



Zahav Books

Yoram Kaufmann Memorial

My name is David Rottman, I'm president of the Jung Foundation of New York and also president of Zahav Books, the publisher of Yoram's book, *The Way of the Image*.

Hannah and I were talking recently about whether someone can love you without seeing you. Yoram's great gifts started with his ability to see, to see with precision and to bow to what is actually there, not as we might want things to be, but as they are. As you know, he called it the orient. I asked him where did this great ability to see come from (and of course he was a great man), where did this great objectivity come from? He said he didn't know altogether but already as a young child he knew that the way he was reacting to his surroundings was due to him, it was his own response; he knew someone else would have reacted in a different way.

That piercing ability of his to see objectively was scary to a number of people. Some students ran away from him and avoided his classes. It also led to reactions of outrage from some people, and it made him enemies. It's important to remember that this was not attributable simply to his bluntness or his directness—that's not what led to negative responses. After all, he could also be the most amazingly discreet person, elegant in the way he handled confidences. His respect and caring for the genuine in the soul of other people was something instantaneous, he just was immediately moved by the soul of other people. He was a boundary keeping person, which was why he could break boundaries with deep conviction when something sacred required it. He could and did take a stand, put himself on the line, and accept the responsibility that came with taking a risk, sometimes a very big risk—those were essential qualities about him. As he said, it made him very vulnerable, extremely vulnerable, a fact that people who focused on his bluntness were not able to see. He said we should act directly on the orient, not wavering on one side or the other. What amazing persistent courage he had! People were not neutral in their response to Yoram, as life itself is not neutral. "He's just so real," said a friend of mine. So no, it wasn't just his bluntness that led to some famous whopping hostile reactions—it was that he embodied the capacity to look at things and see them as they are, and stand behind what he saw, which outrages people who don't want to see.

One of his many great ideas is that the lack of exquisite attunement is the root of all evil. He also said that many if not most people find it painful to be seen in a three-dimensional way, even if some part of them craves it. The corollary is that if conditions are right, the presence and the application of exquisite attunement leads to healing, a kind of healing that only a person as gifted as Yoram could initiate.

Of course this was his way to love. He put love into his work, but we have to honor him by being equally precise and staying with the fact that it was his form of love—objective, working with the orient, accepting the givens that couldn't be changed and working tirelessly, and with the most potent creativity, on what could be changed. Exquisitely attuned. With this potency of his, he altered the trajectory of the lives of so many people, and gave them a chance at experiencing the good things of life. As he said, knowing and bowing to one's own orients, one's own inner guidelines, is the culmination of life.

Yoram was a life-giver. He was a life-giver. We are so blessed to have known him. He saved the lives of a number of adults and children with his encyclopedic knowledge of the body and medicine. These were people who were misdiagnosed or not diagnosed at all. Those stories really need to be collected so their impact can be seen. He also saved the lives of many people whose depression and discouragement and lack of being seen were leading them to an early death. And he was a life-giver by his daily work of enhancing what his patients could experience about life. His incredible ability to attune himself with precision in his work meant that, as he said, he worked in a different way with every single patient he saw, based on the patient's material, based on their orients. With one patient he did nothing but exchange jokes for several years because he saw that was what the patient's psyche needed to defrost, to become human. Yoram had a wonderful sense of humor and with his nearly perfect memory and great timing, he could tell very comic jokes. With another patient he was completely silent for a similar period, quite some years, and when the patient was finally ready to talk, he thanked Yoram profusely for respecting his need for silence, and then began a regular talking therapy. With another patient Yoram talked for the most of the time in the sessions, explaining every nuance of life, all the elements of human motivation because this patient had a burning desire to know. I will be always in awe of his overwhelming generosity in giving people parts of themselves. That is what life-giving is, at its best.

It's part of my journey to spread the good news that there is and was such a man, a man who used his very extraordinary gifts in the service of this amazing fact: that under the right circumstances, with precision and attunement and knowledge and openness, people can change and change in ways that are still very much news to the world. It's possible to work successfully therapeutically against a person's karma, against their ordained fate. To bring a second fate to birth. As he put it, the tectonic plates of the psyche can shift, and that is earth-shaking. In this sense, he was a pioneer in the tradition of the great men who shift our understanding and worldview, who make new things possible.

Yoram was loyal to the numinous experiences of his own life—he said he was shaking after his first day of therapeutic work, shaking from the power of the experience, its rightness. When he saw the orient of what he could do in the field of therapy, he devoted his life to it with utmost seriousness. That loyalty is probably the best working definition we have of a spiritual attitude—he was a wonderful example without ever having the slightest inclination to be an example.

What he saw about himself at the end of his life was that many other people in turn saw who he was: we saw how he expressed this love of his in his work and in his relationships, and we loved him for it. So we here were attuned to him, to his tremendous contribution to the people around him, and the world at large. He said that the outpouring of appreciation and love that came to him and Rise, and the realization that he had made such a huge impact, was a big part of the meaning he made from his illness. I'm so glad he saw us seeing him.

In general Yoram did not like the limelight, but he pointed out forcefully that when it came his way, he made the most of it. Again, he was bowing to the orient of the moment, honoring the orient. We worked on the book for more than a year, and although it is short, it is so dense with its "Yoramness," so packed with its layers of meaning and wisdom, that I am still discovering its implications after many readings. One must become richer oneself in order to gain from all of its richness. He found and chose the beautiful fractal on the cover. It is a study of energy flow in ocean waves moving through current eddies. When we were done and it went to the printer, he said he was very pleased but also he dreaded the reactions that would come negatively to his book from the therapeutic community. Which of the many things in the book would be the primary target, I asked. "There is a right and wrong thing to say." I hope that reaction doesn't happen of course, I hope his work receives the welcome it deserves from that community. We'll see, I can hear him saying. As for the rest of the world, I'm quite confident that his work will find its way very well. He is and was a man whose positive impact always has had a deeply widening dimension, a rippling out effect, that will go on with no end in sight.

Yoram said that we need rituals when something happens that is larger than the ego; he said rituals help us deal with something greater than the extent and scope of our consciousness. His death is such a thing. Our loss of him is such a thing. On the day before he died I was as sad as I have ever been. With the help of a dream, I got the message that along with our sadness and our grief, which are so real and so much with us, we must also devote energy to celebrating him and his life and his spirit. We can honor his impact on us by going for what is most life-giving in our own lives. A ritual such as this one today can be once, as today, and it can also be often, or even daily. The ongoing celebration of Yoram's life will be a long-lasting meaningful ritual that we can carry forward, in the glow of that wonderful and powerful life-giving Yoram spirit, a spirit based on a love of what is real.