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## Magazine

**EDITION 31**

**Rosh Hashanah/Fall 2017**

**Opinion**

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**Published by Farber Marketing Inc.**  
**Editor & Publisher:** Shirley Nigri Farber  
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Shirley Nigri Farber

It is with great pleasure that I present the Shalom Magazine Rosh Hashanah edition. The Jewish New Year brings a time of reflection and humility, while we evaluate our deeds throughout the preceding year. The sound of the Shofar is a wakeup call for Jews to examine their actions, and prepare to start a new year. During the holiday prayers we humbly ask G-d for forgiveness for the sins which we have committed, knowingly and unknowingly.

Unfortunately, not all Jewish people will be pausing to celebrate this holiday, hear the Shofar, or even go to synagogue. For many Jews who have drifted away, this holiday is just a fancy dinner at a relative's home.

But whether you celebrate or not, you probably have been disturbed by neo-Nazis yelling hateful slogans in Charlottesville, and by the desecration of the Holocaust Memorial in Boston. While most people say anti-Semitism is on the rise, if you ask Orthodox Jews and Zionist Jews who have been the target of hate for so long, anti-Semitism in America was never down. It is just that people usually feel safe when they are assimilated into the crowd, and they don't look or think different from a non Jew.

While anti-Semites spread the hateful message that Jews are all wealthy and control the world, we know that this is not the reality. There are also Jews living under the poverty line. Fortunately, various Jewish organizations are trying to assist these financially distressed and/or elderly Jews, but it is still a challenge to find the people who are in need, as they tend to hide in shame and lack of hope.

Since we started Shalom Magazine in April, 2009, our goal of uniting the Jewish communities in Massachusetts has been achieved. We have been blessed with the support of our advertisers, writers and organizations that encourage our mission of connecting the various sides of our diverse community, from the North Shore to the South Shore, from Metrowest to Greater Boston.

Because Shalom Magazine is available not only at Jewish locations but at regular supermarkets, we reach the unaffiliated like no other Jewish media. It is amazing to see that in times of social media, there are many people who enjoy picking up and reading a hard copy of Shalom. Shalom Magazine is also available online at [www.issuu.com/shalomma](http://www.issuu.com/shalomma).

May you and your family be blessed with a happy and healthy New Year,

*Shirley Farber - Publisher*

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@ShalomMagazine



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The Kol Nidre "broadcast"/live stream service begins at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, September 29. Services are lead by Rabbi Rachel Gurevitz and Rabbi Joe Eiduson, and Cantorial Soloists Lisa Marcus-Jones and Sharon Brown Goldstein.

Temple Emanuel Sinai in Worcester normally broadcasts its Kol Nidre services for the sake of those unable to attend services. This year, due to construction of its building, the synagogue is unable to do this.

### Keshet Cabaret 2017

Thursday, October 19 at Club Café,  
doors open at 7 p.m.

Dust off those glittery pumps and dashing bow ties: it's time for Keshet Cabaret 2017. Come celebrate with your favorite Boston LGBTQ Jews! Your \$36 ticket includes a drink, fabulous entertainment, and access to an extravagant raffle. Raffle tickets are \$10 each or 6 tickets for \$50 at the event ONLY, payable by cash or credit card. Come dance, drink, and schmooze while supporting Keshet's work for full LGBTQ inclusion and equality in Jewish life. Club Café, 209 Columbus Ave. in Boston is MBTA (Orange Line or Commuter Rail) and wheelchair accessible. This is a 21+ event. Please eat dinner before you arrive. The ticket link is: <https://www.keshetonline.org/events/keshetcabaretrsvp/>



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## High Holidays Wellesley-Weston

Please join the Wellesley Weston Chabad at any of the free and open to the public High Holiday services by e mailing [rabbi@wwjewish.org](mailto:rabbi@wwjewish.org). We will also once again host our HUGE Rosh Hashanah dinner on Wednesday, September 20. Please check out [www.wwjewish.org](http://www.wwjewish.org) for more information.

### Adult Education

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On Sunday, September 24 at 1 p.m., we will have a Webinar with Alan Morinis, founder of the Mussar Institute and author of four books about Mussar. Mr. Morinis will talk about the High Holidays through a Mussar lens. The program is free to the public.

On Sunday, October 22 at 10 a.m., Dr. Roger Kligler will speak about his personal story and the legislation he is fighting for regarding the Right to Die. The program is free to the public. Join us for breakfast.

On Sunday, November 5 at 10 a.m., Dorian Mintzer, life coach, therapist, and author will speak on "Embrace your Aging: A Time to Grow, Learn and Evolve." Ms. Mintzer's book(s) will be available for purchase. The program is free to the public. Join us for breakfast.

### The Zamir Chorale of Boston

The Zamir Chorale of Boston presents the third performance in the Divine Majesty Series: Masterworks of Majesty; Joshua R. Jacobson, Artistic Director, on Monday, November 6, 2017, 7:30 p.m., at Temple Beth Elohim, 10 Bethel Rd., Wellesley. Admission is free; registration required. Visit: [zamir.org](http://zamir.org). The Divine Majesty Series is made possible by an anonymous underwriter in memory of Mary Wolfman Epstein and Cantor Barney Mould.



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# New England Holocaust Memorial

When the New England Holocaust Memorial was the target of vandals this summer, people from across Greater Boston responded with an unprecedented outpouring of love and support.

Jews, Christians, Muslims, political leaders, clergy, and hundreds of Greater Boston residents of all ages and faiths attended events at the Memorial to show that Boston is, and will remain, a city that respects all and bears witness to the horrors of the Holocaust. As CJP President Barry Shrage said in his remarks, the meaning of the memorial is "to never forget the powerless. To never forget the people who are oppressed."

The New England Holocaust Memorial, which was inspired by a group of Holocaust survivors, was dedicated in 1995. Auschwitz survivor Israel Arbeiter, whose family was murdered in Nazi gas chambers, said that the Memorial was "a special place, a holy place" where he can remember his parents and other relatives who perished.

For 22 years, its glass towers etched with numbers representing the victims of the Holocaust has attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors. While Arbeiter said he felt great pain over the acts of vandalism that shattered two of the Memorial's glass panels, he was heartened by the large number of people who reached out to him and attended events to show support for Boston's Jewish community.

To learn more about the Memorial or how you can help efforts to sustain it, please visit [www.nehm.org](http://www.nehm.org).



*Mayor Marty Walsh, Governor Charlie Baker and CJP President Barry Shrage*



*Holocaust survivor Israel Arbeiter*



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# Our People



*Jeff Bussgang, co founder of Flybridge Capital, was honored at Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition's Give Liberty a Hand Gala on June 1 at the Fairmont Copley Plaza. Bussgang received this recognition for his support to immigrants and minorities. He co-founded Hack.Diversity, a private-public partnership designed to counter the underrepresentation of highly skilled minority employees in Boston. In the photo are Jeff with his daughter Jacqueline, Shalom Magazine editor Shirley Farber and Mira Executive Director Eva Millona.*



*Leonard Florence Center for Living resident Marie Ricci (106) is pushing "youngster" Ellie Chasdi, who is a mere 89 years of age, to the NY deli for lunch*



*Eleanor Karp, 102, on her way to a musical concert at Leonard Florence Center for Living.*

*Julian and Fay Bussgang at the MIRA Coalition Gala honoring their son Jeff. In a brief interview with Shalom Magazine, Julian Bussgang recounted how he survived the Holocaust as a refugee and soldier, and left Poland to immigrate to the US in the 1940s.*



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Boston's Tu B'Av White Party on August 8  
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## *AJC Global Forum*

More than 80 AJC New England lay leaders and staff attended AJC Global Forum in Washington, D.C. in June. As always, advocacy visits on Capitol Hill were a highlight of the conference. Meetings with Representatives and Senators from throughout New England provided the opportunity to talk about legislation on issues concerning fighting anti-Semitism, combating BDS, countering the spread of radicalism and extremism, and promoting Israel's security and place in the world.

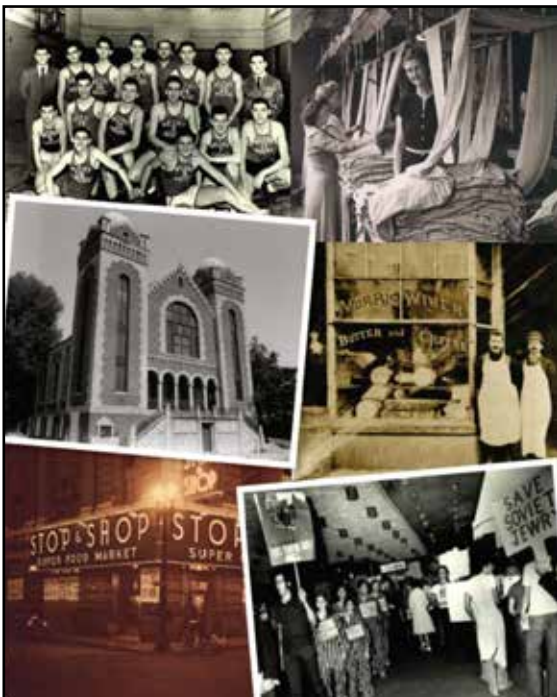
## *Red Sox Jewish Heritage Night*



*Chai Note members from Congregation Shirat Hayam of Swampscott sing the National Anthem at Red Sox Jewish Heritage Night at Fenway Park on June 13.*



*Jewish community members honored at Red Sox Jewish Heritage Night at Fenway Park on June 13*



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## **Interfaith Community Gathering in Boston**



*The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) held an interfaith gathering of Unity, Love, and Strength at Temple Israel of Boston on August 18 in response to hateful acts in Charlottesville and the desecration of the New England Holocaust Memorial. More than a 1000 people attended the event.*



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# New Torah Scroll in Wellesley

The iconic menorah (Jewish candelabra) that graces Route 9 in Wellesley is a symbol of Jewish pride. Its light is intended to shine on people of all backgrounds, making the location ideal as thousands of cars per day zoom past the Chabad House and the front yard in which the menorah stands. The Chabad House began out of a two-bedroom rental in Wellesley 18 years ago, and now has more than 300 families who regularly attend events and services.



The two big missing pieces in the Chabad House community were a Torah Scroll - a living testament to the Jewish people - and a proper synagogue that could accommodate the entire community (currently, the congregation meets in the rabbi's house). Recently, both of these pieces were added to the colorful mosaic of Wellesley-Weston's Chabad community.



In August, several hundred congregants welcomed a new Torah scroll at a lovely gathering on the Chabad House front lawn. Local scribe Rabbi Zirkind sat with a goose quill and homemade ink, inscribing the last few letters. Completing their first Torah will provide strong roots for the community as

they continue to see accelerated growth in the community, with the largest number of new families and students from Babson and Wellesley Colleges participating in 2017.

"I loved watching the scribe write the words onto the Torah scroll," said community member Sally Rosenfield. "It was very meaningful to welcome this brand new Torah into the community."

Co-president Eric Silverman, who dedicated two of the books of the Torah in memory of his father, said: "What an honor to participate in the 613th (of 613) commandment to write a Sefer Torah and to honor my father!"

"The Wellesley Weston Chabad's Torah dedication ceremony was as special as a wedding and we were witnesses to history in the making. I can picture myself, years from now, looking back and saying, 'we were there when...'" said Lauren Grinberg of the Chabad Women's Auxiliary and one of the organizers of the beautiful event.

Rabbi Moshe Bleich made sure to point out that the Torah scroll is called the Yisroel Ben Nosson Halevi Community Torah.

Although the main benefactor dedicated the Torah to his father, it is really a "community" Torah, as more than 175 people united to contribute to its writing.

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# JALSA Stands with Immigrants: Connecting our past to the present

By Hannah Klein

It is commonly discussed that one of the most often used phrases in the Torah is that which compels us to treat “strangers in our midst with justice and compassion.” It is so central to who we are, that this commandment appears in the Torah 36 times: “You shall not oppress the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

These words were written thousands of years ago, what meaning do they have for us in 2017?

Many different immigrant communities, so called ‘strangers’ in our land, are facing increasing hostility and oppression from our government, our laws, and individuals. This is a time where we must connect our tradition and our own Jewish history to what immigrant communities are facing right now.

As Jews, we are not strangers to being immigrants in different lands. Throughout our people’s history, Jews have fled persecution, discrimination, poverty, and violence. Many of us do not have to look far back in our ancestry to find our own relatives who immigrated to this country. In my case, my father came to the United States as a small child in the 1960’s as he and his parents searched to rebuild their lives after surviving the Holocaust.

These personal and historical connections demonstrate our need to come together as a Jewish community and work together with immigrants across our Commonwealth. At JALSA we have turned to the legislature where we aim to pass the Safe Communities Act, a piece of legislation by Senator Jamie Eldridge and Representative Juana Matias. The Safe Communities Act would protect the civil

rights of all state residents by making sure our tax dollars are not used to help the Federal administration deport immigrant families or create a Muslim registry. One main focus of this bill is to ensure that state,

local, and campus police do not participate in immigration enforcement activities. As a Jewish community organization, we are deeply troubled with any practices that intimidate immigrants, too often preventing them from turning to local police to report domestic violence or other crimes, in the fear that instead of protecting them, the local police will turn them over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and forcibly return them to the very country from which they were forced to flee.

We have added our voice inside the State House and outside of it. JALSA members have made calls for the bill's co-sponsors;

lobbied at the State House; and hosted a 60-person event on the legislation at its Tzedek Reflection series event in April at Temple Emanuel.

We also are speaking out in opposition to Gov. Charlie Baker's newly proposed ICE detainer/anti-immigrant bill, which would both fund and permit local and state law enforcement officers to act as ICE agents, thereby obstructing protective efforts by immigrant assistance organizations. Instead of a bill that plays into fear, we know the way to protect our communities is to pass the Safe Communities Act. To allow anything else would go against our traditions and heritage.

*Hannah Klein is the Community Organizer and Program Manager at JALSA.*



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## One Family - Many Opinions

By Sandra Lilienthal, Ed.D.



In the Jewish world, we have always had different opinions (you know the saying - two Jews, three opinions). Back in the Talmud, the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai, two different schools of thought, disagreed on almost everything. And yet, the Talmud tells us that the disagreements did not put one against the other. They married into each others' families, for example. More importantly, in one of the tractates of the Talmud (*Eruvin 13b*), when two opposing opinions are stated, it is said that a heavenly voice proclaimed: "These and those are the words of the Living G-d." Meaning yes, the views may be diametrically opposed, but both views are possible, both make sense, and both are valid and even holy.

When I look at the Jewish world today, the simple number of denominations is astounding! Reform, Conservative, Modern Orthodox, Ultra-Orthodox, Reconstructionist, Renewal, and more. Within some of these movements, we also have divisions: mitnagdim and chasidim; different Chasidic sects; and within some of the Chasidic groups, different sub-groups. We have managed to create boxes for each kind of Jew. And in between the big boxes, we created smaller boxes (those who accept A and those who don't, those who believe B and those who don't). Whether it is about same-gender marriages, female rabbis, who prays where at the Kotel (the Western Wall), who has the right to determine who is a Jew, which organization is really considered pro-Israel, or whether Israelis should or not live beyond the Green Line, we find ways of making smaller and smaller boxes, we build walls around ourselves, and we isolate ourselves from the rest of the Jewish community. Having different opinions is not the problem! The problem is that one side states that the other is ignorant. When did we lose the ability to understand that a different opinion does not make us enemies?

You might say that the phenomenon of divisiveness is not exclusively

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*Cheryl Anns*



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Rabbi Mendel & Chana Gurkow



# One Family - Many Opinions

a Jewish one! This is true - we have managed to escalate our differences to a point that we cannot and do not want to hear the other. Last year, I recall many people worried about Thanksgiving dinner with the family as some were supporters of Clinton and others of Trump, and they could not fathom how they could sit at the same table. Friendships of decades were lost over political differences. Is this how we want to live our lives? Is this what we mean by Ahavat Israel (the love for a fellow Jew)? Is this the way we envision the world to be?

Years ago, when the terrible attack happened in Mumbai that killed a Chabad rabbi and his wife, our local Chabad congregation held a service in their memory and invited all congregations, regardless of denomination, to participate. Very few of the congregational leaders from other synagogues came. And one of the only two who did come began her speech by saying: "We are very sorry for your loss." While her speech was very appropriate, I remember how I reacted to "your" loss. NO!!! It's our loss. We, the Jewish community, lost a young couple simply because they were Jewish.

However, it CAN be different. When the three teenage boys were kidnapped in the Gush in 2014, most of our communities came together. There were prayers held at different synagogues and by different groups, regardless of denominations or beliefs. Racheli Frankel, the mother of one of the boys, later said that what kept her going was the knowledge that the Jewish community had united. "In the Diaspora, people say they can't remember a time when [Jews] came together across denominations. I'm convinced that it wasn't an illusion. Hasidic Jews, Orthodox, [and] seculars all came together, and we were one family." (Barker, 2015) [1] So we know it can happen. But why do we need to wait until tragedies hit us to come together?

Inspired by the incredible display of unity throughout the Jewish world, the three families created the Jerusalem Unity Prize, which recognizes individuals and organizations, both in Israel and in the Diaspora, who promote Jewish communal understanding.

We do not need prizes, but we need awareness. We do not need to

think alike, but we need to recognize that we are bound together as a family. We may not love all our family members, we may not agree with all our relatives, but we are a family! I want to propose that we, rabbis, Jewish educators and communal leaders, make real efforts to unite our communities. Yes, we are different. We believe differently, we observe differently. But how about focusing on what we have in common, as opposed to what divides us? I am not suggesting that we all sit together and sing *kumbaya*. I am suggesting that we promote programs that can bring all of us together.

There are education conferences that bring together Jews from all walks of life. We must, however, bring this model into our own communities. There are communities that are working hard to make that happen more often. For example, there is a community that created a program for the summer months called *Learning on the Lawn*. Every Shabbat afternoon, someone hosts a learning session on their lawn. They bring in different speakers and voila, you have a community event. People from different congregations and different denominations just show up, sit on the grass or on lawn chairs, and enjoy an afternoon of learning and socializing.

There is another community that decided that Tisha B'Av is the perfect holiday for a unity event. Our Sages tell us that the Temple was destroyed because of *Sinat Chinam* - baseless hatred between different groups of Jews. And how do we counter such kinds of destruction? By uniting, by coming together to learn, to socialize, to meet other Jews who might look different, act different, believe different, but are still our brothers and sisters, links on the same chain.

As we begin a new year, I challenge every reader to do one thing, big or small, which will bring us closer, as opposed to pulling us apart. Are you ready? I am! Wishing all our readers a *Shanah Tovah umevoretchet*, a good and blessed New Year!

**Sandra Lilienthal is an adult educator in South Florida. She is a 2015 recipient of the Covenant Award for Excellence in Jewish Education.**

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# No More Symbols of Hate

By Steven Schimmel

Over the past several weeks, we have seen a serious push to remove monuments depicting Confederate Civil War figures. These statues are seen by many as representing White Supremacist, racist and hateful ideology.

Monuments to Confederate generals and soldiers stand in thousands of locations around the United States, and not only in the South. The debate around these statues rages on, with passionate pleas for removal coming from individuals who see them as glorifications of racism and suppression. Those asking that the statues be removed see themselves as supporters of civil rights, equality, and justice, and want to see us overcome our violent past.

I share their views on this subject in many ways, and as a Jew I feel particularly passionate about justice, freedom, and opposing hate and racism. That is why I would like to invite those who seek to remove these symbols of hate to also focus on Palestinian schools, stadiums, streets, and squares named for terrorists. There are many examples of this sort of heroic martyrdom in Palestinian society, and it is a serious problem that should be linked to the efforts in the United States to have the Confederate statues removed.

Both examples are egregious and disgusting ways of twisting and manipulating history and encouraging dangerous ideology. I see a parallel between removing statues and removing the names of terrorists from prominence in Palestinian society.

Statues, place-names, and street naming all send signals about society. These monuments force us to ask questions: What do the people value, and what do they support? What are the norms of this culture?

We must not allow for moral inconsistencies on these issues. There is momentum right now in the United States, and it is the right time to shed blinding light on the glorification of terror in Palestinian society. While we confront our own past, we should also confront those who seek to do harm to our ally Israel.

*The views and opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts.*

*Steven Schimmel is the Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts in Worcester. He has an MBA from Rutgers University, and both a B.A. in History and a B.A. in Political Science from Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York. He serves on the Board of Directors of American Friends of Kaplan Medical Center in Israel.*

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The Chabad Chai Jewish Center of Canton, led by Rabbi Mendy and Rivka Horowitz, recently opened a magnificent, state-of-the-art Mikvah. The Mikvah is fully equipped with the most modern amenities, such as heated floors, air tubs, and individualized music capabilities. It was built to meet the needs of the growing Jewish community in the South Shore, which expressed a desire to fulfill this mitzvah in the most beautiful way possible.

The Mikvah is ADA compliant and has a wheelchair lift. It was built through the generous help of Mikvah USA, and local businesses and individuals.

A moving opening ceremony was held on the 28th of Sivan (June 22), the day that the Lubavitcher Rebbe and his wife arrived in America to continue the tremendous work of bringing Yiddishkeit (Judaism) to every Jew in every corner of the world. The Mikvah is called Mei Menachem, and is dedicated to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who continues to inspire us daily.

The Chabad Chai Jewish Center of Canton hopes that the combined efforts in this special mitzvah of Mikvah will finally tip the scale and bring Moshiach now. To book a Mikvah appointment or tour, please visit [Mikvahcanton.com](http://Mikvahcanton.com), or call 781-929-1455.



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# Mass. Teens Join 8,000 from Around the World: A Life-Changing Journey to Poland and Israel

## March of the Living Already Recruiting High School Seniors for 2018 Trip

*By Stanley Hurwitz*

Several Massachusetts 17-year-olds participated in the 2017 March of the Living. At a recent post-event reception in Sharon for participant families, prospective participants, and supporters, three teens discussed what they saw during the unique two-week journey to Poland and Israel, and how it dramatically changed their outlook and their lives.

This year's MOTL brought together 8000 teens from around the world to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of fighting prejudice wherever they see it, and the historical significance of the State of Israel. Recruitment is underway for MOTL 2018 scheduled for April 8-22.

Participant Micha Salzberg said, "Nothing could have prepared me for what it would feel like to really stand in the cattle cars, walk through the gas chambers, and march with thousands of other Jewish teenagers like me in the place where so much of my family was murdered."

Participant Beatrice Fellman said, "March of the Living not only gave me a stronger connection to the Holocaust, but to Israel. To see where my great-grandfather was murdered and to immerse myself further into the history of the atrocity that my grandmother survived is an experience I will take with me forever. I have a deeper understanding of the effect Israel has on many people who live in fear that we could one

day be targeted again. I have such a huge appreciation for the knowledge that I gained on this trip."

17 year-old Chelsea Haime said, "This made my first trip to Israel all the more powerful because I have seen the lowest point in Jewish history, and then the beauty of Israel. Among high points were celebrating Shabbat in Jerusalem and seeing the Wall, walking from Tel Aviv to Jaffa, shopping, and the beauty of Safed, as well as marking Yom HaShoah in Haifa. I want to thank you personally because this trip had a tremendous amount of meaning that I will never forget."

MOTL New England is recruiting participants for 2018, and earlier this year launched its scholarship drive with a Beatles tribute concert. For registration info, contact Aaron Kischel at [kischel7241@gmail.com](mailto:kischel7241@gmail.com).

To donate to the Friends of the MOTL Endowment Fund for Mass. teens, tax-deductible donations may be sent to: CJP-Kempner Family Foundation, c/o Combined Jewish Philanthropies, 126 High Street, Boston, MA 02110. To ensure proper credit, on the memo line, write "March of the Living." Donations of \$1,000 will be matched dollar for dollar by the Kempner Family Foundation. For more information about donations and/or participation in Friends of MOTL, contact [IrvKempner@gmail.com](mailto:IrvKempner@gmail.com) / (617) 285-8620, or visit <https://motlnewengland.org/>



*Gary Markoff, Irv Kempner; Zoe Nierman, and her father Jon Nierman*

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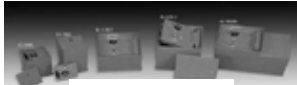
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## Is G-d's 'Very Good' World Approaching An Environmental Catastrophe?

By Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D.

Rosh Hashanah commemorates G-d's creation of the world. The "Ten Days of Repentance" from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur is a period to evaluate our deeds and to do *teshuvah* (repentance) for cases where we have missed the mark. Sukkot is a holiday in which we leave our fine houses and live in temporary shelters (*sukkahs*) to commemorate our ancestors' journey in the wilderness. Hence, the upcoming weeks provide an excellent time to consider the state of the planet's environment and what we should do to make sure that the world is on a sustainable path.

When G-d created the world, He was able to say, "It is *tov meod* (very good)." (Genesis 1:31) Everything was in harmony as G-d had planned: the waters were clean, and the air was pure. But what must G-d think about the world today?

What must G-d think when the rain He provided to nourish our crops is often acid rain, due to the many chemicals emitted into the air by industries and automobiles; when the ozone layer He provided to protect all life on earth from the sun's radiation has been significantly diminished; when the abundance of species of plants and animals that He created are becoming extinct at such an alarming rate in tropical rain forests and other threatened habitats; when the abundant fertile soil He provided is quickly being depleted and eroded; when the climate conditions that He designed to meet our needs are threatened by climate change?

An ancient rabbinic teaching has become all too relevant today:

In the hour when the Holy one, blessed be He, created the first human being (Adam), He took him and let him pass before all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him:

"See my works, how fine and excellent they are! All that I have created, for you have I created them. Think upon this and do not despoil and destroy My world, For if you do, there is no one to set it right after you."

Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:28



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# Is G-d's 'Very Good' World Approaching An Environmental Catastrophe?

Today's environmental threats bring to mind the Biblical ten plagues:

- When we consider the threats to our land, water, and air due to pesticides and other chemical pollutants, resource scarcities, acid rain, deforestation, desertification, threats to our climate, etc., we can easily enumerate ten modern "plagues."

- The Egyptians were subjected to one plague at a time, while the modern plagues threaten us simultaneously.

- The Israelites in Goshen were spared the Biblical plagues, while every person on earth is imperiled by the modern plagues.

- Instead of an ancient Pharaoh's heart being hardened, our hearts today seem to have been hardened by the greed, materialism, and waste that are at the root of current environmental threats.

- G-d provided the Biblical plagues to free the Israelites, while today we must apply G-d's teachings in order to save ourselves and our precious but imperiled planet.

Today there seem to be almost daily reports about record heat waves, severe droughts and major wildfires, the melting of glaciers and polar ice caps, an increase in the number and severity of hurricanes and other storms, and other effects of climate change. All of the above and much more has occurred due to a temperature increase since 1800 of a little more than one degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit). So, it is very frightening that climate scientists believe that we are currently on track for a temperature increase of at least two degrees Celsius and possibly much more by the end of this century. Some leading climate experts have stated that climate change may soon reach a tipping point and spin out of control, with disastrous consequences, unless major changes soon occur. Military experts fear that this will be a catalyst for instability, violence, terrorism and war, as tens of millions of desperate refugees flee from droughts, wildfires, storms, floods, and other effects of climate change.

Israel is specially threatened, as climate scientists project warmer temperatures, decreased precipitation, growing deserts, and an inundation of the coastal plain, which includes much of Israel's population and infrastructure, by a rising Mediterranean Sea.

Fortunately, there are many Jewish teachings that can be applied to shift the earth onto a sustainable path. Briefly, these include:

- Our mandate to be *shomrei ha'adamah* (guardians of the Earth), based on the admonition that we should "work the Earth and guard it" (Genesis 2:15);

- the prohibition of *bal tashchit*, that we should not waste or unnecessarily destroy anything of value (Deuteronomy 20:19-20);

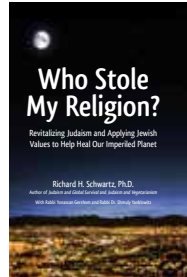
- the teaching that, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Psalms 24:1), and that the assigned role of the Jewish people is to enhance the world as "partners of G-d in the work of creation" (Shabbat 10a);

- ecological lessons related to the Shabbat, sabbatical,

and jubilee cycles.

As co-workers with G-d, charged with the task of being a light unto the nations and accomplishing tikkun olam (healing and restoring the earth), it is essential that Jews take an active role in applying our eternal, sacred values in struggles to reduce climate change, pollution, and the waste of natural resources. Based on the central Jewish mandates to work with G-d in preserving the earth, Jews must work with others for significant changes in society's economic and production systems, values, and lifestyles. So at the start of a new year, we should seek to significantly reduce our environmental impact. The fate of humanity and G-d's precious world are at stake, and if we fail to act properly and in time, there may be "no one after us to set it right."

**Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D. is the president emeritus of Jewish Vegetarians of North America ([www.JewishVeg.org](http://www.JewishVeg.org)) and the author of *Judaism and Vegetarianism*, *Judaism and Global Survival*, and *Who Stole My Religion?***



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## Heroic Faith

By Dr. Rebecca Housel



August 6th saw a partial lunar eclipse, then, just 14 days later, a swath across the States witnessed what was a rare total eclipse of the sun. August 2017 was an exceptional month that way. A total solar eclipse hadn't happened in 99 years. But don't worry if you missed it - the next one will be visible from Texas to Maine on April 8, 2024. Five short years later, an asteroid called Apophis, named after the Egyptian god of chaos, is expected to pay Earth a visit. As we

look toward Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, we look toward the future. But not just the future of Jews and Judaism. We live in a larger human community. We look to the futures of the seven-billion inhabiting our planet, all of whom we are connected to, like fine strands on a spider's web. Though we may not always be able to see the practically invisible webbing that connects each and every one of us, it's ever-present, creating a continuous flow within the natural world.

From Passover forward, Jewish people around the globe reconsider their commitment to the foundational tenet of all Judaism, Tikun Olam, or "Repairing the World." Why is this so important? Because of those invisible strands - the ones that connect all of humanity. But it doesn't stop there. Every living, breathing creature is connected to us as well. And, so is our planet. No, this isn't a James Cameron movie, but it is still the truth. Farmers are perhaps more acutely aware of this connection than the average person. And yet, whether you live in a high rise in the city, or a house in the suburbs, or a rural mobile home, it is our job to not just look inward, but also, outward.

Joseph Campbell was the preeminent mythology-scholar who influenced one of the most important stories of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, *Star Wars*. How? Campbell was the first to identify what he called the "Hero's Journey." Looking at art, architecture and literature

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# Heroic Faith

across a million years of human-evolution - even Paleolithic cave drawings - Campbell managed to find a singularity, one that repeated regardless of space, time, geology, philosophy, or theology.

What did Campbell discover?

Each of us is the hero of our own story. Moving from the more insular world of childhood, we cross a proverbial threshold into larger society and begin a series of trials throughout our life cycle. By the end of that cycle, we learn to become “Master of Two Worlds” - both the world we came from as children and the world we entered as adults. The key to becoming a hero is self-responsibility, or, transcending the innate dualities in life and rising above to help others, rather than play victim. That's what villains do - blame others for their problems. It's a sign of entitlement, a reactive notion that stems from envy, jealousy. Heroes are heroes because a hero is proactive. That's Judaism in a nutshell. Or rather, Tikun Olam.

Where will you be when the next total solar eclipse happens? Will you even be alive? And, wherever you are, will you be able to look back at the years 2017-2024 and see all the ways you made the world a better place? What about five years after that, when Apophis comes in 2029? If the world were going to end in the next twelve years, how might you contribute to making life easier, kinder, and better for others?

As Jews, it is our annual practice to commit to making mindful choices. Every holiday we celebrate this fall, whether Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, or Sukkot, lends itself toward mindfulness, self-awareness and self-responsibility. And THAT is why we are tasked with repairing not only our own lives, but the lives of others - including the lives of animals and all that is alive on our planet.

In today's fast-paced, tech-happy world, we tend to think of ourselves

as islands dotting a great sea. But, we are more like the ocean itself--interconnected yet individual molecules that literally create life. Or, destroy it. Unlike H<sub>2</sub>O, we have opposable thumbs and a complex brain, tools that have allowed us to understand the galaxy beyond our planet's surface, and the universe beyond even that. We created whole systems to feed and clothe ourselves *en mass*, to build shelter that is (mostly) weather resistant, to heal our bodies, and sometimes, our minds. But we often forget the soul. Our spirit, or “ruach” in Hebrew. You see, Judaism isn't so much a religion as it is a philosophy. An inclusive one.

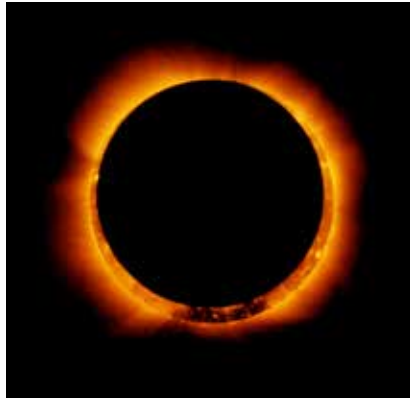
As Jews, we don't just commit to our religion or even to ourselves and our families...we commit to making the world outside of us a better place. We do not require people think like us, act like us, or even believe what we believe to do so. Why? Because we know better. And, when one possesses knowledge others do not, it is the responsibility of that person to act on said knowledge. It's that simple.

Judaism encourages us to choose solutions over problems, compassion over judgment and kindness over cruelty. Self-awareness and self-responsibility are what make Jews and Judaism special. Unique. We are not like other faiths, because our faith is not just in something bigger than ourselves, it's in each other.

*L'shana Tova...*

**Dr. Rebecca Housel, known as the #PopCultureProfessor, is an author and editor of international best-selling books on pop culture and philosophy. You can read more on her website and blog: [RebeccaHousel.com](http://RebeccaHousel.com).**

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# Confronting Anti-Semitism: Jews Need Trifocal Lenses

By David Harris

For close to two decades, we have been blowing the whistle on the rising tide of anti-Semitism. When asked the source, our answer has always been the same: Look in three directions - the far left, the far right, and the jihadists. Too many in our hyper-politicized world, however, would prefer to shy away from this trifocal analysis. For them, it doesn't necessarily sit well ideologically, the facts be damned.

But we don't have a particular ax to grind or, if you will, a "preferred" enemy to confront. We're a Jewish front-line agency that doesn't get to pick and choose our threats because they might suit a subtle, or not-so-subtle, partisan outlook.

When neo-Nazis came out by the hundreds in Charlottesville and chanted blood-curdling diatribes evoking the Third Reich, many Jews rushed to condemn them, and rightly so. We were most assuredly among them.

Whether appropriate or not, some celebrity Jews even chose to brandish the yellow Star of David, reminiscent of what Jews in the German concentration camps and ghettos had to wear, marking them for likely extermination.

While admiring this post-Charlottesville determination to stand up as Jews, I couldn't help but wonder where some of these very same people had been in recent years when the threats and attacks were coming from elsewhere.

To be absolutely, unmistakably clear, there is a real danger emanating from the far right.

For some time, we had thought it was more ominous in Europe, where, unlike here, extremists were also organizing under the banners of political parties, such as the Golden Dawn in Greece, Jobbik in Hungary, and the National Front in France. They have been seeking to gain influence through the ballot box, in addition to their activities in cyberspace and on the streets.

In some cases, they lionize 20th century fascists, call for registries

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# Confronting Anti-Semitism: Jews Need Trifocal Lenses

of Jews, disparage or even deny the Holocaust, and rant about Jewish power and influence.

It turns out that they have a fair number of kindred spirits in the U.S., who march in the streets declaring that “Jews will not replace us” and pining for “blood and soil,” the English translation of the Nazi belief in “Blut und Boden.”

But the danger doesn’t begin and end here. Nor, therefore, should our concern and outrage.

For one thing, the far left also poses daunting challenges.

Many in this camp seem to have a problem with one country on earth - and it just happens to be the only Jewish-majority nation around, with a Jewish population, it might be noted, of just over six million people, many of whom were themselves targets of the far right (and the far left and jihadists) in the past century.

No other nation awakens the far left’s misguided passion in the way that Israel does. Only democratic Israel is constantly in their crosshairs.

They don’t organize BDS campaigns, flotillas, flytillas, apartheid weeks, or disruptive protests about the true human-rights abusers, just Israel, as it seeks to defend itself against those who openly proclaim their intent to destroy it.

In the same vein, they celebrate self-determination for the Palestinians, but would deny it for the Jews.

Is this obsessive, relentless attempt to challenge the Jewish people’s national aspirations not a form of anti-Semitism? Of course it is, and has been acknowledged as such by the UN Secretary-General, the President of France, and many other astute leaders.

And when was the last time, for example, that anyone saw a protest by these self-professed human rights campaigners of the far left, whether on an American campus or elsewhere, about mass murder in Syria; Islamic State’s genocide against the Yazidis; the Venezuelan government’s wholesale destruction of a country; concentration camps housing hundreds of thousands of inmates in North Korea; the British Labor Party’s recurring examples of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, beginning at the very top of the party leadership; or Iran’s serial vio-

lations of the human rights of women, gays, and religious minorities?

Their blatant selectivity and hypocrisy speak volumes.

But bifocal lenses aren’t sufficient, either. Trifocals are needed.

Of late, the greatest physical threat to Jews has come from jihadists.

Consider the fact that every fatal attack against Jews in Europe in recent years has been carried out by Islamic extremists.

From the kosher supermarket in Paris to a Jewish school in Toulouse, from the Jewish Museum in Brussels to the synagogue in Copenhagen, from the murders of Ilan Halimi and Sarah Halimi in Paris to the Israelis (and Bulgarian) killed in Burgas, they were all perpetrated by jihadists.

Add to that the genocidal ambitions of Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas, incendiary Salafist teachings in many madrassas, and the ubiquitous anti-Semitism in important segments of the Arab media.

So, by all means, let’s express our utter revulsion when Nazis march in Charlottesville, and let’s speak up when the occupant of the Oval Office stunningly fails to provide moral clarity in confronting such an unfolding drama.

But, equally, the same Jewish outrage needs to be manifested when the leader of a country, Iran, seeks a world without Israel, when Hezbollah’s top cleric calls for the mass murder of Jews, when Jewish children are shot to death in front of a Jewish school for the simple fact that they are Jews, and when groups on American campuses single out Israel, alone among 193 UN member states, for delegitimization and disappearance.

Oh, and as if things weren’t already complicated enough, we also must not lose sight of the seemingly bizarre alliances that emerge, such as between the far left and Islamic extremists regarding Israel and Zionism, or the far right and Islamic extremists on Holocaust denial and demonization of Jews.

In other words, it’s a time for those who genuinely care about anti-Semitism to open their eyes wide - and not allow ideological or partisan thinking to narrow the field of vision.

*David Harris is the Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee. This article was originally published at HuffPost and Times of Israel on September 4, 2017.*

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# How A Nice Jewish Girl Got “Duped” And What She’s Doing About It Now

By Rus Devorah Wallen, LCSW, ACSW

I am constantly in motion. Growing up, my friends and family often commented on my unbounded energy. If I had been born 20 years later, I probably would have been diagnosed with ADD or ADHD. In high school, with hopes of slowing me down, my best friend’s mother introduced me to Transcendental Meditation (TM), a movement that started in the 1970s and has grown to 5 million participants in recent years. Like many secular Jews, I was drawn to the spirituality of TM, and I also hoped meditation would help me focus.

My friend’s mother brought us to the TM center in Buffalo. There, we were individually given a private mantra chosen expressly for each person. The leaders explained that it was such a special secret that the mantra was whispered into our ears, never to be uttered out loud. We were told to repeat this sound in our heads for twenty minutes, twice a day, and were assured that it would bring a sense of focus, calm, and equanimity.

I obediently began to practice this exercise twice daily for 20 minutes. After a few weeks, repeating the mantra was so powerful that I experienced a sense of peace I had never known before. It was amazing that I had the discipline to do this with my creative, overly active, free spirit. Focusing was always a difficult task for me. Sitting still and meditating this long was a feat. Yet I felt I was improving, so I continued with the practice each day. I know it calmed my mind and body, though little did I know how it disrupted my Jewish soul.

While TM claimed to be a “world affirming” movement that did not seek to interfere with members’ involvement in their respective religions, a disturbing memory of the initiation ceremony kept coming up. In order to receive my mantra, I was told to sit on my knees before an altar, containing rice, flowers, incense and a picture of an Indian guru who was regarded as a “holy man.” When I expressed concern that this practice seemed like Hinduism (which I knew to be forbidden to me as a Jew, although I was not observant at the time), I was told, “This is just the initiation. You only do it once, and then you’ll be able

to meditate. After this, you won’t need to do this part again.”

Staring at the guru still felt like idolatry, but I followed the instructions. Most days, I forgot about the strange initiation. But a feeling of discomfort lingered, surfacing every so often.

As I was contemplating these concerns, I met a Chabad rabbi on my college campus. I asked the rabbi if Jews were allowed to meditate. He responded, “As long as you are not doing anything idolatrous, it is permissible.” The rabbi also mentioned that just prior to our meeting, the Lubavitcher Rebbe had spoken about this issue (13 Tammuz, 5739 – July 8, 1979), stating that mental health professionals informed by Jewish law and tradition should come up with a meditation that is “value free” and devoid of all religious content, and therefore kosher.

I continued meditating, thinking it was OK. Yet, after a while my meditation practice became boring. I needed a new mantra. If I returned to the TM center, it would cost me \$100 to get an “advanced” mantra. So I decided to try to find my own. I went to the campus bookstore and found a book entitled, “Choose Your Own Mantra” for \$6.95! How perfect, I thought. But, as soon as I took the book in my hand, it flipped open to a page with my unique, secret mantra. I read the translation of the now familiar words in shock: “Hindu deity, goddess of the Earth.” I slammed the book shut, feeling duped, and utterly deceived. Twice a day for the past four years, I had been saying the name of a Hindu deity. I could no longer deny the Hindu origins of TM. When I confided in my Rabbi, he said, “And you thought you were going spiritually upwards!”

From that first meeting with the campus rabbi, I began to pursue Torah learning, while growing as an observant Jew. Yet I just couldn’t get that mantra out of my head. I wondered what to do. Shortly thereafter, when I went to a Torah learning seminar in Minnesota, I spoke to Rabbi Manis Friedman, who recommended that I memorize 12 Torah passages the Lubavitcher Rebbe encouraged children to learn. He told me that whenever the mantra came up, I should say one of these 12 verses. This worked wonders, literally pushing the mantra out of my mind.



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# How A Nice Jewish Girl Got “Duped” And What She’s Doing About It Now

Eventually TM became part of my past, one of the many experiences I had before returning to my Jewish roots. Over the next 30 years, I went on to become a social worker, and to help many people with mental health and life challenges. I have spent decades travelling and speaking, teaching Torah and therapeutic concepts and techniques, and sharing inspiration.

In the last several years, research and science have proven the psychological, physiological, neuroplastic, and other benefits of meditation and relaxation techniques. Due to my personal experiences with meditation, and my current professional involvement, I have come to see raising awareness about effective, non-religion based relaxation practices as my mission. Simple meditations, like those on the breath or the body’s sensations, do wonders for calming the nerves and strengthening the brain’s ability to focus and to regulate emotions. Additionally, along with many other benefits, such meditations enhance the prefrontal cortex of the brain - the adult, mature part that is used for making smart, responsible choices.

As a Torah-observant mental health professional, with a Torah-based practice working with primarily observant clients, I have taken courses and done extensive research to integrate kosher meditation and relaxation techniques into my work. To ensure my approach was in accordance with Jewish law, I consulted many rabbis, including Rabbi Yehoram Ulman, Senior Dayan (Judge) of the Sydney Bais Din, who has given endorsement to the exercises I use with clients, students, and friends.

The meditations I developed do not include any Jewish content, per the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s instructions. The Rebbe spoke about his concern for Jews inadvertently falling prey to using idolatrous techniques. He also encouraged those in the mental health field to learn about and teach meditation and its benefits in a neutral and scientific fashion, verifying there are no remnants of idol worship: no offerings, gurus, incense, specific positions or stances, rituals, bells or gongs, etc. This is what I have done in my album “NOGA™ Sound Solutions: Listen

Your Way to Wellness.”

After more than four decades since the Rebbe’s request, the world is ready for this type of “kosher” meditation. The Rebbe understood this need even before MRIs and research proved that meditation is a tremendously effective healing tool when utilized properly. People of all monotheistic denominations are turning to therapists like me to utilize neutral techniques to help them with many different conditions including anxiety, ADD, high blood pressure, pre-menstrual and perinatal problems, tic disorders, muscle aches and pains, emotional reactivity, and more.

Therapists and rabbis need to become more informed about these scientific healing tools, since they are involved with helping people. Due to technology, distractions, and other life stressors, more individuals than we can imagine are still getting involved with meditation without knowing what is safe and appropriate for them. There is concern for all who believe in one G-d to avoid falling into the trap of idolatry in meditation. The Rebbe’s desire was not only to sterilize meditation from Eastern implications, but to keep it free of religion altogether, to better help all those who could benefit from some added calm and focus in their lives. Feel free to try out one of my most helpful techniques, The Beginner’s Meditation on the Breath.™ Think of it as a gift of self-compassion that you can sit back, relax and enjoy amidst your busy day-to-day life!

Here is a link to my BEGINNER’S MEDITATION ON THE BREATH™ - <https://www.reverbnation.com/rdwallen/song/24615043--beginners-meditation-on-breath>

**Rus Devorah (Darcy) Wallen, LCSW, ACSW is a psychotherapist, educator, musician and motivational entertainer. Her company, Toratherapeutics®, is dedicated to providing high quality, personalized, holistic psychotherapy and consultation in a Torah consonant way. Her website and recordings can be found at [www.toratherapeutics.com](http://www.toratherapeutics.com)**



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# Jewish People Cannot Afford to Stay Silent

By Rep. Lori A. Ehrlich, CPA, MPA

Recent weeks have not been easy for a Jewish public official. All too often, I have had to attend vigils, demonstrations, and ceremonies to speak out against bigoted ideologies that I had hoped the world, had for the most part, had put behind us.

First, there was an incident in July in which someone spray-painted anti-Semitic graffiti in my district, Marblehead, along with, pointedly, the slogan "Make America Great Again." The community came together and we held a rally with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), faith leaders, elected officials, and hundreds of community members.

Marblehead is generally a peaceful, quiet, and conscientious town, so many of us were deeply hurt to see signs of such vitriol in a place that also has deep Jewish roots. This incident, however, proved to be a precursor to even more hate.

As terrible and shocking as these incidents were, I was yet unprepared for what the nation, and indeed the world, witnessed in Charlottesville. Footage of young white men and women marching through the streets with torches chanting slogans such as the Nazi battle cry "Blood and soil," and "Jews will not replace us," is horrifying. These images should only exist in the darkest parts of history books, not on modern day cable news. Their expression today reveals a cancer on the soul of our country.

It is worth digging into the mental contortionism required to believe that Jewish people, who represent approximately 2.2 percent of America's populace, are going to "replace" the majority of the population. Beyond the zero-sum, inherently confrontational false narrative that undergirds the term "replace," it is a near-statistical impossibility that people of Jewish identity will overtake Christian Caucasians in the demographic makeup of this country.

But anti-Semitism has never been about reason or facts. It has always had its roots in conspiracy theories, scapegoating, and downright lies about a group of people who have historically been easy to term the "other."

So it is when these ugly impulses rear into public view that leadership is most needed. That leadership was on display less than a week after Charlottesville, when the Holocaust Memorial in Boston was smashed for the second time in one summer. Jews and Gentiles, including ADL representatives, Governor Charlie Baker, Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh and clergy of all stripes gathered to declare with one voice that while glass pillars may be easy to break, the bonds of a community that strives for justice are much stronger.

At the exact same time as this show of solidarity was going on in Massachusetts, the President stood in sharp contrast. He was drawing a false equivalency between white supremacists and anti-racist protesters. He was making excuses for people who march in his name under Confederate flags, and swastikas. He was asking for pity because HE felt mistreated, while a young woman lay dead and a nation was in need of consoling.

President Trump has abdicated his moral responsibility to clearly and forcefully denounce hate. Fortunately, the good people of Greater Boston have shouldered the moral leadership that the President lacks. A group of so-called "proud boys," warmed-over trolls and alt-righters, organized a rally under the pretense of "free speech" to give a platform to conspiracy theorists from Infowars to Joe Biggs. The "proud boys" may have tried to hide behind the idea that they were celebrating free



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## *Jewish People Cannot Afford to Stay Silent*

speech, but free speech does not insulate you from the consequences of the speech you promote.

So people organized in opposition. Only about 50 people attended the alt-right rally, but according to Boston Police, 40,000 people came out to counter-protest and show that our Commonwealth will not sit idly by when groups try to spew hatred. After the show of strength by anti-racists in Massachusetts' capital city, 67 "America First" rallies were cancelled, with organizers fearing that their fringe status would be exposed again and again.

Notably, the term "America First" brings up chilling memories for many American Jews. It was the catchphrase for an ostensibly anti-interventionist movement against American involvement during World War II that was often marred by anti-Semitic and even pro-fascist rhetoric before Pearl Harbor. Charles Lindbergh, the spokesperson for the campaign, once said that the "greatest danger" Jews posed to the U.S. "lies in their large ownership and influence in our motion pictures, our press, our radio, and our government."

The ADL has asked Trump repeatedly to stop using the loaded term in his campaign and in his governing, but Trump either remains indifferent to the echoes of history in order to please his vicious base, or worse, seeks to actively stoke the worst sentiments within them.

While the turnouts against racism, bigotry and anti-Semitism have been encouraging, activism cannot end there. We as Jewish people, perhaps because so many of us know the sting of discrimination personally, have a proud history of standing up for social justice. As much as it breaks my heart to see this resurgence of hate groups, I know that when we stand together we are stronger. If we are to continue not only to uphold our values but to build upon them for ourselves and our children, we must stand as one whenever hate rears its head, whether silently or outright in the streets. We can, we must, and we will.

*Lori A. Ehrlich, CPA, MPA, is a State Representative for the 8th Essex District.*

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## ***From Secular to Observant***

*By Stanley Helinski, Esq.*

Having grown up in Northern New England, I was likely a hundred miles from the closest shul, and Heaven-knows where the nearest place was to buy kosher food. Raised by my mother, a Revere-based Jewish woman, she often warned me not to let anyone know that I was Jewish. I saw my Jewishness as a shortcoming, something that needed to be hidden. We celebrated Chanukah, and I remember my mother lighting candles for my grandfather and grandmother's yarzeits.

Eventually in fifth grade, somehow it was learned that I was Jewish, and my fifth-grade teacher asked me to stand up in front of the entire class to explain Chanukah. I was horrified, but did so. After this, I was routinely picked on by classmates and felt ostracized by my surroundings. I hated being Jewish. Residually, I retained only an abiding belief in G-d.

Years later, my brother became involved in a program that encouraged him to explore any religion that he was a part of. As he did, he eventually formed a relationship with Rabbi Shmuel Posner of Boston Chabad. Slowly, he became frum, attended Yeshiva in Monsey, New York, and got a *smichah*, was ordained as a rabbi. He attempted to open a Chabad House in Amherst, but was not successful and abandoned his efforts. He then met a woman in New York and eventually had a *chatunah* (wedding) at the Lubavitch headquarters in Crown Heights. I was still mostly secular, and I felt much of his life was quite foreign to me. He is now 25 years frum and lives in North Miami Beach with his family.

During these years, I attended Bentley College and eventually the Massachusetts School of Law, where I eventually taught as an adjunct professor. Today I am nearly twenty years a criminal defense attorney and handle mostly life felonies, homicides and similar cases. I was married to a non-Jewish woman whom I met in the courthouse, and we had a daughter together. We divorced after a short time, and I am now in search of a *shidduch* (spouse) with whom I may build a Jewish home. I myself have become frum and am nearly two years into a

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## *From Secular to Observant*

smicha program with the hopes of also becoming ordained as a rabbi.

I cannot explain what brought two Jewish brothers who grew up knowing not a single aspect of such a complex, life calling of Yiddishkeit. I can say that, as I grew older, I felt an emptiness in my life. Regardless of how many states I travelled to, how much national recognition I achieved for legal cases that I was working on, or even having a beautiful daughter with whom I have an unbreakable bond, in spite of my becoming a third degree blackbelt in martial arts, writing nationally, and marking achievement after achievement. I still felt something missing.

During this month of Elul, we as Jews are to take an accounting of our lives, which is a custom of observant Jews. As a businessman often lifts his head from his work and evaluates his business, we do so with our lives, in preparation for the upcoming month of Tishrei.

All that I can say is that I started to become more observant following my separation from my ex-wife and what I saw as a start of a new life, a new era. And as I did so, I realized how much was missing from it. I found the beauty of Yiddishkeit and of being Jewish. I found a love for my fellow Jew. I found what a wonderful people comprise the Jewish nation and the *Simchah* (joyfulness) of Judaism.

As I continued to evolve in my observance, I began attending High Holidays with my mother. Nearly a decade ago, we decided to stay in Massachusetts for Rosh Hashanah instead of in Maine, where she now lives. As it was a last minute decision, we were hard-pressed to find a place to attend services in Newton, where I lived at the time. Seemingly, we needed to buy tickets far in advance, and the tickets ranged from hundreds of dollars to thousands of dollars. But, in my search, I found a place in Wellesley - the Wellesley-Weston Chabad run by Rabbi Moshe Bleich, a sheliach from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. From the website, it seemed that we need only to show up, which we did. I found Rabbi Bleich - who was close in age to me - and his family to be thoroughly open-armed, and the services thoroughly enjoyable,

funny in some respects. The community was wonderful as well. I spent the next several years at the W-W Chabad for the high holidays, until I eventually asked Rabbi Bleich whether he had Shabbos services. He laughed and assured me that he did. I don't believe I have missed many Shabbases since.

I have now moved two doors down from the W-W Chabad and the Bleich family with my daughter, and I study through my smicha program with Rabbi Bleich and others. In recent days, while I never thought of abandoning my law practice, my thoughts have become more and more focused on becoming ordained through continuing hard work and much catching up from growing up in what seems to have been the dark ages. I would also like to begin helping others with similar backgrounds to my own - those on the fence or also in the dark - to appreciate that the emptiness for which I was constantly trying to fill, was my disconnect from G-d. A Jew cannot abandon their Jewishness - it is impossible. However, through my study of Torah, seeing the flow of the *Tanach*, though the *Mishnah*, *Gemara* and so on, I see that this is not some set of books that were drafted up by some former rabbis. This is real. Torah is real. Hashem is real.

A Jew is a Jew is a Jew. Despite my secular upbringing, I was drawn to Torah and by doing so, Hashem. And despite being unmarried and still on the search for my *bashert* (soulmate), my connection to my creator has filled that void. And so too has it for my daughter.

This is my story of evolving from a secular Jew to a *frumah yid*. I would love to hear your story and your beliefs, as we each have our own, and I derive great pleasure in hearing each and every one. *Chetiva v'chatima tovah*, have a sweet and meaningful year with many blessings.

*Stanley Helinski, Esq. is a Boston trial lawyer presently in Yeshiva at Machon L'Horah studying to be a rabbi. He lives in Wellesley.*



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Don't wait! This show is open to the public and likely to sell out, so get your tickets today. COST: \$10 per ticket. All event attendees must be at least 21 years of age. For more information or special accommodations, please contact Meghan at meghand@cjp.org or 617-457-8736.

## Ahavath Torah Congregation, Stoughton

Ahavath Torah Congregation announces the opening of its Sunday morning preschool class beginning this fall for ages 3-5. The classes will foster a love for Judaism through music, drama, art, cooking, beginning Alef-Bet, (alphabet), beginning Hebrew vocabulary, and celebrating the holidays and learning about Shabbat using hands-on, developmentally appropriate activities. The classes are taught by a highly experienced, loving teacher and staff. For information please contact Madeleine, Lewis.madeleine@gmail.com.

Ahavath Torah Congregation, (ATC) is a Conservative synagogue in Stoughton, with Rabbi Jonathan Hausman as religious leader.

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# Women's Roles Cannot be Limited

By Sharon Weiss-Greenberg

If it means that you will never allow a woman on the board, please do not pass me the Torah on Simchat Torah.

If it means that you will never allow women to make decisions and have true voices in our shul, please do not pass me the Torah on Simchat Torah.

If it means that you will not pass me the Torah any other of the 51 weeks of the year, please do not pass me the Torah on Simchat Torah.

The past number of weeks have been a blur in many ways. In the Jewish media world, including the blogosphere, there are now standard topics that are covered as each new holiday approaches. How should one ask for forgiveness? - Rosh Hashanah. Should someone who is pregnant, nursing or struggling with an eating disorder fast, and how so? - Yom Kippur. As Simchat Torah approaches, the blogosphere is afflutter with pieces of hope and pieces of despair, as Simchat Torah has the potential to be a highlight of the year for women, or a rock bottom low point. I've experienced both.

While I would generally advocate for having the conversations with key players weeks if not months in advance of Simchat Torah to ensure that the experience is positive and meaningful, this year I cannot help but notice that having access to a Torah on this one particular day can, and often does, come at a high cost. That of the rest of the year.

For one day your community may allow you to dance with the Torah, perhaps lain, and become enraptured with the blueprint of the way we live our lives on a daily basis. We are given the opportunity to celebrate what drives us, motivates us, and inspires us from one day to the next. But what happens the day after? What happens the following Shabbat in synagogue?

Professor Daniel Effron of the London Business School is one of the leading scholars of moral licensing. In Malcolm Gladwell's Revisionist History podcast, Gladwell interviews Effron to explain this relatively new concept in the field of social psychology. In the podcast, moral licensing is defined in the following manner: "Past good deeds can liberate individuals to engage in behaviors that are immoral, unethical, or otherwise problematic - behaviors that they would otherwise avoid for fear of feeling or appearing immoral." Gladwell explains, "When we do something good...sometimes we then, on occasion, give ourselves permission to do something bad."

Gladwell makes the point by highlighting various examples of moral licensing as it relates to specific moments in modern and quite recent history. He focuses our attention on the first prime minister of Australia, Julia Gillard. While one would imagine that having a woman prime minister would be a step forward, what moral licensing, and for that matter history, teaches us is that "doing good," in this case, breaking the glass ceiling by installing a woman prime minister, might allow one to "do bad," such as taking a backseat to other feminist causes.

Gillard was elected as the first woman prime minister of Australia in 2010. She was regularly subjected to sexism by her opponents, the media and the like. Name calling and an obsession with her appearance ensued. During her tenure, Gillard delivered a powerful speech to Parliament after being accused of allowing for sexism because a man whom she had appointed as speaker from her party had sent sexist text messages. Gillard, who had been subjected to horrific discrimination and constant, harmful sexism, was audaciously accused of being sexist herself.

While the appointment of Julia Gillard as Prime Minister of Australia would seemingly be a step forward, the investigation and election of her vocally sexist opponent following her time in office is an example of moral licensing. By checking off the box of having elected a woman prime minister, rapid, vulgar sexism ensued. Gladwell concludes by listing the many countries who have elected a woman prime minister or president one time, and have yet to elect a second. I would imagine that Golda Meir would come to mind for many reading this piece.

While this could easily relate to the American political realm, I would like to argue that it also fits quite nicely into what happens in many synagogues around the world. Simchat Torah is the one time of the year that a woman can hold a Torah. Throughout the year, every year, when one might suggest further steps, suggestions are dismissed by remarking that the synagogue is obviously open minded as women are allowed to hold the Torah on that one day a year. Even when it comes to engaging in the same exact act, i.e. allowing a woman to carry the Torah on Shabbat so that women have access to pay respect to and kiss the Torah as the men are afforded this opportunity without question, all eyes focus back on the "good" that is done on Simchat Torah.

Do I want women to have access to our Torah on Simchat Torah? Yes. Do I want synagogues to be able to use this as an opportunity to claim that the women box was checked? No. While the time of the chag is special, spiritual, and meaningful, do not allow your engagement with the Torah and prayer to be limited to a holiday season. Learn the lessons from history that women's roles cannot be limited to checking off a box and considering the job done. We exist throughout the year, and should be acknowledged, empowered, and entrusted throughout.

**Sharon Weiss-Greenberg, Ph.D. is the Executive Director of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance.**

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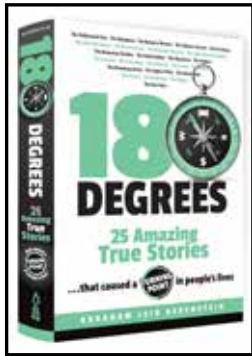
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 by Abraham Leib Bernstein. Publisher: Feldheim



I love reading true stories of people that, at a certain point in their lives, decided that it was time to change spiritually and choose to become close to Judaism (made Teshuvah).

While flipping through this book to choose one story to start with, I found an amazing and moving account of a Brazilian non-Jewish boy who used to live on the streets begging for food, lost his parents at young age, became a master in Capoeira (Brazilian Martial Arts), and ended up going to Yeshiva in Israel.

Of course, his story was close to me, as I grew up in Brazil seeing so many lost young boys running barefoot on the streets, and sometimes stealing from people. It was surprising to read that this man converted and now is a Chasid, living in Bnei Brak. How did he get there? You've got to read the book.

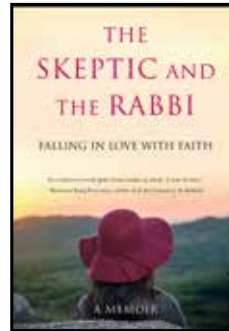
There are 25 true stories, all first-person accounts, and the book even includes each narrator's email address in case people wish to contact them directly.

Since there is so much talk about Neo-Nazis in the US, I went straight to the last chapter of the book to read the story of a Neo-Nazi who became a Torah observant Jew. (*Shirley Farber*)

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**The Skeptic and the Rabbi: Falling in Love with Faith**  
 By Judy Gruen. Publisher: She Writes Press



When Judy marries the man she loves - an Orthodox Jew - she embarks on a serious spiritual quest that is by turns poignant and hilarious.

The Skeptic and the Rabbi is a rare memoir, one that combines historical depth, spirituality and intelligent humor. Gruen writes with refreshing honesty about what it means to remain authentic to yourself while charting a new yet ancient spiritual path at odds with the surrounding culture. She also writes touchingly about her family, including her

two sets of grandparents, who influenced her in wildly opposite ways. As she navigates her new life with the man she loves and the faith she also loves, she survives several awkward moments, including when the rabbi calls to tell her that she accidentally served unkosher food to her Shabbat guests. Reading this wry, bold and compelling memoir, you'll laugh, you'll cry, and when you're finished, you may also have a sudden craving for chicken matzo ball soup-kosher, of course.

**About the Author**

Judy Gruen is the author of several award-winning humor books and coauthor of a book on MBA admissions. Her work has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, Boston Globe, Aish.com, Kveller, Jewish Action, the Jewish Journal and many other media outlets, as well as 10 anthologies. She has been quoted in The New York Times and Better Homes & Gardens, and been a guest on many radio programs.



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## Rosh Hashanah, Kingship, and Models of Leadership

By David Bernat, PhD

The theme of Divine Kingship is central to Rosh Hashanah and the High Holidays. Monarchic metaphors frame the worship traditions, and the word *Melech* [King] and its derivations permeate the liturgies. G-d's Kingship is a culmination of G-d's creation of the world, and is central to G-d's power to save and safeguard the people and forgive our transgressions. Most significantly, the three-part daytime Shofar service is essentially a coronation ceremony. Malchuyot announces G-d's Kingship, *Zichronot* highlights and remembers G-d's power and actions on behalf of the people of Israel throughout history, and *Shofarot* literally "trumpets" the symbolic crowning of G-d for yet another year.

The foregrounding of Kingship during the *Yamin Noraim*, Days of Awe, raises a potential dynamic tension for us as American Jews. Our country was founded on the rejection of Monarchy as a governing principle in favor of democracy. That being the case, how do we reconcile a theology that promotes Kingship as a ruling ethos?

I am not suggesting that we dismiss or overhaul our High Holiday liturgy. Rather, I believe the abovementioned dichotomy provides the opportunity for a reflection on ideal leadership qualities. This reflection can be both outward and inward facing. What types of leaders do we seek, and by what measurements do we each assess our own behavior? In addition, I would suggest that a major election cycle, and a new Presidency, bring the issues of leadership to the forefront of our consciousness.

Whether you are a supporter or detractor of the current administration, it is safe to say that President Trump is characterized by his tendency to certitude, and by his general unwillingness to acknowledge his own errors or missteps. This is a posture that I find problematic, and in the present Rosh Hashanah reflection on leadership models, I would like to make a case for uncertainty, humility, and the willingness to "be wrong."

In 2010, Kathryn Schultz published a compelling treatise titled *Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error*. Shultz observes that societies have long valued and pursued certainty. She argues instead that we are healthier, as individuals and collectives, if we eschew certainty to recognize, even embrace, the inevitability of error. Our strength therefore is not in our infallibility, but in the way we behave, and interrelate, in the face of our capacity to do wrong. In the same vein, General Stanley McChrystal asserted, in a notable TED talk, that "... a leader isn't good because they're right, they're good because they're willing to learn and trust."

Jewish tradition and theology anticipated these conclusions millennia ago. The process of repentance, which is at the core of our High Holiday practice, demands a forthright moral inventory and a commitment to positive change, but is, at the same time, cognizant of the inevitability of error. Kol Nidre, a centerpiece of our liturgy, provides a poignant expression of this sensitivity. In the prayer, we ask to be absolved, *in advance*, for breaking our word in the year to come.

Remarkably, the Torah furnishes a counterintuitive model of a deity who is also capable of error and doubt. G-d creates humanity and soon regrets the unanticipatedly corrupt end product. G-d resolves to eradicate humanity with a flood and to start afresh with Noah and his family. After the massive upheaval, and the "reboot," G-d reflects

## Rosh Hashanah, Kingship, and Models of Leadership

“Though the formation of the human heart is compromised from their youth, I will no longer strike all living things that I made” (Genesis 9:21). G-d falls short of perfection, and yet, through the uncertainty, owns up to, and reconciles with, the flawed nature of the created world. In this light, the Babylonian Talmud (Tractate Eruvin 13b) recounts a profound Rabbinic conversation:

For years the School of Shammai and the School of Hillel debated - this one asserting, “It would have been better if humanity had not been created,” and the other asserting that “It is better that humanity was created...” They voted and decided: “It would have been better if humans had not been created - but since they were created, every person should constantly examine their actions.”

Similarly, The Sages portray a G-d who struggles with the need to be compassionate against the need to be right. According to the Talmud (*Berachot 7a*), G-d’s regular prayer consists of an appeal: “May it be My Will that My Mercy conquers My Anger and that My Mercy prevails over my other attributes, and that I behave toward My Children with the attribute of Mercy and that I temper my strict application of Justice.”

Our tradition emphasizes that every person is created *beTselem Elohim*, in the Divine Image. Thus, we have the potential to mirror, among other qualities, G-d’s capacity to be wrong and to be uncertain. Therefore, our imperative, and that of our leaders all the more, is not necessarily to strive to be like a King who rule with rectitude alone. Rather, our charge is to act with humility, generosity, and compassion, when inevitably, we, and those in our community, tread “the margin of error.” *Shana Tovah*. A Happy and Healthy New Year.

**David Bernat is the Executive Director of the Synagogue Council of MA and a lecturer in Judaic Studies at UMass Amherst.**



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## LimmudBoston

### Presents...

By Steffi Aronson Karp

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at the annual LimmudBoston conference, which takes place at the Temple Reyim/Mayyim Hayyim campus in Newton on Sunday, December 3.

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• Visiting from Jerusalem, **Rabbi Leon Morris**, president of the renowned Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, will offer text study and take part in a lunchtime panel on leadership.

• LimmudBoston 2017 will also offer sessions from two new leaders to the Boston Jewish community. **Rabbi Michael Rothbaum** is the new rabbi at Acton's Congregation Beth Elohim. Michael's husband, **Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell**, is an accomplished Yiddish vocalist.



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# Jewish Pluralism



*By Tamar Lilienthal*

Our I had never understood pluralism until I went to a summer program at Brandeis University.

For many years, I attended Congregation Kol Tikvah in Parkland, Florida, the Reform Jewish synagogue where my father was the rabbi. Then, after we left the synagogue and moved to a more observant community in Coral Springs, I slowly followed a path to Orthodoxy. However, I had never encountered the worlds simultaneously. There were the Reform ideals and the

Orthodox ideals: two separate realms of Judaism. I never thought I would be in a place where they collided.

But then I arrived at the Brandeis Institute of Music and Art (BIMA). BIMA is a month-long Jewish arts program for high school students. Here, not only were there Reform Jews and Orthodox Jews, but there were also Conservative Jews, Secular Jews, Cultural Jews, and Reconstructionist Jews. The staff at the program gave us a mission: we were to form a "pluralistic" community where we could all work together and still meet everyone's individual needs.

My initial reaction was to stick to the people most similar to me. Almost immediately, the Orthodox participants of the program formed a special bond, since we all prayed the same way, observed the Sabbath the same way, and had similar lifestyles. We built our own bubble within the program, and I found myself primarily spending my time with the people I most easily related to. I stayed within my comfort zone and what was familiar to me.

But, as I soon learned, adults see everything! The BIMA staff soon noticed that my friends and I were living in seclusion. The director of the program called me to a meeting on a Wednesday night, where he informed me that he had decided that the Orthodox minyan would join with the Egalitarian minyan for Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv. He asked me if I would be OK organizing this special service.

I told him that I would do it. I had no clue how this was going to work, but I had to give it a try.

I sat with a girl from the egalitarian prayer group, and together we worked out how we would meet everyone's needs. Our service would have a men's and a women's seating section to accommodate the Orthodox students like myself, but there would be a mixed section in the middle for those who preferred to sit together. A man would lead the end of Kabbalat Shabbat and the Maariv service, in keeping

with traditional Jewish law, but the rest of Kabbalat Shabbat would be female-led. At the same time, it could not be led by just one woman, since many Orthodox Jewish men do not listen to a sole woman's voice, so the psalms of Kabbalat Shabbat would be sung by a group of at least three girls.

While we thought our plans would accommodate all sides, many members of both groups were outraged. Some Orthodox participants argued that there could be absolutely no mixed seating, and some Reform and Conservative participants complained that the primary part of the service would still be male-run. As one of the leaders of this effort, I received most of the backlash. One participant even yelled at me in the middle of the busy dining hall. I will never forget how everyone's faces turned toward us to see what was going on, and how I felt an immense amount of shame.

I was trying to bring people together. How come it seemed to be driving everyone further apart?

I wish that I could say that we worked out our differences in the end, but that wasn't how it concluded. Most people didn't attend our service. I was so frustrated at the time that when the service ended, I broke down in tears. But looking back on the experience, I think I grew tremendously from it. I learned that not only the Jewish community, but the world at large, has much work to do to push past our differences and collaborate. At the same time, I realized that differences need to be respected. The way I think might differ from how the next person thinks, and that's OK.

The push and pull of pluralism is something difficult to balance. But BIMA taught me that it is something I need to continue to master. I believe that pluralism is at the heart of the Judaism of the future. It's a difficult journey, but one worth embarking upon.

*Tamar is currently a high school senior at Rohr Bais Chaya Academy in Tamarac, Florida. She is an avid reader and writer, and hopes to study in Israel for a year after high school.*



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# Why the Kotel? Why women?

By Cheryl Birkner Mack

The Western Wall, known in Hebrew as the Kotel, is the only surviving remnant of the Holy Temple built in Jerusalem, and is a significant site for Jewish worship. After the first destruction of the site in 586 BCE, Jews were exiled from the land. They returned to rebuild it and worship returned until the second destruction in 70 CE. Jews were subsequently not allowed to pray there for hundreds of years under Roman, Byzantine and Muslim rule, although Jews, dispersed around the world, directed their prayers toward Jerusalem, and those fortunate enough to be in Jerusalem directed their prayers toward the Wall. The Jewish world rejoiced in 1967 with the exultant words of the army officer: "The Temple Mount is in our hands."

Jews returned to pray at this site. Prominent visitors to Israel, Jews and non-Jews alike, were brought to the Wall. National events, Army inductions all were conducted at the Wall.

In the fall of 1988, a group of women participating in an academic conference in Jerusalem, inspired by Rivka Haut, an Orthodox teacher of Talmud, went to the Kotel to pray together. The group was multi-denominational. The prayer was inspiring, and women who

remained in Jerusalem after the conference decided to continue meeting, eventually evolving under the leadership of Bonna Devora Haberman into the group known as Women of the Wall. Haut and other women who had returned to North America formed an organization known as the International Committee for Women of the Wall (ICWOW).

Women of the Wall, known in Hebrew as Nashot HaKotel, organized into a non-profit group with the stated goals of conducting women's prayer at the women's section of the Wall, and providing education towards that end.

Over the 29 years of its existence, Women of the Wall has maintained its multi-denominationalism, ranging at times from barely a minyan of women to over two hundred participants. The group prays at the beginning of every lunar month, Rosh Hodesh, which in Jewish tradition is a day associated with women. For the first twenty years of their existence, the group would pray during the first part of the service in the women's section, moving to another place to finish the service when those who chose to put on talit and tefilin would do so. It was then that they read from the Torah scroll.

In 2010 women began to wear talitot, and in 2013, following another judicial victory, women began to wear tefilin.

The reaction of the Israeli public to the women's presence in the women's section has ranged from lack of awareness, to surprise, to pleased responses, and, unfortunately, also to occasional indignation that has sometimes resulted in insults and physical objects being hurled at the women as they pray. At times, the police have detained members of Women of the Wall for the offense of "disturbing the public order." Judges have informed the police that these women have the right to pray just as men do, and detentions have ceased in recent months.

It isn't that women don't regularly pray in the women's section of the Kotel. On any particular day, at any particular time, dozens, even hundreds of Ultra-Orthodox women, traditional women, secular women and tourists can be found in the women's section of the Kotel. It's that Women of the Wall come to pray together. That doesn't routinely happen. Most women pray by themselves. And since the practice of wearing talit

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# Why the Kotel? Why women?

and tefilin has become more common among members of the group, the group has stood out from other women in the women's section.

Four years ago, contravening the goals stated in their group's charter and with no consultation with ICWOW or other long-time supporters and members of the organization, board members of Women of the Wall agreed to enter into negotiations with the government to abandon the Kotel and move their prayer to the archaeological site located to the south of the traditional Wall, known as Robinson's Arch. This agreement, were it implemented, would also ban women's group prayer from the Kotel. Women who, like some of the members of Women of the Wall choose to wear talit and tefilin during morning prayer, would be banned from doing so in the women's section of the Kotel. Torah reading would be forbidden there, and woman praying as a group there would be disbanded.

The status of women praying at the Kotel would regress, despite acknowledgement, recognition and acceptance by rabbis of all denominations, Israeli courts, and Israeli and worldwide public opinion. It should also be noted that Robinson's Arch is today and has been for many years a site open for egalitarian prayer. There is no need to negotiate for a site that already exists. Furthermore, Orthodox members of Women of the Wall would be uncomfortable in an egalitarian setting. While many point out that the stones at Robinson's Arch are the same stones that constitute the Wall in the Women's section, many argue that the sanctity of Robinson's Arch is not the same as that of the traditional prayer plaza.



Immediately upon hearing of the decision to give up their acknowledged and protected rights, Haberman, Haut, and others formed a group which took the name "Original Women of the Wall" (Facebook: Original Women of the Wall or [www.originalwow.org](http://www.originalwow.org)). The name is not only in recognition of Haberman, Haut and most other founders of the group joining together, but is also a statement of unshakeable commitment to the original goals of the group.

Original Women of the Wall meet at the Kotel for prayer, establishing that women's prayer will continue at this site regardless of any agreements made by others. Some members of the group choose to wear talit, some tefilin, some both, some neither. On days when the Torah is read, the group reads Torah.

Although it is not the norm at the Kotel, Israeli courts have ruled that all these practices are permitted for women as they are to men. Original Women of the Wall remain committed to multi-denominationalism, a characteristic too often lacking in Israeli society and in Jewish prayer in general. They refuse to cede the rights of Jewish women to pray as women according to their custom at

this sacred place.

*Cheryl Birkner Mack served on the Board of Women of the Wall, but resigned over the decision to enter into negotiations with the Israeli government to move to Robinson's Arch. She is one of the leading activists working with Original Women of the Wall.*

Photo from [www.facebook.com/OriginalWomenoftheWall](http://www.facebook.com/OriginalWomenoftheWall)

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## Susan Musicant Shikora: A Fourth Generation Hadassah Life Member

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc. (HWZOA) has been a powerful force of change for Israel and the United States for just over 100 years. Hadassah -Northeast has a regional membership of 24,000 members. Sharon resident Sharon Musicant Shikora tells Shalom Magazine how the country's largest Zionist women's organization changed her life.

### Q: What was it about Hadassah that first attracted you?

I was born into a Hadassah family; I am a 4th generation Life Member, and my daughter is 5th generation. I have a certificate of appreciation given to my great-grandmother for "outstanding knitting over the years" - her group would knit afghans for the patients at Hadassah Hospital! My mother was co-president of her Connecticut chapter and so I learned at her knee, while helping to stuff envelopes.

My grandmother made me a Life Member when I was 10 years old, but truthfully, I would have found my way to Hadassah anyway, because of my love for Israel and my affinity toward medical research and care (I am a physician assistant by training.) In December, I completed my Region Presidency, and I am now part of the Hadassah National Annual Giving Team.

### Q: Hadassah's slogan is: "Hadassah: The Power of Women Who Do." How do its messages of female empowerment and "The Power of Women Who Do" resonate in your life today?

Hadassah is, and has always been, a women's organization, never "the women's auxiliary," or an afterthought. Hadassah women were responsible for building the medical infrastructure of what is now Israel, before transatlantic flights or email, and before women had the right to vote here in the United States. Because of Hadassah, generations of women learned skills that they might not have learned in school, but which have translated well into other aspects of their lives. For instance, as a physician assistant, I never needed (or wanted!) to take part in public speaking, but now, thanks to my Hadassah training,

I frequently speak at Hadassah events.

### Q: What is it about Hadassah women that enables them to make things happen?

Because we work with each other to make things happen, we learn from each other, and we grow stronger together. We advocate for domestic issues at the federal and state levels. In the 1990s, we met with our legislators on Beacon Hill and Capitol Hill to advocate for human embryonic stem cell research - and it came to fruition!

### Q: What is your favorite thing about Hadassah?

I love being a part of something bigger than myself. Hadassah physicians are known for emergency medical relief, as seen in Haiti after the earthquake. The trauma medicine experience of our Hadassah clinicians was shared with Boston doctors, and that saved the life of every victim who made it to the hospitals after the Boston Marathon bombing.

### Q: What is your personal connection to Hadassah's ground-breaking medical research?

Hadassah runs in my family, you could say, but so does breast cancer. My mother and grandmother both succumbed to it. Hadassah has been working to find cures to many diseases, including breast cancer.

Hadassah researchers were instrumental in the discovery of the BRCA genes, and continue to seek the cure for breast cancer.

### Q: Is Zionism important to you?

When I was little, I used to hear my mother and her friends talking about Israel, "our" Hadassah Hospitals, and how wonderful it was to have our people living in our homeland, not as visitors, but as citizens of a Jewish state that didn't exist when they were my age. I loved Israel sight unseen, unabashedly, and that has been more than confirmed with each trip I make there.

### Q: Please sum up Hadassah in one word.

As Henrietta Szold, the founder of Hadassah, once said, "Hadassah is 'Practical Zionism.'" Two words (sorry!), but that sums it up for me!



SUSAN AND HER DAUGHTER,  
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# Have We Done Enough to Help our Jewish Community?

By Suzi Schuller, MSW

As we approach the New Year and pause to reflect upon the choices we have made over the past year, especially regarding our actions and intentions towards others, we ask: Have we done enough to help our Jewish community?

Tikkun Olam is part of our rich Jewish tradition, yet each and every day, many Jews among us are suffering. Yad Chessed, which means "hand of loving kindness," is a small, Boston-based Jewish organization whose mission is simple: to help relieve the financial distress of Jewish individuals and families in our community while preserving their dignity.

In 1989, Robert Housman, having witnessed many Jewish individuals and families in financial trouble, personally decided to address this problem. This year, almost three decades later, Yad Chessed social workers distribute financial assistance to more than 700 households annually. Whether meeting basic needs by helping with an emergency or an ongoing monthly need, Yad Chessed provides help with food and clothing purchases, rent or mortgage payments, utilities, medical expenses, and also, interest-free loans. We also provide additional food subsidies at Rosh Hashanah and Pesach to some of the families. All of this assistance, year-round and holiday time, depends on donations from our generous community.

Our best-known program, the Purim fundraiser, engages over 60 synagogues, Hillels, minyanim, day schools, and other organizations in raising money for food purchases, which are distributed in fulfillment of the mitzvah of Matanot l'evyonim (gifts to the poor) on the day of Purim. This past year, 714 families received \$143,500, thanks to the involvement of the larger community.

Yad Chessed is the last call someone wants to make. Our social workers try to help alleviate any feelings of shame many people may experience, and to preserve their clients' dignity. Imagine having to choose between eating and keeping the lights on, or imagine hesitating

to go to the doctor or to fill prescriptions for lack of money. We have clients who were evicted from housing because they have lost their jobs and cannot pay their rent. We work with parents who must choose between working a full-time job or helping their children with disabilities, or who are ill. We have young clients in their 20s with illnesses and disabilities who cannot work for a period of time and may need help applying for disability benefits. We have clients young and old, living on less than \$1000 a month (typically consisting of social security or federal benefits), who, thanks to the community's contribution to Yad Chessed, receive monthly food cards that enable them to put food on the table.

Each and every day, our social workers give those less fortunate in our community hope. Yad Chessed is a CJP Anti-Poverty agency, and is one of the partner agencies that receives "Warmline" referrals to help families in financial distress.

Do you have a neighbor, co-worker, or friend who might benefit from one of our programs? If so, please direct them to the Warmline at 1-800-CJP-9500, an access point into the Jewish community for services.

As we begin 5778, we reflect on the past year while considering our fortunes for the coming year. We at Yad Chessed believe that our deeds help determine who will have a good life and who will not. Will your actions this next year help those in need in our community? Will you make a difference in the life of someone who is in need?

According to our tradition, tzedakah, usually in the form of charity, is one way to ensure that we are inscribed in the Book of Life. Reaffirm your own commitment to tzedakah by going to [www.yadchedded.org](http://www.yadchedded.org) to learn more about our work and to donate online. or send your tzedakah to Yad Chessed, P.O. Box 470752, Brookline Village, MA 02447.

Wishing you and the entire Jewish community a Shanah tovah u'metuka.

**Suzi Schuller, MSW is the Executive Director of Yad Chessed Fund, Inc.**



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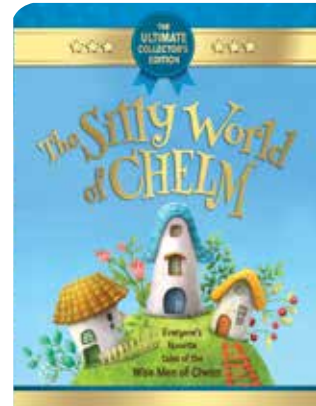
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# The Election in Chelm

Once upon a time, the village of Chelm decided it was time they had a mayor. "Every community has a mayor," Mottel, the Tailor, declared. "Since our little village has grown, we too should have one."

Everyone agreed. Now, the question was, who should run for the office? After many discussions, it was decided that Yankel, the Butcher, should run for the coveted position.



"Listen," Chaim, the Farmer, exclaimed. "If we are to have a real election for mayor, we should have more than one candidate. How would it look to others if Yankel were the only person from all of Chelm who we deemed worthy enough to run for the office?"

So it was decided to have Tevya, the Milk Farmer, run as an opposition candidate.

The following week everyone gathered in the center of the village - it was election day.

"Everyone who wants to vote for Yankel will please raise their hand!" announced Mottel.

"Wait! Wait!" shouted the Old Sage of Chelm. "We must use a secret ballot like the other communities do when they hold elections. Therefore, I want everyone to close their eyes when they cast their vote."

"Good idea," exclaimed Mottel. "Listen up everyone! All who want to vote for Yankel, raise your hand and close your eyes."

"Now," shouted Mottel, "everyone who wants to vote for Tevya close your eyes and raise your hand."

Then the Old Sage of Chelm stepped forward beaming happily and announced, "You see my dear friends, we have held our first election in Chelm. It was done honestly and without argument. And what pleases me most is that we did it by a secret ballot."

He then turned to Mottel and asked, "Now tell us, who got the most votes?" Mottel's face grew red. Then he raised his shoulders in a shrug and said, "I really don't know. When I voted for Yankel, I closed my eyes. And then when we asked everyone who wanted to vote for Tevya, I, too, closed my eyes to keep it fair."

The Old Sage of Chelm smiled broadly and announced, "Because we must conduct our elections honestly and by secret ballot, let it be written that both Tevya and Yankel will be our mayor. Yankel will be mayor for one week, and Tevya will be mayor for the next. And so it will be until our next secret ballot election!"

And so, that's the way it was in the village of Chelm. The villagers sustained their secret ballot, and no one was ever a loser.

*Excerpted from the book "The Silly World of Chelm." Available at [www.WorldOfChelm.com](http://www.WorldOfChelm.com) and at Amazon.com.*

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## ***New England Yachad Events***

Yachad is the National Jewish Council for Disabilities. Yachad promotes inclusion for people with disabilities.

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Yachad Sukkah party on Sunday, October 8, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the home of Liz Offen in West Roxbury. Hang out in the Sukkah, create crafts, and have fun! cost is \$5.

Volunteer at Yom Chesed with Yachad! Come team up with Yachad to work on a volunteer project to brighten your life and the lives of others. Yom Chesed will be on Sunday, November 5, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Maimonides School, 34 Philbrick Rd, Brookline.

Have a fun-filled weekend at the Yachad Sharon Junior Shabbaton, Friday and Saturday, November 4-5 in Sharon, MA. Meet new friends, enjoy Shabbat with old friends, and have fun! Cost is \$75 for early bird registration and \$90 for regular registration.

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# Rosh Hashanah – A Day of Judgment and of Opportunity

By Judy Gruen

Jews take a lot of traditions from the secular world and flip them over like a hot Chanukah latke.

For example, in the secular world people party the night away before New Year's, drinking, dining and dancing. Only when the party's over do they really face the music, forcing themselves to the gym, signing on to the latest diet (South Beach, paleo, other), and trying their best to implement their other resolutions for self-improvement.

Jews do just the opposite. Our New Year isn't about drinking or dancing, though food plays its recurring, starring role. It's about recognizing that God is really our Father and our King. It's about recognizing that we are being evaluated and judged - that's why Rosh Hashanah is also known as Yom Ha Din - the day of judgment.

Rosh Hashanah may be a new year, but it's also pretty serious stuff, which is why we hold off our celebrations until the holiday of Sukkot, two weeks later. Till then, we're supposed to be busy with self-reflection and sincere plans for self-improvement. Not the shallow changes about losing the same old 10 pounds or getting a new car, but the deeper goals of making ourselves greater spiritually and morally.

We also ask God, as well as the people in our lives, to forgive us for our mistakes, missteps and missed opportunities.

Rosh Hashanah means "head of the year," so it's logical that we use our heads to get ready for it. But we also need to use our hearts to make the process work. Before Rosh Hashanah, I try to carve out serious think time about how I can develop closer relationships with God and with my husband and children.

I also choose a few small ways to become a better Jew, whether adding more study time during the week, a commitment to do more acts of kindness for the needy in the community, or something else that will have both practical and transcendent power.

At this time, I try to put my life in perspective, to remember what really matters most. If the idea of Rosh Hashanah as "Judgment Day" seems scary, well, look at the bright side: God may be judging us, but He's also rooting for us.

I admit that I feel a little sheepish asking for forgiveness and for so many blessings, given my own embarrassing record of Most Blown Resolutions in a Single Year. Over the years, my resolutions have included praying each morning; reading through all the Psalms, including the commentary (a fat two-volume set); reading the weekly Torah portion with commentary; and working my way through the books of the Prophets, Judges and Writings.

Because I often attempt an unreasonable amount, I end up just like the guy or girl who committed to become a gym rat, dropping the weighted ball somewhere along the way. I've gotten to Psalm 50 (out of 150); I've read loads of commentary on every Torah portion until about the time the Jews leave Egypt; and I've gotten through Joshua, Judges, and Samuel 1, but I've been in the middle of Samuel 2 longer than I care to admit. As for my morning prayers, let's just call the practice "spotty" and leave it at that.

Faced with this record, I have two choices: beat myself up over my inconsistencies, or look at the glass as half-full rather than half-empty. Berating myself for my failures is actually the easy way out; an excuse not to begin again, perhaps with more modest goals.

Our Torah and other sacred writings are eternal. They are waiting for me to plumb their depths again. Opportunities for prayer, for acts of kindness, for giving more charity, to restrain my anger over inconsequential things, and overcome other petty instincts, are there each day that I am blessed with life and health.

It's not too late to resume where I left off. No, I didn't achieve the goals I had set for myself - yet.

It's ironic that in an era saturated with notions of self-esteem, so many of us are plagued with doubts about our own self-worth. We wonder if our prayers, our words and our actions really matter to God.

I am convinced that they do. And every apple tree grows from a single seed.

We each hold within us enormous, untapped potential to become far greater than we ever imagined. Even small changes, small deeds, can tip the balance sheet in the world to the good.

We don't dance on Rosh Hashanah because it is judgment day, but our celebration will be that much sweeter during Sukkot, also known as zman simchateinu, meaning, the "time of our happiness." We're happy because after this period of reflection and heartfelt prayer, we are confident that God accepts our repentance and will bless us with another year of life - with all of that untapped potential just waiting to burst forth. And of course on the holiday of Simchat Torah, right after Sukkot, dancing (and drinking) are de rigeur.

Jews have plenty to celebrate when it comes to the New Year. We just need to do it in the right order.

*Judy Gruen's latest book is The Skeptic and the Rabbi: Falling in Love with Faith, just published by She Writes Press.*



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# Why Get Involved in Interfaith Dialogue and Celebration?

**By Rabbi Katy Z. Allen**

I have a multi-faith family. I grew up as a Unitarian and converted to Judaism when my children were young, after marrying a Jewish man. My brothers and my cousins practice various denominations of Christianity. Some of my cousins are Native Americans, and one of them married a Buddhist. I live inherently in a multi-faith world.

This multi-faith world extends beyond my family. In the community in which I live, there are Reform and Conservative synagogues, and Protestant, Catholic, and Coptic Christian churches as well as a Unitarian church, a mosque, and an active Baha'i community. There is a Friends (Quaker) meeting house nearby, and I am on the board of a multi-faith organization that includes a Buddhist and a Christian scientist, as well as leaders of the faiths previously mentioned.

Our world and our communities are incredibly diverse. How much do we know about our neighbors' faith traditions, besides what we see in the media? Perhaps you, like I, live intimately among people

of other faiths. Perhaps you don't. Either way, it is important for us to learn more about those who hold different beliefs than ours. Doing so has many rewards and can bear much fruit.

I remember once using a Reform *siddur* (prayer book) to lead a *mincha* (afternoon) service at a multi-faith event. In addition to Jews, attendees included both Christians and Muslims, and after the service, the Muslims present spoke with astonishment and delight about the similarities between our prayers and theirs.

I helped organize an Iftar, the meal for breaking the fast during Ramadan, in an interfaith setting, and people of all faiths were invited. During the time when the Muslims in attendance prayed in their traditional fashion, all of us were invited to pray in whatever way worked for us personally. The spiritual energy in the room during those prayers was powerful, and we all felt it and shared it.

Together with a Protestant minister and a practicing Buddhist from Sri Lanka, I helped to teach a class on the topic of loving kindness. It was amazing to see how the teachings of the three religions complemented each other and overlapped in ways that were inspiring to all of us. Everyone learned a great deal.

Engaging in interfaith celebration and dialogue can open our hearts and minds to the richness of religious traditions in our country and our world. The learning we do can help us better understand and empathize with people who are different from us, and can give us a deeper sense of our own faith tradition. Learning about faiths different from our own can enrich our ability to engage in teshuvah - return to G-d, at this time of year, and all year long.

*Rabbi Katy Allen is the founder and rabbi of Ma'yan Tikvah - A Wellspring of Hope. She blogs at [www.mayantikvah.blogspot.com](http://www.mayantikvah.blogspot.com).*

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## Jackson to Jerusalem: Judaism All Over the World

By Joe Frank



When I was younger, I thought I knew what Judaism was. Born and raised here in Eastern Massachusetts, I thought that Judaism was going to services with lots of people. Judaism was staying out of school to go to High Holiday services and having make-up work to do the week after. Judaism was various movements, such as Reform, Conservative and Orthodox. Up until recently, I assumed this to be true for Judaism everywhere. However, on recent trips to Mississippi and Israel, I met Jews from around the world, and

found that Judaism is more multifaceted than I ever realized.

Last March, I ventured to the Mississippi Delta on an alternative spring break trip run by the Hillel at UMass Amherst. The goal of the journey was twofold: to make a small but positive impact on communities in Mississippi, and to learn about the culture of Mississippi, in particular, its Jewish culture. If you are like me, then you are surprised to learn that there even are Jews in the South. It's true, though. During the early 20th century, while many Jewish immigrants settled in New York, others made their way to Mississippi, and many opened up stores in the Delta.

The number of Jews in the region has fallen over the years as successive generations have moved to other parts of the country. By talking to Jews who live in the area, I realized that it can be difficult to observe Judaism in ways that I had often taken for granted growing up. There is little access to kosher food. The low number of Jews can make it difficult to maintain a Jewish community. For instance, a synagogue we visited in Greenwood had a total of 15 members. Not families -- members. To keep their synagogue afloat, they partnered with a local church. I have never heard of a similar partnership in Massachusetts.

Furthermore, common labels such as Reform, Conservative, or Orthodox were absent from the Jewish communities we met in Mississippi. There simply aren't enough Jews to have the luxury of separate groups. In some ways though, this strengthens the ties between the Jews that are there.

It would be a massive understatement to say that Israel contrasts greatly with the Mississippi Delta in terms of Jewish presence. After the school year ended, I lived in Haifa for two months as I participated in the Onward Israel program, a program that brings college students to Israel to work in summer internships.

Even though Haifa is not as religious as other parts of Israel due to its diverse population, many shops still close on Shabbat, the work week is Sunday through Thursday, and public transportation is limited on weekends. In a city like Jerusalem, Judaism is even more dominant, as much of the city shuts down to observe Shabbat. There is no public transportation in Jerusalem on Shabbat. Even though I only lived in Haifa, it felt comfortably odd to be in a country where everybody knew what Shabbat is, and where Passover warrants a week's vacation.

Obviously, Israel is a special place to be a Jew, but while in Israel I met Jews from countries like France, India, Venezuela, Brazil, and Ethiopia, and I found that Judaism varies both as a religion and a culture. In France, the movements of Judaism were not the same as the

# Jackson to Jerusalem: Judaism All Over the World

ones here. In Ethiopia, most of the Jewish population has lived there from biblical times, up until a few decades ago. They remained isolated from other Jews around the world, even in the biblical texts they upheld. Global Jewish populations use Jewish texts that arose after the Torah, such as the Talmud. But in Ethiopia, Judaism has always been practiced exactly as instructed in the Torah, without any later interpretations of the Five Books. It was only recently that most Ethiopian Jews finally made their way to Israel and joined Israeli society.

Judaism is found across the globe, and even with all of the differences that come from such separation and distance, there are commonalities that remain wherever there are Jewish communities. The Shabbat prayers I am used to in Amherst were the same as the ones I found in Greenville, Mississippi, and in Haifa. They even used some of the same melodies. While there are many differences between Jewish communities, there are many fundamental similarities, too, like Shabbat and other holidays, services, and a shared history.

At the time of these High Holidays, it is important to recognize that Judaism is not set in stone and that it is far more vast than many of us realize. If Judaism can vary so greatly between communities, one can only imagine how it varies between individuals. Since the diaspora, Judaism hasn't been practiced in one way and one way only, and it still is malleable to this day. Each culture, each community, and each individual observes Judaism in a unique way. This Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur offers time to reflect on how we each have observed Judaism over the past year and how we each want to observe Judaism in the upcoming year. As we have this moment to reflect, we can choose how we want Judaism to be a part of our lives in the upcoming year.

*Joe Frank, originally from Foxboro, is a junior at UMass Amherst majoring in Marketing and minoring in Psychology. He is a columnist for the Massachusetts Daily Collegian.*

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October 18, 8 p.m. at JCC Newton

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For tickets, visit [shacharhasonboston.eventbrite.com](http://shacharhasonboston.eventbrite.com)

November 12, 8:30 p.m. at JCC Newton

**Yeladim Sorgim 2** - Avi Greinich and Idan Alterman, the legendary duo who brought us "Yeladim Sorgim," one of the most successful entertainment shows in Israel, are back after ten years with a new show, with new skits and new characters, and no less importantly, with well-known and beloved characters from Neve Chamtzitzim and Platfus. The show is in Hebrew.

For tickets, please visit [sorgim2boston.eventbrite.com](http://sorgim2boston.eventbrite.com)

December 16, 8 p.m. at Berklee Performance Center

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# Israeli aid pours into Texas

By Abigail Klein Leichman (September 6, 2017)

Miriam Ballin's heart sank when she saw the water line - a calling card of Hurricane Harvey - ringing her former childhood home in Houston. But she couldn't linger. Urgent work awaited her as leader of the United Hatzalah Psychotrauma and Crisis Response Unit.



United Hatzalah volunteers

The voluntary six-person team of Israeli mental-health professionals landed in Texas last Thursday morning on behalf of the Israel Rescue Coalition. It is one of several Israeli humanitarian-aid groups sending personnel to Texas.

Ballin, a family therapist in Jerusalem, had sent her five kids off to their first day of school the morning before she left. Her husband, a physician, encouraged her to go.

"I hadn't been back to Houston for years," Texas native Ballin told ISRAEL21c yesterday from the Dallas Convention Center, where the Israelis are giving psychological first aid to evacuees and relief workers.

"Houston was already in recovery mode when we arrived, but the mayor's office said we were needed in the surrounding towns of Beaumont and Port Arthur. They were still saving people from rooftops and could not get supplies in and out.

"We headed out in the highest two SUVs we could get hold of, and joined the National Guard motorcade with other EMS volunteers in boats. On our left and right we saw 10 feet of water covering cars; we saw dogs on rooftops. It was really sad."

A US Army coordinator directed the Israelis to Jack Brooks Regional Airport in Port Arthur to help prepare evacuees for departure by air to a Red Cross shelter set up in the Dallas Convention Center. Over the next two days, a few hundred people were sent to the Israeli experts for psychological care.

*This article is reproduced from [www.israel21c.org](http://www.israel21c.org). To read the full article and more on Israel, please visit the website.*



## Private School Fair

AISNE will host the Private School Fair this fall. This fair brings together over 50 schools under one roof to support families who are considering an independent school for their child/children. The school fair provides an opportunity for families and students at all grade levels to meet with representatives from day schools in the Boston area and boarding schools throughout New England.

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**REGISTRATION** Families do not need to register to attend the school fair, but AISNE would appreciate learning of your interest in our fairs. Visit [aisne.org/family-resources/aisne-school-fairs](http://aisne.org/family-resources/aisne-school-fairs) to express interest in attending an AISNE school fair.

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Erev Rosh Hashanah Sept 20, Mincha 6:15 p.m.

Rosh Hashanah, Sept 21 and 22, Shacharit 9 a.m. We will be joining Kehilat Israel for the evening services of Rosh Hashanah.

Yom Kippur Sept 29, Kol Nidre 5:45 p.m.

Yom Kippur Sept 30, Shacharit 9 a.m., Mincha 4:50 p.m., Neilah 6:10 p.m. and Havdalah 7:08 p.m. For more information, visit [www.minyanshaleyim.org](http://www.minyanshaleyim.org) or email [HighHolidays@minyanshaleyim.org](mailto:HighHolidays@minyanshaleyim.org).

## Boston Jewish Film Festival

The 29th annual Boston Jewish Film Festival runs from Nov. 8-20 at venues across Greater Boston. We present (and celebrate!) the best contemporary independent films from around the world. Join us as we host filmmakers, musicians, comedians, and local experts to create a unique opportunity for discussion and live entertainment. For more information, visit [www.bjff.org](http://www.bjff.org) or call 617-244-9899.

## New Fall Programs for Seniors at Temple Emanuel, 385 Ward St., Newton Centre

Adapted Senior Yoga Program continues Oct. 18, 23 and 31 and Nov. 6, 20, 27, from 1-2:30 p.m. in Reisman Hall.

Seniors may try a smorgasbord of various types of exercises such as "Ageless Grace," Chair Tai Chi, Muscle Conditioning, and more.

Artful Afternoons - NEW! - Artful Afternoons was created to engage and stimulate seniors with creative and interactive programs. Thursdays starting October 26, 1 to 2:45 p.m.

Memory Cafe - Memory Cafe will continue to welcome persons with memory loss, as well as guests in our community to an array of stimulating programs. Oct. 19 will be the next program, "The Musical Memories of Your Life." On Nov. 9, join in with ElderPlay.

L'CHAIM - Welcome back the mainstay of the senior program at Temple Emanuel, on Tuesdays from 1-2:30 p.m. Programs run from September through June. For further information or to join L'CHAIM, please contact Tracy Schneider at 617-959-4928.

## Stumbling Stones: Remembrance and Social Sculpture

The German Consulate General is honored to bring this exhibit to Boston, the first time it has been shown outside of Germany. The exhibit details the Stolpersteine ("Stumbling Stones") Project first conceived by Cologne artist Gunter Demnig, which consists of square cobblestones with a brass layer, engraved with the name and spare details of the life and death of victims of the Holocaust. Designed to "trip memory," each stone is then embedded in the sidewalk outside of the individual's last known and voluntary residence.

The first Stumbling Stones were placed in Berlin more than 20 years ago and the project is still going strong with more than 6,000 stones in Berlin alone and more than 61,000 stones at over 900 different German locations and in 20 other European countries.

The exhibit will be on display from Sept. 14 through 28, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Mezzanine of Boston City Hall.

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