

Although he had not abandoned the tendency of anthropology to emphasize the *functional* interrelationships between religious practices and beliefs, it was also of prime importance to Harris to comprehend such phenomena as *processes* that did not have an independent existence in people's minds or depend on a set of *a priori* cultural or symbolic norms, which was the prevailing anthropological view. On the contrary, for Harris they reflected and, even more, were part of, a community's overall mode of production, emerging out of the practical experience of people challenged to secure their livelihoods within a particular set of environmental conditions. As such, they could be shown to play an important role in organizing or reinforcing behavior patterns that were crucial, often counterintuitively, to the ongoing dynamic of a given social formation. But, to that extent, religious phenomena, in Harris' overall research strategy, were really treated no differently than any other cultural traits that initially seemed to have an incomprehensible relationship to the way people met basic needs.

Harris first elaborated this position in two papers on the "cultural ecology" of the sacred cattle of India (1966), in which he forcefully argued that the apparently counter-productive Hindu taboos on cow slaughter and beef consumption were intelligible if examined both in terms of other material advantages – such as the use of cow dung for fuel and fertilizer and of oxen for traction – for individual poor farmers and, in the aggregate, in terms of their cumulative positive effects for the carrying capacity of the Indian ecosystem.

Over time, Harris elaborated his arguments to meet the views of his many critics, while his general method of analysis was extended by some of his students and colleagues to other cases. Collectively, they have made a powerful argument that patterns of religious meaning and practice need to be seen within wider patterns of survival and livelihood strategies of individuals, communities and societies.

Harris' work is not beyond criticism. There is a tendency in his approach, especially where he has examined religious beliefs related to dietary practices (including not only the cow in India, but the pork taboo in ancient Israel and cannibalism among the Aztecs) to place inordinate emphasis on endogenous variables such as population pressure and to minimize the influence of political-economic structures and processes, especially those of a global nature. In his accounts of the emergence of the India cow taboo, for example, Harris' environmental history of the sub-continent makes virtually no reference to British colonialism. While this does not negate the merit of a materialist analysis of religion, it does raise theoretical questions about Harris' work that will engage future scholars for years to come.

Eric B. Ross

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- See also: Anthropologists; Anthropology as a Source of Nature Religion; Domestication; Ecological Anthropology; Ecology and Religion; Evolutionary Biology, Religion, and Stewardship; Goshalas (Home for Aged Cattle); Hunting and the Origins of Religion; Magic; Rappaport, Roy A. ("Skip"); Religio-Ecological Perspective on Religion and Nature.

Hasidism and Nature Mysticism

Hasidism is a mystical revival movement within Judaism that began in southeastern Poland in the last decades of the eighteenth century. It spread quickly through the areas of Jewish population in Eastern Europe and was a major force in Jewish religious life until the Holocaust. In the post-war era, Hasidism has reestablished itself in Israel, North America, and Western Europe.

Hasidism originates in a call for spiritual renewal, one that did not shy away from radical and daring forms of expression. These include a challenge to Judaism's typically bookish, intellectualized form of religiosity and a call to seek out the radiance of divine presence to be found throughout the created world. "The power of the Maker is in the made," proclaimed many a Hasidic author, and therefore (quoting the biblical prophet Isaiah [6:3]) "the whole Earth is filled with God's glory."

The discovery of God's presence within the created world was often couched in the language of a quest for "sparks" and their "uplifting." This religious discourse was derived from the sixteenth-century Lurianic Kabbalah, named for its originator, Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed.

A ritual task of the Jew, taught the Hasidic masters, was to find these sparks even in the most unlikely places, recognize their divine origin, and thus restore them to God. This quest often took masters and disciples to the fields and forests surrounding the shtetls or towns in which they lived. It was there that the true devotee could best celebrate the pure joy of living in God's presence.

"Nature" is a concept not found in the ancient sources of Judaism. Indeed the Hebrew term for nature, *teva*, is a coinage created for the translation of Greco-Arabic

scientific works into Hebrew during the Middle Ages. Hasidism follows a school of Jewish thought that insists on the absolutely supernatural character of all events; “nature” is but a cloak that hides the constant stream of divine energy that ever flows into the world, sustaining it anew in each moment as an assertion of willful divine grace. An acceptance of the “naturalness” of such events as the daily sunrise or even the continuation of one’s life from one moment to the next is seen in the Hasidic perspective as implying a lack of true faith. Here the natural is identified with the ordinary, that which is not appreciated for the true miracle that it is.

This insight that God’s presence underlies all of nature is expressed by frequent mention that the word *hateva* (“nature,” preceded by the definite article) is numerically equal to Elohim or “God.” Some Hasidic authors depict the creative word of God (identified with the divine “Let there be” in the first chapter of Genesis) as the true object of creation the entire natural universe serving as a mere cover for that divine essence.

The celebration of nature within Hasidism is most often associated with the movement’s first key figure, Rabbi Israel Ba’al Shem Tov (1700–1760) and his great-grandson, Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav (1772–1810). The legends of the Ba’al Shem Tov’s life tell that as a schoolboy he often disappeared from the classroom, only to be found later, alone in the deep forest, calling out to God. This motif of the woods as a place to find God is carried through in many tales and melodies associated with Hasidic life. Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, perhaps the greatest poetic spirit among the Hasidic masters, spoke of melodies that rise up from the “corners of the Earth,” of each field’s grasses bearing a unique note in the symphony of divine music, and of prayer as an act of gathering beautiful blossoms in a field, drawing them together to be offered as a gift to God.

Scholars have debated whether the Hasidic quest for the divine essence of being is one that truly affirms the natural world as a locus of divinity or merely seeks to cast the varied masks of nature aside in order to reach the single, undifferentiated goal of the mystic quest. While the key mystical authors within Hasidism (Rabbi Dov Baer of Mezritch and his circle) do indeed waver on this question, popular Hasidism in its early days surely glorified the natural world as a setting for the encounter with God’s glory.

In later years, especially as Hasidism moved from rural to urban settings, much of this devotion to the outdoors as a place to seek God was set aside. As Hasidism became an ever more ultra-conservative force within Jewry, the image of the early Hasidic masters came to be colored more by their devotion to tradition than by their attraction to a mystical appreciation of the natural world. This element was recovered, however, in the twentieth-century phenomenon known as Neo-Hasidism, and is prominent

in the writings of such key figures as the young Martin Buber (1878–1965) and Hillel Zeitlin (1871–1942).

Arthur Green

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Haudenosaunee Confederacy

The term Iroquois refers to a confederation of five Native American nations (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk) who joined together under the Great Law of Peace. In the early eighteenth century the Tuscarora joined the Confederacy, becoming the sixth nation. Iroquois was a name assigned to this Confederacy by the French but the indigenous term for this confederation is the *Haudenosaunee*, which means “People of the Longhouse.” Previous to European invasion the Longhouse was a building in which resided several, perhaps hundreds, of people related through a clan connected through the women’s lineage. The leader of the clan, called the Clan-mother, undergoes a selection process by the entire clan. Among the Clan-mother’s many duties are naming children, selecting and nominating leaders of the clan, and observing and overseeing the conduct of the leaders. All of her nominations for leaders are subject to the consensus of clan. Clan-mothers have the responsibility and authority to remove leaders who have violated their roles as clan leaders. Today the Longhouse is not a residence but continues to be the center of traditional communities organized by clans.

Offices associated with each clan are the Clan-Mother, a male clan “chief” (which in Iroquoian languages usually translates to “good mind”), a sub-chief, and a male and

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