

At a party in our home last evening (20Jan82), a person of eminence and sophistication, just back from the Himalayas, remarked, "All these valuable artifacts, right out in the open! Aren't you afraid...?" It never fails: Every group that enters our house reveals the common pervasive fear of being ripped off, one's castle invaded and despoiled. This thinksheet is about this garrison mentality among America's haves, parallel with a surley, proviolent mentality among America's have-nots.

1. Biblically, "shalom" is the human condition, and the condition of the whole of "nature," under "the Kingdom [reign, rule, dominion, governance] of God," *malikut YHWH*. The rip-off does not exist where shalom exists, so "gates need not be closed."

2. The "gates" metaphor is prominent in scripture for the existential reason that gates/doors are everyday human experience: how many have you gone through so far today? Kṛṣṇa in Gita and Jesus in Gospel say, "I am the door." And my friend Rabbi Chaim Stern uses this as the continuum metaphor for his great liturgical series titles GATES OF...(PRAYER; UNDERSTANDING; THE HOUSE; HEAVEN; JOY; REPENTANCE; FORGIVENESS; FREEDOM).

3. Judaism and Confucianism being more similar than are the latter and Christianity, China has not been as rough on Judaism as on Christianity. The Chinese 10 this and 5 that and 3 the other have the feel of the 10 Commandments, 1 of which this thinksheet is about: "Thou shalt not steal." The other part of the thinksheet's title is not Jewish but Chinese: "Gates need not be closed," which is true in situations in which it is unnecessary to say "Thou shalt not steal."

4. Several times in my life I've lived in subcultures in which "gates need not be closed." In each case, I lived there long enough for the gates to begin being closed and locked: the general culture was beginning to swamp the subculture. Eg, no doors were locked in the village when 20 years ago we moved to Chappaqua; now, all are. And all were, already, when 1 1/2 years ago we moved to Craigville, another little (in this case, tiny!) village of WASP foundation. Before the technological development of transportation and communication, it was possible to wall in the minds, bodies, houses, territories of subcultures: self-willed ghettos, small and (eg, China) large. Partly because, under media bombardment especially, this is now impossible, the view has spread that ghettoization is undesirable, even wrong. For this thinksheet, I set this view aside, with only the aside that it's one of the perpetual roots of antisemitism.

5. Here's the whole quote from Confucius Himself, on open gates (Himself quoting the classic LI CHI, the CLASSIC OF RITES, one of the FIVE CLASSICS [243f, last pg. of Chic Meng's CHINESE AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING: A SIXTY-YEAR SEARCH, China Inst./8]): "When the Great Way prevails, the world belongs to all mankind. People choose for their leaders the wise and the able, and world order is based on fidelity and harmony. They care for their own parents and children, and see to it that all old people enjoy their old age, all the able bodied are properly employed, and the young develop their talents. Provisions are made for widows and widowers and orphans, and homes are found for single men and women. Surplus wealth is not hoarded for personal gain, and manpower is not exploited for personal advantage. Consequently, theft and robbery do not arise, and gates need not be closed. This is Ta Tung, the Great Commonweal." It takes no exegesis to see that "Ta Tung" in Chinese = "Shalom" in Hebrew: the human ideal future (though the Hebrew word includes devotion/obedience to the Divine, whereas Confucius' description of Ta Tung leaves the Divine to other interpreters, which came to be Taoism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity).... This quote from pre-Confucian scriptures lays out a program "the social gospel" fosters and Reaganomics distrusts at the Federal level.

6. The word underlined in pg.5 reveals a Pelagian trust in human nature as good: stealing roots in need. Much of it, I say, does; and much need roots in stealing!