





# THE BOISI CENTER

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THE BOISI CENTER FOR RELIGION AND AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE

MAY 2002

is as we usually discuss public square at the Boise Center, a discussion of student oral for at the Catholic College Illinois (a conservative Protestant institution), and a talk at Loyola College in Maryland on religious diversity and the good. The last of these events, which took place in the "Religion in the Capital" series, involved a discussion with the authors of a recent book on the topic. For the latter event, which was a keynote address, I discussed the series in a Catholic-like self-referential intellectual tradition. The talk will eventually be published, and I will be publishing it in the letter.

The week in particular stands out as I think about the past

several weeks featured a discussion of Jesus and the American public square at the Boise Center, a discussion of student oral for at the Catholic College Illinois (a conservative Protestant institution), and a talk at Loyola College in Maryland on religious diversity and the good. The last of these events, which took place in the "Religion in the Capital" series, involved a discussion with the authors of a recent book on the topic. For the latter event, which was a keynote address, I discussed the series in a Catholic-like self-referential intellectual tradition. The talk will eventually be published, and I will be publishing it in the letter.

to expect that the book, the Boise Center will be a significant reference in the history of religion in America. The author, James Griffith, and I will be working with a group of advanced graduate students and beginning assistant professors who are engaged in ethnographic studies of American religious practice.

Finally, the . . . state Department has asked us to submit a proposal for a rotating residence program for fifteen scholars from various countries next fall, which we would lead ourselves and discuss so American religious pluralism and the separation of church and state. If we receive the grant, I will have more to say about this in the next letter.

Ala Wile



# Debating the Role of Jews in the Public Square

The rabbinic tradition of scholarly investigation and rational disputation proved to be alive and well at the annual meeting of the American Jewish University in Washington, D.C. in 2001. The topic of the meeting was "The Role of Jews in the Public Square." As part of a broader program sponsored by the Center for Jewish-Christian Dialogue, the meeting was a rare opportunity for religious traditions to be heard in a public square. The event featured a presentation by David Olovson, a rabbi at Harvard University, and a panel discussion of Harvard University. Kevin Hassid, of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, as the respondent.

Olovson argued that the central problem for Jews in the public square is how to clarify the issues of both the liberal and the conservative. He suggested that the Jewish people as a whole, not just the Orthodox, are the ones who are the most vocal in their support of the state of Israel, because "our unalloyed political conviction is to support the Jewish people." Give that Jewish support to the state of Israel is a political conviction, it is not a religious conviction. First, such a conviction is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Second, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Third, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Fourth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Fifth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Sixth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Seventh, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Eighth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Ninth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Tenth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people.

The rabbi of the presentation struck a different perspective on the role of Jews in the public square. In his view, Jews have always served the public square, but it is not obvious to the public. He suggested that the Jewish people are the ones who are the most vocal in their support of the state of Israel, because "our unalloyed political conviction is to support the Jewish people." Give that Jewish support to the state of Israel is a political conviction, it is not a religious conviction. First, such a conviction is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Second, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Third, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Fourth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Fifth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Sixth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Seventh, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Eighth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Ninth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Tenth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people.

For the rabbi of the presentation, the central question is not whether Jews should be in the public square, but how they should be. He suggested that the Jewish people are the ones who are the most vocal in their support of the state of Israel, because "our unalloyed political conviction is to support the Jewish people." Give that Jewish support to the state of Israel is a political conviction, it is not a religious conviction. First, such a conviction is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Second, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Third, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Fourth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Fifth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Sixth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Seventh, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Eighth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Ninth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people. Tenth, public opinion is not self-interest of the Jewish people.

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2400 University of Idaho  
Crest Hill, Boise, ID 83726  
(617) 552-1860 • Fax: (617) 552-1863  
e-mail: [publiclife@boisi.edu](mailto:publiclife@boisi.edu)  
website: [boisi.edu/publiclife](http://boisi.edu/publiclife)

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**Alan Wolfe** serves as the director of the Bill Center and is a professor of political science at Boston College. Professor Wolfe is the author or editor of several books, including *One Nation, After All*, *Disorderly: The Story of the Vietnam War*, *The Story of the Vietnam War*, *The Story of the Vietnam War*, *The Story of the Vietnam War*. Professor Wolfe is a contributing editor of *The New York Times*.

## Sells Reflects on "The Struggle for the Soul of Islam"

Islamic scholar and professor of religion at Haverford College, asserted in a recent lecture at Boston College that the alternative to a more conservative Islamic movement are really fighting a war against the West, and that it represents: a culture of global advertisement and technology of images. It is so accurate, he argued, that the September 11 attacks were "coordinated" to ensure that these symbols would be captured; it is as if the part of the world that is the place of defeat and the states that are believed as America's slave to the images.

Sells argued to have a sense of the obligation of radical Islamic groups, and to contrast these movements with the broader Islamic cultural tradition that is often the basis of its

# Sorush Offers An Islamic Perspective on Reason in Society

Acording to Islamic scholar Abdolkarim Soroush, the distinctive capacity of reason is situated within the context of freedom — in fact, “the only free thing in the world is reason.” The capacity for reason is also intertwined with other important aspects of human experience—revelation, revolution, and the divine. Soroush, a visiting professor this year at Harvard Divinity School, explained these topics of reason in a lecture at Boston College on March 25.

As a challenge to revelation, or religious experience, reason is a dependent upon a challenge to its epistemological case of Galileo and his conflict with the Catholic Church. For Soroush, this relationship is intractable, and “Islamic fundamentalism is a better solution than Christianity to this question.”

These perspectives on reason and revolution, or the other hand, as illustrated strikingly for Soroush in the Iranian revolution of 1979, and still plausible in Iran today. Revolutions, because they involve the “eruption of events,” are “very far from rational.” People taking part in revolution need to be guided by

faith and a balance between reason and emotion, and Soroush sees this as the task of intellectuals.

Finally, Soroush books to the great utility of human beings to the great extent that reason and the divine. This teaching is the elevation of the human condition for reason; as such, “reason is a human essence, although a biological interest.”



Soroush concluded by explaining a significant difference between the two cases he addressed, if not resolved. Reason and revelation can relate several aspects—though understanding, analysis, and logic, and a critique—all of which can be helpful, but people are all. In the end, Soroush

argued, there is great resistance to the idea that reason can critique religion, but it is a step towards what needs to be taken. At the same time, the posture of faith and belief is a better alternative to the Islamic world, which needs to develop its own qualified scholars who can participate actively in the intellectual world.

# Banuazizi Proposes a Typology of Political Islam

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These concepts are actually Islamic; for most of its history, Islamic rule has been characterized by a separation of spiritual and political rule. In the 1960s and 70s, the idea of an Islamic state developed.

While justice is the overriding ideological goal of these movements, each has its own justice (in general and as it pertains to the world) is quite different: the liberals, for example, understand justice in terms of the French model of equality before the law and the use of a fair and moderate view of freedom and social roles. Revolutionaries, on the other hand, interpret justice as essential, involving the equal distribution of resources to all, and the use of a responsible egalitarian view of the world's place in society. Finally, conservatives use an Aristotelian notion of justice as a partial involvement in proportionate treatment of equal parties; it is seen, however, as a self-perpetuating and therefore receive different treatment than the other two.

Banuazizi notes that the two groups outlined above cut across the traditional civilizational divide in Islam; at the same time, it does not include the authoritarian political orientation in Islam, ranging from the world of the “brave men, apart from” Soroush. The two groups also make the study of terrorism more complex, because it demonstrates the difficulty of fitting terrorism into these two categories. But to the contrary, terrorism groups tend to be peripheral to Islamic societies, and their methods are rejected by most Islamic governments.

Banuazizi argues that the fight to spread a different kind of terrorism groups is a double-edged political strategy. First, the debate between political groups in the world needs to be allowed to flourish. At the same time, the intended target of its allies should promote democratic institutions in Islamic societies through a measured process of influence and governance. The values of pluralism and tolerance.



# Waterman Asks if Economists are Human



✚ Ja uar 30, e Boisi  
 Ce ter's pri g 2002 v'sit-  
 i g scolar A. .C. ater a ,  
 P ofessor of Eco o ics at t e  
 i versit of i ipeg, detaile  
 is curre t researc pogra at  
 a lu c o prese tatp e t tle  
 "Eco o ists versus Hu a  
 Be i gs?" ater a e plai ed  
 t at i s i volve e t i t public  
 plic advocac i t e Ca adia  
 A gli ca C urc i t e 1970's  
 b ug t b i s atte tp a gap

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 tatp of C r i s t i a s o c i a l t i k i g a d t o s e o f i s o  
 v o c a t p a s a e o o i s t . a t e r a p r o p o s e s i s  
 r e s e a r c , a c r i t i q u e o f C r i s t i a s o c i a l t i k i g t a t o e s  
 j u s t i c e b o t b t e " s p o t a o u s o r d e r " t a t e o o i s t s  
 r e o g z e i u a s o c i e t , a d b t e o r g a i c i s d e e p l  
 i b e d d e d i C r i s t i a e c c l e s p b g .

As b a c k g r o u d b i s p r o j e c t , a t e r a  
 e p l a i e d t a t t e d i v i d e b e t e e " e o o i s t s " a d  
 " u a b e i g s " f i r s t a n s e a t t e b e g i i g o f t e i g t  
 c e t u r i t e o r k s o f u o a s a l t u s , o a r g u e d  
 t a t s c a r c i t o f r e s o u r c e s i t e o r l d p o s e d f u d a e t a l  
 p o p l e s i c c a l l e d i b q u e s t p t e g o d e s s o f

God's creatp . u b s e q u e t o r k i p o l i t i c a l e o o  
 p r o c e e d e d o t e a s s u p t p o f a e t o o b g i c a l i d i -  
 v i d u a l i s i c d e i e d t e p o s s i b i l i t o f r e o g z i g a  
 " e o o g o d " o r o l l e c t i v e l o p t i a l o u r s e o f a c t p ,  
 b u t s u c a u d e r s t a d i g o f u a s o c i e t a s i o -  
 f l i c t i t C r i s t i a s o c i a l t i k i g ' s u d e r s t a d i g o f t e  
 o r l d a s a o r g a i s o r " B o d p o l i t i c k " o d e l e d o t e  
 P a u l i e o t p o f s o c i e t a s t e s t i c a l b o d o f C r i s t .  
 u s a t e r a t r a c e d t e o s t i t o f C r i s t i a s o c i a l  
 t o u g t b a r d s t e s c i e c e o f p o l i t i c a l e o o b t e  
 b u d a t p o f e o o i c s a s a o d e r s c i e c e .

Dur i g i s t i e a t t e B o i s i C e t e r , a t e r a  
 p l a s b l e a r o r e a b o u t o A e r i c a C r i s t i a s  
 t e s e l v e s u d e r s t a d t e i r t r a d i t p ' s s o c i a l t e a c i g s  
 s o t a t e c a a c o u t b r o t o l t e s o c i a l t i k i g o f  
 t o s e i t e p u l p i t , b u t a l s o f t o s e i t e p e s . v c e  
 e a s e s t a b l i s e d a t e a c t l i s C r i s t i a s o c i a l t i k i  
 i g b d a a o g s t b o t c l e r g a d t e l a i t , e p l a s b  
 s u b j e c t t e o c t r i e f i r s t b t e c r i t i c a l e a i a t p o f t e  
 c a o s o f e o o i c s , a d s e o d l , b t r a c e i t s d e p a r -  
 t u r e s f r o t e t r a d i t p a l C r i s t i a s o c i a l t i k i g o f t e  
 19 t C e t u r . l t i a t e l , e o p e s b d i s o v e r i f t e  
 C r i s t i a t r a d i t p o f i q u i r o c e r i g s o c i a l q u e s t p s  
 c a l e a r f r o t e o d e r s c i e c e o f e o o i c s , o r i f  
 t e t o v e r s o f i q u i r u s t u l t i a t e l b e i o f l i c t .

# Davidman Discusses "Unsynagogued" Jews

ere i o s i s t s t e s e l f i d e t i t o f s e c u l a r " u s a -  
 g o g u e d " A e r i c a J e s ? L D a v i d a ,  
 P o f e s s o r o f J u d a i c s t u d i e s a t B o i s i u n i v e r s i t a d b r -  
 e r i s i t i g c o l a r a t t e B o i s i C e t e r , a d d r e s s e d t i s  
 a d o t e r q u e s t p s r e l a t e d b e r c u r r e t s o c p b g i -  
 c a l o r k o J e s ' b u t s i d e t e s a g o g u e . " D a v i d a  
 a s o c l u d e d t a t t e s e l f i d e t i t o f s e c u l a r J e s  
 o s i s t s o r e i v i e i g t e s e l v e s a s ' b t e r " i  
 o p p o s i t p b t e p r e v a l i g c u l t u r a l i d e t i t i e s i  
 o d e r A e r i c a t a i v i e i g t e s e l v e s a s u i t -  
 e d i s u p p o r t o f a s p e c i f i c c u l t u r a l t r a i t . H e r  
 r e s e a r c , b a s e d o i d e p t i t e r v i e s i t 30 u s -  
 a g g u e d J e s , b c u s e s o t e i r l i v e d r e l i g p i  
 e v e r d a l i f e b a a l z i g t e a s t a t J e i s i d e -  
 t i t i e s , p r a c t i c e s a d e a i g s a r e e s t a b l i s e d o u t s i d e  
 o f i s t i t u t p a l s e t t i g s .

P o f e s s o r D a v i d a b u d t a t t e r e l i g p u s  
 t r a d i t p s o f u s a g g u e d J e s e r e r e l a t i v e l t i :  
 s e r e o u t e d t e s b r i e s o f J e s o a d r e t u r e d  
 o e b r q u a s i - t r a d i t p a l s e d e r s t a t f e a t u r e d p a s t a  
 a d o t e r o l o s e r d i s e s . I f s u c t r a d i t p s e r e  
 t i i t r e s p e c t b r e l i g p u s o t e t s e r e a s o e d t e  
 p e r a p s t e r e e r e o t e r t r a i t s a n o u d i c s e c u l a r  
 J e s a d p r e s e r v e d t e i r i d e t i t i e s .

v d d l e o u g , e r i t e r v i e s s u g g e s t e d t a t  
 a J e s b c a t e d t e i r c u l t u r a l i d e t i t i o c e p t s s u c  
 a s " r a c e , " i c i t e a f t e r a t o f t e H b b c a u s t a d  
 t e " F i a l o l u t p " s e e e d p a r a d i c a l . B u t u p f u r -



t e r p o b i g , s e l e a r e d t a t  
 i f a c t s e c u l a r J e s e r e t e  
 " f i r s t p o s t - o d e r " p o p l e o  
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 i s b r — b u t i s e d b r e j e c t t e a u t o r i t o f r a b i s o r  
 r e l i g p u s o f f i c i a l s .