The 3 C's: Gateways to Jewish Peoplehood

Covenantal

In each and every generation a person is obliged to see himself as if he has gone out from Egypt.

This phrase advocates that history is the collective memory. The covenantal approach to Judaism says that what matters is that we live within a particular set of visions, values, dreams, and experiences that we are all products of, and keep retelling and passing on. A covenantal Jew sees him or herself as living as part of the chain of history, and acts with the drive to be a good link in this chain. What’s more, covenantal Jews are propelled by their very connection to the chain. The covenant has been made between God and the Jewish People, which imposes obligations and commandments on those involved. This covenant is seen as the road map directing as to where we (today) are coming from and where we are headed, as well as what the larger purpose of the journey is for. Being a covenantal Jew is about tapping into the wealth of cultural and religious capitol that Jewish tradition offers.

Common perceptions: ____________________________

The 'poster child': ____________________________

Communitarian

All of Israel is Responsible for one another

Communitarian Judaism champions that in spite of the geographic and ideological diversity, all the Jews of the world are one extended family, and therefore worry about each other, care for one another, celebrate together, etc. A communitarian Jew makes sure to visit the synagogue in any city they visit on their travels (regardless of whether or not they go to synagogue in their own town). The most ardent communitarians may be secular in their theology, but are committed to supporting fellow Jews worldwide in any plight. Being a communitarian Jew is about tapping into the abundant social capitol of world Jewry.

Common perceptions: ____________________________

The 'poster child': ____________________________

Cosmopolitan

To fix the world in the kingdom of God

Cosmopolitan Jews view humans in the divine image and see the ultimate Jewish purpose as being to fix the world and make it a just place. A cosmopolitan Jew is one who says and believes “I am fully living and expressing my Jewish identity by fixing the world (and not necessarily, or not only, by fixing Jews)”. Though perhaps the majority of cosmopolitan Jews may not actually interpret their actions as expressions of Judaism, the Cosmopolitan approach to Jewish peoplehood prescribes this association as an opportunity to deepen and enrich one’s work, as well as to widen the range of people and organization working together to make a strong impact.

Common perceptions: ____________________________

The ‘poster child’: ____________________________
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 ADDRESS OF ANATOLY (NATAN) SHARANSKY

By Rabbi Richard Jacobs, Summer 2006 (abridged)

Three days after Yom Kippur, while most rabbis were recovering from the High Holy Days or building their Sukkot, I was in the African nation of Chad, meeting with refugees who had survived the genocide across the border in the Darfur region of Sudan.

...On October 18, thirty-six hours after taking off from JFK International Airport, we landed in Eastern Chad, a vast desolate area bordering Darfur that is now home to some 300,000 Darfur survivors in twelve refugee camps. ...Hardship was evident everywhere...Later that day, we were sitting on the dirt floor of a tent in the Kuoungou refugee camp, another sprawling sea of huts and tents. Kuoungou, about a half-hour's drive from Guedeia, is now home to some 11,000 refugees. Through an interpreter we listened to the chilling stories of Darfur survivors. Yago Abdallah Omer; a man in his mid-40s with a salt-and-pepper Van Dyke beard, was dressed in a white turban and loose-fitting African clothes. He had been the principal of the school in his village in Northern Darfur. “It was early in the morning and I was at school with my students,” Omer said through an interpreter. “First, the village was surrounded by the Janjaweed [Arab militia armed by the Sudanese government] on horseback. Then the Antonovs [Russian-manufactured warplanes operated by the Sudanese army] came and bombed the village. On the FM radio frequency I heard the pilots coordinating the attack with the horsemens on the ground.” These were not the isolated actions of spontaneous desert marauders, but an act of state-sponsored genocide. Yago told us that he walked for twelve days before reaching Chad. He is one of the few men we saw in the camps; most were either killed or are in Darfur battling the militia and the Sudanese army.

Next we heard from Adam Ishak Chalac, an older man whose face was covered in deep scars. Government cars had driven into his village in Northern Darfur. Guns blazing, they shouted racial epithets. Thirty-five of the 300 villagers were killed. We assured Yago and Adam that we would share their horrifying experiences with as many people as possible. We hoped that their pain would help awaken the sleeping conscience of the world. “Inside Sudan, over two million civilians in Darfur have been bombed out of their homes and now live as IDPs (internally displaced persons). Children, women, and men perish from starvation and illness every day, living in these “dens of death” under control of the very people who are the cause of their suffering. Many Non-Governmental Organizations have pulled their aid workers out of Darfur because the NGOs are unable to protect them. The 7,000 African Union peacekeepers cannot shield these aid workers and have no mandate to safeguard Darfur’s civilian population.

The genocide in Darfur has strong and undeniable parallels to the Holocaust. Civilians are being murdered daily in Darfur by the government’s Janjaweed militias, much like Hitler’s Einsatzgruppen slaughtered more than a million Jews before the Nazis started using death camps with gas chambers.

...In our last few hours in Chad, we stopped in the open market to buy some African fabric. I wanted to make a question my grandchildren will one day ask me. “Grandpa, what did you know about the significance of aspiring to live by the commandments. Sinai does not tell us about the moral purity of the Jewish nation, but about the judge himself by the way he acts and not by mystical myths regarding the purity or sacredness of celestial languages with the land. Th... external transformation of the suffering slave. Sinai requires of the Jew that he believe in the possibility of integrating the moral demands of Sinai into the land. We first went to Sinai, made a covenant with God, and pledged absolute allegiance to the commandments. We spent years in the desert casting off the mantle of the suffering slave. After we overcome the humiliating memory of slavery and persecution and understood the failure to implement covenantal responsibilities.

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קדושה |بني ברית
Communitarian

קהילה | בני ישראל
Cosmopolitan

קוסמוסוליטי | בני אדם