

L II 3. AMITAI ETZIONI has long been the country's leading sociologist. He is a very unusual sociologist in that he makes it very clear that he is not willing to limit himself to analyzing society's social structures and processes; he wants to figure out how to make the whole society better for succeeding generations. As a professor at Columbia University, he has been a prolific writer, and anything he writes is very well worth reading, whether they are just very constructive additions to sociology or whether they tackle social issues that could concern any thinking person.

The first four I will mention are in the first category, constructive sociology. A 670 page book entitled THE ACTIVE SOCIETY: A THEORY OF SOCIETAL AND POLITICAL PROCESSES is as good as the day it was published in 1968. By an active society, Etzioni means one that is "master of itself". That, he says, had by then become an option for societies, and the book explores the conditions under which the option can be exercised. Etzioni contends that modern productive technologies pose a challenge to the primacy of the human values they were supposed to serve. The book considers what can we do about it, and how to do it. It was followed by a book entitled ANATOMIES OF AMERICA: SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES, then by one entitled COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COMPLEX ORGANIZATIONS, and lastly by SOCIAL CHANGE: SOURCES, PATTERNS, AND CONSEQUENCES.

Now two books of wider general interest, SOCIAL PROBLEMS, and CAPITAL CORRUPTION: THE NEW ATTACK ON AMERICAN DEMOCRACY. The latter was published in 1984, but present readers will not find it at all outdated.

Now I will mention a book that I have assigned as one of several required readings in an economics course that I teach from time to time. The book is entitled THE MORAL DIMENSION: TOWARD A NEW ECONOMICS. Etzioni charges economists with having too narrow a conception of human nature as single-minded and selfishly rational. He contends that most people also are committed to moral values that are important to them, and that these need to be taken into account even in their economic behavior as individuals and as a society. Etzioni followed this in 1991 with SOCIO-ECONOMICS: TOWARD A NEW SYNTHESIS. Economics is supposedly a social science, and my training in sociology has always tried to teach it that way, though most economists now do not have the training to teach it as a socio-economic discipline.

In the early 1990s, Etzioni followed up the book on what he called the active society with one entitled A RESPONSIVE SOCIETY: COLLECTED ESSAYS ON GUIDING DELIBERATE SOCIAL CHANGE. He followed that with a book having wider public appeal, PUBLIC POLICY IN A NEW KEY. Then he tackled the matter of public ethics directly with THE NEW GOLDEN RULE: COMMUNITY AND MORALITY IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. Using the word "New" with the Golden Rule may disturb some people. In case you are worried that Etzioni is tampering with the widely respected Golden Rule, he is not. What he does in this book is try to

show how the same principle might well be applied in democratic decision making. The modification in wording for this application is strictly in accord with the old golden rule principle. This book does not try to replace that old Golden Rule but to suggest that since it is usually understood to deal just with inter-personal relations, we may need a formulation of the principle to deal with relations between groups and societies, and he makes a stab at trying to formulate the principle so it could serve that purpose too. You can read the book easily and judge for yourself whether he has succeeded, and if not try writing the Golden Rule that way yourself.

Etzioni has taken a lead in what is now called the communitarian movement in modern society, and he had already written in the 1990s a number of books supporting the movement: **RIGHTS AND THE COMMON GOOD: THE COMMUNITARIAN PERSPECTIVE**, also **NEW COMMUNITARIAN THINKING: PERSONS, VIRTUES, INSTITUTIONS, AND COMMUNITIES** and **THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY: RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND THE COMMUNITARIAN AGENDA**. He is also involved in **THE ESSENTIAL COMMUNITARIAN READER**.

Etzioni's moral concern not limited to communitarianism; see **CIVIC REPENTANCE**. Then consider the world community or lack thereof, and read **PREVENTING THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS: A PEACE STRATEGY FOR THE 21st CENTURY** and a 2001 book, **POLITICAL UNIFICATION: ON BUILDING SUPRANATIONAL COMMUNITIES**.

America was terrified by the terrorist threats since 9/11/2001, and Etzioni has not been silent. See **RIGHTS vs. PUBLIC SAFETY: AMERICA IN THE AGE OF TERRORISM**, and **HOW PATRIOTIC IS THE PATRIOT ACT? : FREEDOM vs. SECURITY IN THE AGE OF TERRORISM**. See also **FROM EMPIRE TO COMMUNITY: A NEW APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**.

As the new century began, Etzioni maintained his interest in building a better world, as indicated by his publishing in 2001 **NEXT: THE ROAD TO THE GOOD SOCIETY**. It is noteworthy when a leading academic sociologist is not content to write constructive new sociological analyses but shows real concern with the problems of building a better world, and his writings show it.