



## **An 11-Point Agenda for Renewal of American Jewry** **By Gidi Grinstein**

Growing worry and rising concern were the common thread among the sermons of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur of 5786 in synagogues across America. Two years after the so-called “10/7” and “10/8,” **we are living through an undeniable communal setback, which may lead to our decline but can also ignite a decade of renewal.** The quality of our community’s leadership will determine that outcome.

On July 21, 2025, Reut USA and the Rabbi Sacks Legacy co-led a conference on *American Jewry as the Great Diaspora of our Time*. We set our eyes on the year 2054, when our community will mark 400 years since the arrival of the first group of Jews to New Amsterdam. A twenty-nine-year horizon allows ample time for writing another glorious chapter in our communal history by inspiring and supporting a new generation of leaders; reinventing every institution of our community, sunsetting some and creating others; and by mobilizing, shifting and deploying many billions of dollars.

**Such a vision may sound fantastic to those who believe that our community is “too divided to do anything,”** that “our best days are behind us,” or that “the next generation is lost.” Some have even gone further to embrace a self-fulfilling defeatist approach, which they reaffirm by every piece of bad news, while discarding the existence of any silver linings.

**But many among us who believe that American Jewry does have an enduring collective mission to serve the continued and significant existence of the Jewish People,** which is alongside but also distinct from Israel’s; that **America’s exceptionalism is long-standing and therefore also the exceptionalism of American Jewry;** that **the current crises also create opportunities;** and that **our self-organizing ever-entrepreneurial community will generate the “right” initiatives.**

With such a forward-leaning mindset a promising future may be forged, and here is **an eleven-point agenda** for creating it:

- **A “national security” strategy:** American Jewry is not a “nation” per se, but rather a network of communities and institutions within American society. Nonetheless, it does need a “non-partisan” safety and security strategy for engaging government and civil society, while balancing defense, “hitting” and “hugging” to protect our institutions, contain antisemitism and to build essential alliances on local, state and federal levels.

- **American-Jewry Studies with a civilizational outlook:** American Jewry must better educate itself about its own remarkable legacy. Our community has made a distinct and significant contribution to America, which emanates from the civilizational contribution of Judaism to humanity. We need various forums and initiatives in academia, schools and think tanks to educate proud American Jews of all ages of their heritage.
- **Jewish day-schools must produce proud American Jews** based on a curriculum that focuses on the legacy of American Jewry. Yes, our schools need to teach kids about American history and government and about Zionism and the holocaust, and that is a lot. But a top priority should be also educating them about their own great community.
- **Affordable Jewish education:** Graduates of Jewish day schools are more likely to “live” Jewish life and contribute to our community through philanthropy, volunteerism or leadership. Therefore, Jewish education needs to be affordable. There are many initiatives in this space including increased government funding, NY Federation’s financial support for families who move their kids to Jewish schools and Rabbi Marc Schneier’s efforts to ensure free Jewish day-school education.
- **Engaging intermarried couples and supporting young families:** Some 60% of young American Jews self-define as “just Jewish” and a similar ratio marry non-Jews. Every such Jewish or interfaith family is a “double-or-nothing opportunity” for our community. Initiatives like Honeymoon Israel, 18Doors and PJ Library are at the frontier of this challenge.
- **Leadership pipeline:** A great diaspora requires its pipeline of professional, philanthropic and lay leaders who have a broad national and international outlook, as well as relevant knowledge and skills to lead with bold ideas. If every Jewish board today includes graduates of Wexner Heritage, Young Leadership Cabinet and Mandel (as examples), what are the programs that will generate the leaders of the coming decades?
- **Institutional renewal:** The superpower of American Jewry is its web of thousands of institutions, with their physical assets, lay leaders and professionals. Many of these institutions - including, for example, JFNA and federations, JCCA and JCCs, Hillel International and Hillels, JCPA and JCRCs - should publish their revised strategy for the coming 5-10 years. There is a clear advantage of scale for many organizations to do so simultaneously, and a communal urgency that it happens soon.
- **People-to-people connections with Israel:** President Herzog has been calling for stronger people-to-people ties among Israeli and American civil societies and between Israelis and (non-Jewish) Americans. American Jewry is at the frontier of

realizing this goal around challenges of common interest e.g. health, education, development and welfare.

- **Moderation of American society:** The polarization and radicalization of American politics are a grave threat to American Jewry. Hence, our collective strategic interest is “structural moderation” of the American political system and society on local, state and federal levels. This is a challenge that other communities share as well.
- **Distinct contribution to America:** American Jewry has always celebrated the significant contributions of its members to America. In the coming decades, we can do more and better than ever before primarily by helping millions of Americans at the bottom of the economic ladder in inner city and rural areas or by helping wounded veterans.
- **Make a standout participation in America’s 250th anniversary,** which is taking place this year, in 2026. We can do so in a way that contributes to the local, state and national celebrations, while proudly telling our story of contribution to America.

Evidently, this is a very ambitious agenda, but it is not a pie in the sky. Yes, it will require many contributions over years, but most of the ideas that are mentioned above are not new, some are already in place and all of them are within our power. **America’s 250th anniversary offers a tremendous opportunity for communal renewal, which is available to those who believe in its future. Let’s seize it.**

*Gidi Grinstein is the Founder and President of the Reut Group, which is a think-tank that focuses on long-term challenges facing the Jewish People and the State of Israel including American Jewry and its relations with Israel. Gidi publishes the [Flexigidity Podcast](#) and is the author of *Flexigidity: the Secret of Jewish Adaptability*. Reut USA also promotes *Le’Chaim America* and *Todah America* ahead of America’s 250th anniversary.*