the life of Theodor Herzl. As I thought about writing this essay, it occurred to me that Herzl was a man of the theater. He is always writing lousy comedies with French doors; he loves the cheap brocade and he is terrible at life (husband and father, anyone?). Then, he finds a way to make his fantasy real. He stages a Zionist Congress and insists the delegates wear dinner jackets. He encounters the kaiser and plays a statesman with the sultan; he receives an offer to buy Palestine. (Rothschild declined his small character part.) Finally, Herzl's pageant turns against him and after the turbulent final Zionist Congress (where he is reviled), he dies. But his characters keep moving after him — out of the East, Jews move to Palestine, and his posthumous production continues to run. They are drinking Viennese swirls outside the opera he imagined, in Tel Aviv, even now. He is Don Quixote, tilting at windmills, of course. I just didn't see it. Now there is a baking tin in which to raise a life.

Sometimes one must squint to see what's moving in the darkness. And sometimes one must cut away most of the dough before uncovering what is rising in the oven — suddenly alive and running like a gingerbread man. When the character won't stop running, when one is surprised by what makes the character run, you have a play.

The Temple: Strong Metaphors Don't Die

DALIA MARX

I admit that writing about the Temple is not the most natural topic for me, a vegetarian Reform female rabbi who lives in Jerusalem and has no desire to behold a third Temple on her way to work. But the Temple and how Jews think about it as a repository of the prayers and yearnings of the people of Israel — almost 2,000 years after its destruction — remain riveting. Generations of Jews have prayed to be able to behold the restoration of the Temple but have not been privileged to witness it. The absent Temple remained very present in the Jews' imagination and imagery throughout the ages; it shaped their language and encapsulated their hopes for redemption even though it was not a concrete component of their lives. The Temple is remembered in Jewish tradition as a place of unity, utmost purity, and holiness. Contemporary sources, however, did not spare it or its priestly leadership from reservations and harsh criticism.

The Temple was perceived as an intersection between the divine and the human, between Jew and Jew (see the poetic description of the pilgrimage in *Mishnah Bikkurim*, Chapter 1), between the vertical and the horizontal; it was the essence to which all other practices were compared. After its destruction, the Temple became the measure of many contemporary rabbinic practices, as can be observed in this story about Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai, the leader who is identified more than anyone else with the post-Temple rabbinic revolution:

Once, Rabban Johanan was walking in Jerusalem. Rabbi Joshua followed after him, and beheld the Temple in ruins.

"Woe unto us!" Rabbi Joshua cried, "that this place, the place where the iniquities of Israel were atoned for, is laid waste."

What is the meaning of the Temple as a metaphor that symbolizes utmost purity and unity, now that we are back in our historic homeland?

"My son," Rabban Johanan said to him, "Be not grieved; we have another atonement as effective as this. And what is it? It is *gemilut hasadim* (acts of lovingkindness), as it is said, 'For I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'" (Hosea 6:6; *Avot d'Rabbi Nathan*, 9, p. 21)

And just as acts of lovingkindness can serve as valid replacements for the sacrificial cult, so, too, can Torah study, prayer, and repentance serve as legitimate substitutes for Temple worship. The Temple's appearance and aroma, the voices heard from within it, and the emotions of those who entered it, have been preserved in the Mishnah's succinct words. Now, our focus is on prayer, study, and religious intentionality (*kavanah*) rather than on a specific place and act. But in the generations immediately following the destruction, the Temple greatly occupied the rabbis — in fact, four of the six orders of the Mishnah are dedicated to Temple-related issues and practices.

Some believe that had the Temple not been destroyed, it would have been eventually ignored. Jews of the late Second Temple period

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seemed to need a different kind of religious symbol or experience. In a way, its dramatic destruction was the greatest public relations success in Jewish history. And, paradoxically, the Temple became more accessible after its destruction. Before, pilgrims ascended to it only at prescribed times (many people were likely not privileged to enter its gates more than a few times over their lifetimes, if at all). Today, standing in prayer, reciting the grace after meals, or participating in lifecycle events are all vehicles for entering the figurative Temple courts. Every man is a priest in his "lesser Temple" (home) and every woman lighting Shabbat candles is comparable to the High Priest.

Writing these words, I am conscious of the extraordinary circumstances of my existence in Jewish history. Living in Jerusalem reminds me that one of the essential rules for ensuring the endurance of metaphors is to keep them somewhat obscure and mysterious, not entirely attainable, and most definitely not translatable into reality. What is the meaning of the Temple as a metaphor that symbolizes utmost purity and unity, now that we are back in our historic homeland? To some, the metaphor of the Temple and its cult should not remain a mere symbolic matter. Extreme Jewish groups (often supported by fundamentalist Christian organizations) explicitly call for practical and spiritual preparations for the rebuilding of the Temple, disregarding the devastating political ramifications of such endeavors. But even if, for the sake of argument, we put these fringe groups aside, the desire to restore the Temple is not only dangerous but also futile.

Our task today is to find ways to make the Temple a constructive metaphor without trying to revive the Temple itself. Quite the contrary, it is up to us to continue to transform Judaism into a more pluralistic and ever-evolving religion and culture that reflects the needs of contemporary Jews, just as the Temple once did in its time.

Cherubs and Gender Harmony

IRIT KOREN

I often wonder about the metaphor of the cherubs at the end of the Adam and Eve creation story. This image of the cherubs in Genesis is a key symbol to the understanding of creation. In this essay, I will focus only on the second story of creation. After man is created, God identifies the loneliness of the *adam*, person, as the first flaw in God's creation plan. Surprisingly, it is God, not *adam*, who is able to articulate this problematic existence, hence God wishes to create an *ezer kenegdo*. It is the ambiguity in this term, *kenegdo*, that enables us to understand the story. The word *kenegdo* can be understood either as "opposite" or as "against." God gives us the potential to decide how the interaction and gender relations will ensue. Will the first couple be able to see each other as two subjects who are standing in front of each other, facing each other? Or will each see the other standing in opposition?

After the woman is created from the *adam*, he recognizes her existence and proclaims, "This one shall be called 'woman' (*'isha'*)." (Genesis 2:23) His naming of the woman — like his naming of the animals earlier — demonstrates his superiority and a hierarchy in the world order.[1] According to Anne Lapidus Lerner, when the man names the female creature "woman," he defines his authority over the woman as fundamental and binding. It is clear that name-giving in the ancient world was "a powerful activity, a symbol of sovereignty."[2] Hence, the *adam* chose to view the woman as standing against him, creating hierarchical relations of a dominant one and a submissive one. The *adam* has made the choice to "shift from differentiation to domination."[3]

It is also at this moment that the process of gender alienation begins. *Adam* refers to the woman in the third person, "because from man [*ish*] was taken this [*zot*]." (Genesis 2:23) It is not surprising that from this moment until the end of the story, the *adam* and the woman never once talk to each other directly — a tragedy of noncommunication of the first two gendered beings.

After this creation story, we are introduced to the "fall" of man and woman and their "punishment" for the forbidden act of eating from the tree. After their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, two symbolic objects are put behind them at the entrance of the garden: "the *cherubim* and the *fiery ever-turning sword*, to guard the way to the tree of life." (Genesis 3:24 author emphasis).

The cherubs are seen not only as guardians

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[1] Phyllis Trible, *Overtures to Biblical Theology*, 92, 96.

[2] Anne Lapidus Lerner, *Eternally Eve: Images of Eve in the Hebrew Bible, Midrash, and Modern Poetry*, 182. Here I disagree with Trible who claims that the act of calling the woman "*isha*" is not an act of dominating power but rather an act of recognition, as opposed to the act of calling the animals by name which is an act of power. Rather, I see the act of naming, in both instances, as an act of domination.

[3] See Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 51.