

Chapter 2
THE FOUR SACRED COWS OF DEMOCRACY
(the following is an excerpt from *Law* now being translated)

Introduction: The Four Principles of Civil Liberty.

THE MOST SUPREME and sacrosanct value in western democratic society is freedom of the individual. In order to ensure that this value not be violated, or deprived, even by the bureaucratic mechanism of the democratic regime itself, society has isolated four principles which promote the interests of civil liberty. It has made of these a sort of fundamental legislature of the human rights of a free society. These principles fall into the category of "taboo". They may not be touched under any condition. To harm them is to harm the very soul of democracy itself.

The four components of individual freedom, which have acquired the status of sacred cows in every sense, are as follows: Art, Scientific Research, Journalism, The Law. Plump and complacent, but also cross and suspicious, these four cows graze by the eastern wall of our secular-liberal society, and their worship is the principle yardstick by which one's culture and enlightenment are measured.

These four – "the four primary categories of damage" if we may borrow mishnaic terminology – share in common a status of immunity. They are beyond the reach of human criticism, even on issues of morality and fundamental values. Certainly, they need not consider national loyalty. The cow must be allowed to go her own way. She may trample and destroy anything that happens across her path. You may not stop her, calm her, or curb her.

It is paradoxical and grave indeed that the enemies of democracy use these cows as Trojan horses. Out of their bellies, they spew forth to destroy and to shake the pillars of democratic regime. They need not fear that their conspiracy will be exposed for on the contrary, whom more than they, show such concern for and such worship of the sacred cows. This process is illustrated in Elias Kanti's great work, "Blinders." Kanti illuminates a new dimension for us. He goes one level higher than the Kafkaesque in describing the terror of the grotesque when law, separated from its meaningful content, destroys both. The law is embodied in the monstrous gatekeeper. Values, naked and forlorn, are embodied in Kin the Sinologist, a pathetic image of the detached and defenseless scientist.

The following paragraphs will briefly detail the nature and scope of each of these ritual bearers:

A. ART

ART IS THE FREEDOM of the creator to give expression to his spirit and to his senses in every manner and in every context that seems fit in his eyes. He bears no obligation toward any values or conventions, hallowed as they may be within the social tradition. His allegiance is to the value of art alone. And you, little private citizen – commoner – have no authority to judge the artistic creation except by the criteria of artistic value. And if you are not proficient in such matters, base creature that you are, be so good as to muzzle your mouth.

In truth, definition of the concept "artistic value" entails a complex and comprehensive study in esthetics. Yet in the democratic reality of our own day, it suffices for a work to have come forth from the hand of one who considers himself an artist. It is then considered a work of art, acquiring thereby, instantaneously, the privileges reserved for the sacred cow.

Thus do license, vulgarity, primitive emotion and ignorance, representing themselves as vital artistic expression, invade the top echelons of society. We find that art, rather than serving as a refining and broadening force, is turned into a source of spiritual retardation. It has become infamous for its destructive effect upon an entire society and upon its youth. It degrades the values held by western humanistic tradition to be basic to human existence. Every repulsive behavior, every pathological perversion becomes justified and legitimate. Through the intricate dialectics of stupidity, it becomes a respectable expression – bearing existentialist tidings, as it were. Depravity, wallowing in the sewage and waste waters of human experience, debasing the human image and delighting in its shame, all of these have become not merely permissible. Under the inspiration of art, they are imbued with an aura of superiority. Woe to the one who points out naively that the emperor is naked. The bearers of the banner of freedom, progress and enlightenment come forth immediately and silence him. He is placed in the public stocks, to be shamed by all, as the cow scales ever-greater heights in her absurd and paradoxical existence.

2nd. SCIENCE

THE BUSINESS OF SCIENCE, claim the disciples of this sacred cow, is the investigation of ultimate and uncontestable truth. Therefore, no limitation or restraint may be imposed upon it by any party or outside interest, for what power can remotely resemble or compare to absolute truth? Therefore the man of science has the divine right of kings. (We will not pause here to delve into the character of the true man of science. We will only mention that he bears no resemblance to the priest of the sacred cow.) He may violate the rights of others,

he may trifle with the beliefs and proprieties of entire societies because they are not considered members of the scientific community. He may deliberately and arrogantly desecrate the values and traditions that generations have held sacred. It is characteristic that every apprentice researcher sees himself as the new Galileo, and every minor lecturer, utterly devoid of culture, is by his own perception at least Voltaire.

Matters are particularly grave in the science of medicine, for here the practitioners of medicine adopt for themselves the right to determine the fate of a human life by weighing considerations such as its advantages to science. Medical experiments are practiced upon human beings. These are dubious and reckless from a scientific perspective, and criminal from a moral perspective. Many and various are the ethical philosophers who have exhorted against this peril yet it continues; it is routine practice. What makes medical research particularly deadly, aside from the fact that most people lack the professional capacity to criticize these matters, is the fact that one can apparently justify any experimental procedure, as repugnant as it may be. One need merely evoke the virtuous and morally illogical claim of the “good to mankind” which eventually will grow out of this research in the course of time. A simple reference to its contribution toward saving human life in the future will suffice. It is a sort of standard abstract life saving of the human race. Indeed the very fact that science’s relationship to values has become a subject of philosophical inquiry, gravely examined from every aspect, offers a hundred testimonies to the sense of Olympian separatism, of the arrogant hubris that characterizes scientific research.

By the power of this sense of superiority, the sacrosanct academic brotherhood insists upon immunity to all criticism or restriction. Who is the one so worthy as to come and to teach them? Who can enlighten them, the possessors of truth, in the manners and norms of decency? The academic community will not tolerate any meddling in its affairs or any examination of its linen; rather the world must lend an ear to its song, and honor its greater wisdom.

Thus is the academic community exempted from critical evaluation, bountifully endowed by society with every means at its disposal, and pampered and coddled like those infant children who delight us by the very fact that they exist and enrich our world. Gradually, university campuses in the western world have grown to become an ideal hothouse: Law breaking, anti-democratic elements are grown and cultivated there; they expand and increase without limit.

Out of the midst of the campus population of lecturers and students come forth the leaders and members of unscrupulous and inhuman terror gangs. Bearing the banner of this revolution or that one, they cast their dread over the entire civilized world. Their only objective: the eradication of the democratic society itself, to its very foundations. Their hatred knows no bounds toward that

society whose reverent awe of academic freedom permitted them to flourish undisturbed.

3rd. Media

THE MEDIA EMBODIES another element of civil liberty: The public's right to know. In principle, a free press serves one of the vital interests of the democratic way of life, because it acts as an alert and efficient supervisor, overseeing the procedures and actions of the ruling bodies lest they betray their trust. There is no doubt that the watchful eye of the media and its swift reporting ability serves as a deterrent to established government, and forces it to follow democratic norms.

Yet the difficulty lies precisely here: Media reporters have hallowed "the right to know," which from their perspective refers to "the right to report." They have turned it into an autonomous value, which may not be subjected to criticism of any sort. This right is not supervised in any way, and one may not set any boundaries to it. Information must flow to the public without inhibition and without delay. The newsman reporting from the scene may ignore all secondary issues, so to speak, such as morality, politics, or national security. He may invade an individual's private space, and he may be cavalier with the well being of an entire country. Only the news must flow and the public must know.

The power which the western media has acquired in the course of these last few decades, by virtue of the value that it upholds - the great sanctity of which it has managed to instill into the civil consciousness - has long since deviated from its original framework. The press no longer plays the humble role of government critic. It has become – and this is especially true of television – the most absolute ruling power in the western democratic world. Practically speaking, it would be correct to describe the modern media as a superpower. This superpower is not born of democratic processes. Yet it wields its far-reaching influence upon western governments. It is a power that intervenes, directs and determines the outcome of events, even when they are of a crucial nature. International wars are waged in conformity with the agenda of those who rule the media. Indeed, television is a near-perfect realization of Orwell's Big Brother, the all-powerful tyrant that manipulates his citizens in their own homes. Because he brainwashes them within their own private space, this outside manipulation can never be detected.

Again, as in the academic world, it is precisely the anti-democratic elements that exploit the sacred cow. Their extraction is from other cultures. They are bred of traditions devoid of the concept of individual freedom. Their goal is simple: They would like to undermine western democracy and eventually to take control of it. These elements capitalize on the bias of the media. They proclaim loudly "the right of the (western) public to know." They take cynical

and shrewd advantage of this “value” that they “cherish” in order to further their influence over western governments and over public opinion in the free world.

4th. Law

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE LEGAL SYSTEM is embedded in the social consciousness as an independent value, is an issue which we discuss extensively in various sections of our work. Nevertheless, we shall remark here that this process of the consecration of the law, and of society’s submission to it, has the most absurd aspect of all of those processes that beget the sacred offspring which we have enumerated here.

For the prevailing law, by the very nature of its creation and origins, is heir to its power and to its very existence only by virtue of the consent of human beings to create it and to uphold it. Common secular law has no resources for its existence beyond the consent of mortals who have organized themselves into a social framework. They have agreed to live according to a law that will regulate the course of their lives for their benefit. As to humanistic myths regarding “natural law,” we do not address them here for obvious reasons.

To relate to the law as to a value that stands on its own authority, to turn this into the ultimate measure of public and political life, can be classified as an absolute reversal of orders. It is a fulfillment of the prophecy “when the slave shall reign...” Law, designated from its very conception to serve man, becomes an independent entity. It becomes man’s master. Rather than judging a law by its suitability, by its competency in arranging human affairs in the manner most positive and most beneficial to human development, rather than measuring a law by its tendency to reflect human meaningful content faithfully, a human being is judged and evaluated by the extent to which he cleaves to and embraces the law. He is measured by the measure of faith that he puts in the legal system. This is the nightmare described in Kafka’s great work.

It appears that the vital lessons concealed in Kafka’s work have not been learned. The legal mechanism is attaining increasingly powerful status in democratic regimes. It has acquired the status of an autonomous system. It is a self-sustaining sentient being that operates only out of its own motives and needs. It is heedless, this Frankenstein, of anything that lies outside the narrow confines of the law.

The State of Israel was established at a moment of profound moral crisis for the Jewish people. During this period, its citizens were undergoing a process of dissociation from the existential meanings of Jewish tradition. The State of Israel adopted the law as a substitute for its abandoned values. Glorification of the law was turned into an educational goal. The administrative regime cultivated among

the people an absolute faith in the law; a reverent, nearly mystical awe of its institutions and its attendants. These were represented as the oracle, of perfect character and integrity, from which no secret of the ways of truth and of justice in any area or subject could ever be hidden. Courthouses and especially the Supreme Court were, in the eyes of the people and of their instructors, miniature temples. The verdict of the judges of Israel was the word of the oracle - which splits asunder and rises forth from the temple. Any word of criticism or inquiry concerning a verdict, or any aspersion cast upon the absolute wisdom of the judges was perceived to be utter sacrilege.

How very many public and national misfortunes have befallen the State of Israel because of the attitude of indiscriminating adoration of the law that has been cultivated among her people. Matters becomes especially grave – they take on an actually grotesque aspect, when hostile elements actively seeking Israel’s downfall learn how easily this attitude can be turned to their advantage. Among the Arabs, sensitivity to the value of the legal regime and to the authority of consensual law is a foreign concept. It is unheard of in their native culture, but they may make use of it for their own purposes. They have learned that it is possible to make use of the legal terminology of the Israeli court system in order to inflict injury upon the “Legal State” of the Jews.

5th. The War of the Gods

As mentioned, that which endows the sacred cow with its status is the fact that in the public eye it appears to embody a value of civil liberty. It is entrusted with the duty of protecting the individual from the arbitrary limitation and inhibition of his freedom of movement by the authorities and by established government. However, the sacred cow itself needs to be protected from harm by hostile elements. It must be fully enabled to stand its guard, and to faithfully carry out its task. Therefore, society has granted it an immunity that is, for all intents and purposes, absolute. From a logical perspective, it could not be otherwise. If the value that the sacred cow represents is not immune and exempt from every existing limitation, then it is no longer a supreme ideal. The cow is then deprived of her power to serve democracy in the manner that she was instructed to serve it. At best she can be considered a desirable social consensus. If there is any power before which the cow is compelled to bow her head and moo submissively, then her sacredness automatically expires. All of her sublime power is exposed as mere illusion.

For this reason it has never occurred to society to consider the nature of the relations that must obtain between the four sacred cows, among one another. It has not defined the status of one cow vis a` vis another cow. Rather, all are sacred, all are supreme, and all enjoy unlimited immunity.

Thus it can happen that a war of the gods breaks out. One cow battles another, or all the cows fight among themselves, for certain conflicts of interest exist between them. Since society has not determined the protocols of priority or of mutuality that are to prevail among the sacred ones, these wars can escalate. The law that governs this battle of the titans is the same law that governs the “natural condition” described by Hobbes: “The more violent one prevails.” The cow who is heftier, whose priests are more aggressive, and whose artillery is more lethal, subdues her weaker enemy. Exactly like in Pharaoh’s dream, one cow swallows another. But not quite – Pharaoh’s dream reflects a more democratic vision, for after all, the thin cow swallows the fat one. Whereas in the reality of the western democracies, violence reigns supreme when speaking of the war of the gods, in their most brutal manifestations, and results are only natural and predictable: The stronger cow subdues the weaker.

Thus it comes about that the news media and the law reach a point of confrontation. Certain requirements of the law may impinge upon the sacrosanct privileges of the news media, and may deprive the newsman’s “freedom of reportage.” For example: The legal system may demand of a journalist that he reveal the source of certain information that he has obtained. The journalist refuses, for he reasons that this constitutes intervention in his sublime task and a setting of limitation upon him that is unthinkable. In a case of this sort, the law will not consider the status of the media, or to the fact that it is charged with actualizing civil liberty. It will not be overly critical of the means that it employs in order to compel the defiant journalist to obey its demands. It will exert its superior power (which the law grants it) against him, and it will put him – all of his sacredness notwithstanding – on trial.

For the most part the law must have recourse to aggressive imposition of its authority, being frequently incapable of acquiring information by professional methods such as police expertise, when investigating some legal issue or other. In order to conceal its own ineffectuality and to justify its own good name, the law will not hesitate to violate the sanctity of another democratic value - the citizen’s right to know.

A similar adversarial relationship is encountered frequently between art and the law. Civil censorship is an official and established institution for the critique of art by the democratic regime. It has the legal authority to disqualify any artistic creation, according to its own principles and criteria – for example, it can declare that it is illegal to stage a particular play or to show a particular film. In such cases, the world of art usually responds with a show of deep offense and unforgivable insult. Its wrath burns within it, its fury is all-consuming. It arms for battle to the bitter end, for the law has attempted to circumscribe its territory. If the government is not aggressive enough to stand upon enforcement of the law, the offended titans of the art world “daringly defy” the law. They rebel in the

name of artistic freedom, and stage the illegal play in spite of all. The right of the artist to express himself freely, however his heart may desire, is, in their eyes, a supreme value that cancels out every other value.

Thus we find a situation of inherent and intrinsic contradiction. The assurance of liberty and of the basic rights of society and of the individual is dependent upon the invulnerability and the immunity of the sacred cows. However, their own immunity is broken down by the sacred cows' own aggression against one another. There is no principle, no supreme value that protects the sacred cows from assault and injury by one another. It is obvious that there could be no such value. It could never be found in a secular humanistic society. The whole actuality and definition of the sacred cow lies in the fact that it is not dependent upon any human consent and consensus. Rather, it is an absolute value.

6th. The Root of All Evil: Separation in Principle

The phenomena described above demand investigation. It behooves us to attempt to expose their root and cause. It seems clear that there exists a certain primary cause, embedded in modern society's most basic assumptions, that is directing the entire mechanism behind these phenomena. We do not presume to encompass this complex problem. Social, psychological, economic and political factors all most likely play their role. Nevertheless, we would like to pause and examine the one primary factor that seems to be at the root of it. One principle seems to turn the wheels for all the many forms and variations that this problem takes.

It would appear that the root of this evil is the principle of separation, an assumption that is rooted in modern social consciousness. The sacred cows have hastened to exploit this principle in order to grant themselves absolute autonomy as far as their hearts may desire. The independence that stands beyond the reach of any criteria for criticism whatsoever, that the sacred cows have taken for themselves, justifies itself through a pragmatic approach, in which reality is divided into separate segments. Reality becomes a series of patches and pieces. In terms of practical application, this requires separate systems of activity, separate spheres with no common aspect between them. There is no meta-structure of values to unite them into one organic system. There is nothing to compensate for the inadequacy inherent in every separate sphere. Segmentation creates a situation whereby every sphere of activity recognizes only its own reality. It is inevitable that conflict and competition for supremacy will rage among them. One pushes and attempts to crowd out the other, ignoring quite deliberately its right to exist. It must reject every meaning or worth that the other attributes to itself.

General principles that serve as hallowed beliefs and as fundamental criteria in one sphere, are not even recognized – they have no place in another sphere. The pristine logic that serves as science’s guiding light is rejected within the borders of art and of the law, as though it belonged to a separate reality distinct unto itself. Justice, which serves as the law’s guiding light, is not recognized in the private territory of science or in any of the other territories. It is as though this justice, to which the law is subject, is not necessarily relevant in relation to “the public’s right to know.” It seems as though it is not appropriate for one moral value to be equally incumbent upon all the separate spheres.

Within this reality, of the zealously guarded separation of territories, a paradoxical situation is created. It is as fascinating as it is fraught with disaster. Because the separate systems are hostile to one another, they become reverse companions in misery. The trouble of one is the liberation of the other, which strives to limit the first or to annihilate her entirely. It is the nature of the sacred cow to be incapable of recognizing her fellow cows' right to liberty.

In conclusion, we will consider the Jewish approach to this question. In a society that is organized and operates according to Jewish belief, a war of the gods can never be declared. Because God is the only supreme value recognized in Judaism, this value serves as a controlling and mediating factor among the other values that are its derivatives. Thus historically, royalty was subservient to prophet or priest, who represented the godly value, and these two in turn were subservient to the rule of the Torah.

The fact that an entire system addresses one absolute value provides a balancing and stabilizing effect. It ascertains that the various value systems operating within it are reconciled with one another. They must operate under conditions of mutual dependency, yet one may not deprive another of its unique status.