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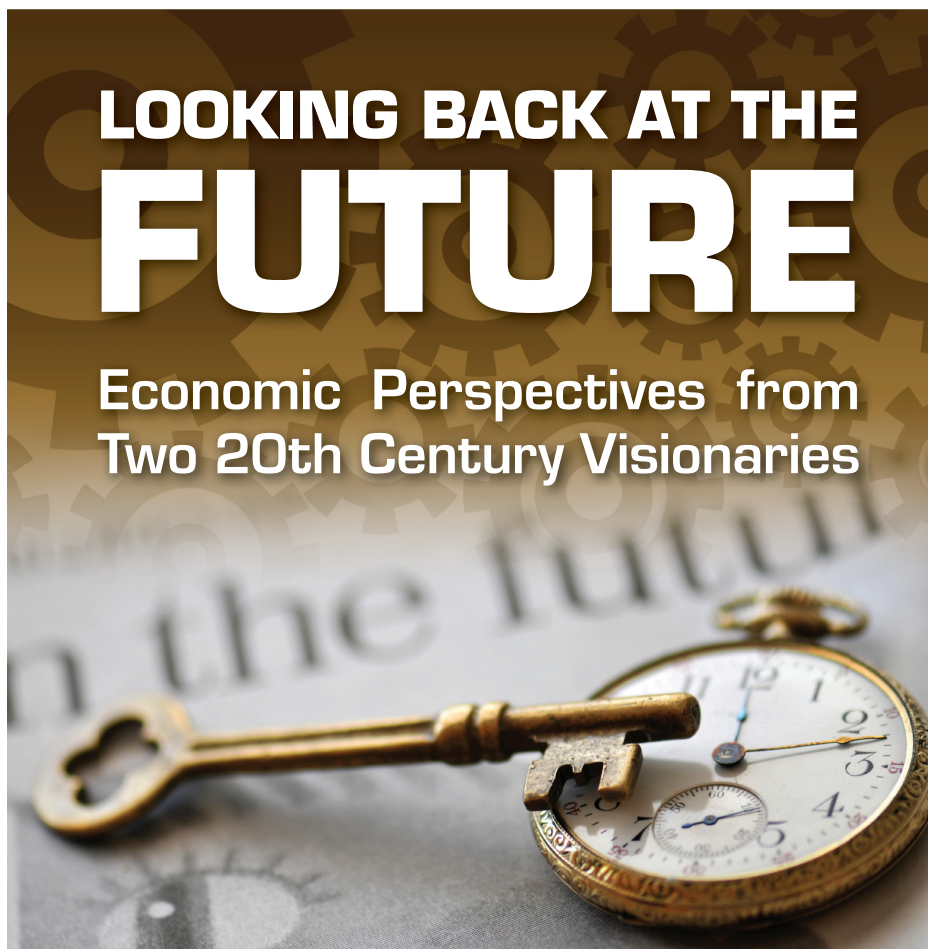
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LOOKING BACK AT THE FUTURE

Economic Perspectives from Two 20th Century Visionaries



by *Seth Bogner*

JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES & YEHUDA ASHLAG (BAAL HASULAM)

The current Global Economic Crisis has affected virtually every country. No corner of the world has been left untouched by the most severe recession in 80 years. Most nations have reacted to the Crisis by following the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes, reputedly the foremost economist of the 20th Century. Keynes believed that government intervention and spending is the best way out of a financial crisis. His theories were the basis of the strategies employed by both the US and UK in response to the Great Depression. Many economists, central bankers and pundits frequently cite Keynesian economics when discussing the various economic stimulus programs enacted globally to attempt to combat the Crisis.

VISION OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC HEALTH

Would Keynes, if he were alive, believe that we would have found ourselves in a quandary similar to the Great Depression all over again? probably not.

Keynes envisioned a vastly different picture of global economic health for our generation. In 1930 in his rarely discussed article, "Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren" Keynes predicted an end or evolution of capitalism. In fact, he foresaw this as a highly desirable eventuality.

Keynes anticipated that by now all the world's economic problems would be solved. Goods and services would be produced at a level to sustain all of humanity and the means to distribute them to all would end the struggle for subsistence. He predicted that improvements in productivity due to technological advancements would increase and together with the accumulation of capital, would solve the world's economic problems. Keynes observed, "We shall be able to rid ourselves of many of the pseudo-moral principles which have hag-ridden us for two-hundred years, by which we have exalted some of the most distasteful of human qualities into the position of the highest virtues. ... therefore, to return to some of the most sure and certain principles of religion and traditional virtue -that avarice is vice, that the exaction of usury is

a misdemeanour, and the love of money is detestable, that those walk most truly in the paths of virtue and sane wisdom who take least thought for the morrow. We shall once more value ends above means and prefer the good to the useful."

While the most renowned economist of the 20th Century was promoting his vision of economic and social possibilities for his grandchildren, the most highly recognized Kabbalist of the 20th Century, Yehuda Ashlag (widely known as Baal HaSulam) was sharing his forward looking world view, which was remarkably similar to those of Keynes. Although contemporaries, Keynes (1883 – 1946) and Ashlag (1884 – 1954) probably never met. Ashlag's theories were rooted in the Wisdom of Kabbalah. If Ashlag were alive today he would probably have told us that the reason for the Crisis was man's unwillingness to recognize we operate in a global interdependent system, mankind will only renounce its economic system when the system brings more suffering for society than pleasure. His views were based on one of Kabbalah's central tenants, if humanity does not work together to correct our egotistical nature and start acting in concert with nature we would bring blows upon mankind of biblical proportions. According to him we could avert the impending suffering by educating people about our inherent nature and providing society with an alternative path.

AN EVOLVED ECONOMIC REALITY

The current Economic Crisis is sending us a message that the capitalism, of our time, must adapt or become extinct, both Keynes and Ashlag foresaw this eventuality 80 years ago. They predicted that the hubris that has been celebrated in our generation will give birth to a new economic reality where capitalism will evolve into a new system. In Keynes' words, "The critical difference will be realized when this condition [freedom from concern about basic survival needs] has become so general that the nature of one's duty to one's neighbour is changed. For it will remain reasonable to be economically purposive for others after it has ceased to be reasonable for oneself."

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“When mankind reaches the degree of complete love for the fellow man, all the happiness intended for humanity will be revealed in all its glory.”

Baal HaSulam



MUSIC CAN NAME THE UNNAMABLE AND COMMUNICATE THE UNKNOWNABLE

– Leonard Bernstein

Music expresses a wide range of emotions, feelings and ideas with varying rhythms, melodies, instruments and vocalizations. Historically, music has highlighted our celebrations with joyful passion; has intimately professed our romantic love in ballads or dejectedly bemoaned its lack; has stalwartly sent troops marching to war and bugled them into battle; music has added pomp to the circumstances requiring such grandeur; and has lamented the loss of loved ones in dirges. Music is capable of conveying deep and complex emotions that are understood and felt by the listeners.

TRUE MUSIC MUST REPEAT THE THOUGHT AND INSPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE TIME

– George Gershwin

Throughout the ages and across cultures, composers have created music as an expression of inner feelings and ideas. Their compositions necessarily are a reflection of all aspects of their

culture, including social and economic frameworks, climate, and availability of technology. Not surprisingly with the widely recognized globalization of the world, which is fraught with financial, economic, social, familial, psychological, and ecological problems, today's music most often expresses disillusionment, pain, suffering, and desires for what seems missing: love, sex, money It isn't just the lyrics that convey the unhappy and dissatisfied messages, the intense beat and discordant, cacophonous instrumentation share the sentiments. Humans are literally singing and shouting their desire to receive, and to receive more and more and more. It is only natural that music resonates these sincere growing and unfilled needs and desires of humanity.

WE HAVE BEEN FOCUSING ENTIRELY ON THE DESIRE TO RECEIVE

In fact, it is a law of Nature, a force that acts upon us. The desire to receive is what runs the human world. But this is only half of the equation. The world really runs on two desires: to receive and to give. “They determine not only our behavior, but the whole of reality – everything we think, see, feel, taste, or touch. ... We receive our life energy from the desire to give, and we are

formed by the desire to receive. However, since we learned that we could change our surroundings to suit our desires, we have been focusing entirely on the desire to receive. We have become ignorant of the fact that we receive energy and life not from the desire to receive, but from the desire to give.” (*Bail Yourself Out*)

Humanity is discovering that our natural growing desire to receive remains unsatisfied, unfilled, unquenched. We are realizing that our exclusive focus on our ever growing desire to receive material things and fulfillment from others leaves us feeling more starkly vacant and empty. As this song asks, “Will I always feel this way, so empty, so estranged?” (*Ray LaMontagne*)

THE ANSWER LIES IN THE DESIRE TO GIVE

The answer lies in the second part of the equation of these forces of Nature, the desire to give. “The interplay between the two desires eludes us because it is the very basis of our makeup, and therefore resides at a level deeper even than our consciousness. But once we understand how these desires interact with each other to create life, we can put this information into practice and discover how to benefit from doing so.” (*Bail Yourself Out*)

MUSIC IS THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE SPIRITUAL AND THE SENSUAL LIFE

– Ludwig van Beethoven

Music also provides a key to understanding the interaction of these forces of Nature. It can help us see our lack of balance with Nature and a clue as to how to attain the balance. Music's current almost exclusive expression of wanting to receive helps us see our singular focus on one of the forces and shows us how distant we are from the other force, the desire to give. We are out of balance. We are not in harmony. “Classical music with strong internal harmony helps because it contains harmony born out of unity between opposites. It is precisely when these opposites unite that they create harmony which corrects...” (*Laitman.com*) Classical music with its intricate, extensive and multi-layered internal harmony exhibits the fitting together and joining of contrasted elements in balance.

This musical example of balance and harmony can help us to achieve the same qualities for humankind..

MUSIC IS THE DIVINE WAY TO TELL BEAUTIFUL, POETIC THINGS TO THE HEART

– Pablo Casals

Music is a universal language and this far reaching quality makes it well suited to be used as tool to help us emerge from the world crisis resultant from the singular focus on receiving. The desires expressed in lack can be supplanted by music that espouses unity and balance between giving and receiving. Musicians who experience unity and the interaction and connection of these two forces can convey this balance in their compositions both through lyrics and melodies. “Music can help us express a whole new side of reality ... the impact of such music on the listener will be unmatched, precisely because it expresses our life force!” (*Bail Yourself Out*)

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Keynes trusted in the inherent generosity and morality of mankind. Unfortunately, mankind has not lived up to his expectations.

Given the accuracy of their vision, perhaps it is time for us to listen to their views on the next stage of socioeconomic development. Their views are remarkably similar: both agree that people must reach a state where concern for other members of the society outweighs concern for self-promotion and they also agree that this transition will not be easy. In fact, Keynes saw this as “the greatest change which has ever occurred in the material environment of life for human beings in the aggregate.” For Ashlag, it represents nothing less than the transformation of human nature from egoism to altruism. In “The Last Generation” Ashlag observed that “our planet is rich enough to provide for all of us, so why this tragic war for life which has been clouding our lives for generations? Let us divide the work and its produce equally among ourselves and end all the troubles.”

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela

A BETTER WORLD FOR OUR CHILDREN

by Riggan Shilstone



With the world in crisis, parents everywhere fear for their children's future. Yet, if we rise to the challenge, we can set them on the path to a future far brighter than any we ever dreamed of

As I sit at my computer, the neighborhood rings with the laughter of children playing tag. It brings back memories of my childhood, and I can't help but wonder what the future has in store for them.

Mankind has always invested superhuman efforts to assure that the next generation will have an easier, more fulfilling life. For many parents today, this dream may forever remain a fantasy. Economic uncertainty, environmental collapse, and violence promise to be the legacy we will leave our children. A Rasmussen Poll in January found that only 47% of American parents believe their children will be better off than they are.

This gloomy outlook should be a clarion call to action for people everywhere. But if we are to have any hope of finding lasting solutions, we must first retrace the developments that led to the problems we face today.

DID SOMEONE PRESS "FAST FORWARD?"

Mankind's needs were simple once: If there was adequate food, shelter and security from predators, life was good. But time marched on, and the necessities were no longer enough. People wanted

more from life, and so the relentless quest for new pleasures began. By the time we reached the 20th century, everything had accelerated, as if someone pressed "fast forward." We went from horses to trains to jets; from telegraphs to phones to the Internet. With each generation, the luxuries of the parents became the necessities of the children

This continuous escalation of self-indulgence has finally caught up with us, bringing our world to the brink of collapse. Our culture of excess reached its culmination with ego-maniacs like Bernard Madoff, who swindled investors of \$50 billion. And while it's easy to put the blame on the likes of Madoff, the reality is that we all bear a share of the guilt, even if our excesses are on a much smaller scale.

If we are honest, we'll see that success in our society is defined as more money, fame or power, no matter what the cost to others. So what can we expect for our future if these are the values that we promote?

If egoism is the root of our problems, then the solution is to transform our values to altruism and sharing. But how? After all, mankind has prospered with a "Me first!" mentality for thousands of years. Yet, in today's globalized society, where everything that happens on one side of the world has an almost immediate impact on the other side, "Me first!" no longer works. In the words of Britain's PM, Gordon Brown, "In this global age, we need solutions that can no longer be defined in terms of us and them, but can be achieved only together – as us *with* them."

NEW PROBLEMS CALL FOR NEW SOLUTIONS

We can't buy our way out of the current crisis with taxpayer dollars or consume our way out through increased shopping. We have to approach life from a new perspective, taking advantage of three powerful tools.

• Education

People today are lost and confused, wondering: Why is this happening? What should we do? But we are resourceful, and if we understand the problem, we will perform miracles to solve it. This is why a public education campaign about the globalization of our economies, the interdependence of all people, and the benefits of cooperation could guide us to the solutions.

Our best hope for the future lies in educating our children. *NY Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof recently classified education as "our greatest national shame." And he's right: we are not providing our children with the knowledge they need to succeed in the new global era. If we offer them an education about the natural laws that govern interconnected systems, they will be prepared to easily navigate the stormy seas that are so baffling to us.

• Media

Most of our behavioral patterns come directly from TV and the Internet. As long as news, entertainment and sports glorify the pursuit of wealth and a "win at any cost" mentality, we will see greed and exploitation dominate our society. If, however, we insist that these venues reflect the values of compassion, we will turn today's destructive media force to our advantage.

And in fact, the tide is already start-

ing to shift. A recent series of ads bears titles such as, "In an Absolut World, Currency will be Replaced with Acts of Kindness." CNN's series on economic survival features stories about people who find happiness through the renewal of family connections, sharing with others, and a simpler lifestyle. We just need to give things a push!

• The Power of Society

The most powerful instrument for change, however, is us. Throughout history, social change has been driven by the people. The 14th century Renaissance is just one example of a cultural movement that led to exponential advances in all areas. And today, the desire for change among the American people was so strong that it swept an unlikely candidate into the highest office.

This is the force we can harness to make the changes in today's society. But how can we transform our approach to life from egoism to altruism when all we know is "taking care of #1"? Actually, our children can show us the way! When a child decides to become a doctor, he "plays" doctor, even though he has no idea what he is doing. Only when the child becomes a doctor will he know what it really means, but each of his imagined notions along the way is a necessary preparation.

So to begin with, we can "fake it until we make it." Our first "altruistic" efforts will be purely egoistic: done to escape the crisis. Over time, however, an amazing transformation will occur: our simulated joy in altruism will give way to the real thing, providing real relief from the crisis.

Arne Duncan, the new Education Secretary, commented, "We have to continue to think differently and do everything we can to put our students ... on the path to pursuing the American dream." Let's pressure our government to use part of the \$150 billion education stimulus to create a new American dream, one that values activities that benefit all and frowns upon personal success at the expense of others. Let's use the power of our collective will to show politicians and businesses that we are no longer buying into a consumer oriented society. Let's encourage media to promote values of generosity and sharing, while shunning egoistic glorification of individuals. In this way, we will leave a lasting legacy to our children, and they will have the wisdom to know how to use it.

“The high destiny of the individual is to serve rather than to rule.”

Albert Einstein

by Chaim Ratz

Recently, it was rumored that Barack Obama was tempted to enter the bidding for a rare edition of the first-ever Superman comic. The rumors began to settle when it was announced that the American President would *not* be participating in the auction (and besides, he's a Spiderman, not a Superman, fan). And finally, all the talk came to a halt when the comic was sold to someone else for \$325,000 (almost the yearly salary for Mr. Obama).

Still, the fact that the rumors started is much more than a coincidence. Superman is a clear symbol of the American Dream; he is the ultimate cowboy, the redeeming angel of a new era. Despite the decades that have passed since he was last seen flying above Metropolis, and the steady stream of heroes that have flooded the world ever since, there is no doubt that the blue knight in the red cape is still number one.

It's no wonder that people are associating Obama with Superman, as if asking the two to join forces and defeat the escalating crisis. Obama's sweeping inaugural speech before Congress was a perfect testimony to this. It was a classic Superman speech.

Superman, as we all know, always “emerges stronger than before” after a crisis. He always comes out on top and gains the upper hand even when all seems lost. He saves the world from complete catastrophe at the very last moment, and gets a big round of applause in the process.



The world is desperately looking for heroes, people who will lead us out of the crises that are pummeling us. Can President Obama rise to the occasion and defeat the villains of greed and egoism?

CAN SUPERMAN STILL PREVAIL?

The only problem is that Obama is trying to be Superman in a post-Superman era, an era where there is no place for mythological superheroes, shrouded in an aura of heroic loneliness. Obama, like the rest of the world leaders, has

to understand that none of the old methods will help him solve this crisis because reality has changed. It's not just that the rules of the game have changed; we are playing a completely new game.

Until recently, we have lived in an individualistic world, where the planet was ruled by omnipotent financial opportunists and brilliant, cunning ego-giants. Now, however, the situation has changed completely. It's as if an invisible giant fisherman has caught humanity inside one global net and left it hanging, lost and perplexed. The fat sharks on Wall Street have suddenly found themselves tossed into the same boat as the smallest of the “small fry” in Istanbul, all gasping for air in unison.

In this new era, the collapse of the financial system is clearly showing us that an attitude of using others, or even just caring for yourself alone, is a vengeful, double-edged sword. Our ambition, also known as the ego, has ceased being a loyal friend that helps us get ahead

and has become a dangerous enemy. And now, the big question is: who will save the world from itself?

NEW HEROES FOR A NEW AGE

There is no doubt that we are in dire need of new heroes. To find them, we must rearrange our entire value system and change the formula for prosperity from the one that says: “success comes from using others,” to the opposite, “success comes from mutual concern.” Or, in the words of the British prime minister Gordon Brown to labor activists in Bristol, “Our task must be nothing less than to rebuild a financial system where it has failed and then to create an economy where banks are no longer serving themselves but serving the public.”

Our new, interconnected, interrelated world demands new superheroes, who will understand that the true enemy is found within. A true hero will be someone who knows how to conquer his own evil inclination, his own greed and self-centered way of thinking. The leaders of tomorrow will be people or nations who know they have to encourage mutual support and strengthen the connections between people, and who are able to see others as heroes, too.

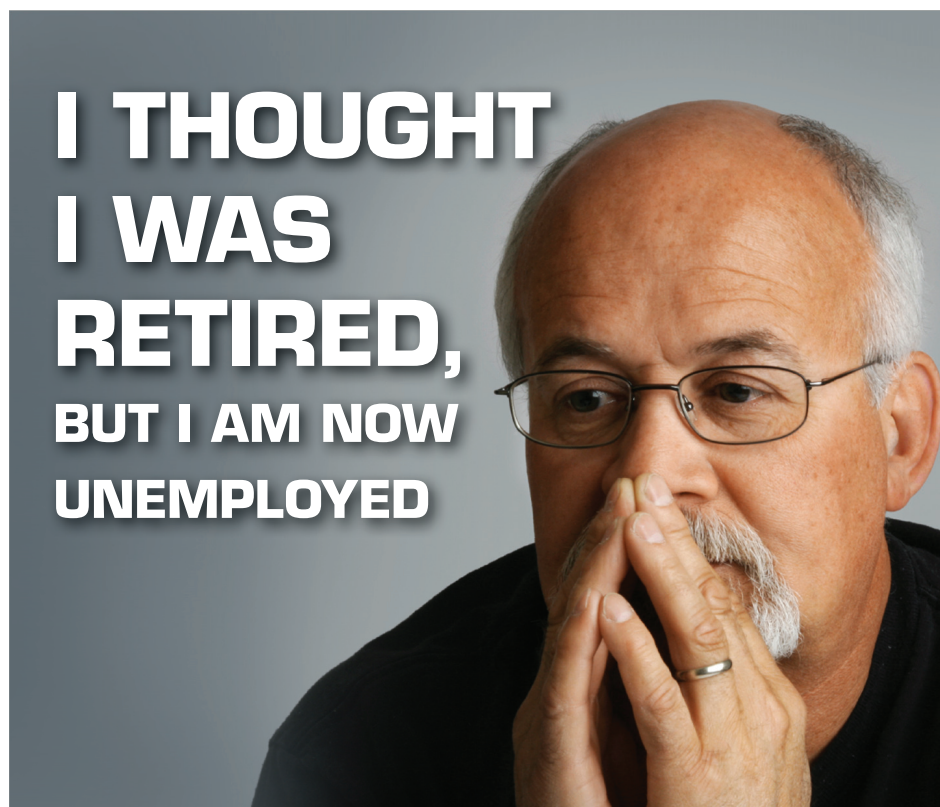
The new superheroes will communicate the laws of integration and unification, necessary for our existence, to the next generations. They will teach people to see themselves and others as organs in one body, existing inside one nature, as one universal Superman. And just like in a body, mutual care for the benefit of the whole generates harmony and life, whereas caring for the self alone results in cancer. The new Superman will help us all understand that this also applies to our single, unified body of humanity, and once we understand this, we will regain life in the systems that are now gasping for air.

Could Obama be that Superman? Only time will tell. He is off to a promising start. He shows a great desire to change the world for the better, and has a personality that embodies a unique mixture of countries and people. The only question is whether he will be wise enough to set the right example for the other world leaders to follow. Otherwise, he may find himself carved into the pages of history as the last egoistic Superman. ■



“He is the only one of them all who does not seem to me ridiculous. Perhaps that is because he is thinking of something else besides himself.”

Antoine de Saint-Exupery



Like so many people, my carefully crafted retirement plans are in shatters. Now it is time to move past the “blame game” and find our own solutions

by **Pete LaTona**

I retired in late 2006 with a conservative financial plan in place that would last through the lives of my wife and myself and still leave a little something for the kids. My financial planner and I choose an appropriate asset allocation model and we needed only 5% returns to be in good shape. My wife and I planned on working or volunteering, because we wanted to not because we had to. After many years in corporate America, this seemed like a great position to be in as we faced our “golden years.”

I am still in a little bit of shock over everything that has happened in the fi-

nancial markets over the past year. On the one hand, events unfolded in the blink of an eye, and on the other, it was a death by a thousand cuts. My retirement plans were solid and in place, but now they are gone. Disappeared. Vanished. Dead. They will not be revived and I am left with the shock, disbelief, despair and anger of trying to figure out what to do next.

SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS

What I want to know is: Who is responsible for all this? I played by the rules. I put my money in secure invest-

ments. I didn't gamble on housing or any of the other get rich schemes out there. Perhaps I was too willing to accept the advice of financial planners with all of their asset allocation models and long-term investment theories. History always repeats itself, the market runs in cycles, you cannot time the market, and so, in the end, you buy and hold investments, trusting the theory that what comes down will eventually rise even higher. But I don't think this will be so this time. The mess we are in right now feels very different. No one is talking about rebounding to past highs. All of the talk is about whether we can avoid the dire straits of a total system collapse

There is probably much blame to go around. For years, while I was still a part of corporate America, I was incensed at the salaries, bonuses, perks and power being given to our CEO and to all CEOs. CEOs in the USA average 450 times the pay of the average worker, CEOs in the next highest ranking country average 22 times the average worker's pay. It's not too hard to see that something was terribly wrong, but times were booming, money was being made, stock prices were climbing, so who cared? Of course now we find out that most of these profits were just shell games and the people who could, manipulated their way to huge paydays. The foxes raided the hen houses, and they have all gotten away.

I need to get back to work. I need to earn money comparable to my former salary, but it won't be easy. My age and experience work against me, not for me. The job market is terrible, and we just hit 23 straight months of net job losses. There is no end in sight, but still, I conduct my daily job searches, try to stay positive, and pray I do not lose everything I have worked so hard to acquire.

A WAY FORWARD

I am an optimistic person, but it is clear to me that all of the rules have changed. I have no confidence in the economic stimulus plans, although I am a supporter of this President. I do not see how we can buy our way out of this mess. It is like we are trying to pay off the judge in order to avoid going to jail, but the judge is harsh and does not accept bribes. Something tells me that we must accept our sentence and learn from all this. I don't claim to know what our lesson or lessons might be, but I feel certain that our lives have to change, as do our desires. “He who dies with the most toys wins” was a funny bumper sticker, but it is funny no more. I think it is time to end this era of greed, selfishness and over-consumption. It is time to focus on needs and not wants, and it certainly wouldn't hurt to think about how our actions affect the other guy, and not just about “what is in it for me.”

There are so many of us in this predicament. It is as if we are stranded on an island and there is no one coming to our rescue – certainly not the government! Perhaps therein lie our opportunities. Those of us with first-hand experience on how the old rules no longer apply can begin to create the new rules. We can find strength by looking to each other. Our unique bond will then expand into a feeling of being truly connected, and this connection will feel so good and right that we'll begin to desire more of it. As we nurture this connection, we'll begin to realize what our world could look like if we took care of each other instead of taking care of only ourselves.

Why not put this into action? It has been talked about often, but never implemented. What do we have to lose?



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*Kabbalah
and the
Meaning
of Life*



“Give us the knowledge of laws of nature, and both future and past will reveal their secrets.”

Isaac Newton

EXPERT OPINION



Nature is filled with examples of endlessly repeating patterns, where the whole is built on the balanced interaction of the parts. For generations, man has only looked at his “parts” – individuals. Now, maybe it is time to consider the whole – humanity

by Elliot Pines, Ph.D

I feel another downhill day coming, and I dread going into work. Will I get a sudden escort out this morning like poor Erika? Our manager, Phil, wouldn't want us to steal or damage anything, especially staff morale – as if there were any left! I've known Phil for 30 years; what's happened to him? To the whole world?.

At least we still have some creature comforts, most notably – a gourmet cup of java to give me some courage. Watching that drop of cream in the coffee, the pattern of swirls within swirls, I can't help thinking back to that 1972 Carly Simon song, “*I had some dreams; they were clouds in my coffee, clouds in my coffee...*”

Clouds in coffee... swirls within swirls... patterns, unfolding within themselves, over and over, like variations on a theme. Isn't this the way all of Nature is? Fern leaves, coastlines, clouds – each is composed of a geometric shape that's repeated at a smaller and smaller scale, each shape nested within

its larger counterpart. Isn't there something to be learned at this time from this property that is so pervasive in Nature? Perhaps the world's problems and solutions are hidden within these unique, yet universal, patterns. And perhaps we could unlock this universal secret if only we had a master key, the “fractal”!

PATTERNS OF LIFE

This term, referring to all these pervasive self-similarities, was coined by Benoit Mandelbrot, due to the common element in the recurring patterns – their **fractional** dimension. The math behind a fractal is a simple repeating formula, yet it can produce awesomely beautiful visuals. Looking into them, one senses a deep, almost frightening, power – a two-way ebb and flow, as though looking into the eyes of Infinity itself.

There really is a dynamic transcending the still image. As pointed out by Robert Shaw, a pioneer in the science

of “Chaos,” there's actual communication reflected up and down the orders of magnitude between the inner and outer patterns. But for us, the consequences are a lot more serious than pretty pictures.

A most important example is our complex heartbeat and circulatory flow. The complexity actually keeps us alive. Because all the components work together in perfect harmony, communicating as though in mutual love, coronary interactions operate smoothly on every scale. Natural fluctuations at any level are corrected by the system as a whole. However, if this “love” breaks down and a part of the system selfishly pulls itself too far away for too long, something ominous begins to happen. The beat pattern grows smoother, at first glance seemingly a sign of stability; that is, until it smoothes down to a simple sine wave, and finally - the straight line of cardiac arrest.

The fractal's universality makes the above a fundamental law of nature, ruling all systems: mineral, vegetable, animal, and human. But only at the human level is there the freedom to follow a dysfunctional policy of “every man for himself.” Sweet as it may first appear to gifted predators, beneath the surface the system begins an accelerating decay, until the nightmare finally comes out of the woodwork as Murphy's Law: “Anything that can go wrong will go wrong.”

It's a bit like an enormous pocket watch over wound to the point of no return. Though it may still be beautiful, gold and shiny on the surface, a look

at the inner mechanism will reveal a flaming explosion of snapping teeth and mainspring, leading to the grand finale – the freezing of gears, grinding to a halt. So it is with our business models: systematic doom seals the fate of even the most “successful” individuals along with the rest of the human mechanism. It's just a question of “who by fire and who by ice.”

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Humanity's evolution into a global economy through ever-growing and entwining infrastructures has given it a worldwide heartbeat and circulation. Murphy's Law has already started to go berserk before our very eyes, yet we continue to proceed mindlessly against Nature, like lemmings treading toward a cliff's edge. No force can turn the situation around other than every person's individual, free choice to see others as the greater part of himself, rather than isolated prey to feed upon. Do we not yet realize that the pattern in each of our personal fractals is actually made of all of us?

The clouds in my coffee dissipate on a hopeful note – a song the Young Bloods provided five years before Carly Simon, “*Come on people now, smile on your brother. Everybody get together; try to love one another right now.*” And when we look into the eyes of Infinity, maybe we'll be met by an infinite fractal smile. Wouldn't that be something!

Despite the odds, my cup of java has once again kept its promise to encourage. What message will your favorite brew be giving you? ■

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“Love consists in desiring to give what is our own to another and feeling his delight as our own.”

Emanuel Swedenborg

LETTERS FROM THE READERS

HOW CAN WE STOP MEDICINE FROM BEING A BUSINESS?



procedures they perform, and whether the hospitals are filled with sick patients. The system is built so doctors profit by keeping the patients sick for as long as possible! However, shouldn't their first and foremost concern be for the patients to be healthy?

Yet, can we really go back to the “good Samaritan”

system of ancient times? No, we can't, because back then, people's egos were much smaller than today. In addition, the problem is global, not local. Under these circumstances, the only way to create a healthy medical system is by creating a global solution that will address the egos of today's people.

If society as a whole will pay for health, rather than illness, doctors will have incentive to prevent ailments from occurring in the first place. Then people's health will improve and health care expenses will decrease.

Money should be removed from the doctor-patient relationship. A doctor should receive administrative, not monetary, punishment for mistakes he makes, and a patient should not be able to demand monetary compensation through the courts. Instead, the only kind of compensation he should receive is treatment.

In Latin, “doctor” means “teacher.” So, a doctor is someone who should teach people how to live without getting sick! How different is this definition from our present, egoistic medical system!?

A letter sent to us by physician Dr. Angelov of Boston, Massachusetts USA:

WHAT IS WRONG WITH MODERN MEDICAL INSURANCE?

35% of the stimulus package intended to jumpstart the US economy is going to the medical industry, because it is one of the hardest-hit by the financial crisis. Insurance rates have gone up, but people's incomes certainly haven't, so many can no longer afford doctor visits or medication. It's even worse with the unemployed, who have lost health insurance entirely.

The government is trying to salvage the situation, but unfortunately, it's using the same measures that caused the medical industry to go into crisis in the first place: allocating funds to people's egos. But our egos are what caused the crisis! How so?

People's egos, their desire to make more and more money, have become more important than healthy relation-

ships between doctors and patients. Modern medicine is run by the profit principle: It's not about how effective it is at helping the sick, but about how much profit it brings to everyone involved.

Doctors make money from their patients' illnesses and medical procedures, and thus have little motivation to cure them, and patients, in turn, look for opportunities to sue the doctors for malpractice. There is no trust between them since the entire modern medical insurance revolves around money, rather than care for the patients and their health.

THE MEDICAL INDUSTRY WAS NOT ALWAYS THIS WAY

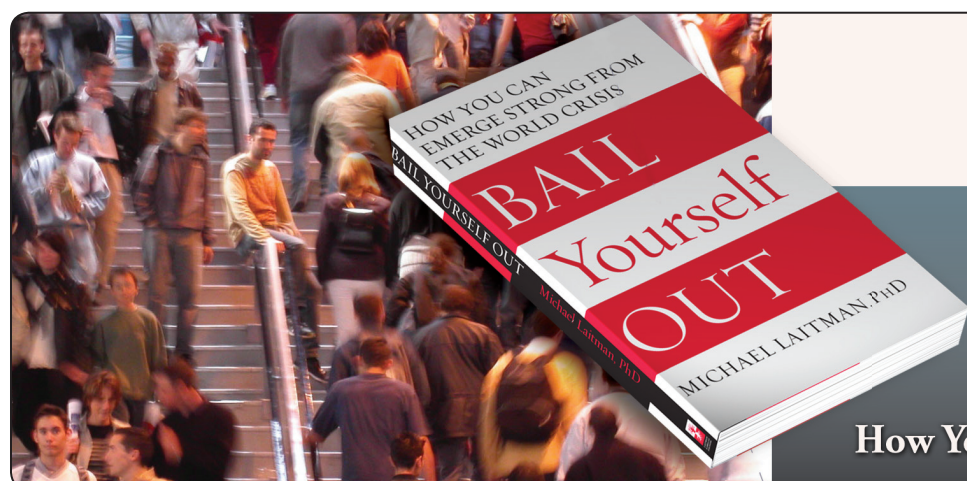
In ancient China, 4000 years ago, every morning a healer would pass by every house in the village. A vase was placed by the entrance to every

house, containing a coin for the healer, signifying that everyone in that house was healthy. If the vase was empty, this meant that someone in the house was sick. The healer would enter and treat the sick person to the best of his ability; and the herbs, needles and other medical supplies were paid for by the coin that hadn't been put inside the vase. In his free time, the healer would also go to people's houses to make sure their diets and lifestyles were healthy.

Back then, health insurance was completely opposite to what it is today. People paid to help keep others healthy, and the person who was ill did not have to pay.

COULD THIS EVER WORK TODAY?

Clearly, we have to stop medicine from being a business. Today, doctors' salaries depend on the number of sick patients they have, the number of medical



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Michael Laitman, PhD

BAIL YOURSELF OUT

How You Can Emerge Strong from the World Crisis



Throughout history, women have been the force maintaining harmony in the home and family. Now it is time to use our wisdom to bring that same balance to our world, the global village

by **Keren Applebaum**

The world is be faced with many unprecedented challenges, including financial instability worldwide, a record food shortage, and an escalating trend of violence in many countries. Under these circumstances, the world's greatest hope at this time is its women: their inherent ability to nurture and heal, to be wise and compas-

sionate, and to take necessary action when the times call for it.

Women's voices are being heard today more than ever before, with a record number of women in office and leadership positions. We have Hillary Clinton in the USA, Angela Merkel in Germany, Tarja Halonen in Finland, Vaira Vike-Freiberg in Latvia, Cristina

Kirshner in Argentina, Pratibha Patil in India, Gloria Macapagal in the Philippines, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in Liberia, Yulia Tymoshenko in the Ukraine, and many more. But this is not enough. We cannot leave the work to the leading women, because a true change has to begin from the bottom up (as proven by Obama's presidential campaign).

IF NOT ME, THEN WHO?

As 2009 takes us deeper into the global financial crisis, each and every one of us should ask herself: what am I doing about the world's situation? What contribution am I making to amend the financial crisis or the escalating violence? Why don't I make myself heard and help lead the world to safer ground?

So, what exactly should we do? The way to a better world starts at the level of recognition, a recognition that the current situation requires us to adopt relationships of compassion and consideration for all people in our small global village. Thus, we must first make the change within, in our hearts.

Once we do this, we can begin to educate the people around us about these new attitudes. Women today have great influence over the media – we are editors, writers, TV show hosts, teachers, and radio talk show hosts, and we can promote the compassionate approach

the world now needs through all these channels. And at the very least, every woman can influence her boyfriend, husband, friends and neighbors.

Some of us may feel held back because we are as confused by the present global fiasco as the next person. But ask yourself this: Who else can begin and power this spiritual transformation if not the women of the world? The global nature of our problems demonstrates that we are becoming one global family, and just like in a regular family, women have the greatest power to change things for the better.

A WORLD IN HARMONY

It is time to bring our innate abilities out into the greater world – to use your strength, wisdom and understanding to help the whole world be properly arranged in the new, globalized reality. Think of it this way: how many men are capable of maintaining a successful career while smoothly running a household, taking care of their children, and naturally setting the tone for the proper functioning of the whole family?

The answer is clear. What our “global home” lacks is a woman's touch, a woman's influence from within. Only then will our global family regain safety and stability.

About Bnei Baruch

Bnei Baruch is a non-profit organization committed to sharing the wisdom of Kabbalah in order to raise humankind's level of spirituality. Its founder and president, Kabbalist Rav Michael Laitman, PhD, was the disciple and personal assistant to Rabbi Baruch Ashlag, son of Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (author of the *Sulam* [Ladder] commentary on *The Book of Zohar*).

Bnei Baruch provides individuals of all faiths, religions, and cultures with the precise tools they will need to embark on a fascinating journey of self-discovery and spiritual ascent. Its teaching method focuses primarily on the inner processes that people experience, each at his or her own pace.

In recent years, a massive worldwide search for the answers to life's questions has been gaining momentum. Society has lost its ability to perceive reality as it is, and in its place, superficial and often misleading concepts have appeared. Bnei Baruch reaches out to all those who are seeking awareness beyond the ordinary, who wish to understand their true purpose for being here.

Bnei Baruch's approach to understanding our experience of life on earth is both practical and reliable. By studying Ashlag's method, based on authentic writings, we can overcome the trials of everyday life, and initiate a process by which we will move beyond our present boundaries and limitations.

In addition to *Kabbalah Today*, Bnei Baruch offers a variety of avenues for further study. Among them are: Kabbalah TV (www.kab.tv), the Online Kabbalah Learning Center (www.KabbalahLearningCenter.info), and www.kabbalah.info, the largest, most comprehensive Kabbalah site on the Internet.

Bnei Baruch welcomes people of all ages and lifestyles to engage in this rewarding process.

About Kabbalah Today

In 1940, Kabbalist Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam) published the first and, as it turned out, the last issue of his Kabbalah paper *HaUma* (*The Nation*). Its aim was to introduce the ancient wisdom of Kabbalah in a contemporary style and language. The paper was shut down by the

British Mandate authorities after having received malicious (and false) information that the journal propagated communism. Nevertheless, the goals for which *The Nation* was published are even more valid today than ever.

Kabbalah Today continues the spirit of *The Nation*. It is a Kabbalah paper that shares the ancient wisdom of Kabbalah in a contemporary style, and aims to reach people from all walks of life. Its sections provide readers with a wide variety of content, presented in different styles and approaches, while guaranteeing that the material is true to authentic Kabbalah texts such as *The Book of Zohar*, *The Tree of Life*, and the writings of Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag.

No prior knowledge is required to read *Kabbalah Today*.

It is our hope that you will enjoy reading *Kabbalah Today* as much as we enjoy making it.

Sincerely,
Kabbalah Today editorial staff

If you wish to share your comments and feedback with us, please write to: info@kabbalah.info

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Through Kabbalah we can reveal nature's complete picture, achieve world peace, eternal life and unbounded fulfillment, all while living in this world.

All efforts of the Bnei Baruch Association are aimed solely at achieving these goals.

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