

## FOR ELI WIESEL

Barry W. Holtz

Soft coals burning, turning with your head,  
 Stop, aim at me, flicker, spark, and die—  
 Passing on.  
 You walk slowly, stumble into the microphone, face the audience  
 And begin to whisper words  
 We almost cannot hear.

No one speaks so softly  
 But wind in flowergardens;  
 No one speaks so intimately making  
 Each of us a lover who waits in a dark room,  
 And like soft coal burning, your eyes are gentle  
 Touching us lightly, lingering, passing on.

You say no art can come of suffering  
 But your face, forged in fire, denies that.  
 The truth is: You have seen too much—  
 Men turned to carbon in stone houses is too high  
 A price for any graven "David" or "Moses."

You say you are only a storyteller  
 And you spend this night  
 Softly recalling tales, softly recalling  
 The poetry that is passing and never written down.  
 They say when the Temple was in flames,  
 The Priests threw the keys to the gates  
 Back to the heavens.  
 But your eyes, your ancient burning eyes,  
 Remembering ash and black smoke  
 Softly curling like a serpent,  
 Your eyes grasp the keys tightly on earth  
 With a soft burning light  
 Eternal and unspeakably gentle.

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NOTES FROM THE JEWISH UNDERGROUND:  
PSYCHEDELICS AND KABBALAH

Itzik Lodzer

Mysticism and words are strange bedfellows. They have always had to live together, neither ever being quite comfortable about the presence of the other. Mystics have ever been wary about the limitations of language: words seem to bind them to earth, forcing them to discourse in neatly boxed categories on that which by nature seeks to flow, to soar, transcending all possible verbal boxes. And words, as it were, have always been suspicious of that which they are told they cannot apprehend; they can admit of no reality beyond their own ken.

From the modern mystic's point of view, the most problematic words of all are the words associated with religion. "God," "Holy," "Love"—and all the rest. The words have become prisoners of synagogues and churches where their overpowering reality is unknown. So long have they been read responsively that they evoke no response. Even the more sophisticated words now used in their stead suffer from guilt by association; "Numinous" and "Sacred" are too respectable—they turn no one on.

When coming to speak of the deeply religious quality of the experience many of us have had through the use of psychedelic drugs, I balk before conventional religious language. Members of the religious establishment have been too quick to say that any experience brought on by a drug is necessarily cheap. I rather tend to fear the opposite: to speak of psychedelic/mystic experience in terms familiar to religionists might indeed cheapen that experience.

(Now that the mystic in us has voiced his objections and we have duly apologized, we may proceed.)

Perhaps the first key to understanding what psychedelic insight is all about is the notion of *perspective*. Leary, Watts, and others have written at great length about the point of view one achieves during a

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(Although the harmful genetic effects of one hallucinogenic drug have recently been discovered, we nevertheless feel compelled to examine the awesome implications of drug use for religious thinking.—  
 Editors)

psychedelic session. In the experience, consciousness and ego become detached. One comes to view the world no longer from the contextual position of the self, but rather as an outsider. "I" can somehow stand aside, somewhere in the back of my head, and watch "me" at play. The "I" who watches is liberated from the context of the "me" who acts. Associated with this generally cute busybody me (who sometimes seems to belong to the kind of toy world one sees when taking off in an airplane) is the entire active material universe: on the side of the "I," to one of a Western background, stands He who looks on from beyond. The most distinctively non-Western aspect of this God-image, incidentally, is that here He who looks from beyond cannot suppress a smile. The world is simply much too cute to be an object of cosmic wrath. Visions of the laughing Buddha who knows it's all a joke. . . .

Together we look from beyond. God and I are not yet one at this point, but I have taken the first step: I am learning to see things from his point of view. That which I thought was all terribly real just a few moments ago now seems to be part of a great dramatic role-playing situation, a cosmic comedy which this "me" has to play out for the benefit of his audience. I am overwhelmed by my dramatic style, and the world's. I suppress my desire to applaud, waiting patiently for the end of the act. I no longer think that anything is "real" down there on stage, but I feel truly awed by the artistry of it all.

This perspective has a particularly close analogue in the history of Jewish thought. One of the great systems of *HaBaD* mysticism is that of Reb Aaron of Starroselje, who bases much of his thought on a distinction between truths and realities "from God's point of view" and "from man's point of view." Reb Aaron hesitates, along with so many other Western mystics, to call our world of time and space mere illusion. (The *Zohar*, in calling the universe of ordinary consciousness the *Alma-De-Shikra* or World of Deception, is more radical here.) Rather, says Reb Aaron, we must learn to speak of two levels of reality. In order for "down" consciousness to function, this world must be seen as somehow real. From man's point of view, time, space, selfhood, and God's otherness are all to be taken quite seriously. Seen from beyond, however, world and ego are but aspects of the same illusion. From God's point of view, only God can be called real. The mystic must learn to balance himself between the two standpoints, never falling *too far* off the tightrope into either one. Of course the Kabbalist would never have been so immodest, as to tell us openly that he personally had been "high" enough to see the world from God's point of view. He doesn't have to tell us. Assum-

ing that the Jewish mystical literature embodies real inner experience and not just a body of empty theosophic doctrine (and this is my assumption throughout), the point is quite obvious: with the proper pneumatic keys, man can come to see the world as it is viewed from above. One who has read Alan Watts' description of psychedelic experience in *The Joyous Cosmology* might feel much at home with Reb Aaron.

Now the serious Jewish theologian might rise in protest: How can you dare to equate the vision of Reb Aaron, who labored humbly for years and meant his system to encompass answers to timeless theological issues, with something you describe in such terribly frivolous terms? I would admit, of course, that there is a tremendous difference *in tone* between the writings of the Kabbalist and that which we seem to experience. This is precisely one of the great advantages or drawbacks of psychedelics, depending upon where you stand. Because mystic insight came so hard to most mystics, their words came out heavy and awesomely serious. Only a rare figure, a Bratzlaver for example, could make his theology dance. But when one can flip into mystic consciousness as easily as one swallows a pill, the whole thing is so much lighter that it almost cannot be "serious." Indeed, nothing *remains* serious: on the next wave of acid one can flip out again, go another rung higher, and watch Reb Aaron's system too become part of the Joke.

Turning now from a description of psychedelic perspective to a discussion of the *content* of the religious insight that comes to the psychedelic voyager, our first encounter is with the age-old metaphysical/mystical problem of the nature of change. As we step back and view the world as outsiders, we observe that everything about us, including our own selves, is involved in a seemingly never-ending flow. All is becoming, moving. I blink my eyes and seem to reopen them to an entirely new universe, one terribly different from that which existed a moment ago. I think of Hesse's image of the river of life with its countless changing forms. Yes, but at the same time one seeks a metaphor that makes for bolder colors. Everything that is stands constantly ready to reorganize itself into new molecular patterns, to burst into hitherto undreamed-of forms of life. Kaplan's "God as Process" becomes attractive (has he been there?), but only for a moment. For behind the constantly changing patterns of reality, or—better—within them, something remains the same. If there is a "God" we have discovered through psychedelics, He is the One within the many; the changeless constant in a world of change.

On one level I perceive this duality through the perception of external (or relatively external) phenomena: the face of the friend in front of me may change a million times, may become all faces or may become The Face. All this *happens*—I do not *experience* at is "hallucination"—yet somewhere in the bottom of my consciousness I know that before me stands my friend, unchanged. *Everything has been changing, but nothing has changed.* On a still more profound level, one experiences this paradox of change and constancy with regard to oneself. I encounter my own consciousness at any given moment in a psychedelic voyage only in terms of its contents. My mind, now more than at any other time, is filled to overflowing with fast-changing images and countless interweaving patterns. In the face of this, the continuity of consciousness from one moment to the next is to me the greatest of miracles. All is changing, and my mind seems constantly on the verge of bursting into the shrapnel of its own perceptions—and yet somehow "I" remain. Space, time, and consciousness, insofar as they can be distinguished from one another, are all going through this same infinitely majestic but terrifying process; they are all rushing constantly toward the brink of "Bang!" disintegration, but just as they reach the far limits of existence they turn around and smile. Relax: we haven't moved at all. *'Olam'—Shanah'—Nefesh*; Space, Time, and Mind, says the *Sefer Yetsirah*, are playing the same games. The miracle of how all three remain constant in their change, how their oneness persists through their never-ending multiplicity of forms, is the essence of religious wonder. Somehow the Principle of Paradox which allows for this coexistence seems to want to be capitalized. . . .

Now it seems to this reader of the Jewish mystical literature that here we have encountered one of the basic motifs of Kabbalistic thought. The Kabbalah speaks of two aspects of the divine Self: *Eyn Sof* or "The Endless," and the *Sefirot*, the various aspects of God's active inner life. Insofar as God is seen as *Eyn Sof*, he is in no way subject to change or multiplicity. He is eternal oneness, possessing no attributes, no personality, no specific content of any kind. And, in a certain sense, He is all there is. The seeming reality of God as *Sefirot*, let alone the illusory reality of this "World of Deception," are nothing in the face of the One. It is only through the veiledness of the One that the many are granted some form of existence. The enlightened are at moments able to peer through the veils, and catch a glimpse of the Reality within. Insofar as God is the *Sefirot*, on the other hand, the near antithesis is true. In the Kabbalists' descriptions of God as *Sefirot* we find a brightly colored picture of infinitely varied forms of divine life. God loves, gives birth, is

Himself born, unites and separates, pours forth multicolored light and withholds it when it becomes too strong; tragically causes and then combats evil, etc., etc. While *nothing* can be said of God as *Eyn Sof*, virtually *everything* can be said of God as *Sefirot*. Here there is no limit to the ever-flowing and ever-changing face of the divine personality. God as *Sefirot* is in a sense closer to the dancing multi-limbed gods of the Hindu myths than He is to the heavy seated God of the West, who only by cosmic Herculean effort can be moved from the Throne of Justice to the Throne of Mercy. Countless images can be used to describe the *Sefirot* aspect of the Divine. God is water: the various aspects of His self are streams and rivers flowing into the cosmic sea. God is fire: the blue and the red of the candle's flame unite and rise into unlimited divine white. God is speech: from the hidden chasms of heart and throat, the Word struggles forth to emerge from the lips. Perhaps most striking: God is male and female, eternally seeking self-fulfillment through a union that has been rent asunder. In short, the Kabbalistic description of the two faces of God seems strikingly similar to that which we have met in the psychedelic experience. Reality is many-faced and ever-changing, and yet the One behind it all remains the same.

Students of the Kabbalah have generally shied away from this kind of experimental analysis of the Kabbalistic God-image. Those trained in *Religionsgeschichte* have seen the duality of *Eyn Sof* and *Sefirot* as a historic combining of Neoplatonic and Gnostic conceptions. Others, proceeding from a more philosophical background, have viewed this duality as an attempt to solve the *philosophic* problem of how the many proceed from the One. But since we are after all dealing with *mystics*, an explanation which takes the inner experience of the mystic into account might prove to be more fruitful. Our claim here, of course, is that on this level one can learn of the classic mystical experience from the psychedelic. When we further compare both the psychedelic reports and the Kabbalistic doctrine with the myths of oneness and change in Hindu mysticism, we can only conclude that psychedelic experiments have indeed led us to one of the major mystic insights common to East and West.

Within the context of this same distinction between *Eyn Sof* and *Sefirot* in God, we might mention another parallel we find between Kabbalistic Judaism and the religious viewpoint that seems to be emerging from psychedelic experimentation. As we have seen, the Kabbalists were hardly afraid of using imagery in speaking of God. On the contrary, they were far more daring and creative in their use of religious imagery than Judaism had ever been. Yet they knew enough to maintain

a free-flowing attitude toward their own metaphoric creations. Images in Kabbalistic literature are beautifully inconsistent. Intentionally mixed metaphors abound in the *Zohar*: in the midst of a passage describing the *Sefirot* as patterns of light, the light imagery will suddenly turn sexual; at other times, human imagery will quietly dissolve into images of water. They tacitly knew well that all their images were of value—and that none of them was itself the truth. The anonymous mystic who penned the *Shir-Ha-Kavod* knew this well:

*They imaged You, but not as You are;  
They adjudged You only through Your deeds.  
They conceived of You through many visions,  
Yet You remain One, within all the images.*

Images of the *Sefirot* could be taken seriously without being meant literally; for *Eyn Sof* itself, no images were allowed at all. As a matter of fact, the taking of any image for God too literally, or the divorcing of a particular image from its intentionally amorphous context, was considered by the Kabbalist to be the very heart of idolatry. The Kabbalist's consciousness was sufficiently expanded (an expression often found in the later Kabbalistic literature: *Gadlut Ha-Mohin*) that he could see through his own image games.

Similar processes seem to be a common part of the psychedelic voyage. At various stages of increasingly intensified consciousness, almost anything that catches the traveler's eye can be converted into a metaphor which for the moment seems tremendously rich and significant. Looking at a picture, contemplating a certain word—suddenly we understand what it is "all" about. Like the author of the *Zohar* looking into the candle and suddenly discovering a new way of expressing the Great Truth, the psychedelic voyager, if he allows himself to "groove" on almost anything for a while, may come up with an image which produces great excitement. Indeed, this is one of the great "pastimes" of people under the influence of psychedelics: the construction of elaborate and often beautiful systems of imagery which momentarily seem to contain all the meaning of life or the secrets of all the universe, only to push beyond them moments later, leaving their remains as desolate as the ruins of a child's castle in the sand. No metaphor is permanent; one can always ascend another rung and look down on the silliness of what appeared to be revelation just minutes before. Most important, in this potentially constant drive upward, outshooting all images, one can catch a glimpse of what the Kabbalists must have experienced as *Eyn*

*Sof*: expanded consciousness seems to have no limit, except that of the degree of intensity that the mind can stand. Reb Nachman Bratzlaver speaks of this in startlingly contemporary language: the mind is expanded to the point where it becomes limitless (*Eyn Sof* is the term he uses!), and it has difficulty *fitting* into the brain when it seeks to return. Now again we have a difference in the degree of seriousness with which the whole mystic venture is taken. For the classic Kabbalist the images of his tradition were, if not absolute truth, nevertheless eternally valid approximations of aspects of the divine reality. For contemporary trippers, for whom all this happens so much more quickly, similar images may be nothing more than a moment's heavenly entertainment. But this in no way contradicts the impression that the states of consciousness reached are in some manner the same. Both find that image and metaphor are the only tools that language can offer them which may be of value, yet as both confront the Ultimate they are forced to leave all images behind.

It is in part for this very reason, so well comprehended by Western mystics, that most psychedelic voyagers have sought their religious guidance in the traditions of the East. In the East, the distinction between image and reality appears to have been better preserved, at least in such "intellectual" circles as those around Vedanta and Zen. Both Judaism and Christianity, as taught and practiced in the last few centuries, have neglected some of those insights which would be of greatest value to us today. Judaism as presented today knows nothing of God as *Eyn Sof*; it has lost the creative mystic drive which led beyond its own images into a confrontation with the Nothing. The Judaism which contemporary Jews have inherited is one of a father figure who looms so large that one dare not try to look beyond Him. We have indeed become trapped by our image. The Kabbalists knew well that God-as-father made sense only in the context of God-as-mother, God-as-lover, God-as-bride, etc. They played the image game with great delicacy; their descendants have forgotten how to play. Perhaps most tragically of all, the Father Himself has lost His power. Were it not for guilt feelings and some sentimentalism on the part of His most loyal children, He might have been put to pasture long ago. Sophisticated Eastern religionists never took their god-images so seriously that they had to undergo the trauma of their decay and death.

From the perspective of this psychedelic/mystic insight, conventional Western religion seems to have fallen prey to a psychologically

highly complex idolatry. In Judaism, the cult of God-as-father has been allowed to run rampant for hundreds of years. Now that the image is crumbling, Western man naively seems to think that the religious reality is itself about to die. Indeed, he has forgotten that there ever was a reality behind his image.

Deeply tied to this problem of image, father image, and religious reality is the whole question of inner freedom in the religious consciousness. The psychedelic experience is generally conceived of as terribly exhilarating liberation. When one allows oneself to ascend into the rungs of consciousness associated with "God's point of view," one releases oneself from the bondage of all those daily ego problems which until now had seemed so terribly important. Conventional strivings for achievement or success seem to have been just so many meaningless webs in which the Self had become entangled. Now one can see beyond them, and their emptiness lies bared. This is of course the real meaning of "dropping out" in Leary's slogan. In the face of the magnificent reality now revealed to me, I am truly amazed that just yesterday my ego was frantic about the silliest things imaginable. I try to reconstruct my life on the basis of this psychedelically induced moment of truth. I resolve to stay out of bags, to maintain this freedom from the trivial as I re-enter my former worlds.

Mystics of all traditions have experienced this same liberation. In Judaism it is a part of the "negation of the Is" (*Bitul he-Yesh*), or it is sometimes more specifically referred to as the "stripping off of the physical" (*Hitpashtut ha-Gashmiyut*). The voyager reaches the rungs where all his physical needs, all his this-worldly preoccupations, are left behind. They no longer matter to him; their vanity has been revealed. This, for example, is the interpretation that some of the Kabbalists give to the act of fasting on Yom Kippur: on the day of the great confrontation, man transcends his own physical self. He has become angelic; that is to say, he has been liberated from his ordinary earthbound context. This of course is virtually the antithesis of the way Yom Kippur is seen in non-mystical Jewish theology. Yet generally for the Jewish mystic this liberation is carefully held in check. In the Jew's relationship to God, the image of *servant* was of tremendous power. Man's mystic liberation was not allowed to flourish for its own sake. Rather it was to permit him, by throwing off the yoke of enslavement to this world, to take upon himself the yoke of service of the kingdom of heaven. This is not to say, of course, that there is no joy in real Jewish

worship. Jews knew well how to "serve the Lord with gladness." But for the modern man seeking mystic awareness of the Divine, the image of master and servant is as dead as that of father and child. The nature of our religious encounter, even if it is mystic, cannot counter the fact that we are children of the post-Nietzschean world: we want to enjoy and exult in our liberation no less than others who proclaim the "death of God." Our particular form of the awareness of God can no longer be one that leads us to His *service*.

This is not to say that none of the traditional forms of Jewish religious expression can be made to work. In the spirit of Berdyczewski, Kaplan, and Richard Rubenstein, I too believe that certain symbols can be reborn if we allow them to undergo a *basic reorientation* in meaning. The attempt to instill the liberating effects of psychedelic consciousness into everyday life generally meets with, at best, limited success. One has the feeling that the absence of ritual makes this effort all the more difficult. Were the great ritual moments of Judaism used as reminders (or recreators) of states of elevated consciousness, as they once were used to some extent by the Kabbalists, those of us who have gained religious insight through the use of drugs might indeed find great excitement in the ritual life. Compulsive or legalistic attitudes toward ritual we will of course find repulsive; ritual must help us to be more free, not bind us. Those of us who do know of the gentle poetry that is still to be found in the Sabbath and the Holy Days would like to open up to that poetry, seeking in it the reflection of what we have discovered within. We are wary of being "hooked," or of being tied into a religious community with which we have terribly little in common—but we do want to try.

Of particular relevance here are those rituals which have so much to do with the sacred in time. The religious view of sacred time, so essential to Judaism and yet so alien to the modern—even observant—Jew, finds its parallel deeply engrained in the psychedelic experience. As with the Hasidic Sabbath, time in psychedelic consciousness takes on a cosmic co-ordinate. The moment exists, but eternity is mysteriously contained within it. A psychedelic voyager, watching a sunrise in the woods, told me that he *knew* how Adam felt when the sun first rose in Eden. Eden was there with him; he was back at home in Eden. Watching a waterfall in New Jersey, hearing it crash through the silence, we were reminded of a *Midrash* that speaks of the silence that surrounded revelation, and suddenly we stood at the foot of the eternal Sinai. An almost sexual (in its shocking flow of completeness) union of moment

and eternity, of the here and now with the everywhere and forever, is constantly taking place. But of course. This is again one of the things that Kabbalistic theology is all about. Creation happened; creation *was a moment*. Yet creation still happens. All future moments were contained within creation, and creation is renewed in every moment since. God "renews every day the work of creation." In the Kabbalistic view, Being flows unceasingly from the Endless, through the chasm of the Nothing, into ever-new forms of life. The world in which the Kabbalist lives is, in one of his greatest symbols, a universe of eternal birth.

This is perhaps even more true of Sinai. On a certain day in the third month after the Children of Israel had left Egypt, God who is "beyond time" and who is Himself called "Place" for He is beyond the totality of place, came down upon the mountain. Cosmic space and endless time enter into union with the here and now. And then, because of that union, Sinai becomes a moment that can live forever. Every moment and every place, according to Hasidic doctrine, contains within itself a Sinai waiting to be discovered. The Torah is ever being given: the moment of Sinai, having tasted of eternity, can never die. One feels that certain of the Hasidic masters would have smilingly understood: watching the silence and rush of a waterfall in New Jersey, we stood before Sinai.

The eternal moment. Having been given ringside seats from which to witness the struggle, dance, and ultimate union of the Forever and the Now, we have the exhilarating feeling of having seen through a great illusion. We had been taking time so *seriously* until now: suddenly, having peered through to eternity, time has become a joke.

We live in temporal and trans-temporal realities at once. All that we have said with regard to constancy and change seems to apply equally to eternity and time. Both are fulfilled through their union. Alan Watts describes the experience this way: "At some time in the middle of the twentieth century, upon an afternoon in the summer, we are sitting around a table on the terrace, eating dark homemade bread and drinking white wine. And yet we seem to have been there forever, for the people with me are no longer the humdrum and harassed little personalities with names, addresses, and social security numbers—the specifically dated mortals we are all pretending to be. They rather appear as immortal archetypes of themselves without, however, losing their humanity. . . . They are at once unique and eternal, men and women but also gods and goddesses. For now that we have time to look at each other, we have become timeless."

"We have become timeless. . . ." Israel, through celebrating the Sabbath and fulfilling the Torah, achieve a state which is "beyond time," as is God Himself. An old Hasidic doctrine is strangely rediscovered and relived by Watts. Were those aspects of Jewish life that were once purported to be relevant to states of higher consciousness only *translated* into a symbolic language our age could read, the Jewish scene might begin to look significantly different.

As we turn to a discussion of the deepest, simplest, and most radical insight of psychedelic/mystic consciousness, we balk before the enormous difficulty of expressing it in terms that will not be offensive to the Western man, and particularly to the religiously sensitive Jew. This insight has been so terribly frightening to the Jewish consciousness, so bizarre in terms of the Biblical background of all Jewish faith, that even the mystics who knew it well generally fled from fully spelling it out. We refer of course to the realization that all reality is one with the Divine. *Tat tvam asi*, in Hinduism: "Thou are God." The Hindu mystic says it unabashedly: Self and self flow together; Atman and Brahman are one. The game of Western consciousness, including most of Western religion, is truly threatened by such a claim. We have built all of our colossal civilization on the premise of the reality of the individual ego; our very religion and ethics assign limitless importance to the decisions and confrontations of the separate human self. Judaism from the Bible down to Buber and Rosenzweig has been the religion of God's *dialogue* and *confrontation* with man. If God and man are truly one—if separate identity is really but a veiling of our true oneness—what has all the game been for?

The question is more urgent than just one of institutional vested interest. Our very notion of sanity in the Western world is here being called into question. If the self and its everyday vision are said to be illusion (or at best half-truth), what place is left for sanity as the ability to distinguish the "fantastic" from the "real"? If inner vision (drug-induced or not) is to replace sense perception as the most appropriate vehicle for man's apprehension of "reality," is not the psychotic perhaps the most enlightened of us all? These questions have deeply bothered both classic and modern mystics—as well as their detractors. They certainly form the basis for the classic Jewish fears of mystic study affecting or "burning" the unstable and the young; they also legitimately enter into the reasoning of those who demand sensible societal controls of the use of psychedelic drugs.

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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