

we search for strength to glorify God. But,
how can we give thanks when we remember Treblinka?

Only silence is loud enough for the millions.
All words minimize the horror. Yet,
we must speak because of the outrage.

Yesterday is past.
It does not cause tomorrow,
Nor will God.
But we can.

Goodness is at the heart of life,
Its power, like evil, is real.
What shall prevail?
Moment by moment we must choose,
rightly, and often,
so the broken fragments will be made whole.

Thus, I choose these as my commandments:

1. Start with forgiveness.
2. Keep the vision of ecstatic union; let memories of killing lead to the fight for justice.
3. Walk humbly with my teacher, neither before nor behind.
4. Stay on the path of reunion, transcend my self, and give service.
5. Make silence into song, simply because I choose to sing.
6. Weep wherever there is suffering, then defeat despair with hope.
7. Choose to love others as I was chosen and loved.
8. Create paths where love can flow.
9. Let Home-coming, as symbolized by Israel, be a uni-

versal cause.
10. Keep my covenants.

Are my commandments answers to the stubborn question? Do they silence my complaints? Will they erase memories of the bodies? Will they ensure a wholesome world?

Obviously not, anymore than a parable solves life's problems. The stories we tell help create meaning. In listening to others' stories new choices emerge.

Should others take my meanings and commandments? No. A meta-message in my story is to construct your own, to come closer to God by listening to your inner and outer voices, and become more godlike by creating your own world of meanings and choices.

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COMMENTARY ON "MAKING BROKEN FRAGMENTS WHOLE" BY ALSCHULER

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I was absolutely captivated by A.S. Alschuler's paper. This is a fascinating and compelling work. I opened your package this afternoon and meant to set the essay aside until later on this evening; but after reading the first few paragraphs, I simply couldn't put it down. The author is definitely present in his prose. He does an excellent job of communicating the essential tension involved in maintaining one's commitments to both the inner and outer dimensions. I would say that it is only by thus refusing to sacrifice one for the other that our spiritual understanding and experience will be expanded. What follows, then, is not criticism but an appreciation for the author's important and stimulating contribution.

Coincidentally (or synchronistically), I have been

rereading a book by Jane Roberts (1986) that I first read ten years ago. Roberts is certainly one of Alschuler's "hearers." Like Alschuler, Roberts was a highly courageous explorer of inner reality. I was struck by another key similarity between Roberts and Alschuler: Both hearers emphasize the importance of free will and of maintaining a questioning attitude toward, and final authority over, the various forms of inner guidance and revelatory insights. David Spangler (1988) has made similar points in his little pamphlet on channeling.

This is one reason, however, that I would argue that it may be misleading to lump all "hearers" together. I'm not sure that the author intends this (p. 36), but I would want to be very cautious here. I think (and the author

himself seems to believe) that how we respond to such sources is more important than the mere existence of such sources. Now, Abraham was ready to sacrifice Isaac. And he is praised by religious traditionalists as a paradigmatic "great man of faith" for his readiness to obey God's will. But I do not believe that such perfect obedience is an appropriate response to inner voices today—even if they are, so to speak, divine as opposed to diabolical. We ought not to sacrifice or dismiss the hard-won values of autonomy and critical thinking. These are not just modernist "window dressing" or mere sociopolitical platitudes; they are an important aspect of our collective spiritual evolution and inheritance. Or so I would argue.

The author's confrontation with the problem of evil is deeply heartfelt and scrupulously honest; his anguish is palpable. I think it is not unhealthy, however, if one feels like somewhat of "an outsider in both worlds" (p. 43). This brings me back to the point I made at the outset, namely, that the tension between our commitments to the inner and outer realities serves as a potential source of creative energies, and as such, is not to be despised, no matter how uncomfortable the stretch. (I say this as a fellow "outsider" and as one who needs to heed my own advice!) Perhaps this is why I am not moved by the traditional statement of the problem of evil ("Either God is not omniscient and omnipotent, or an omniscient God is partly evil.") To me, "God" is not that which stands entirely outside the world-flux, looking in from afar (and as such, to be praised for miraculous rescues or cursed for inaction); God is the flux.

This is clearly where I part company with traditional monotheism, which urgently feels the need to find a "solution" to the problem of evil, once and for all. For the theist, the mere existence of pain, suffering, and callous and immoral behavior poses a direct challenge to the core belief that a transcendent god who is both infinitely good and powerful is the one and only ultimate creative power. For then the question is: How and why does He permit evil to exist? This is an especially urgent question for Jews in the wake of the ultimate evil: the Holocaust. How could God do this to his Chosen People? But since I

want to question these very same assumptions, I also want to question the way that the problem of evil has traditionally been posed. The Eastern view, which dismisses evil as mere illusion or ignorance, seems hardly more satisfactory. Indeed, any general, formulaic "solution" which seeks to save the religious system by explaining away the mystery of evil and sparing the individual the burden of having to confront the dark side of her or his own soul does humanity a major disservice. If it is true that "I and the Father are one," it is no less true that I and the Nazi are one. The comfortable certainties offered by traditional religions as a bulwark against this uncomfortable truth—Salvation for the elect in the West, Enlightenment for the élite in the East—should be viewed with suspicion. Accepting the perpetual discomfort of self-inquiry would be a sign of spiritual progress.

Is anyone today truly at home in either "world"? I, for one, am deeply suspicious of those gurus and messiahs on the one side, and the hard core skeptical materialists on the other, who claim otherwise. The only God worth having is one we no longer feel compelled to worship as a King. Such a God would be revealed and expressed in a cat's purr, a child's smile, a lover's embrace—and also in the stubborn refusal to dismiss or answer those nagging and unanswerable questions about evil that bedevil the old-time religions

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COMMENTARY ON "MAKING BROKEN FRAGMENTS WHOLE" BY ALSCHULER

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I cannot get the last article that you sent me by Alfred Alschuler out of my head. My father used to cry when he thought of the tragedies that occurred to the Greeks and the Armenians under Turkish rule. A dear friend of mine is half Blackfoot. Alternately she despises the Scotch-Irish half of herself until she is forced to identify with them also.

It seems to me that nationalism is as dangerous as

religion when it is used as an exclusionary tool. Tribalism, whether primitive or civilized, seems to result from a need to defend against the other, who invariably has what one wants or wants what one has.

But the extent of the brutality which individuals justify inflicting upon one another can only remind us of the long struggle that humanity has undergone to reach even this primitive level of awareness. Though some of us are