

White Jewish Precariousness Located In American Christianity

It is December 6, 2018. It is 6 days after the death of George HW Bush and 103 days after the death of John McCain. Even though much time has passed in our speed-of-light popular attention span since the death of the later, I can still recall the visceral dis-ease that churned in me digesting the near canonization of Mr. McCain in the week following his death. Today, I observe uneasily again the enactment of our American rites of civility, the rites of posthumous canonization, of our most powerful political figures. As depicted in the public forum, these rites are presented with false neutrality and safeguarded as personal and sanctified. Yet these moments of public performance of grief, reifying our mostly undisputed notions of heroism, are simultaneously rife with political meaning as they thrive, fester, and multiply in the unswerving spotlight of the commercial media gaze. As we both consume and re-tell these stories we deepen the restrictive groove of a key myth of America, a deep and blinding trench, bound up in extoling unexamined valor, dependent on amnesiac honor, and forever reducing complexity into biblically simple moralism.

No matter where you read the paper in America today, this morning's front page imagery perfectly exemplified this vision of false American heroism combining militaristic pomp, genteel nobility, and religious piousness. We saw an American flag-draped casket escorted into and out of an Episcopalian church known as *The National Cathedral*, by a U.S. Naval Honor Guard, while bells (church) tolled, and choirs (church) sang, and cannons (military) sounded. All the while, mourners held their hands over their hearts in a clear display of patriotism. This conflation of Christian symbols and actions and American symbols and actions is dizzying, but not confusing. It is repeated and clearly explained and demonstrated at every level of patriotism. According to

its website *The National Cathedral* is a place “grounded in the reconciling love of Jesus Christ ... and is a house of prayer for all people, conceived by our founders to serve as a great church for national purposes.” Christian and American symbolism thus overlaid is not merely complimentary as it works in tandem as a direct expression of cultural moralism, but in fact, these religious and patriotic symbols and structures are inextricably linked in our institutions of governance. Christian hegemony. Cultural Hegemony is the ideological domination of a culturally diverse society by its leaders who impose their own beliefs, values, and mores onto the masses thereby coercing the leadership view into the general worldview. Once the imposed ruling-class worldview becomes accepted over time as cultural norm this view then serves to justify social, political and economic status-quo as inevitable and natural, rather than to expose the worldview as benefiting the ruling class. Christian hegemony in America is not new and is not neutral.

I set out to write this article as a continuation of the exploration of Jewish whiteness in the context of antiracist activism. I set out to ask and address the questions Are Jews white? Is Jewish white-skin privilege different and how does Jewish whiteness operate differently? Ultimately, the question of the precariousness of Jewish whiteness pervades all these sites. And though I will address those questions here, and continue my dedicated pursuit of teasing apart these complexities, something of unavoidable curiosity has derailed my determined search. If Jewish whiteness is different, then what is it different *from*? “Normal” whiteness? If so, what is this normal whiteness? Is it not *Christian* whiteness?

Here I draw on Massey’s argument in her article *Geographies of Responsibility* that the rhetorical collapsing of the distinction between space and place offers great usefulness. Both in exposing the production of meaning as politically constructed as well as terminologically inconsistent, she posits that the release from binaristic thinking of space/place and local/global offer potential to separate geographical meaning from hegemonic meta-narrative. Like Massey, I posit not only the usefulness but also the necessity of excavating the material implications of hegemonic lexicons. Linguistically speaking, in our American patriarchal worldview, men and maleness are normal and neutral rendering women and other gender expressions aberrant – necessary of naming. By declaring a special nature of *women’s work* it is implied that “normal” work is men’s, and goes,

literally, without saying; and all other gender variations are invisibilized in this binaristic construction. And is not the same true of implicit whiteness as the baseline of normalcy in our racialized nation, wherein everyone who is *not* white must be named “of color” in order to preserve the implication of a neutral skin color, white? What we say matters. What we *don’t* say, matters too. If there is Jewish whiteness, then what is it projected against? I assert we must engage with the Christian nature of American whiteness, and not assume the neutrality of Christianity by rendering it invisible, and thus normal. Though white skin privilege operates materially for all those who have, what Nancy Lopez calls, a white “street race,” we must examine the construction: historically, intellectually, and ideologically, of whiteness in order to engage with, and disarm it fully. Without understanding the Christian hegemony that frames and informs American whiteness, as much as misogynist patriarchy, and capitalist economics, we cannot honestly critique and disable the structures and institutions that authorize, defend, and reiterate racial oppression in the US.

“We need a word for the system that normalizes and honors Christianity, just as *racism* names the system that normalizes and honors whiteness. Our very lack of a word illustrates the problem. How do we challenge what we have no language to discuss? Christian hegemony? Not very catchy, but the assumption of Christianity-as-norm does exercise a negative impact on Jews, and is erasive and diminishing. Jews usually designate this erasure as a form of antisemitism, but it’s not only a Jewish issue: erasure and marginalization of non-Christians denigrates all non-Christians. We sorely need a term such as *Christiansim* to name the system of Christian domination” (Kaye/Kantrowitz, 30.)

Moving forward, I will explore the precariousness of Jewish whiteness in the American context of what Kaye/Kantrowitz terms *christianism* based on three different constructions of this precarity. First, Jewish whiteness is *contestable* because, as the conceptual framework of Theories of Difference will show, not all Jews are white. American Jews must be understood as a multiplicity which is not exclusively a religious category, but also as a diasporic people. Second, Jewish whiteness is *derivative*, because in the United States it is entirely dependent on American assimilationist culture grounded in Liberal individualism and economics. Within this context, Jewish identity formation is particularly perilous because Jews as a race are unstable when understood in the setting of Theories of Racialization. Third, Jewish whiteness is *dangerous* when regarded in the

environment of historical and cyclical antisemitism that frames the precariousness. This American antisemitism expresses as both racial and religious, and informs the tenuousness of both the physical as well as psychic safety of white American Jews.

Jewish whiteness is *contestable*

“And what about other Jews, the ones who don’t look white, those who by anyone’s definition are not white: Jewish African Americans, Jews from the Middle East, Latin America, Ethiopia, the Caribbean, India, China. Jews of any race who chose Judaism. Biracial and multi-racial Jews. Children of mixed marriages. Children of color adopted by Ashkenazim. Invisible, marginalized, not even imagined” (Kaye/Kantrowitz, 9.)

Jews have long been mythologized as cosmopolitans. This myth, which has been a consistent and reoccurring theme in anti-semitic narrative, has meant that Jews are not patriots, and cannot be trusted in a national context. Cosmopolitanism, however understood through the works of a scholarly inquiry into theories of difference, is not a reference to the soviet expression *rootless cosmopolitans* which called for the exposure and persecution of “passing” Jewish writers and intellectuals, but rather a reference to a citizen of the world. This term, along with its associates, *elitist* and *globalist* however, have bivalent meanings; they function in academia as theoretical framing and discourse, yet become coded into political rhetoric in often co-optive and destructive ways – not only in mid-20th century Stalinist Soviet rhetoric but also in current day America. They are then projected against the meanings of terms like *nationalism* and *America first*, which muchly implies *white* Nationalism, and *white* Americans, and the coding is clear. Jews are neither white Americans nor are they trustable Americans.

Appiah’s grand, almost moralistic view of Cosmopolitanism, and Cosmopolitan Patriots, can be easily used to explore Jewishness. The righteous individuals are not only world citizens, but embody and disseminate a new ethos of rootedness which exists in a liminality that is both rooted in place and simultaneously entirely mobile, and which is adaptable to various political ideologies. Appiah’s sentimental vision of Cosmopolitanism

not only celebrates “free decisions of individuals or of groups” (Appiah 618) but it depends on the “possibility of a world in which *everyone* is a rooted cosmopolitan” (Appiah 618.) His vision is typified by understanding Patriotism as the vast “loyalty to humankind” (Appiah, 270) and yet he asserts that not everyone needs to be a cosmopolitan, but rather that everyone engage in a common national culture (his form of planning theory), and that by engaging in a common national culture, this possibility of cosmopolitanism becomes available. His theory lends itself well to understanding culture in diaspora.

Jews are a diasporic people, and in this context, since there is no one answer to the question “Are Jews white?” Jewish whiteness becomes deeply contested. In multiculturalism and liberal pluralism, the individual is the unit of understanding difference. However, interculturalism, according to Sandercock interrogates the prevailing notions of multiculturalism and develops an intercultural setting which is positioned on the foundation of a strong identity formation that paradoxically offers belonging only when real difference is embraced to the end that “a more robust sense of identity must be able to embrace cultural autonomy and, at the same time, work to strengthen intercultural solidarity” (Sandercock, 297.) This is a strong model for American Jews to embrace inner-cultural diversity. She then goes on to link the triumphs of integration to the practice of this intercultural theory. She emphasizes a “vocabulary of accommodation to difference is a vocabulary of ‘rights of presence, bridging difference, getting along’” (Sandercock, 303) as a means to identifying the predictability of conflict. She concludes that the effectiveness of this strategy is reliant upon a larger political culture with successfully operational anti-racism policies. Ultimately, she affirms this alchemy is the proper mix for the virtues of intercultural society, “mutual respect and concern, tolerance, self-restraint, love of diversity, minds open to new ideas and hearts open to the needs of others” (Sandercock, 303), to be cultivated. Within this idea formation, American Jewishness can only be *not* contested in the context of a larger American conversation which embraces real difference as the basis of American acceptance and serves as the baseline for antiracist national reconstruction. In the absence of the adoption of this notion into our currently christianist culture, Jewish whiteness remains deeply unsteady.

Jewish whiteness is *derivative*

“...Jew-qua-American is persuasive if by *Jew* we mean *assimilated Ashkenazi*, yet the persistence of Jewishness as racial/ethnic/cultural marker suggests a limit to Jewish attempts to assimilate into mere ethnic whiteness. Instead values and qualities about which “America” is ambivalent get projected onto the marked Jew, as the Jewish marker shrinks or expands like Alice in *Through the Looking Glass*; one minute nothing more than a bagel or a *mazel tov*, the next minute, Holocaust victim or Shylock’s eternal pound of flesh” (Kaye/Kantrowitz, 11-12.)

Jewish whiteness is assimilative American culture defined by Liberalism, and dependent on passing as white. Once a Jew is outed, or outs herself, even if she is a white Jew, she is no longer seen as *quite white*. She is now seen, as an individual, as something a bit different. She is seen as less white. Jewish whiteness, then, exists in a confounding place where whiteness is both absolute and has shades.

Friedman, in his article, *It’s A Flat World, After All* typifies the emblematic American narrative of globalism as the newest (and best?) manifestation of the possibility and potential for individual empowerment framed in the home of free-market economy. He asserts the “hierarchies are being flattened” (Friedman, 37) and that unlike the first and second waves of globalization, which featured “resources and imperial conquest” (Friedman, 34) and “markets and labor” (Friedman, 34) respectively, that this third (and final?) wave of globalization features – the individual. His insistent reiteration of the American individual as the primary operator of power serves to re-entrench a dangerous fear-based nationalism which implies that America will become like the feminized and disgraced third-world failed nations of the world unless we have a president who can “summon the nation to work harder, get smarter, attract more young women and men to science ... and help every American become more employable in an age in which no one can guarantee you a life of employment” (Freidman, 37.)

Friedman is squarely situated in the classic understanding of Liberalism, with its emphasis on the importance of the individual as the key actor on the societal stage, and the attendant minimal constraint on the liberties of this individual. However, Liberalism only works as a societal ideology if the internal moral compass

of every individual is working. This internal moral compass is the balance of the destructive human capacity of greed, ego, and violence; government regulation (of the economic or political spheres) in Liberalism is not the balance to this imbedded danger. The internal moral compass however, in the American historical context, is intrinsically limited as it is defined by christianism and thereby cannot, by nature, serve the best interests of a diverse population. Within this frame, Jewish whiteness is precarious as it paradoxically depends on the efficacy of an internally functioning moralism in each member of the American society which is defined by Christian morals and values. These Christian morals and values, as they effectively play out, place non-Christian lower in a moralistic hierarchy, and thus reify the precariousness of all non-Christian whiteness, including Jewish whiteness.

In contrast to Friedman, Kirk and Okazawa-Rey in their article, *Who am I? Who are my People?* warn of the dangers of essentializing identity and community which lead to a dangerous romanticization of culture and commodification of identity. This commodification of identity in the form of stereotyping serves to further complicate the precariousness of Jewish whiteness, as it supports a flattening of meaning, and lends itself to a racialized understanding of Jewishness. In each of the various theories of race, Jew can be located and understood as a race. The biblical tropes of Jews as originating from a singular genetic stock, The Cohain priestly lineage, falls squarely within a Natural or Biological racial theory. Cultural stories abound (both within Jewish circles and in greater social groupings) about the ethnic specificity of Jews, both in appearance and behavior, and position Jews inside the non-white cultural construction of American race. A class-based racial technology is easily identifiable with the colloquial definition of the American Jew and is strictly enforced, among many other concepts, by the false notions about the Jewish relationship to money. These are simply a few of the many examples of the way white Jews, despite the real and material benefits of their whiteness, can be understood to simultaneously inhabit a non-white place within an American racialized structure. This concurrence of Jews as both white and non-white exemplifies the precariousness of Jewish whiteness. Lest we get stuck in a solely racialized understanding of Jewish whiteness, we must remember what Kirk and Okazawa-

Rey remind us that place is *not* the location of identity, rather the location of identity resides in social relationships, proximities, and groups.

Jewish whiteness is *dangerous*

“... the idea that one’s religious practice is at fault is consistent with torture and forced conversation, and with death for the obstinate; but a racial definition of Jews is consistent with extermination. The racialized being simply is. Extermination is, then, the appropriate final solution.” ((Kaye/Kantrowitz, 13.)

“In what I have come to think of as an ecology of hatred, racial antisemitism kicks in as society secularizes. If a secular society at moments allows Jews to participate as citizens, no longer totally dehumanized by dint of religious beliefs and practice, racism contravenes this permission by reinscribing Christian fear and disdain as racial. Racism against Jews represents the secularizations of Christian antisemitism, but let not categories obscure essence: difference translated into otherness equals indifference, hatred, fear.”
(Kaye/Kantrowitz, 15)

The historical and cyclical nature of antisemitism frames the instability of Jewish whiteness in its larger context. In extending the political memory far enough back to encompass the history of antisemitism, we are reminded of the unusual and cyclical nature of this particular oppressive cultural degradation. The hundreds year history of antisemitism necessitates both periods of success and assimilation followed by periods of persecution. In order to justify the implementation of the stereotypes of Jewish domination and secrecy during periods of tyranny, there must also be a modicum of perceived realness to these stories, which is supported by the degrees of success and assimilation experienced in the periods where antisemitism recedes deeply underground. According to an interview with Dove Kent, former director for Jews for Racial and Economic Justice “Antisemitism tells the story that Jews are the ones really in power. It offers a seemingly rational explanation for an increasingly irrational world. The system of global capitalism, the workings of the global economy are very complicated. The multiplicity of reasons behind people’s economic suffering is not particularly easy to explain. It is far easier to believe that a specific group of people are pulling the puppet

strings behind your suffering. In this way, antisemitism looks different from other oppressions in that it punches up. That's confusing for people."

But as Kaye/Kantrowitz has informed, there are two different strands of antisemitism: religious and racial. These strands work in tandem to both physically and psychically call into question the functional stability of Jewish whiteness. Last weekend, I sat in a circle of community members convened by Jewish Voice for Peace, an organization that works for justice, equality and dignity for all in Israel/Palestine, as a part of an open forum on antisemitism. There were about 30 people in the room, ranging from early 40s into late 70s. As far as I could perceive most were white, though there was a Native person, a Black person, a Hispanic person, and a person who identified as Palestinian American. About 75% of the people in the room identified as Jewish. Each person spoke freely about what antisemitism meant to them, why they were in the room, and their personal experiences of antisemitism. To a person, each of the Jews that recounted a personal experience of antisemitism told a story of religious antisemitism which orbited around the central theme that Jews are seen as Christ killers, or as doomed for Hell.

I have my own story that echoes this claim. In seventh grade, at my elite, private middle school, I was confronted one afternoon by two of my classmates, girls with whom I played after school sometimes, enjoyed spontaneous laughter and dancing, and admired for their fashion, intelligence, and poise. I considered them friends. This day, in the context of thoroughly enjoying each other's company, I recall them saying to me "We like you so much and wish you would just join us and believe in Jesus so you can come to Heaven with us and don't have to go to Hell." I was so surprised and taken off-guard that I didn't say anything. I felt confused and churned sickly inside. I knew enough at the time to understand this has something to do with the proselyting ideology of the church they both attended, Hoffmantown Baptist, and that what they were expressing was in its own perverse way, a form of love for me. But I did not understand the recoiling and shrinking inside me which I now know was responding to the very pointed expression of antisemitism directed right at me. It must be stated overtly, christianism is implicit here. The only people expressing this type of antisemitism are Christians.

And as evidenced by my story, and the countless other stories of this type of religious antisemitism I have heard, the answer to the “problem” of Jewish non-believers (in Christ), is to convert them.

Though this religious antisemitism is the type most Jews have actually physically experienced, we must remember that this religious form of antisemitism in America rarely takes shape in physical violence on its own, though it contributes deeply to a sense of otherness and exclusion in the lives of most who identify as Jews in this country. As we have seen recently at the Tree of Life massacre in Pittsburgh, the form of antisemitism that animates violence in this country, is most usually driven by racial hatred, and can be easily seen in the engine of White Nationalism and the Alt-Right. However, since most American Jews have not experienced actual physical harm in the face of antisemitism, there emerges yet another paradox and precarity of Jewish whiteness. There is both physical and psychic danger experienced by American Jews, and yet these cannot be directly mapped either experientially or emotionally in a linear way. The bodily experience of antisemitism in the United States produces emotional precarity as otherness, and the mostly symbolic and infrequent acts of real violence produce overwhelming fear and insecurity, and a pervasive (muchly imagined) sense of bodily danger.

Jewish whiteness is *whiteness*

“It occurs to me that much organizational grief could be avoided if people understood that partnership in misery does not necessarily provide for partnership for change: When we get the monsters off our backs all of us may want to run in very different directions.” (June Jordan, *On Call: Political Essays*, 1985)

“Each of us is called upon to take a stand. So in these days ahead, as we examine ourselves and each other, our works, our fears, our differences, our sisterhood and our survivals, I urge you to tackle what is most difficult for us all, self-scrutiny of our complacencies, the idea that since each of us believes she is on the side of right, she need not examine her position.” (Audre Lorde “Sisterhood and Survival” Keynote Address, conference on the Black Woman Writer and the Diaspora, Michigan State University, 1985)

With all this precariousness, and in the persistent pervasiveness of Christian hegemony, where do we as antiracist activists find ground upon which to stand to do the crucial work of facing Jewish white privilege, revealing christianism, understanding antisemitism, and dismantling the tyrannical structures of American racism? I find refuge, inspiration, and energy in historically informed praxis, process focused organizing, and the spiritual wisdom evident in nature.

I am called towards deep self-reflection by Rankin's "ethics of accountability" which by definition can only occur in praxis and requires a "reflexive praxis that historicizes difference and forges new modes of critical political agency" (Rankin, 2010, 15.) Through embracing the value of praxis in my work, I can see the development of my critique expand. I recall, many months ago, when I embarked on this project of confronting my own Jewish whiteness, and the Jewish whiteness of those around me, I had a seminal conversation with my mother. She was trying to explain to me that, for people of her generation, it was impossible to separate out white privilege from the insecurity associated to her identity as Jewish. Specifically, she was talking about the historical trauma of The Holocaust as a defining moment in the lives of American Jews and a deep dampening of their capacity to experience a sense of privilege. I said to her "yes, Mom, but that time is over, it's not The Holocaust anymore, and we need to confront and acknowledge the totality of our privilege as middle class white Jews today." I see in my own response a learned American response, a rational-seeming request for historical amnesia, a willful forgetting of important political and historical context. I'm grateful to see this in myself, and as a result of seeing, be able to have the opportunity for a "do-over." Today, upon revisiting this conversation with my mother I was able to hold the multiple truths of the situation. Truth 1: Historical trauma is real, and long-term effects must be addressed directly. Truth 2: Historical trauma may be passed on cellularly, and may be at work in me, too. Truth 3: Experiences of danger and persecution in one regard do not counter-indicate experiences of privilege and safety in other regards. After all, isn't this a significant conundrum of the precariousness of Jewish whiteness?

I am shored up by models of process based organizing as it works in concert with the catalytic potential of difference. I find useful Umemoto's Community-led planning model which "involves community members

in the design and facilitation of community-based planning processes in the tradition of empowerment planning” (Umemoto, 27) and underscores the import of outcome and suggests what is revealed in the process becomes the meaningful outcome. I also draw on Keating’s frame wherein which she focus on difference as “a catalyst for personal and social transformation” (Keating, 154.) Keating presents the liberatory potential of individual conscious transformation as the seed of cultural and thus, organizing, transformation. She shares eloquently her 5 sites of personal revolution: metaphysical, linguistic, categorical-shedding, race deconstruction, and facing racism. Finally, she wraps all these sites into what she calls the “metaphysics of interconnectedness” (Keating, 156) which weaves together emotions, empathy, experiential learning, creativity, expression, and multi-valent systems of perception to understand everything as connected and intuitively interrelated.

I am supported by these two women’s theories to both engage in antiracism consciousness raising in the white Jewish community as well as call on Christian White people (which includes those whose culture and heritage/ancestry is Christian even if their active belief system/practice of religion or spirituality, is not) to examine Christianity. Specifically, for Christian white people there must be self-reflexive interrogation of the false American myth of the separation of Church/State to understand the absence of Christian neutrality and the presence of Christian hegemony. This hegemony, Christianity, must be acknowledge in operation as a mechanism in the legitimization of mainstream racism. This mainstream racism is animated and normalized, in part, by the racial antisemitism of White Nationalism and the alt-right. These christianist ideas are deeply infused, right at the American political middle, and must be reckoned with directly in the context of waking up to whiteness. It is incumbent on Christian whites to do this work, much in the way it is incumbent on all people who experience and benefit from white skin privilege to examine whiteness. People of Color must not be made responsible for this work, as it is reinjurious to them. At the same time, non-Christian white people must not be the singular carriers of this message to Christian white people.

I am inspired by adrienne marie brown’s position on “emergent strategy” as the primary means to culture transformation. She focuses on the usefulness of emergent strategy in disrupting outmoded stagnant

notions of scale, critical-mass, history, time, morality, ethics, and economy. She frames the history of emergent strategy from its roots in the writings of Octavia Butler, to a plan of action accounting for constant change informed by biomimicry and permaculture, which grew into an organizing ethos that “leverage relatively simple interactions to create complex patterns, systems, and transformations – including adaptation, interdependence and decentralization, fractal awareness, resilience and transformative justice, nonlinear iterative change” (brown, 24.) She understands emergent strategy to be a way to “grow our capacity to embody the just and liberated worlds we long for” (brown, 24.) Finally, for brown, emergent strategy is cosmological, archetypal knowledge of living in harmony.

I have yearned to find a Jewish story of this cosmological, archetypal knowledge of living in harmony. I have found one. This is my version of the Jewish mystical origin story, from the 14th century Kabbalistic teachings. This is a new story to me and an old story, too, for me. I’ve heard this story many times, though I didn’t know it was *this* story. But it is, this story. The story of the beginning of the universe and the Jewish story of healing ...

Before now, before anything we can know or measure or understand, there was nothing but divine darkness, holy darkness, the ein sof, the source of life. And in that darkness, was everything. And then, there was a moment. A moment like a big bang, a sound like a little hum, a wind like a flicker of consciousness, and it was like nothing before or since in this space-place-time-dimension. And in that moment all that was in the divine darkness, all that is everything, all that is this entire universe of a thousand thousand things, turned inside out and burst forth from the heart of the holy darkness in a great ray of light. The fountain of light poured into vast gorgeous vessels. The vessels filled to overflowing with the fountain of light that was the everythingness of the divine darkness turned inside out, and the everythingness of the whole universe. The vessels filled and filled and filled with this inconceivable brightness, with the wholeness of the universe, and when they reached capacity the vessels brilliantly shattered. And with this shattering the light dispersed, was scattered into a thousand thousand fragments of light and these fragments of light fell into all events, into all people, into all

places, into all plants, into all animals, in absolutely everything, and became the light in everything, where they remain deeply hidden until this very day. We are all born with the capacity to find this hidden light in all events, in all people, in all places, in all plants, in all animals, in absolutely everything, and to lift this light up and make this light visible once again and thereby to restore the innate wholeness in the world. And this is also the story of Tikkun Olam, of Repairing the World, one speck of light at a time. And in Jewish mysticism, the story of the beginning of the world and the story of the restoration of the world, are the same story. And wherever the spark of light is found, wherever the fragment is revealed, which is in everyone and is everywhere, there is healing.

There is another reference we know, of a thousand points of light. In 1988, George H.W. Bush said, during his speech accepting the presidential nomination “a brilliant diversity spread like stars, like a thousand points of light in a broad and peaceful sky.” He repeated the phrase in his inaugural address on January 20, 1989 saying “I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the Nation, doing good. We will work hand in hand, encouraging, sometimes leading, sometimes being led ...” When I hear this phrase, from a devout Protestant, patriarch of one of America’s most powerful political families, an arguable icon of Christianity, I am reminded of 2 things. I am reminded of the Jewishness in Christianity, and moreover, I am reminded, yes, there can be light found, there is light found, everywhere.

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