovered (white) addicts. For other races, the attitude is simply that they're just doing what they should have been doing all along.

Again, how do we change this? All successful recovery from chemical dependency is the result of a complete reorientation of values and again, alignment. In many ways, contemporary consumer society rails against alignment. Pharmaceutical companies lull us into thinking that there is a drug for every condition. And medicine is complicit in this insidious mirage. Bringing the body back into alignment with itself and entraining the self with the circadian rhythms of the community are ways to recover and even heal the rift between the classes in our culture. Maybe the answer doesn't lie in dispensing with the idea of illness after all, but just in the military metaphors of invasion and civil war. Instead, let's return to the original Old French etymology of *desaise* from *des* (without) and *aise* (ease)—because addiction is never easy, nor is recovery from it. But the idea of bringing the body back into the *ease* of alignment? Now that is a metaphor we can work with. ■

TWELVE-STEP HEALING

(continued from page 27)

to the community of people in any given twelve-step program—their “higher power” because it is a constant, loving presence and a source of faith and hope and healing for them. And there is so much humor—dark humor—in the rooms of recovery. People have been through some crazy shit and have lived to tell about it.

Meetings are a place where people sit and listen and find respite from the whirling world around them. There is no pretense. There's no work to be done and there's nowhere else to be. There's coffee and sometimes cookies. Nothing is required of you. Not money, not God, not even the cessation of your

drug use. Only the desire to stop using. It is the place where my lifelong sense of alienation, depression, and loneliness was healed. Without my addiction, I don't think I would have healed these wounds. In this way, I am deeply grateful for my downfall.

Ultimately, society will continue to churn out addicts by the millions as long as it churns out false Gods. The corporate-owned media do everything they can to make you want what you don't have, and the corporate-controlled government is, at this very moment, destroying the remedies for the diseases created by our consumption-obsessed culture. Twelve-step programs—which offer kindness and communion and strive to help people live lives of integrity, honesty, and service—are quite a radical alternative to societal addiction and greed. Recovery is a parallel universe that more and more people are choosing for themselves. And it is a choice. If you have the desire to stop using, you may want to try it out. Don't let God scare you away. As a famous rabbi once said, “The God you don't believe in doesn't exist!” ■

DR. SEUSS

(continued from page 30)

It features Horton the Elephant, who befriends tiny creatures (the “Whos”) whom he can't see, but whom he can hear, thanks to his large ears. Horton rallies his neighbors to protect the endangered Who community. Horton agrees to protect the Whos, observing, in one of Geisel's most famous lines, “even though you can't see or hear them at all, a person's a person, no matter how small.” The other animals ridicule Horton for believing in something that they can't see or hear, but he remains loyal to the Whos. Horton urges the Whos to join together to make a big enough sound so that the jungle animals can hear them. That can happen, however, only if Jo-Jo, the “smallest of all” the Whos, speaks out. He has a responsibility to add his voice to save the entire community. Eventually he does so, and the Whos survive.

Some Seuss analysts see the book as a parable about protecting the rights of minorities, urging “big” people to resist bigotry and indifference toward “small” people, and the importance of individuals (particularly “small” ones) speaking out against injustice. A reviewer for the *Des Moines Register* hailed it as a “rhymed lesson in protection of minorities and their rights.” Other observers, however, viewed the residents of Who-ville as representing the Japanese people. Despite Geisel's racism toward the Japanese during the war, depicted in his *PM* cartoons, he was horrified by the consequences of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima and came to sympathize with the helplessness of the Japanese when he visited the country after the war. In this view—supported by the fact that Geisel dedicated the book to a Japanese friend—Horton represents the U.S. government's effort to rebuild Japan as a democracy. (“I've got to protect them,” Horton says. “I'm bigger than they.”) Many Americans opposed this effort, preferring revenge or indifference, reflected in the attitude of the other jungle animals in the story.

The Cat in the Hat

GEISEL WROTE HIS MOST FAMOUS book, *The Cat in the Hat*, in response to a challenge. In May 1954, *Life* magazine published an article about widespread illiteracy among school children, claiming that they were not learning to read because their books were boring. William Spaulding, an editor at Houghton Mifflin, asked Geisel to write a book using the 225 words that, he believed, all first-graders should be able to recognize. Spaulding challenged Geisel to “bring back a book children can't put down.”

Within nine months, Geisel produced *The Cat in the Hat*. The book was an immediate success. It was lauded by educators and sold well. Written a decade before the upheavals of the 1960s, it can be seen as endorsing rebellion against authority. The book became the first in a series of Dr. Seuss' Beginner Books that combined a simple vocabulary,

wonderful drawings, and imaginative stories and bizarre characters (many based on animals). He also continued to write books for older children. In quick succession, he wrote *On Beyond Zebra!* (1955), *If I Ran the Circus* (1956), *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1957), and *Green Eggs and Ham* (1960), which used only fifty words.

Burping Down Unjust Rulers, Fighting Anti-Semitism

IN SEVERAL EARLY BOOKS—INCLUDING *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins* (1938), *The King's Stilts* (1939), and *Bartholomew and the Oobleck* (1949)—Geisel makes fun of the pretensions, foolishness, and arbitrary power of kings. His finest rendition of this theme is in *Yertle the Turtle* (1958). Yertle, king of the pond, stands atop his subjects in order to reach higher than the moon, indifferent to the suffering of those beneath him. In order to be “ruler of all that I see,” Yertle stacks up his subjects so he can reach higher and higher. Mack, the turtle at the very bottom of the pile, says: “Your Majesty, please / I don't like to complain / But down here below / We are feeling great pain / I know up on top / You are seeing great sights / But down at the bottom / We, too, should have rights.” Yertle just tells Mack to shut up. Frustrated and angry, Mack burps, shaking the carefully piled turtles, and Yertle falls into the mud. His rule ends and the turtles celebrate their freedom.

The story is clearly about Hitler's thirst for power, a topic that inspired some of Geisel's most powerful cartoons during his stint with *PM*. But Geisel is also saying that ordinary people can overthrow unjust rulers if they understand their own power. The story's final line reflects Geisel's democratic and anti-authoritarian political outlook: “And turtles, of course ... all the turtles are free / As turtles, and maybe, all creatures should be.”

The Sneetches (1961), inspired by the Protestant Geisel's opposition to anti-Semitism, exposes the absurdity of racial and religious bigotry. Sneetches are yellow bird-like creatures. Some Sneetches have a green star on their belly. They are

the “in” crowd and they look down on Sneetches who lack a green star, who are the outcasts. One day a “fix-it-up” chap named McBean appears with some strange machines. He offers the star-less Sneetches an opportunity to get a star by going through his “star on” machine, for three dollars each. This angers the star-bellied Sneetches, who no longer have a way to display their superiority. But McBean tells them that for ten dollars, they can use his “star off” machine, ridding themselves of their stars and thus, once again, differentiating themselves from the outcast group.

The competition escalates as McBean persuades each Sneetch group to run from one machine to the other, “until neither the Plain nor the Star-Bellies knew / Whether this one was that one or that one was this one / Or which one was what one or what one was who.” Eventually both groups of Sneetches run out of money. After McBean leaves, all the Sneetches realize that neither the plain-belly nor the star-belly Sneetch is superior. The story is an obvious allegory about racism and discrimination, clearly inspired by the yellow stars that the Nazis required Jews to wear on their clothing to identify them as Jewish.

Environmental Consciousness

THE LORAX (1971) APPEARED AS THE environmental movement was just emerging, less than a year after the first Earth Day. Geisel later called it “straight propaganda”—a polemic against pollution—but it also contains some of Geisel's most creative made-up words, like “cruf-fulous croak” and “smogulous smoke.” The book opens with a small boy listening to the Once-ler tell the story of how the area was once full of Truffula trees and Bar-ba-loots and was home to the Lorax. But the greedy Once-ler—clearly a symbol of business—cuts down all the trees to make thneeds, which “everyone, everyone, everyone needs.” The lakes and the air become polluted, there is no food for the animals, and it becomes an unlivable place. The fuzzy yellow Lorax (who speaks for the trees, “for the trees have no tongues”) warns the Once-ler about the devastation he's causing, but his words are ignored.

The Once-ler cares only about making more things and more money. “Businesss is business! / And business must grow,” he says. At the end, surveying the devastation he has caused, the Once-ler shows some remorse, telling the boy: “Unless someone like you / cares a whole awful lot / nothing is going to get better / It's not.” The book attacks corporate greed and excessive consumerism, themes that remind some readers of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. *The Lorax* was once banned by a California school district because of its obvious opposition to clear-cutting by the powerful logging industry.

Geisel Takes on the Arms Race

IN 1984, GEISEL PRODUCED *THE BUTTER BATTLE BOOK*, another strong statement about a pending catastrophe, in this case the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, fueled by President Reagan's Cold War rhetoric. “I'm not anti-military,” Geisel told a friend at the time, “I'm just anti-crazy.” It is a parable about the dangers of the political strategy of “mutually assured destruction” brought on by the escalation of nuclear weapons.

In this book, Geisel's satirical gifts are on full display. The cause of the senseless war is a trivial conflict over toast. The battle is between the Yooks and the Zooks, who don't realize that they are more alike than different, because they live on opposite sides of a long wall. The Yooks eat their bread with the butter-side up, while the Zooks eat their bread with the butter-side down. They compete to make bigger and better weapons until both sides invent a destructive bomb (the “Bitsy Big-Boy Boomeroo”) that, if used, will kill both sides. Like *The Lorax*, there is no happy ending or resolution. As the story ends, the generals on both sides of the wall are poised to drop their bombs. It is hard for even the youngest reader to miss Geisel's point.

Like the Passover Seder story, Geisel's point is one that bears retelling again and again, from generation to generation. Thanks to the ongoing popularity of Dr. Seuss books, it will. ■

MAGPIES

Their calls slap the air, sharper than ratchets
 The necks where the sounds rise make fulcrums
 Strength poised in the angle
 Their legs are firm and stiff—not twigs but taut sticks
 On which they pose, hop and march
 The eye giving direction, the tight beak marking the pace

What they bring to the world's eye is stark, magnificent
 Black and white, blue that merges into turquoise in a fish-scale sheen
 When the light hits them
 No, they hit the light, they break into it
 Diving from some perch high in an umbrella pine or plane tree
 To scatter the glare

I saw them in a gulley near Cassis
 That fire had blanched to boulders and scrub
 Under the calm chestnuts in the Parque del Buen Retiro
 On the damp recreation grounds by the parish church at Giron
 The names of these places—exotic, European—have no value to them
 The events there flat and meaningless as a map

They take their sustenance where they find it
 The air for perspective, the ground for food
 Anything that catches light is treasure
 The fierce eye, for hunting, cannot look back
 Their beauty is a perfection of purpose that continues
 They will not recognize it now or when it ends

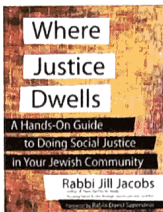
My children are grown, generations of these winged scavengers have passed
 They hover in the dark behind me
 Now I see them again I want to snatch them out of memory
 My voice the quick beak, my language clear as theirs
 Which is not chatter but warnings and commands
 And knows a place not for what happened but what its uses are

— Don Bogen

WHERE JUSTICE DWELLS

Jill Jacobs
Jewish Lights, 2011

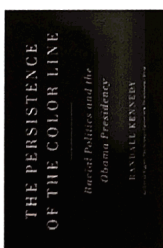
RABBI JILL JACOBS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RABBIS for Human Rights–North America, reminds us how easy it is to become involved in demands for social justice in far-away places while ignoring outrages in our own communities. She recounts her own experience of living in West Jerusalem, drinking a soy latte at a bustling café and listening to the music of Billy Joel, even as the West Bank was closed due to Jewish Israeli fears about Palestinians interfering with their celebration of Passover. “I struggle to imagine the Palestinian women unable to drop in on their friends in neighboring towns,” Jacobs writes. “It’s much easier for me to block out this anonymous woman in favor of planning my daughter’s Purim costume, making plans with friends, and generally enjoying my West Jerusalem life.” This exciting “Hands-On Guide to Doing Social Justice in Your Jewish Community” is filled with provocative insights and detailed stories of current U.S.-based social justice projects, plus ideas about what else should be going on in our communities. This book also discusses how social justice work fits into the larger framework of Judaism. Jacobs encourages readers to study social justice texts deeply rather than merely citing them. She cautions us not to use texts to justify preexisting positions and urges us to actually engage with the texts, bring them into conversation with one another, take the rabbinic stories seriously, and let the texts motivate action. Action is what this book aims to generate—action carefully guided by thought that is deep and rooted in the tradition. Though framed in the discourse of Judaism, this book could easily be adapted to structure text studies in a wide variety of religious and spiritual traditions.



THE PERSISTENCE OF THE COLOR LINE

Randall Kennedy
Pantheon Books, 2011

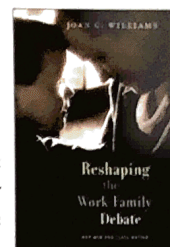
THOSE WHO BELIEVE BARACK OBAMA’S ELECTION signaled a final triumph over racism will learn much from former Harvard law professor Randall Kennedy, whose writings on race in America have delighted and provoked many (e.g., his book *Nigger*). In this book, which explores how race has shaped Americans’ responses to Obama, Kennedy presents convincing evidence that race remains a dominant focus of American political consciousness. When Obama ran for the presidency, his racial identity shaped how commentators described him. For example, Fox News commentator Juan Williams attributed Obama’s popularity to his avoidance of the “self-defeating” politics of the 1960s, which highlighted race. And black leftist commentators, Kennedy maintains, were willing to support any black candidate regardless of the candidate’s political commitments, a position that many came to regret. Kennedy also explores the divisions among Americans about the kind of racial regime they want to create. Some use a vision of a color-blind future to argue against efforts at integration and affirmative action in the present. Others embrace color blindness as an ultimate goal but believe it can best be achieved by policies that are temporarily race-conscious. Still others reject the aspiration for a post-racial American society and resent the notion that the erasure of nonwhite difference is a requisite for “progress” on racial issues. This book is packed full of questions that never get publicly debated in mainstream American politics.



RESHAPING THE WORK-FAMILY DEBATE: WHY MEN AND CLASS MATTER

Joan C. Williams
Harvard University Press, 2010

BERKELEY LAW PROFESSOR JOAN C. WILLIAMS HAS written a brilliant and insightful book about the way masculine norms in the workplace disadvantage both women and men. An astute observer of class bias in media and academic visions of the working class, Williams also discusses the intense class prejudices held by many liberal academics. Working people “sense the attitude reflected in decades of condescending studies that present the working class as fundamentally irrational,” she writes. “They see that we think they are dumb, as when the wildly popular *Freakonomics* casually asserts again and again that upper-middle-class people are more intelligent than the working class.” She goes on to urge progressives to institute the sort of taboo against insulting white workers that currently exists against using racial innuendo and insults. In addition, middle-class progressives must “accept the fact that class is a key axis of social disadvantage in American life so that we do not inadvertently offend potential allies by signaling that we are clueless about our class privilege.”



BLESSED ARE THE ORGANIZED

Jeffrey Stout
Princeton University Press, 2010

PRINCETON RELIGION PROFESSOR JEFFREY STOUT provides a systematic study of grassroots organizing in America, touting its successes and acknowledging its limitations. He presents detailed accounts of the approaches to mass organizing in civil society combined with sophisticated and insightful analyses of what is being tried in the religious communities of American society. He recognizes economic elites’ increasing power to shape political outcomes and points to a decline in the organizational strength of ordinary citizens (particularly as a result of the decline of the labor movement). He also describes the elite’s increased ability to translate economic power into political power in the age of mass media, and the political exclusion of immigrants with permanent residency status and incarcerated people, who are an important element of America’s poor. Yet Stout also acknowledges another source of the current weakness of democratic movements: the failure of our education system to move beyond abstract praise of democracy and teach people to get involved in public life through a union, civic association, or religious institution. He recognizes the value of broad-based organizing that presents a larger vision and is thus in a better position to address the power gap between elites and ordinary people. The “imbalance of power between ordinary citizens and the new ruling class” has reached crisis proportions, Stout tells us. He adds that the crisis will not be resolved happily unless many more institutions and communities commit themselves to getting democratically organized and unless effective “publics of accountability” are constructed. But so many good people are reluctant to get involved in the difficult work of creating and sustaining a national movement. They fall back into the desire to be part of a feel-good group or to see immediate results by narrowing their focus to a single issue. We’ve faced these problems in building the Network of Spiritual Progressives, but we have no intention of giving up. Stout provides useful wisdom for those who will not settle for less than a genuine democratic transformation of our society.



The Perfect Gift for Chanukah, Christmas, or Any Other Happy Occasion:

Embracing Israel/Palestine



A Strategy to Heal
and Transform the Middle East

RABBI MICHAEL LERNER

best-selling author of *The Left Hand of God*

Embracing Israel/Palestine is a terrific book by a pioneer of global transformation. Out of love for both Israelis and Palestinians as equal creations of God, Rabbi Lerner offers us the deepest way out of the bloody conflict—an approach that draws from a deep psychological and political understanding of the dynamics of the Middle East.

—**Avrum Burg**, former chair of the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization, speaker of the Knesset, and interim president of Israel

No matter how many books you've read on this subject, *Embracing Israel/Palestine* will give you a new and powerfully insightful perspective that could empower you to play a significant role in healing this conflict.

—**Zygmunt Bauman**, author of *Modernity and the Holocaust* and *Postmodernity and Its Discontents*

As a Palestinian activist in the West Bank, I am truly grateful for *Embracing Israel/Palestine's* powerful contribution to peace, justice, kindness, and sanity!

—**Sami Awad**, executive director of Holy Land Trust in Bethlehem, Palestine

Rabbi Michael Lerner provides us with a brilliant and hopeful vision of how to transform the Middle East from a cauldron of violence to a vanguard of peace. I hope every American will read this book and apply its lessons to change how we deal with the Middle East.

—**President Jimmy Carter**

Embracing Israel/Palestine is a must-read for those who care about peace in the Middle East. It is provocative, radical, persuasive, and, if given the attention it deserves, could make a major contribution to reconciliation. Please read this book!

—**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

Ask your local bookstore to order this book from Random House by late November—or order it directly from Tikkun Books online at tikkun.org/embracing or by sending a \$20 check made out to *Tikkun*.

Another dynamite holiday gift: a subscription to *Tikkun* magazine (tikkun.org/subscribe) or a gift membership in the Network of Spiritual Progressives (tikkun.org/gift).