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FIRE/MEN

by Judith Seligson

Human sacrifice

In the second week of September of the year 2001, altars to a god who loves human sacrifice were erected in Lower Manhattan and Northern Virginia and a massive burnt offering took place. Though no one has claimed responsibility, we think these rituals were performed to please Allah. "You must make your knife sharp and you must not discomfort your animal during the slaughter."¹ These words of inspiration, found in the hijackers' luggage, echo the Hebrew Bible: "And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall slaughter the bullock before the Lord."² The hijackers "slaughter" their "animal" before their god. What god requires the slaughter of thousands of civilians in exchange for atonement? Does Allah delight in the smell of burning human flesh? No. This is an "other" god, not the one that answers to God or Allah. The Bible warns *ad infinitum* against idol worship, of Moloch, for example, in which human beings, especially children, are sacrificed to appease or please a god. "Recent excavations in Palestine, at Gezer, Taanach, and Megiddo, have revealed regular cemeteries round the heathen altars, in which skeletons of scores of infants have been found, showing traces of slaughter and partial consumption by sacrificial fire."³ "For every abomination to the Lord, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters do they burn in the fire to their gods."⁴ Those who sent these men to burn themselves and others are the high priests of this present-day heathen cult.

Fire is a central image in the act of worship of September 11, with clear allusions to the Hebrew Bible. The burnt offering was once a way of pleasing God. Noah's burnt animal offering was said to exude a "pleasant aroma"⁵, a

metaphor for his good heart. By the time of the prophets, there were lots of burnt animal offerings but few good hearts. The prophet Hosea said “Forget the calves; go straight to God with words of repentance and prayer.”⁶ Ever since, prayer has been the currency of offerings to God in the Judeo/Christian/Muslim tradition.

Fire is a tool God uses in both the Hebrew and Christian Bibles to cleanse the world of corruption. God sent “brimstone and fire” to consume the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah.⁷ In the prophets, we read, ‘Behold, the Lord God called to judgment by fire, and it devoured the great deep...’⁸ Apart from what we think of God’s methods, in those particular times, what does it mean for human beings to mimic this conflagration imagery? They are putting themselves in God’s place.

Fire is intimately linked with human beings. The Hebrew word for “human being” (*eesh*) and for “fire” (*aysh*) come from the same etymological root. There are many possible connections. Human civilization began when we learned to control fire. Fire is a symbol of the human heart, as in “burning with desire.” It is a purifying agent, for sterilizing scalpels and refining metals. The word for prayer in Hebrew (*t’filah*) derives from the word for judgment (*p’liloot*). Prayer, our intimate acts of self-scrutiny and self-judgement, is the inner, metaphorical fire human beings use to refine ourselves, to become the best that human beings can be. After all, the burnt offering is only as good as the person offering it.

Interpretation as wish-fulfillment

Fire can be a metaphor for self-improvement, for becoming better human beings. On the other hand, idolaters and would-be gods take “fire” literally, and use it for the destruction of others. One could say, then, that interpretation of scriptural words, like fire, for example, is a matter of life and death. The most traumatic story in the Hebrew Bible, the “sacrifice of Isaac,” can be read as a dire warning about interpretation. And perhaps not coincidentally, this story inextricably links the meaning of the word for “burnt offering” to human sacrifice.

Abraham thinks God has told him to sacrifice his son, Isaac. God has told Abraham to make an *oh’lah*, a word that can mean either “burnt offering” or “go up” the mountain. Abraham interprets the word to mean that God would be

pleased by the odor of Isaac's burnt flesh. The seminal commentator on the Hebrew Bible, Rashi, in the 11th century, wrote that God meant: "Abraham,...I did not say to you 'Slay him,' but 'Bring him up.' You have brought him up, bring him down."⁹ That is, Abraham misinterpreted what God said when God said, *Oh'lah*. One could ask if Abraham misinterpreted God because he (unconsciously) wanted to kill Isaac. In that case, in each generation, we can confront our wish to sacrifice human beings, even our beloved children, and burn that desire.

What comes first, then, scripture or interpretation, God's wish or the wishes we impose on God? We are prone, like Abraham, to interpret the way our hearts lead us. Abraham, by his wife Sarah's and God's wish, had just sent Ishmael, his first son, by Hagar, an Egyptian mother, into the desert. He was told that Ishmael would be the progenitor of a nation, but would not inherit the Jewish tradition. Isaac, his son with Sarah, would. Perhaps Abraham was angry with God (and Sarah) for separating him from his beloved Ishmael. Perhaps he redirects his anger toward Isaac. Perhaps Abraham had not reconciled himself to Isaac as "thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest, even Isaac"¹⁰ as God identifies him. It is not clear that Abraham loves Isaac at all when they start their trek up Mount Moriah.

These are possible motives; but the fact of the double meaning of *oh'lah* remains for every generation to probe. We can also ask why Jews, even to this day, do not acknowledge Abraham's misinterpretation, his secret wish for human sacrifice. Are there interpretations that are not tinged by our wishes, secret or otherwise? Yes. But that comes with the hard work of searching our hearts.

Islamic scripture has become an important underpinning for the terrorist cults. What comes first, the Koran, or the wish to destroy America? Human life hinges on the interpretation of a word in the Koran: *jihad*.

A terrorist sympathizer, Muhammed Ishrat Husain, a retired accountant, wrote in the opinion section of Dawn, the largest English-language newspaper in Pakistan: "Literally speaking, *jihad* means struggle and/or striving in the cause of Allah and includes killing and being killed in his way. It encompasses the whole of the life of a believer and can be divided into three major segments: 1)

against the enemies of Allah and his religion – Islam, 2) against Satan; 3) against the evil inclinations of one’s inner self.”¹¹ The third one is metaphorical, very similar to the meaning of “fire” as tool for self-refinement, rather than for exterminating others. How can one know for sure that jihad does not always mean “against the evil inclinations of one’s inner self”? If human beings want to make war, why attribute the wish to a god? It makes for pliant warriors.

In another article in *Dawn*, Bernard Haykel, a professor of Islamic law at New York University, wrote, “As a professor of Islamic law I have researched the law of jihad and can state unequivocally that the war bin Laden has engaged us in cannot be labeled a jihad....According to Islamic law there are at least six reasons why bin Laden’s barbaric violence cannot fall under the rubric of jihad: 1) Individuals and organizations cannot declare a jihad, only states can. 2) One cannot kill innocent women and children when conducting a jihad. 3) One cannot kill Muslims in a jihad. 4) One cannot fight a jihad against a country in which Muslims can freely practice their religion and proselytize Islam. 5) Prominent Muslim jurists around the world have condemned these attacks and their condemnation forms a juristic consensus (ijma) against bin Laden’s actions. This consensus renders his actions un-Islamic. 6) The welfare and interest of the Muslim community (maslah) is being harmed by bin Laden’s actions and this equally makes them un-Islamic.”¹²

The terrorists pre-empted these objections. Professor Haykel spoke of the writings of Sayyid Qutb, (who was executed by the Egyptian authorities in the mid-1960’s for inciting resistance to the regime –):¹³ “‘Qutb said the rulers of the Muslim world today are no longer Muslims,’ said Mr. Haykel. ‘He basically declared them infidels.’ He did so, Mr. Haykel added, in a particularly persuasive way, by reinterpreting the works of a medieval intellectual named Ibn Taymiyya. A towering figure in the history of Muslim thought, Ibn Taymiyya lived in Damascus in the 13th and 14th centuries, when Syria was in danger of domination by the Mongols. Mr. Qutb equated Ibn Taymiyya’s intellectual and political struggle against the Mongols with his own struggle against Gamal Abdel Nasser and the other Arab rulers of his day. It was a risky move, because Islamic tradition states that if one Muslim falsely calls another an infidel, he could burn in hell, Mr. Haykel said....But decades after his death, Mr. Qutb’s

equation continues to inspire radicals like Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, who was convicted of conspiring to blow up the United Nations and other New York City landmarks, and Osama bin Laden. 'By opening the Arab peninsula to the crusaders, the regime disobeyed and acted against what has been enjoined by the messenger of God,' Mr. bin Laden wrote in his 1996 'declaration of War against America.' In so doing, the Saudi leaders ceased to be Muslims, he concluded."

Will the real idolaters (infidels) please stand up? What leads people to interpret jihad to mean killing Americans? Metaphorical interpretation of scripture is much harder to sell than the literal. Especially when the metaphorical promotes self-criticism while the literal promotes killing others. Especially, if killing is what one wants to do in the first place.

Finally, an angel calls out to Abraham, the father with the hand raised to sacrifice his son, to stop. God says, "And in thy seed shall be blessed all the nations of the earth because thou hast hearkened to my voice."¹⁴ Readers often think this means, "You were willing to obey Me, even if it meant sacrificing your son." But it could also mean, "You heard my angel in time to stop yourself from doing what you told yourself I wanted. It was you, Abraham, not I, who wanted to sacrifice Isaac." By then, Abraham's heart had changed. He loved Isaac. God abhors human sacrifice, never meant for Abraham to kill his son, and now Abraham, recognizing his own capacity, his own desire to do just that, sacrifices that wish. The question of what kind of sacrifice God wants from human beings was settled once and for all. Why on earth would human beings want to worship a god who wants human sacrifice?

Whom do they hate?

Hitler loved fire. He killed the Jews twice, first with gas, and then with fire. Hitler too used the Biblical images of burnt offering and conflagration as judgment. We recognize the nature of the event in the word, Holocaust: "A burnt sacrifice; a sacrificial offering the whole of which is consumed by fire."¹⁵ We say that Hitler hated the Jews and ask why these modern worshippers hate America so. Hitler hated and the terrorists hate our God, their Allah. One could say that a god is a set of values. Hitler hated and the terrorists hate our values. What do they hate? That human beings are constrained by the Ten Commandments; that

they must set up civil courts to judge their fellow citizens and follow exacting rules of evidence and witnesses in trials. They hate the possibility that their (human) judgment is fallible. They hate the God that values life over death. “Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”¹⁶ They hate a God who counts mercy, truth, compassion, justice, kindness and love are among the highest values. Words, of course, are only as good as the hearts of those speaking them.

“Ultimately Mr. Qutb (who began his career as a modernist literary critic!) rejected democracy and nationalism as Western ideas incompatible with Islam. Even pan-Arabism, which was tremendously popular in the Arab world, was simply an obstacle to the foundation of an Islamic state.”¹⁷ Clearly, there is a wish here, shall we say a burning fire, for “an Islamic state” that “rejected democracy and nationalism” and there is an interpretation of the Koran that supports it. Which came first? What other wishes are displaced by this wish? And what other Koranic interpretations are rejected? Is an Islamic state that rejects democracy and nationalism the best way to feed and clothe the poor, the best way to build a strong economy, to employ and educate all segments of the population, including women, the best way to provide justice for its citizens? Is it even a way at all? Is it even a wish?

To what extent has terror become an arm of the radical “Islamic state”? Is it an arm of a people trying to feed, clothe, and educate the poor? Edward Rothstein wrote, “The goals of fundamentalist terror are not to eliminate injustice but to eliminate opposition.”¹⁸ He points out, however, how many people in many high places assume that radical Islamic terror wishes to right injustice, or at least has “root causes” that could be extirpated. “It is remarkable how much agreement there is on the nature of these root causes. Many American intellectuals have cited American policy toward Israel, the poverty of Arab lands and inequalities and inequities reinforced by Western actions. The Vatican Synod in October, after condemning the ‘horror of terrorism’ called for the elimination of the root causes of poverty and inequality. And similar declarations were made by many nations at the United Nations this week.”¹⁹ What are terrorists and Islamic states themselves doing to get rid of these “root causes?” For them,

clearly, the root cause is Us. Judging from their actions, the overriding wish is not “the elimination of the root causes of poverty and inequality.” Rather, it is the imposition of an Islamic state, with interpretations of Islam that bolster it.

What if Osama bin Laden had given out his millions of dollars in micro-loans to local men and women to start small businesses - selling eggs, hand-embroidering garments, or fixing machinery - enterprises that can often be run from a home? This revolutionary concept was begun by “Muhammad Yunus, the Bangladeshi president of Grameen Bank who gave out the first microloans in the mid-1970’s.”²⁰ Since 1997, an international coalition called the Microcredit Summit Campaign has given out 19.3 million loans. Its goal is to give 100 million business start-up loans by 2005 to poor people with no credit history.²¹ The organization has “pledged to help empower women.” The World Bank has estimated that 75% of the 1.2 billion people around the world who live on less than \$1 per day are women.²² But that was not the fire that consumed Bin Laden’s soul. In fact, Hernando deSoto posits this economic route as the antithesis of the terrorist dream: “To divert the poor from the siren call of terrorists, America and its allies must appeal to their entrepreneurial interests...and focus on development at a micro level, encouraging capitalism from below.”²³ Millions of micro-loans, trade, infrastructure, land reform, peace. There is a wish.

What benefit do radical Islamicists gain from their version of an Islamic state? Moral purity? Hegemony? License to kill? One could argue well that an Islamic state is a sure way for a country to remain in poverty. Just as Hitler’s war against the Jews diverted precious resources from his conventional war of territorial conquest²⁴, so the terrorists’ “holy war” is dissipating funds and energy away from economic development toward an enterprise characterized by throwing its sons into fires and preventing its women from accumulating wealth. If modernization and democracy (with its concomitant sexual freedom, and freedom of women) is the enemy, then what kind of political economy do they think will make them super-powers? Oil? Let’s get ourselves free (or freer) of that. Anyhow, a one-product economy may be a good strategy for dictatorship, but is hardly a model for economic development.

The terrorists have imagined a world in which they define and interpret the law, just as Hitler did. They hate a world in which a woman could be free. The terrorists worship themselves, little men-gods who rule women. Sher Abbas Stanakzai, then, the Taliban regime's deputy foreign minister, said in a 1997 interview: "Our current restrictions of women are necessary in order to bring the Afghan people under control. We need these restrictions until people learn to obey the Taliban."²⁵ From their women, to everyone else.

Wakil Motawakil, then-Taliban Minister of Foreign Affairs, said, "Taliban commanders are religious figures...We believe in Judgment Day"²⁶ - with themselves as judges of who shall live and who shall die. "...The Taliban have turned sports stadiums into execution grounds. In today's Afghanistan, you can be executed for anything from adultery to murder, even for prostitution or homosexuality,"²⁷ reported Saira Shah. Motawakil, responding to her questions through an interpreter, said: "The football stadium is a place of leisure, a place for playing games, a place for joy. When justice is done on behalf of a victim, that too is a joyful event, which brings order and security to society....If they [the international community] help us to build a separate place suitable for carrying out executions, we have no problem with that."²⁸ "When the Egyptian hosts were drowning in the Red Sea,' say the Rabbis, 'the angels in heaven were about to break forth into songs of jubilation. But the Holy One, blessed be He, silenced them with the words, "My creatures are perishing, and ye are ready to sing!"²⁹ Do we love a god who loves executions or one who loves compassion, even for our enemies?

"A way that would satisfy God"

What makes a young man a willing agent of his own and others' destruction? His faith in a god who wants those things. Hijacker Atta's note read: "Then every one of you should prepare to carry out his role in a way that would satisfy God."³⁰ Why would he put his faith in a god that wants so much death? Being an agent of god must be a comforting role. Being an agent of god that makes such a big bang assures him of his fifteen minutes of blazing light. Does he value the faith his superiors and fellow worshippers have in him? Does he

enjoy bonding with men in a death wish? Does he enjoy satisfying a male leader? Is it easier to see the world in Manichaean black and white?

“Pray the morning prayer in a group and ponder the great rewards of that prayer.” (Atta’s letter) The letter describes his coming “reward” at least four times, in the excerpts alone. His faith requires indoctrination, a social network, and reward. “...the time between you and your marriage in heaven is very short. Afterwards, begins the happy life, where God is satisfied with you,... Know that the gardens of paradise are waiting for you in all their beauty, and the women of paradise are waiting, calling out, ‘Come hither, friend of God.’ They have dressed in their most beautiful clothing...” (Atta’s letter) Their god is satisfied; has their god paid up? Has the marriage been consummated?

Everyone has a god – Communists, fundamentalists, eco-advocates, humanists, atheists. What does your god want from you? What do you want from you? And what is the reward? The highest Jewish teaching is to “do the right thing” for its own sake. Or, the act itself is its own reward³¹. Could Atta and his fellow worshippers have acted as they did without confidence that they would be compensated? The act itself doesn’t seem to offer that much gratification.

We choose the gods we worship. We choose our values. We choose how to interpret our sacred texts. We can investigate and delete the cruel wishes of our hearts that drive us to cruel interpretations. Yet, it is much easier to be an instrument of a god than to think for oneself. In our heart of hearts, we might “know” what God wants, but others will surely know what god we worship by our acts. “God’s will” cannot be proved, it can only be enforced. “God’s will” is a weapon in the hands of vengeful people of all creeds. Was it God’s will or Abraham’s will to sacrifice Isaac, anyway? Keep God out of it. God has got a bad name.

The Mishnah, the 2nd century commentary on the Torah, writes that “a good heart” is the “good way” that subsumes all other good ways.³² “For Judaism, the heart symbolizes the seat of freedom, the decision-making element in man.”³³ The heart discerns, and it can learn, with good teaching, to further clarify distinctions. Is the heart cultivated as a tool of discernment or mutilated into a weapon of hate? “It hath been told thee, O man, what is good, And what

the Lord doth require of thee: Only to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.”³⁴ God is quoted in the Hebrew Bible saying, “I place before you today life and good and death and evil...therefore choose life.”³⁵ These are values that appear worthy of human beings.

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¹ In a letter found in three locations: in hijacker Mohammed Atta’s luggage, on the plane crashed in Pennsylvania, and in a car of accused hijackers found at Logan Airport; cited in “notes Found After the Hijackings, *New York Times*, 9/29/01, p. B3.

² Leviticus 1:4,5

³ Dr. J.H. Hertz, C.H., *The Pentateuch and Haftarahs* (London: Soncino Press, 1972), p. 804.

⁴ Deuteronomy 12:26.

⁵ Genesis 8:21.

⁶ Paraphrase of Hosea 14:2.

⁷ Genesis 19:24.

⁸ Amos 6:4.

⁹ Rashi on Genesis 22:12.

¹⁰ Genesis 22:2.

¹¹ Cited in “Think Tank-Two Views: Can the Koran Condone Terror?,” *New York Times*, 10/13/01, p.15.

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- ¹² cited in “Think Tank,” *New York Times*, 10/13/01, p. A15.
- ¹³ Robert Worth, “The Deep Intellectual Roots of Islamic Terror,” *New York Times*, 10/13/01, p. A15.
- ¹⁴ **Genesis 22:18.**
- ¹⁵ Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition.
- ¹⁶ **Ezekiel 18:31.**
- ¹⁷ Worth, *New York Times*, 10/13/01, p. A15.
- ¹⁸ Edward Rothstein, “Exploring the Flaws in the Notion of the ‘Root Causes’ of Terror,” *New York Times*, 11/17/01, p. A17.
- ¹⁹ Rothstein, *New York Times*, 11/17/01, p. A17.
- ²⁰ Ginger Thompson, “Small Loans Help Millions of World’s Poorest, Coalition Says”, *New York Times*, 10/8/01, p.A3.
- ²¹ Thompson, *New York Times*, 10/8/01, p. A3.
- ²² Thompson, *New York Times*, 10/8/01, p. A3.
- ²³ **Hernando de Soto, “The Constituency of Terror”, *New York Times*, 10/15/01, p. A19.**
- ²⁴ **Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933-45* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975) pp. 140-7.**
- ²⁵ Cited in Jan Goodwin and Jessica Neuwirth, “The Rifle and the Veil”, *New York Times*, 10/19/01, p.A19.
- ²⁶ CNN broadcast of Saira Shah’s “Encore Presentation: Beneath the Veil: The Taliban’s Harsh Rule of Afghanistan” aired September 22, 2001, 23:03 ET.
- ²⁷ CNN, Shah, “Beneath the Veil.”
- ²⁸ CNN, Shah, “Beneath the Veil.”
- ²⁹ Cited in Hertz, *Pentateuch*, page 270.
- ³⁰ Excerpts from the letter in “Notes Found After the Hijackings,” *New York Times*, 9/29/01, p.B3.
- ³¹ Paraphrase of Ethics of the Fathers 4:2.
- ³² Ethics of the Fathers 2:13.
- ³³ Irving M. Bunim, *Ethics from Sinai* (New York: Philipp Feldheim, Inc, 1964), vol. 1, p.181.
- ³⁴ **Micah 6:8.**
- ³⁵ **Deuteronomy 30:19.**

*The following text was part of the conclusion to the original Fire/Men essay.
It is not included in the article published in JUDAISM.*

Teach your children or sacrifice them?

America is not perfect. We owe it to ourselves to refine our ideals and the actions that flow from them. Americans owned slaves less than 150 years ago; American women could not vote less than 100 years ago. But we offer a vision that no one has matched, of a separation of church and state. This is a recent development in world history. During most of the last 2000 years, nations have been run by, or greatly influenced by, religious authorities. A free people needs to speak a language in which positions are supported by argument and data, with terms that are universally acknowledged.

The world is in the throes of a religious revival. Though it has infected the Muslim world, it is alien to Islam. It is an eruption of an idolatrous cult that voraciously seeks converts. Yet, it is ultimately about political power, because it is a struggle for who defines and interprets the law. It feeds off the indigenous faith and perverts it for its own worship, sacrificing its young sons to hatred and war.

What do we teach our children? If we could read the textbooks and hear the lectures in thousands of classrooms and schools in the Muslim world, would we wonder why young people are so gung-ho for literal jihad against the United States and Israel? “If you review the curriculum [in public schools] in Saudi Arabia, you would see that it promotes any kind of extremist views of Islam, even in the eyes of very devout Muslims,” said Abdul Khadir Tash, the editor of Al Bilad newspaper.¹ What happens in Saudi Arabia is significant for two reasons: One, “money from Saudi businessmen accounts for much of the resources of alQaeda,” (according to Vincent Cannistraro, former CIA counter-terrorism chief)² and two, the extremist schools in other parts of the Muslim world are “often supported by donors from other Islamic states like Saudi Arabia.”³

Among these are the madrassas, the Islamic boarding schools in Pakistan. As one of their prayer leaders says “We prepare them for the jihad, mentally...Their minds are fresh.”⁴ The students are eight to twenty years old.

Another teacher, Al-Sheikh Rahat Gul relates the view he propounds to young students: “The Americans kill only innocents. ‘The Koran forbids the killing of females, children, elders and cattle,’ he said. ‘That is war. That is not holy war.’ Sons of Islam must answer that tyranny with holy war, he said. He condemns the World Trade Center attack but dismisses any connection to this part of the world. ‘The Jews have done this,’ he said, calling the attacks a plot by Israel to draw the world into war. ‘And the Hindus are just like them.’”⁵ “‘Don’t put the blame on the curriculum but on the misinterpretation of the Koran and the Sunnah’ or the saying and actions of prophet Muhammad, said Hamid al-Majid, a professor of education at Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud University, the country’s leading seminary. ‘I believe the way to minimize extremism is to put greater emphasis on religious education, but in a good way.’⁶ We can only hope this professor will raise his voice. What would such a curriculum look like?

The minds are fresh. The boys are poor. Perhaps their parents wouldn’t send them if they could feed them. Perhaps their parents are happy to have holy warriors for sons. How does an economy grow? “To divert the poor from the siren call of terrorists, America and its allies must appeal to their entrepreneurial interests...and focus on development at a micro level, encouraging capitalism from below.”⁷ Millions of micro-loans, trade, infrastructure, land reform, peace?

Yet the hijackers were mostly products of middle class homes, universities, some European universities. “The al-Qaeda network is not made up of dirt-poor Palestinians [or Pakistanis – js], but of ineptly but excessively educated Saudis and Egyptians, fomented by Saudi religious charities.”⁸ Remember, Hitler’s Germany was the height of European culture. Remember that America has its own, some highly-educated, homegrown worshippers of gods who love human sacrifice – McVeigh, Kaczynski, the Columbine massacrers. How do we cultivate the hearts of our young people? It is much easier to be an instrument of a god than to think for oneself.

When Christians teach their children that God was exerting His will on America through the events of September 11, they are worshipping the same god that they worship on the Afghani border, where they call the sacrifices at the World Trade Center “The wrath of God.” When Jews teach their children that the Holocaust was caused by Jewish assimilation, they are sacrificing to that

other god too. “You shall love your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and all your might. And these words which I command you this day, shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children...”⁹ But which god? Which is to ask, What interpretation shall we place on “these words”? The one that rings true to the good heart.

¹ cited in Neil MacFarquhar, “Anti-Western and Extremist Views Pervade Saudi Schools.” *The New York Times*, 10/19/01

² in an interview in *The Los Angeles Times*, cited in Holman W. Jenkins Jr., “A Cure for Royal Pains,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 10/17/01

³ Bragg, “Shaping Young Islamic Hearts and Hatreds,” *The New York Times* 10/14/01

⁴ Bragg, *The New York Times*, 10/14/01

⁵ Bragg, *The New York Times*, **10/14/01**

⁶ cited in MacFarquhar, *The New York Times*, 10/19/01

⁷ **Hernando de Soto, “The Constituency of Terror,” *The New York Times*, 10/15/01**

⁸ Jenkins, *The Wall Street Journal*, 10/17/01

⁹ Deuteronomy 6:5-7