

And yet, despite all the fears and reservations, the feeling of the true oneness of God and man is encountered with surprising frequency in the literature of the Kabbalah. The *Shechinah*, the last of the ten *Sefirot* within God, also contains all the lower worlds within itself. As God achieves His own inner unity, all the worlds, experimentally implying the mystic's own soul as well, enter into the cosmic One. The human soul, according to mystic doctrine, is in some particular way "a part of God above." In an oft-repeated parable of early Hasidic literature, the true son of the King, when entering his Father's palace, discovers that the very palace itself, insofar as its chambers separated him from his father, is mere illusion. Scholem describes the stage in *Zohar's* thinking at which the human "I" becomes but an echo of the divine "I": "the point where man, in attaining the deepest understanding of his own self, becomes aware of the presence of God."

In a particularly poignant passage, and a most revealing one in terms of classic Jewish hesitation before the identity of God and self, the Maggid of Mezritch asks God, as it were, to step outside of man for a moment, so that man can play the confrontation game. To paraphrase him: "I know that I have no real existence outside You, but there are times when my needs require that I feel I am standing before You. Let me be for a few months, so that I can ask You to judge me, without Your having to judge Yourself."

Psychedelic consciousness knows this experience. We too, like our mystic forebearers, are overwhelmed, exhilarated, and frightened by the knowledge. There are times when we want to shout it in the streets, to turn men on to the awareness that all of them are God. There are also times when we want to come back, to live in the world where man is man. In order to do this, we are even willing to pretend that man is man and God is God. But we know that this is a game; we cannot retract. Because we have the *hybris* to admit to ourselves that we have been there, we are doomed to live here with a boundless liberating joy, that we fear to express; lest we be seen as madmen.

But even then we have a role to play. Our society suffers greatly from a lack of madmen.

Nikos Kazantzakis speaks of man's search for God as an ascent up a seemingly unassailable mountain. Men have been climbing for countless generations; occasionally one of them comes to face the summit. There are ledges and cliffs. The higher one goes, the greater the danger of falling. Our forefathers were experts at climbing the mountain.

Kabbalists generally climbed slowly, deliberately, step after sure-footed step. They were equipped with roadmaps that had been tested and found good for centuries. Nearly every inch of the mountain was charted. If there occasionally was a slip-up, it was usually by one of those who tried to chart a bit of a new path for himself. The task was formidable: many tried, some fell, but a good number came near to their particular summits.

Today we no longer know how to read the roadmaps. In any case, they would do us little good. They were charted for hikers. We are driving up the mountain in a fast car, equipped with brightly flashing multicolored headlights. We will get there faster and more easily—if we get there at all.

Perhaps you will pray for us back in our village in the valley. Strange: up there, high on the slopes of the mountain, we seem to forget how to pray. . . .

BLACKMAN AND JEW

Joel Ziff

The Jewish Community has always been deeply committed to the struggle for human rights. Not only has the Jew found that an immoral society eventually directs its prejudices against him, but religious traditions require the Jew to act even when it is not in his immediate self-interest to do so. In the United States, the efforts of Negroes to attain equality of opportunity have attracted Jewish support ranging from simple resolutions of sympathy by communal groups to large-scale financial support of organizations such as NAACP, CORE, and SNCC, and from involvement in "self-help" programs in ghetto areas to active participation in freedom rides, sit-ins, and voter registration drives.

It is not the purpose of this article, however, to justify Jewish involvement in social issues, but rather to examine the nature and prospect of the involvement. Recently, Jewish involvement in the civil rights

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movement has deteriorated as a consequence of the dramatic shift in which concepts of non-violence and integration have been replaced by those of Black Power and separatism. Some have condemned the new tactics while others have found no role for themselves in a movement which seemingly excludes the white man. This writer questions whether the large-scale retreat by the Jewish community was correct.

In order to evaluate Jewish involvement in light of the "escalation" in the Black Revolution, one must examine those factors which caused the militancy. The infant civil rights movement was based on the assumption that society was basically moral, that inequality was an aberration due to the prejudices and ignorance of a small segment of the population. If rights were denied, redress could be obtained through the established channels of society. To obtain equal opportunity, the Negro need only appeal to the embodiment of that morality as represented by federal courts, by Congress, and by enlightened members of the white community. The best tactic was that of non-violence: the oppressed demand their rights legally, never using the unjust tactics of the oppressor. In this manner attention was focused on the existing immorality and society called for justice. Early successes of the civil rights movement included Supreme Court decisions outlawing segregation of schools, civil rights legislation, voter registration drives, and the War on Poverty.

However, these successes seemed inconsequential in comparison to the immensity of the problem; after a decade the civil rights movement had been unable to attain equality of opportunity for Negroes. Only a small percentage of schools were integrated despite court rulings. Legislation guaranteeing equality was ignored and could not undermine deep-seated prejudices. The War on Poverty emerged as little more than a stopgap effort designed to cool the long hot summers; moreover, even its meagre operations were curtailed as funds were increasingly diverted to other war-making efforts. Frustration increased as the poor's rising aspirations were confronted with increasing backlash resistance.

As dissatisfaction grew, civil rights leaders began to question the validity of their tactics. The civil rights movement seemed to sit next to a white man in the bathroom. The non-violent approach relied upon the belief that society was moral, yet experience proved that society was racist: courts operated unjustly for Negroes, schools did not teach black students, civil rights legislation was ignored. Discrimination was

not the product of ignorance unique to only a few people; it was basic to the social structure. A large pool of cheap labor was vital to the short-term economic interests of industry. Discrimination protected the jobs of working class whites, insulating them from competition with Negroes. If racism was vital, change would not come through appeals to the conscience and institutions of society, but only if the oppressed could marshal enough power to demand, not petition, for change. The Black Power movement emerged as an effort to utilize the full resources of the black community—economic, political, and social—to gain control over the factors which determined their lives.

No longer could the black community rely on an enlightened society. Useless appeals to courts and Congress were abandoned in favor of organization on the local "grass-roots" level designed to unify the effective power of the Negro. The white liberals were seen as ultimately racists, hypocrites who paid lip service to goals of equality but fled to the suburbs to escape Negro neighbors. White liberal involvement meant only white control which would dilute programs and prevent blacks from developing leadership skills.

The emphasis on integration was considered incorrect. It was a valid goal only insofar as it eliminated discrimination; but discrimination had continued. In seeking integration, the civil rights movement could not lose sight of the prior goal of equality. If society, for example, would not provide equal education by integrating schools, it should be forced to provide quality education in segregated schools.

If the Black Power movement was to succeed, the resources of the black community had to be unified. However, this task was a difficult one: Negroes did not always exercise rights which they possessed and often passively accepted intolerable conditions. This passivity, it was believed, was caused by internalizing the role of slave. The black man's symbols of authority and success are white, never black. He is taught that black is bad, white is good; and success is measured in terms of its definition by white society. Consequently, the Negro thinks of himself as inferior. If the civil rights movement was to succeed, the Negro must be changed, must become a black man again, regaining his sense of identity. The concept of Black Power served as an expression of the new sense of identity.

Out of these trends emerged the new phase of the civil rights movement. Ultimate goals had not changed, but strategies were altered in line with the realities of life which often led to violence and separatism. As for the Jewish community, as long as the civil rights movement used moral means to achieve its ends, few withheld support: concepts of integration and equality were amenable to most people as was the tactic of

non-violence. When violence and separatism replaced integration and non-violence, the Jewish community withdrew its support.

The moral condemnation by the Jewish community does not appear justifiable. Absolute standards of morality do not always apply to political strategies, which can only be judged in terms of effectiveness within the context of available alternatives. A moral approach is preferable; but if ineffective, an immoral tactic may be necessary in order to achieve goals. A political action must first be judged in terms of effectiveness and only then in terms of morality. For example, one might question the validity of the use of violence insofar as it fails to bring about equality of opportunity by creating backlash. However, one cannot condemn it in terms of morality. No other alternative is open to the black man; efforts to use moral tactics have failed because of society's racism. The Jewish community can judge the Civil Rights movement in the same way as it evaluated the Six Day War: although violence is not desirable, the Israeli use of defensive aggression is justified as the only way to stop Arab persecution.

Peaceful resistance and disruption might be considered to be a more effective tactic than violence; perhaps blacks should declare a general strike instead of rioting. However, this method is not presently feasible in the black community because of lack of organization. The frustration has no channel of expression other than that of riot. For example, peaceful resistance represented by the boycott of P.S. 125 in Manhattan broke down when the divided community demanded 52 members on a negotiating committee with the New York Board of Education. It is unfortunate, though perhaps inevitable, that the oppressed, to become free, must hurt others who may be inadvertent and undeserving targets. When a course of action is dictated by the immorality of society, there is no other alternative.

The rejection of absolute standards in reference to political strategies does not mean that moral judgments cannot be made, but only that moral judgments must be made in terms of goals rather than means. One cannot allow means to corrupt goals. If moral tactics become goals, they must be condemned. If the use of riots becomes permanent and efforts to organize meaningful peaceful resistance are abandoned, the black community must be condemned. If, in its frustration, the civil rights movement replaces white racism with black racism, it must be condemned.

The individual may be able to accept a tactic on an intellectual level yet be unable to accept it on an emotional level. No matter how

sympathetic an outsider is, he still views situations in terms of his own experience. For example, if he has not been subjected to deep injustice and oppression, he may be unable to accept violent action as a solution while still understanding its inevitability and necessity. Each person's ultimate decision on where to draw the line on any issue will be unique, reflecting the interaction of his intellectual and emotional evaluation.

The Jewish community's reaction to separatism has been partially based on the misunderstanding that there is no longer any room for whites in black organizations. Although there are some aspects of political leadership from which whites are indeed asked to step down, it is largely the terms of involvement which have changed. The very essence of community unity and power is a *leadership* comprised of community members who are exclusively responsible for determining policy and tactics. This native leadership must evolve from within the community, a process of development which must proceed autonomously through trial and error. In regard to decision-making, therefore, the white can do little but give advice when requested; for, on one hand, he has the well-known tendency to "take over," and, on the other, he truly cannot act in the interests of the community because of his own emotional inability to view actions in terms of the needs of the oppressed.

There are, however, important areas where the Jew can indeed contribute to this effort. *The nature and degree of involvement must be dictated by the self-expressed needs of the black community.* Contingent on involvement is acceptance by the Jew of the importance of the community's role by basing his actions on the self-expressed needs of the community. The Jew may then be called in at the behest of the community to train and advise community personnel. This approach is exemplified by the tutor who not only tutors but attempts to transmit his ability to a parent or teenager who can then replace him. The black community is in need of specialists: educators, fund-raisers, organizers and administrators. If they can accept the community's new role, Jews could be in a position to provide assistance in these areas.

Needless to say, many of the old efforts of the Jewish community remain unaffected by these changes. Jews can continue to support the efforts of the civil rights movement with financial assistance, with support for legislation, and with pressures on society. However, this support must be again made in view of the self-expressed goals of the community. The Jewish community can seek to deal with covert and overt racism on the part of Jews through education and exposure. Efforts can be made to educate the "liberal" who "believes" in equality of opportunity yet moves to the suburbs, and to stop the opportunist whose income is based on exploitation of the ghetto.

There is a need for a new creativity in dealing with the problems confronting society. "Profit-making" projects can be set up for activities such as renovation of tenement buildings. Programs can be established within the changing neighborhoods to assist Jewish merchants to relocate and establish locally-owned businesses. When Jews abandon a neighborhood, efforts can be made to transfer the existing institutions to the social service centers of the new residents, and assist in setting them up.

Integration failed because neither white nor black man is ready for racial mixing. Both are so engrained with racism that relations between the races must nearly always be ones of inequality which cannot be eliminated by good intentions. Inherent in an equal relationship is the ability of each partner to accept or reject that relationship. When equality is granted by one partner to another, there can be no equal relationship. Before the Negro can integrate, he must separate and unify, achieving the strength and self-confidence to meet with the white community on a truly equal basis, knowing that he exercises a force—that he possesses the power to treat whites in the same way as he has been treated by them. The integrated society will be one in which the black man, like the Jew, achieves equality of opportunity while maintaining the right to be different.

AARON

In the Bible Aaron is the name
of the younger brother with the fluent tongue
who spoke for the larger stutterer.
You too are Aaron but you keep
your small words in and silent.
You are not even prophetic. Now you are
one more patient at Rockland State,
stuttering in the cages of your mind.

I remember at the hospital
when I struggled to write alone you came
hopping on bird legs, afraid not to amuse;
or, proud in a cowboy hat you shot
your Lone Ranger pistol around corners
or from behind doors when I passed by.
I smiled then: wondered who had wounded you
before you knew for sure what danger was.

I am young, you younger still;
once age meant only longer suffering.
Now I try my sentences at home.
They say I'm getting well. I remember
waiting eyes and wavering legs: antennae:
brushed by insects, who brushes you off again?
Aaron, hide in Rockland while you can:
the stutterer freed his people, not himself.

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