

BEYOND
PATRIARCHY

JEWISH FATHERS AND FAMILIES

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strengthening families without the incentives of exclusive male bonding systems, is unknown. Many Jews and other upper middle class men in economically advanced democratic societies may be in the forefront of a movement to create a new paradigm of partnership parenting without patriarchy, a possibility explored more generally in the final chapter.



BEYOND PATRIARCHY?

WHEN I FINISHED WRITING *FAMILY MATTERS* (1972), I WAS DISTURBED ABOUT THE CLASH OF WHAT SEEMED TO ME TO BE two moral imperatives: the right of women to be equal to men in the choices they make regarding their public lives and the right of infants and children to receive continuity of authoritative, loving care from their parents or other adults whom they perceive to be responsible for them. In short, patriarchy should end; motherhood and fatherhood should be major responsibilities for anyone who has a child.

Several facts already were evident: Women were moving increasingly into positions of equality with men in many public roles; some men were beginning to take on more responsibility for the care of children, although the pace of change was slow; many men were leaving the responsibilities of fatherhood altogether; extended family care for children was diminishing; deficits in authoritative, loving care for infants and children were growing; and children were increasingly at risk for problems ranging from obesity to suicide.

As told in the Prologue, I became particularly interested in the role that fathers play in promoting the well-being of children. Thus began my inquiry into the relationship between incentives for postbiological fathering and patriarchy in the evolution of hominids and later in many cultures. What I found about the relationship of human nature to fathering and male dominance is reported briefly in chapter 1: Human males are alone among male primates in making a substantial investment in postbiological fathering for their own biological offspring;

they are alone in entering into long-term pair bonds with the mothers of those offspring; the engagement of human males in continuing to be fathers well beyond the act of procreation probably results from adaptations by adult hominids to maximize the survival of unusually dependent offspring; and finally, male dominance is universal among the other primates, except for the bonobos, and theories that posit the dominance of males among hominids rest on plausible inferences from the evidence.

Although I found that patriarchy is deeply embedded in all cultures, no theory explaining its universality or its origins demonstrates its inevitability. This is not to say that hominid adaptations that favored a pronounced sexual dimorphism in *Homo sapiens*, compared to other primates, are not or will cease to be a major determinant of the different roles played by men and women in families. As sociologist Alice S. Rossi concluded in 1984, even before the recent flood of work in biological anthropology, there is “mounting evidence of sexual dimorphism from the biological and neurosciences” that men on the average are predisposed to behavior quite different from that of women.¹ But there is no genetic code for patriarchy. Sexual dimorphism is not necessarily the enemy of sexual equality, especially under conditions where education is available to women on a basis of equality with men in an information-service economy; and when women have control over the number of children they will have, and mothers and infants no longer routinely die in the birthing process. Under those circumstances, as already seen, the erosion of patriarchy is already under way. I believe that the evidence suggests that sexual dimorphism and an enlarged investment by fathers in postbiological parenting are compatible, although, as discussed later, mothers are likely to continue to make more of an investment in caring for infants and small children than fathers do.

Paradoxically, the story of the Jews, as outlined here, in their revision of the generic patriarchal paradigm, reinforces my belief that patriarchy is not inevitable. The paradox lies in the fact that the Jews evolved a tight religiously based patriarchal culture; but the main lesson from the story is that Jews revealed the human capacity for radical cultural change regarding the relationship of fathering to patriarchy. In their

beginnings, at least from what we know, the peoples who later became the Jews thought of women as chattel and, as in patriarchies generally, often abused them. After they united around a religious insight of one God as the source of all life and developed Torah rules for ethical living, they practiced a radically different and distinct patriarchy, particularly after their defeat by the Romans in 70 C.E. and their dispersion. The Jewish patriarchal model persisted through the late Middle Ages. From the nineteenth century on, particularly in the United States, most people who called themselves Jews modified the Jewish patriarchal paradigm and substituted for it a modern model within which Jewish men competed and succeeded. Finally, during the last four decades of the twentieth century, many Jews, especially Jewish women, played leading roles in attacking the modern patriarchal system in a movement calling for sexual equality in public roles, plus partnerships in parenting at home.

Although the story of the Jews shows the human capacity for major cultural change, resistance to ending patriarchy will continue to come from many quarters, including those men and women who are sincerely concerned about the deficits in child care that sometimes result when mothers enter the full time paid labor force. Patriarchy will not be ended because of ideological arguments, as experience in Communist countries makes clear. Communism, according to its proponents, would end bourgeois patriarchy. Women would have equal access to high-status positions and remunerative income. They would no longer be slaves to the capitalist nuclear family. But patriarchy was deeply entrenched in the cultures of Russia and China, the two most powerful of all Communist nations. In 1969, on a lecture tour in Russia and Ukraine, I learned that whenever any kind of job became predominantly women's work, even that of physician, it was downgraded in status and salary. Fifteen years later, on a lecture tour of universities in China, I visited a major clothing factory, where I learned that work was segregated by sex and that women performed the less well paid and less respected tasks.

Japan is probably the best example of cultural resistance to feminist ideology in the face of some of the same conditions that gave rise to

feminism in the United States, western Europe, and other modern democratic countries. Despite those changes, the Japanese have layers of cultural resistance to overcome before coming close to toppling patriarchy.² But access to education, jobs in a high tech service economy, and control over reproduction are spurring Japanese feminists to attack patriarchy.³

When patriarchal cultures are religiously based, then resistance to feminist arguments is particularly intense, even if those religiously based patriarchies function in modern societies, such as the Mormons, Hutterites, Amish, and Hasidic Jews in the United States. But those patriarchies are also affected to some degree by the factors that gave rise to the modern feminist movement to begin with, such as equal access for women with men to secular education, as seen in chapter II regarding modern Orthodox Jews.

The fight to defend patriarchy is particularly militant in several Muslim countries, where religious leaders defend it as God's will. When Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in Iran in 1979, he proclaimed the code requiring Muslim women to cover their arms, legs, hair, and *zina* (enticing parts).⁴ When the fundamentalist group, the Taliban, gained ascendancy in Afghanistan, it acted quickly to tighten enforcement of its view of the Islamic social code, particularly the taboos that ban women from working in other than domestic occupations and require all females beyond puberty to cloak themselves from head to toe.⁵ Girls were not permitted to go to school or to leave their homes unless accompanied by a close male relative. Some who violated that rule were whipped, beaten, and at times killed. After Algeria's Islamic insurgents ordered all women to veil themselves in 1995, a recalcitrant sixteen-year-old high school student who walked to class without a head scarf was killed by the militants. Between 1992 and 1995, fifty women were murdered in Algeria for working alongside men or wearing Western dress.⁶

A less violent but still militant example of resistance to change is the strong opposition of the ultra-Orthodox men in Israel to women's efforts to invade traditionally exclusive male responsibilities and privileges. When, in 1989, approximately forty women tried to hold morning prayers at the Western Wall, they were attacked by ultra-Orthodox

men and forced to flee after police fired tear gas to disperse the attackers. The Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism, was no place for women to pray, thought these ultra-Orthodox men, who do not believe that women should be permitted to carry a Torah scroll.⁷ But there are Orthodox Jews who are working to enlarge women's rights, as seen in chapter II; there also are religious Muslims who are working toward the same goal.

Educated, upper-middle-class Malaysian women have been in the forefront of an international group of Muslim women who have been promoting a feminist agenda. The women argue that they find no contradiction between their "desire to be strong, independent modern women" and their desire "to be good Muslims."⁸ In some Muslim countries, such as the tiny oil kingdom of Qatar, where the undersecretary of education in 1998 was a woman, an increasing number of women were working side by side with men, although in deference to Muslim tradition most of them wore veils on the job. Patriarchy and polygyny still prevail in Qatar, along with the social segregation of females. Classes at the university are not mixed. Women often cloak themselves from head to ankle. Yet education and access to such positions as professor or bank manager are now open to women.⁹

In portions of the world where large numbers of people live at or close to subsistence level, the spread of feminist consciousness and an equal rights movement is confined primarily to a growing but still relatively small number of university-educated women and focused on issues of neglect of and brutality toward women. Those in the forefront of the movement for women's rights—the most educated—are also most likely to postpone marriage or do without husbands altogether. In Kenya, where one third of the students at Nairobi University are women, the proportion of twenty- to twenty-four-year-old women who had never married jumped from 24 percent in 1984 to 32 percent five years later. One self-employed woman interviewed in her well-equipped apartment told a Western reporter: "At least our African grandfathers looked after their women . . . but now the average man might contribute to the rent but use the rest for mistresses and beer."¹⁰ In the Ivory Coast in 1996, a university-educated woman led a campaign

against the practice of sexual harassment in the workplace and the entrenched customs of multiple wives, mistresses, and concubines.¹¹ Women from dozens of countries met in Beijing in September 1995 at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women and asserted that a woman's right to make sexual decisions free of coercion or violence must be protected. The woman who called it "a major step forward in defining human rights" was correct, although it was a step taken more than two thousand years ago in Judaism.¹²

Much of the world still does not recognize women's sexual rights, as discussed in chapter 3. Domestic male violence also is commonly sanctioned. It continues to exist in Israel, where it appears to have risen in the 1990s, despite the Torah's prohibition of it.¹³ As a result of what appears to be an increase in battering among Orthodox women, many of them launched a publicity effort in 1996 to reach out to victims of domestic abuse. These religious women, including nurses, lawyers, teachers, and social workers, decided to expose the myth that Jewish men never abuse their wives. But social workers acknowledged that the incidence was still relatively low for Jews, compared to the general population. A task force of women developed rabbinic training seminars for religious leaders to help them deal with the problem, indicating support among men in the community for exposing it.¹⁴

It is not accidental that some of the most militant resistance to the sexual equality movement in the United States has occurred in the armed forces. Through some combination of hominid adaptations and subsequent cultural conditioning, males everywhere have tended to think of themselves as protectors of their females and children. It would be extraordinary if the protector-warrior male bonding systems that have been so important to men could be ended without meeting opposition. The best-publicized resistance to the end of male bonding privileges in the 1990s came in the reaction of many young men to the government's insistence that women be admitted to the Virginia Military Institute and the Citadel, two previously all-male military preparatory institutions. When a female visitor from the *Washington Post* visited VMI, many of the young men there were incensed. One of them stripped off his clothes and marched along the second floor mezzanine

naked, to the cheers of his classmates, in order to get his point across that she was not welcome. Another carried a "Keep Women Out" sign.¹⁵ Within the armed services, the sexual harassment of females by males has been a continuing, serious problem.¹⁶

Young men in close physical proximity to women often will be sexually aggressive toward them, and in many poor communities such behavior is exacerbated by the men's feelings of powerlessness. In 1993 two female students at different alternative high schools in Brooklyn were beaten by their boyfriends because, according to the author of the story, the young women went back to school and had jobs, whereas their boyfriends found it difficult to obtain employment. Bob Herbert of the *New York Times* wrote: "In a typical situation, the girl will go to school, then go to work, then pick up the children from whoever has been watching them, and then go home. The boy friend will want sex. The girl will explain that she's tired . . . or maybe she has homework . . . the boy friend will go berserk, calling her every degrading name he can think of, accuse her of seeing someone else, and beat her."¹⁷ These young men are, inexcusably, using physical power perhaps to express feelings of diminished cultural power in relationships with these young mothers. The explanation for their behavior is undoubtedly complex. In any case, the young women are likely to raise their children without any real help from the young fathers, who, to one degree or another, flee from fatherhood.

To go beyond patriarchy without dooming many children to a fatherless childhood has already proved extremely difficult, especially in many poor communities in America, where being unable to provide for or protect one's family is a spur to leaving fatherhood altogether. The pattern, often found among African American women and Puerto Ricans and other Latin Americans, of raising children without their biological fathers present is an old story for poor ethnic groups in America. It resembles the situation of Irish Catholic women in the inner cities of the Northeast during the last half of the nineteenth century, when nearly four million Irish arrived in the United States. Mothers became super-mothers, survivors who had to be fathers and mothers both, sometimes even to their nominal husbands, whose male ancestors often

had been substantially stripped of paternal authority during nearly eight hundred years of brutal English rule.

English attempts at cultural genocide and impoverishment of the Irish provoked patterns of response typical of other groups in similar situations. Many Irish Catholic women decided not to marry at all.¹⁸ Some of those who married remained with husbands for religious reasons, men who were fathers in name only. In the middle and late nineteenth centuries in the United States, unemployment and poverty as well as alcoholism and other illnesses made many Irish Catholic men in America more of a burden to their wives than an asset in raising children. The children, particularly when there were many of them, suffered from father absenteeism, as reflected in the data recording their high rates of illness, school leaving, and petty crime.¹⁹

The best-known contemporary example of fleeing fatherhood has occurred among African Americans. Three hundred years of slavery and caste, during which black men were rendered largely powerless, had substantially undermined paternal authority by the time of the great migration of rural southern blacks to major cities in the South and especially to the North (close to four million between 1915 and 1970). As with the Irish Catholics, mothers became super-mothers, learning to depend more and more on themselves and on female relatives. The situation of African American mothers is much better known than that of Irish Catholics because it is contemporary. Whereas most Irish Americans are now solidly in the middle class, African Americans experience poverty far out of proportion to their numbers. In recent years the incentives for black women to do without husbands have increased, partly because of welfare but also because young black women have been more employable than poor young black men.²⁰

That women can raise children without husbands has been proved by Irish Americans, African Americans, and many others, especially when they can get help from extended family members. In many Italian and Mexican villages it has been customary for men to be away for long periods of time to work. In one such village in Italy, the mothers teach their children, decide on the amount of their daughters' dowries, and make nearly all decisions for their families.²¹ When men are taken away

by work or war, women usually struggle to help their children survive. A group of Muslim women whose husbands were killed in Srebrenica in 1995 told an interviewer that their lives were empty without their husbands, the only meaning coming from their desperate attempts to save their children and to keep the memories of their husbands alive.²² In a Kurdish village where men had been forcibly removed by Iraqi soldiers, their wives, now responsible for managing family life, spoke of their husbands to their children as heroes and as fathers.²³ The emotional attachment of the children to those men, dead or missing, probably remained strong for them most of the time, as it does for the absent Italian, Mexican, and other fathers who work for long periods of time far from home. It is not so much the physical absence of a father as the father's psychological and emotional truancy that makes children feel fatherless. In the United States, absentee fathers often, but not always, give the impression that they are uninterested fathers.

In addition to militant resistance and flight from fatherhood, there is a third pattern of response by males to the erosion of patriarchy. The Southern Baptist Convention of the nation's largest Protestant denomination, called in June of 1998 to end father truancy. Fathers should, they said, "provide for, protect and lead" their families. The Southern Baptists' president explained that the resolution was a response to "a time of growing crisis in the family," and asked for a much greater commitment on the part of men to being good fathers and husbands. But the resolution also asserted that a woman should "submit herself graciously" to her husband's leadership, a declaration justified by references to the New Testament, such as the passage in Ephesians that compares the authority of husbands over wives to that of Christ ruling the church (Eph. 5:22-33).²⁴

Before the Southern Baptists made their declaration, the Nation of Islam and the movement known as the Promise Keepers emphasized the importance of restoring responsible fathering through benign patriarchal rule. Although there are many differences between the two groups, besides the fact that members of the Nation of Islam are Black Muslims and the Promise Keepers includes Christians of all colors, what they have in common is that large groups of men come together

for public national confession that goes something like this: "We have been bad patriarchs. We have neglected our responsibilities as leaders. Sometimes we have been bad fathers, and there are occasions when we even have abused our power badly by hurting our wives emotionally and physically. We turn our backs on those failures and now pledge to be good Muslim and Christian patriarchs. With the power to rule must come the responsibility for being caring, nurturing husbands and fathers. We will be devoted fathers and loving, kindly and faithful husbands, and we will be in charge."²⁵ As the Promise Keeper leader, Bill McCartney, asserted, "When there is a final decision that needs to be made . . . the man needs to take responsibility."²⁶

Many women in the Nation of Islam and those married to Promise Keepers understandably give testimony to their appreciation for the respect shown them by their husbands. The trade-off is an ancient one. Women hope to obtain husbands they can rely on to be good fathers to their children; men obtain wives who acknowledge the male right to power and leadership, at least in public. That many women think the bargain is reasonable, or at least livable in comparison to alternative options, is hardly surprising. They do not want husbands who keep girlfriends or visit prostitutes. Nor do they believe that polygyny is a valid solution for a perceived shortage of reliable marriage partners, as an increasing number of women apparently do in Utah: A 1998 report indicated that in fifty years there had been a tenfold increase in the number of women living in polygynous families, reaching about 2 percent of the state's population.

The abuse of women within polygynous relationships, one reason for the near-abandonment of polygyny by Jews in talmudic times, is also reported to be on the increase. Female advocates of polygyny point out that it provides women a sisterhood of co-wives and an opportunity to pursue their own interests and careers, in addition to strong fathers. On the other side, many ex-wives from polygynous marriages agree with one of them who said: "Once you threw out the religion, all of us women realized that it was made for the benefit of men."²⁷ That many men still want marriages in which they are clearly dominant is indicated by the increase in recent years of the international mail order

bride business, in which agencies routinely describe potential brides as "faithful, devoted, unspoiled . . . raised to be servants for men . . . derives her basic satisfaction from serving and pleasing her husband."²⁸

Perhaps the most ambitious attempt in the twentieth century to end patriarchy as a system of privilege took place on the secular kibbutzim of Israel from the 1930s to the 1960s. When sociologist Melford Spiro first studied the kibbutzim in 1951, women claimed that they had been emancipated from the burden of child rearing and from dependency on their husbands. The key to their emancipation was to be free from the responsibilities of infant care through the infants' and children's houses, where youngsters slept overnight and were cared for by specialized caregivers. Now, women reasoned, they could share in public roles equally with men, driving tractors, serving in the army, and managing the kibbutz. Twenty-five years after his first visit, Spiro found that the children of the original revolutionary kibbutzniks were moving back to traditional ideas in the areas of marriage, family, and sex roles. Mothers rebelled against giving up so much responsibility and control to others in raising their children. They wanted the freedom and equality that emancipation from tasks of nursing and child rearing might give them, but as mothers they also wanted to be in charge of what happened to their children. Eventually, nearly all of the kibbutzim abandoned the idea of the infants' house.

The results were a surprise and a disappointment to Spiro, who began his work as a cultural determinist interested in observing the influence of culture on human nature and then discovered that he was observing what he called the influence of human nature on culture.²⁹ After conducting different experiments in role playing and fantasy play by boys and girls on the kibbutz, Spiro decided, against his ideological preference, that powerful biological, prehistorical factors probably explained the retreat to gender role differentiation.³⁰ Did role differentiation mean a retreat to patriarchy for these women? Not according to their own testimony. Even though men tended to hold positions of greater power on the kibbutz than their wives did, the women have come to believe that sexual equality does not mean sharing equally in all roles. This view was held in another study of six kibbutzim reported by

Spiro, showing that *sabra*-born (native-born) women rejected the assumption that equality with males means becoming like them. A great majority of both male and female *sabras* in the six kibbutzim agreed that sexual equality remains a primary characteristic of the kibbutz, in practice as well as an ideal.³¹

There is an obvious connection between patriarchy in the public realm and patriarchy in family life. Most modern women in democratic societies want full equality in work, politics, and religion. They also know how difficult it is to be an effective parent without having a partner in parenting in the fathers of their children. Adult caregivers, mainly parents, must nurture, teach, protect, and provide for children. Someone must represent them to the outside world until they are young adults, and someone must manage the households in which they live.

Men who may be willing to yield to the moral imperatives of equality in the public realm may be reluctant to take on more as caregivers of children and as household managers. In the United States, mothers still tend to be largely responsible for child care and housework, although many chores customarily done by males—repairing the car, cleaning the cellar or the garage, paying the insurance bills—are not usually thought of as housework.³² However, an increasing number of fathers in intact families have become involved in day-to-day caregiving chores in recent years, compared to decades past. One study showed that in 1977 men put in only 30 percent as much time on household chores as women did, compared to 75 percent in 1997. Working fathers in such families were spending 2.3 workday hours caring for and doing things with their children, a half hour more than the average reported in a Department of Labor survey two decades earlier.³³

James A. Levine, director since 1981 of the Fatherhood Project, found that “there [still] is a mismatch in the young women’s and men’s views,” at colleges and universities, of who will take care of children and who will work for money. Levine is a leader in what could loosely be called a growing movement for fatherhood beyond patriarchy.³⁴ Levine and many of his colleagues, having amassed data to show that men feel conflict between work and family more than had previously been

thought, conclude that the major obstacle to men’s becoming involved fathers is an unfriendly workplace. The Fatherhood Project works on strategies to support the involvement of men in the lives of their children, mainly by trying to get the workplace to be more supportive. One vehicle for the movement was the magazine *Modern Dad*, which appeared first in 1995 and ceased publication in 1997. Edited by a woman, it urged men to “get up and get involved” as fathers.³⁵ Not surprisingly, more subscriptions were bought by women for their sons, husbands, and sons-in-law than by their primary target male audience. “We tried to appeal to the masculine side of men with articles on things like tools and lawn care,” wrote the editor, “while at the same time we were undeniably trying to appeal to the feminine side of men with articles on bonding with their babies or dealing with the death of a baby.”³⁶

Biological anthropologists and evolutionary psychologists might be expected to cast a skeptical eye on ambitions for such a magazine or even on the idea of partnership parenting if that rests on the assumption that men will be as interested as women in the care of infants and small children. Many would hold the view that it took millions of years of evolution to bring about the sexual dimorphism that leads human females to be more nurturing than males and males to be more aggressive than females. Yet many men have shown a desire for the teaching and nurturing aspects of fatherhood, according to David Blankenhorn and his colleagues, who interviewed 250 parents in eight states. The male respondents accepted the view that fatherhood “means fathers teaching children a way of life” and used such words as “instilling,” “advising,” “teaching,” “setting an example,” and “preparing.”

Blankenhorn seems, without any reference to the talmudic patriarchal paradigm, to be calling for a reinvention of the classical rabbinic Jewish father. He wants the norms to say: “I am a man because I cherish my wife and nurture my children.”³⁷ Several studies show that blood pressure, heart rate, and galvanic skin responses of men and women are the same when they hear babies crying in discomfort.³⁸ Those physiological reactions reveal that at least some fathers care at a deep, visceral level about the well-being of their infants. But they do not necessarily mean that most males will be sufficiently motivated to spend less time

and energy competing in some aspect of life outside the family in order to share equally with their wives in the care of infants and small children.

Fathers in intact families are spending more time in child care and housework than they did just three or four decades ago, perhaps more than twice as much for the parents of young children.³⁹ If the culture becomes increasingly supportive of such behavior, an increasing number of men probably will engage in it without the patriarchal incentives that in the past have motivated fathers to be teachers and nurturers. In an ambitious attempt at social engineering in Norway, the government in 1998 introduced regulations to its equal rights law to promote preferential treatment for men in jobs such as child care, preschool and primary school teaching, and child welfare, to encourage a change in children's views of gender roles.⁴⁰ To judge from the kibbutz experience, the government may fail to accomplish its objectives, even as it discriminates against women, who may be excluded from jobs they want and for which they are qualified.

My inquiry has led me to conclude that a successful assault on patriarchy as a system of power and privilege does not depend on the obliteration of gender role differences in domestic life, although it is clearly related to the willingness of males to invest energy in the continuing loving care of their children. The end of patriarchy is a moral imperative toward which we should work in the spiritual, economic, political, and domestic realms of life. It will mean families and workplaces in which men and women truly respect each other. It will also mean that women and men will be free to be nurturing parents.

Sociologist Judith Wallerstein reports from her research and that of others what everyday observation confirms: most mothers and their babies are tied "by a thousand and one biological and psychological strands" that fathers do not experience. The father may really love the baby and want to share more in its upbringing, but sometimes his wife does not want him to (a significantly higher percentage of kibbutz women than men wanted to end the infants' house). The father has not experienced pregnancy nor the demands of nursing. Because her biological energy investment in the production of a child overwhelms his, most mothers would be expected to feel a more intense bond with their

infants than most fathers do.⁴¹ But we are not dealing with an iron law of biology, and there are and will continue to be exceptions to that generalization.

We are in the midst of a revolution in relations between men and women regarding sex roles, and that has caused great confusion, perhaps especially for males who are trying to figure out how to respond.⁴² The future of parenting by true partnership on a basis of equality will be shaped by hundreds of millions of negotiations between men and women as they sort out their own understanding of the responsibilities they have toward each other and toward their children. The end of patriarchy as a system of power and privilege may find many women wanting to spend more time on child care than their husbands do, as Spiro found on the kibbutz, where the kibbutzniks claimed that patriarchy is over. However any given couple allocates child care roles, the end of patriarchy would mean that women and men will be able to pursue their interests and negotiate their differences on an equal footing under the law and cultural sanctions. That is taking place now in an increasing number of middle-class families, particularly in the economically advanced democratic countries. Aka men, as discussed in chapter 2, take care of infants in exchange for the vital economic contributions of their wives, who collect fruits and caterpillars and hunt small animals.⁴³ Perhaps the Aka spouses can be compared in this regard to a growing number of young husbands and wives who work at home in start-up family businesses. But the Aka did not abandon patriarchy. No society ever has, yet.

One study in Cambridge, Massachusetts, reveals the conditions that might be most favorable to partnership parenting without patriarchy. In research regarding professional parents, both mothers and fathers made strong efforts to make special time to play with and teach their children.⁴⁴ Both presumably had achieved some recognition in the world of work; between them, they were able to provide for supplemental caregivers. As educated upper-middle-class men and women, they probably had already embraced the ideology of partnership parenting; as professionals, they may have had some control over their work schedules. But neither the vast majority of the world's people nor

even the vast majority of Americans are parents in such conditions. It is under those conditions that men are likely to be soccer dads, Cub scout den leaders, fathers who change their children's diapers and read to their children as well as teach and discipline them, without requiring patriarchal incentives. It is much easier for fathers to be lovingly involved in their children's care when they are reasonably well off and respected in their work, especially if they have some control over their schedules.

The story of the Jews, taken to the end of the twentieth century in the United States, shows that many middle-class Jewish men have abandoned patriarchal norms and practices and, like the professional parents in Cambridge, appear to be ready for partnership parenting. Perhaps it helps many of them, even those who do not have a close knowledge of Judaism, that their religion provides a rationale for men to be as nurturing as women by emphasizing that a genderless God is mother and father to the children of Israel. Feminist biblical scholar Phyllis Trible sees the Jewish ideal as having both males and females lift infants close against their cheeks and take children in their arms, "with reins of kindness, with leading strings of love," according to the prophet Hosea (II:1-4).⁴⁵ Jewish patriarchs were rewarded by being made the cultural custodians of what was most valuable to Jews. Their patriarchy may have made them, on the average, more affectionate, responsible husbands and fathers than others, but it was patriarchy nonetheless. In teaching their sons what was most sacred to their covenanted people, they saw their own immortality.

An increasing number of men have shown that they do not have to believe they are rulers over their wives in order to link their immortality to what they see in their children's faces and behavior. Fathers who are not needed as protectors of and providers for females and who no longer have the power to control them must gain their sense of esteem and significance in other ways than through patriarchy. In the end, the deepest, longest-lasting sense of significance that most men and women achieve will be in the response of their children and grandchildren to the love and the values that they teach. That is the hope for a world of committed, engaged fathers without the incentives of patriarchy.

By beginning a radical change in relations between men and women more than two thousand years ago, the Jews demonstrated the human capacity for major cultural change in a relationship that appears to have deep biological roots. It was a reform of great magnitude but not as profound as the one that would bring men and women to a new paradigm of partnership parenting without patriarchy. What would that paradigm look like? Since patriarchy is not programmed by biology, it would mean the end of special power and privileges for males as a class. Clearly, it would not and could not mean the end of evolution-based sexual dimorphism. Those differences do not support a simplistic view of partnership that insists on men and women necessarily having the same roles as nurturers of infants and small children. But true partnership would give full recognition to the rights of women to make choices as individuals to the extent that their economic situation permitted it, choices that were consistent with their special biological and psychological qualities as they experience them. At such a time we will have moved beyond patriarchy.

Whether men and women in fact move beyond patriarchy to fulfill a vision of partnership parenting that is rewarding for both sexes and provides a continuity of authoritative, loving care by adults for children who perceive those adults as responsible for their well-being is one of the most important questions to be faced in the twenty-first century.