

RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY

FALL 2015



From the executive vice president

by Julie Schonfeld

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much to the many colleagues who offered their condolences following the death of father, Arnold Schonfeld. I am still in the midst of shloshim as I write. My father was quite ill with Alzheimers but was blessed to die peacefully in his sleep in the Riverdale, NY apartment where my family lived for 48 years. My father was a cultural Jew, and not an observant Jew, a product of growing up on Brighton Beach in the 30's and 40's, the City College of NY, the US Navy, and his own place in the ever-changing landscape of New York City. It might be said that Jewish observance is meant to teach us, above all, the characteristics of duty and self-discipline. My father, for 84 years, was, quietly, the most dutiful and self-disciplined person I have ever known, but he was known, mostly, for his warm smile, his good jokes, his impeccable dress, and his gracious interest in other people.

From whichever movement or "post-movement" or organization we self-declared Jewish leaders may hail, if only a few of us could emulate only a fraction of my father's self-effacing demeanor his tireless work ethic, and his genuine interest in hearing the ideas of others, the Jewish future would be on exponentially firmer footing. My father had an unspoken and unswerving practice of seeing only the character of a person, never the superficial markings of identity. For some years, I thought my father was ahead of his time in his complete blindness to a person's race, gender, social background or sexual identity, his instinctive habits preceded the social catharses of the mid to late 20th century that would later transform many societies along the same lines. I have come to realize the commitment to judging people solely by their characters has no "time" but is a decision that people, and not their generation, make for themselves.

Some of you, I know, were curious as to why I sat shiva privately. As rabbis, we all share the peculiar paradoxes of public life. The days surrounding my father's passing were full of surprise and coincidence. While my dad suffered advanced dementia requiring round the clock companionship for the last five years of his life, his condition had been mostly unchanged during those years and his passing, sometime in the early morning hours of Monday, October 19th, was a surprise. I was to be in Israel for the World Zionist Congress, with a flight scheduled for the previous motzei Shabbat, but had become acutely ill on Thursday into Friday, making me unable to travel, which meant that I was unexpectedly

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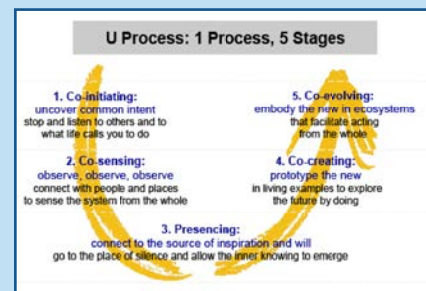


Listening and Learning: The Rabbinical Assembly's Previsioning Process

by Bill Gershon

Dear Hevre,

Since the end of the Hagim, the leadership team of the RA and the Vision Team comprised of a representative group of 50 of our colleagues has been very busy working with each other and Insyte Partners on reimagining and previsioning the Rabbinical Assembly. Our strategic planning work is guided by our consultants at Insyte Partners (www.insytepartners.com) with a framework for profound societal change developed at MIT called "Theory U" or "Presencing" (www.presencing.net). One fundamental question Theory U responds to is, "How can we stop reenacting patterns of the past and learn from a future that wants to emerge?" The process comprises five stages which guides our work:



- On the "left side of the U" we confine our work to "sensing" or seeing our own system with fresh eyes. Typically decisions are not made here. **This is where the vision team is right now!**
- At the "bottom of the U" we make choices about the heart of our strategic plan. The epicomic questions at the bottom of the U are "Who am I? What is my work?"
- our shared intent to action, aligning head, heart and hands and widening the circle of engagement.

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Book News!

Important Book News!

• *Siddur Lev Shalem for Shabbat & Festivals* is available for sale on the RA website for a 40% discount—\$29.40 plus shipping. The large print pulpit edition is available for \$72 plus shipping and can be added to an order at the same time shipping costs are applied before books are distributed. Publication is now scheduled for early 2016!

• *Siddur Lev Shalem* has the same dimensions as *Mahzor Lev Shalem* and weighs only one ounce more than the mahzor. It will be shipped 16 books to each double walled carton for a total of 34 pounds per carton.

• All Rabbinical Assembly publications are now available for sale through the Rabbinical Assembly Online Book Store on the RA website. Distribution of all RA publications is now through G & H Soho, the firm that has been providing excellent customer service for *Etz Hayim* sales over the past several years. The RA is grateful to United Synagogue for the many years of collaboration on the publication and sales of the essential texts of the Conservative movement. USCJ recently entered into a partnership with Rowman & Littlefield, a firm that is now handling sales and distribution of a variety of other books and materials. To purchase RA publications go to:

rabbinicalassembly.org/publications.



You are cordially invited to Spend a Day with *Siddur Lev Shalem*!

Join us for an Historic Yom Iyyun for Cantors & Rabbis

Who: CA and RA Members

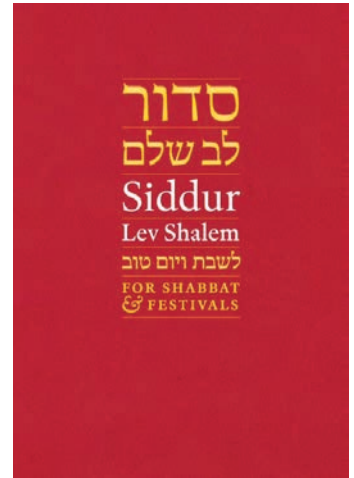
Where: New York City (most likely at JTS in spite of demolition!)

When: Tuesday, April 5th, 9:30 am-3:30 pm (coffee and muffins at 9 am!)

What: An opportunity to explore this new siddur together, share ideas about how it can affect the prayer experience, talk about prayer in our movement and build community among rabbis and hazzanim.

Be sure to put this date in your calendar - print or electronic! Our keynoter will be **Rabbi Ed Feld**, senior editor of *Siddur Lev Shalem for Shabbat and Festivals*. Much more to come in future emails.

The Yom Iyyun is co-sponsored by the Rabbinical Assembly, the Cantors Assembly and the JTS Block/Kolker Center for Spiritual Arts. Committee members include Hazzan Joanna Dulkan; Rabbi Amy Wallk Katz; Hazzan David Lipp; Rabbi Jan Uhrbach; Hazzan Stephen Stein and Rabbi Carol Levithan (ex officio).



Here's What's Happening at the RA and Beyond!

Strategic Planning Meeting
November 3-4

CJLS Meeting November 10-11

Joint Learning with National Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC)
December 1-2

Hanukkah (1st candle is December 6)
December 7-14

Rav Hamakshir December 13-17

Strategic Planning Meeting
January 5-6

RARRA Kallah January 18-24

Strategic Planning Meeting February 3

Interview Week February 8-11

AIPAC Policy Conference March 20-22

Purim (Megilah is read on the 23rd)
March 24

Rabbis in Small Congregations Conference March 28-30

Siddur Lev Shalem: Yom Iyyun for Rabbis & Cantors April 5

CJLS Meeting April 5-6

Strategic Planning Meeting
April 12-13

Pesah (1st seder is Thursday, April 21)
April 22-29

AJU Graduation May 15

Ziegler Ordination May 16

JTS Commencement & Ordination
May 19

RA Convention (New York City)
May 22-25

Interim Rabbi Seminar June 8

RA newsletter

Rabbi Carol Levithan, *editor*

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Rabbi Harold J. Kravitz, *secretary*

Rabbi Julie Schonfeld,
executive vice president
Rabbi Joel H. Meyers,
executive vice president emeritus

Coming in 2016 From the RA: Pirkei Avot

The Rabbinical Assembly is pleased to announce the forthcoming publication of a stand-alone volume of *Pirkei Avot* to be underwritten by the Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation as a memorial to our late colleague, Rabbi Irwin Groner, ז"ל.

Edited by Rabbi Martin S. Cohen, who most recently served the Assembly as the senior editor of the landmark volume, *The Observant Life*, the book will feature a fresh translation of Tractate Avot by Rabbi Cohen, as well as new, innovative, and inspiring commentaries by Rabbi Tamar Elad-Appelbaum of Jerusalem and Rabbi Gordon Tucker of White Plains, New York. Rabbi Elad-Appelbaum's work, originally composed in Hebrew, will appear in a translation prepared specifically for this volume by Rabbi Peretz Rodman, also of Jerusalem.

This *Pirkei Avot* volume will be focused specifically on offering readers a way to grow spiritually and intellectually through the informed contemplation of one of our most revered classical texts. Of particular interest will be the way that the commentators specifically do *not* shy away from the explication of passages that appear to be at odds with modern sensibilities. Indeed, just the opposite is the case: the principle that underlies both commentaries is the supposition that ancient works can be encountered on their own terms and in a frank, open way that neither demeans the intellectual integrity of the modern reader nor deforms the simple meaning of the work's original formulators.

Hebrew Text from the 15th Century

The Hebrew text presented in the volume will be modeled on the text that appeared in the first printed edition of *Pirkei Avot*, published by Joshua Solomon Soncino in Italy in 1484. A copy of this rare volume, one of the only 175 or so Hebrew books published in the fifteenth century, is owned by the JTS Library and was made available to the Rabbinical Assembly specifically to facilitate this edition of *Pirkei Avot*. The English translation, akin to the editor's 2004 translation of the Psalms brought out by the Rabbinical Assembly under the Aviv Press imprint, is colloquial and accurate.

This *Pirkei Avot* volume will easily find its way into Adult Education



Mishnah text, Italian, late 11th - mid 12th century.

classes as well as Hebrew High School and day school curricula, and will be accessible to readers unfamiliar with the ancient Jewish world. But seasoned students of the Mishnah will also find much to enjoy in the commentators' sharp, clever insights and worthy contextualization of the material under consideration. A study guide will be published electronically to assist teachers and rabbis in using the volume most effectively in the classroom and study hall setting.

Although the mishnaic tractate Avot only has five chapters, a sixth chapter called the "Chapter of Rabbi Meir" is regularly appended to the work so as to provide material for study on the sixth Shabbat between Pesach and Shavuot, the traditional time of year for reviewing Tractate Avot. To round out the volume, therefore, this edition of *Pirkei Avot* will feature a devotional commentary on that sixth chapter as well, one composed specifically for this volume by its editor.



What's Happening at the Rabbinical Assembly?

RA Convention Returns to JTS

For the second time in recent history, the RA will hold its annual convention at JTS, May 22-25, 2016. As many of you know, JTS will be undergoing a significant building transformation so this will be a chance for you to say goodbye to the library building in which many of you studied and also to learn about the new plans for JTS.

Chairing the Convention this year is Jan Kaufman who staffed so many conventions during her years at the RA. Members who are working on the committee include: Rachel Ain, Julia Andelman, Jeremy Kalmanofsky, Barry Katz, David-Seth Kirschner, Craig Scheff, Larry Sebert, Gerry Skolnik, David Wise and (exofficio) Bill Gershon, Phil Scheim, Julie Schonfeld and Ashira Konigsburg. On board as the RA staff liaison is Carol Levithan, who has assumed a number of Jan's roles at the RA, including working on the convention. You can reach Carol at 212-280-6056 or at clevithan@rabbinicalassembly.org and you can reach Jan at 2127490142, jancaryl@gmail.com with any questions or comments.

The Convention will provide an opportunity for members to learn about – and participate in – the process of *Re-Imagining Our RA* that has been underway since August, under the guidance of Liz Alperin Solms and Marie McCormick of Insyte Partners. This strategic planning effort is designed to “unify us as a community of rabbis around shared purpose and vision for the RA . . .” The committee will be helping plan sessions to engage members in this critical effort and to discuss some of the pressing issues that confront us as rabbis at a time of such rapid change.

Since JTS will be under construction, we will hold several programs off-site in what we hope will be uniquely New York venues. Those who attended the RA Convention at JTS in 2010 will recall the excellent limud opportunities with JTS faculty which will be on the agenda again this year along with a chance to catch up with your colleagues, meet new rabbis and engage with prominent speakers. Looking forward to seeing all of you in May.

Jan Kaufman, Convention Chair

Committee on Jewish Law and Standards

At its fall meeting on November 10th and 11th, the CJLS approved two papers. The first was Rabbi Danny Nevins' paper —“Halakhic Perspectives on Genetically Modified Organisms”—and the other was Rabbi Loel Weiss' on the kashrut of dishwashers. The Committee began discussion on two other papers, both of which argue for the permissibility of eating kitniyot on Passover: one by Rabbi David Golinkin and the second by Rabbis Amy Levin and Avram Reisner. The authors are responding to comments with the hope that they

will be able to present a final draft to the CJLS before Passover. Discussion began on papers by Rabbis David Booth, Ashira Konigsburg, and Baruch Frydman-Kohl discussing tzni'ut; the ritual of post-mortem circumcision by Rabbi Frydman-Kohl; and the status of non-Jews in Jewish law by Rabbi Reuven Hammer. The Committee also discussed papers by Rabbi Elie Spitz about the use of E-readers on Shabbat and by Rabbi Jay Stein about the ethics surrounding physician strikes.

Social Justice Commission

I would like to welcome our colleague, Lee Paskind, as a Consultant to the Social Justice Commission. Lee has served on the Social Justice Commission for many years and brings with him a wealth of experience. I am looking forward to working with Lee in his new position. At the same time, I would like to thank our colleague, Carol Levithan, who has served as the RA staff member to the Social Justice Commission for the past two years. It has been a pleasure working with Carol who will continue to work in the RA Office on many other projects.

The Social Justice Commission has been concentrating efforts in these areas:

- **Food Justice:** We had a successful Fair Trade Shabbat on May 8th and 9th and we hope to expand our efforts in other areas such as offering greater guidance in prioritizing different criteria in ethical food shopping.
- **Racial Justice:** After a successful conference call in March, we are looking to involve more RA colleagues in this critically important issue.
- **Human Trafficking:** The Commission will be working on this extensively during the upcoming year. We hope to find out what programs our colleagues are engaging in on this issue and to then determine how the RA can help spread the word as to how we can help combat this problem that is going on throughout the world.
- **Gun Violence:** We organized a conference call where we heard from two colleagues who have been doing extensive work on this issue as well as a representative from Faiths United Against Gun Violence. We encourage you to sign a resolution that you endorse handgun purchasing licensing everywhere in America to prevent gun violence and save lives. The resolution can be found at www.taleoftwostates.com. Gun violence continues to plague our country and the Commission will look to expand its outreach in this area this year.
- **Voting Rights Amendment Act:** We organized a Voting Rights Shabbat on August 7th and 8th where we asked our colleagues to address this issue and to encourage

our elected representatives to make the passage of this act a priority this year. As new developments on this topic emerge, the Social Justice Commission is prepared to do what it can to move this issue forward.

- **African Asylum Seekers in Israel:** This is the newest issue that the Commission is tackling. We hope through educational initiatives to share with our colleagues why we cannot be silent on this matter and why we have a responsibility to do what we can to help these people in Israel.
- **Environment:** This is an area that is constantly in the news and one in which our tradition takes a deep interest. We will be looking to make suggestions as to how each of us can have an impact on our surroundings.

We continue to sign on to letters drafted by a variety of organizations that reflect our values and positions on certain issues. Our work is guided by our mission which is to evolve a vision of social justice through the lens of Conservative Judaism in order to serve as a model for the Conservative Movement.

Rabbi Jay M. Kornsgold, Chair, Social Justice Commission

Commission for a Vital Connected Rabbinate: An Update

Since its creation two years ago by the RA leadership, this Commission, chaired by Stewart Vogel and coordinated by Bill Lebeau, has made significant progress. The goal of the Commission has been to bring RA colleagues closer to one another in pursuit of our shared mission of providing greater personal and professional support for members and encouraging more members to become actively involved in the work of the Assembly.

Two rounds of processing groups, led by Rabbi Mychal Springer have brought colleagues together virtually in conversation and been extremely well reviewed. The professional education committee of the Commission designed the very successful "Leading through Communications" conference held at the Pearlstone Conference Center this past June. (More about that in the article on Rabbis Jeffrey Abraham and Daniel Dorsch on page 8.) The Committee to improve outreach to rabbinical students at the Ziegler School and JTS has advanced on both coasts through face-to-face meetings between students and RA leaders. Another committee of the Commission has selected ten experienced colleagues to serve as rabbinic guides who are prepared to mentor colleagues seeking assistance. The work of this committee to create new methods of helping colleagues meet personal and professional challenges is still underway.

A fifth Commission committee has devoted its efforts to restructuring the regional divisions of the RA. Until recently, RA colleagues in the United States and Canada were organized in 19 regions but since these regions were sometimes spread over several states, it was difficult to bring colleagues together in face to face meetings. Even some regions including only colleagues within the same state were just too large for colleagues to travel to many meetings. Thanks to the efforts of Commission members in consultation with the RA leadership, these 19 very large regions have been restructured into 53 regions/clusters in which colleagues, for the most part, live within two hours or so from one other. Given the size of this country, there are a significant number of colleagues who live at a distance of more than two hours from the nearest RA member. Two "Isolated" clusters have been created for these colleagues with the intention that these clusters will meet electronically for discussion of general issues as well as those challenges unique to their geographical situation.

This structural change was endorsed in November 2014 by the 19 regional presidents. Presently, almost all of the 53 rabbinic cohorts have either held or scheduled a first meeting. New colleagues are being welcomed into their new RA region/cluster and each of the RA subdivisions is preparing to



Photograph by Yossi Hoffman.

RA Annual Meeting, April 2015. Honoring the first women to enter JTS Rabbinical School in Fall 1984 and the first to join the Rabbinical Assembly.

Seated (left to right): Rabbis Beverly Magidson, Jodie Futornick, Julie Gordon, Amy Eilberg, Rhonda Nebel, Shelley Knaiz, Carolyn Braun, Pamela Liebe Hoffman

Standing (left to right): Rabbis Jan Caryl Kaufman, Julie Schonfeld (RA Executive Vice President), Marion Shulevitz, Elana Kanter, Debra Cantor, Nina Bieber Feinstein, Naomi Levy, Susan Grossman, Lori Forman-Jacobi, Debra Orenstein, Nina Beth Cardin, Avis Miller, William Gershon (RA President)

choose or reaffirm a name for their region/cluster and designate the leadership who will move the new groups forward. Colleagues should find it much easier to be in touch for study, *hizuk* and discussion of issues of common concern. *Panim el panim* is a powerful concept in our tradition and a strategy that brings colleagues with so much in common closer together will benefit each of us and further the goal of the RA: to advance our unique approach to promoting Jewish tradition and community in a rapidly changing world.

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Rabbinical Assembly Retired Rabbis

Welcome Aboard Celebrity Silhouette!

Departing on January 17, all RA members are invited to join the almost 60 colleagues already registered for the annual RARRA Kinus aboard the glorious Celebrity Silhouette. Our scholar for the week will be the outstanding E. Bill Ivry Professor of Talmud and Rabbinic Culture at JTS and RA colleague, Dr. Judith Hauptman who will deliver four lectures on the topics: *The Moral Obligation to Speak Out in the Face of Wrongdoing; *How the Talmud's Very Short Legal Anecdotes Influenced the Development of Halakhah; *Women and Men in Marriage and *Women and Judaism, From the Torah to the Talmud to Today. A complete description of Professor Hauptman's topics is available on the RA website.

Dr. Hauptman has the distinction of being the first woman to receive a PhD in Talmud and is the author of *Development of the Talmudic Sugya: Relationship Between Tannaitic and Amoraic Sources*; *Rereading the Rabbis: A Woman's Voice*; and

Rereading the Mishnah: A New Approach to Ancient Jewish Texts (Mohr Siebeck, 2005), that examines the relationship of the Mishnah and Tosefta.

The beautiful and recently updated Celebrity-Silhouette departs from Ft. Lauderdale with ports of call in San Juan, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts and St. Maarten, returning to Ft. Lauderdale on January 24. You can see the details of the ship here:

<http://www.celebritycruises.com/ships/celebrity-silhouette>.

To register for the kinus, contact Pedro Oliveira (pedro@jbcruises.com) at JB Cruises, 800-329-7447 and for more information contact Lester Hering, lhering18@bellsouth.net, 561-498-8444 or Marvin Bash, 703 528-2274. We look forward to fine fellowship, great Torah and beautiful scenery. You don't have to be retired to join us!

The View from Retirement

Rabbi Carl Wolkin

Retired on July 1, 2015, after 35 years as the rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom, Northbrook, Illinois. He reports: "Since then, Judy and I have been exploring the city of Chicago for the first time; I never found time before to do things like take the Chicago Architectural Boat Tour, enjoy theatre (we have two different subscriptions for the coming year), enjoy the Art Institute with a two year membership. I am a Board Member of our local federation (JUF) and have taken on a few more committee obligations (as well as attending the GA in DC) and also become a member of the Board of CJE-Senior Life. In the spring I will be teaching a course for Melton as well as for Beth Shalom. Travel is in the future but not yet planned. With all of that there is still lots of time to enjoy much more time together and for our children. It was totally my decision to retire after a total of 43 years in the congregational rabbinate (first 8 years as an assistant to Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, z"l in Great Neck). It was the right time to retire. I am most proud of spending my entire career as a senior rabbi in the same wonderful synagogue. Judy and I feel truly feel truly blessed, and now we can sit with each other at services."

Rabbi Ron Isaacs

I served Temple Sholom for 40 years and retired at the end of June, 2015. I have found retirement thus far to be rejuvenating and exhilarating, and I am now doing all the things that I most

enjoy and give me personal gratification. I am working as a musical therapist for a Jewish hospice, I am a part time rabbi/cantori serving Beth Judah Temple in Wildwood New Jersey, and I will be performing (singing and playing guitar) at various J.C.C.'s and synagogues during Jewish Book month with a congregant/ventriloquist based on our newest children's book Farmer Kobi's Hanukkah Match. I am also teaching several Adult Ed classes and am hoping to teach a course on the History of the Jewish Experience at a local community college.

Rabbi Marvin Bash

I associated myself with RARRA since my retirement from the pulpit in 2001. I joined the group and made new friends among our colleagues, engaging and studying with them at our kinusim and enjoying their company in leisure activities. It has been an enriching and a joyful time. As RARRA engages in more various ventures, I hope our group will grow and help us spread the warmth of collegiality, fellowship and friendship ever further.

President RARRA 2012/14-15

Rabbi Richard Hammerman

Though I had planned to retire from Congregation B'nai Israel, Toms River after 30 years, I ended up spending an additional year until 2005. I was under 60-years old. I never wanted to ac-

Rabbinical Assembly Retired Rabbis (Cont'd)

cept a "life-time" contract which, to me, seemed too similar to a "life-sentence!" I didn't want to have my entire professional lifetime associated as a rabbi of one particular synagogue in a lovely area of New Jersey, a bit distant from larger, more active Jewish communities of like-minded Conservative Jews. After my first 15-years I agreed to remain for another 15-years and felt that, this way, "there was light at the end of the tunnel." I was confident that there would be other Jewish professional possibilities for me to attempt

Since retiring from the congregation, I worked for 1 ½ years for Masorti Olami as Vice President for North America, Executive Director for 5 years of Agudath Israel in Caldwell, NJ, the congregation we joined after retirement. Most recently, I have been involved in encouraging colleagues to do what I most enjoy today, and enjoyed for years as a congregational rabbi: Leading trips to Israel and places of Masorti involvement world-wide. Through ITC, I have encouraged a number of colleagues to travel with their congregations. They have come back with very positive experiences. I also do some teaching, rabbinic mentoring, volunteer work and spend time with the family.

I'm most proud that my experience in the congregation life must have been seen by those who were closest to it as a positive one, since two of my three children went on to rabbinical school and a third has been involved in Jewish education professionally. I guess they saw something fulfilling and joyous, as I did.

Rabbi Gerald I. Zeliger

After 45 years as rabbi of Cong Neve Shalom in Metuchen NJ, which included two extensions beyond my original retirement date, the congregation and I decided that it was finally time to retire on September 1, 2015. They honored my tenure with a year-Long series of events called "Zelibration." Among my accomplishments (and some failures), are four themes:

An early - mid 1970s - and relatively pacific change to egalitarianism ; a well attended adult education program with both substantive classes and prominent lecturers; participatory religious services in which about 200 laity of all ages are baalei keriah and tefilah; a successful merging with two smaller congregations. Currently I continue as an op writer in various Jewish and secular Jewish newspapers; have been engaged as teacher of adult classes by several of our colleagues, guest lecturer at Union Theological Seminary and enjoy being an intellectual 'consumer' for example, studying Yiddish at YIVO and studying the history of NYC. My archives will reside in the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati.

Rabbi Stephen E. Steindel

I appreciate the opportunity to reflect on my retired rabbi status, one I had truly not given much thought to in advance during my active pulpit career. Just as I needed "pressure" well into my career to take a weekly day off, I had no firm plans to right, read or garden in my dotage. But the arrival of our two oldest daughters in Boston, beginning their families at almost the same time, was enough encouragement first for Lisa and then for me to fore-go our establishment status after nearly a quarter century at Beth Shalom in Pittsburgh and join them in Brookline, Massachusetts. For four years there we were active riders of the Green Line, and regulars at Cong. Kehillath Israel, but mostly busy and hands-on grandparents as the number of little bodies grew from two to seven in a mere four years (twins helps). Boston is a wonderful city with lots to offer, but it wasn't ours. We missed being at the heart of the Jewish community and while there was some pleasure in being an "unknown quantity," the patina of anonymity wore off for both of us.

When our daughter Shiri (Mrs. Joshua) Friedman introduced the idea of her returning to Pittsburgh and raising her children here in the same Day School she had attended, we could understand her priorities. When she asked if we would consider re-locating at about the same easy twenty minute walk we had enjoyed in Boston, we were delighted to concur and find a new home in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood we all knew so well. While that would leave Sara (Mrs. Dr. Andrew Dauber) still in Massachusetts, we promised to visit as close to once a month as possible. When they moved to Cincinnati, our commute from Pittsburgh became a simple four and one half hour drive, which we have even done round-trip in one day!

All this time our youngest grandchild has been in Minneapolis (Sivya and Keith Leventhal) and our son Avi pursuing his rock music career in Chicago. Our travel is split between family trips and obligations and the ocean cruising that Lisa and I have come to enjoy as restful, educational and restorative. The introduction last year of the RARRA Kallah on the Seas was a wonderful experience with an older generation of retired colleagues. In recent months I appreciated the opportunity to help bring word of this new programmatic offering to friends in my own age group, and can only hope that the RA will help us all remain in touch as we entertain the end of our active rabbinates and re-position for new challenges in the years we are granted.

More reflections from our colleagues who have retired will be forthcoming in future newsletters!

How an RA Conference Helped a Colleague Communicate

Our colleague Jeffrey Abraham (JTS, '11) signed up for the RA's first "Leading Through Communications" conference, thanks to the recruitment efforts of Bill Lebeau, one of the "brains" behind it. While he's always "looking to do better on sermons and with social media", Jeffrey hadn't thought about communication with the media—one of the topics for the conference—when he registered. But it was just those skills he needed when Congregation Agudas Achim, the San Antonio shul he has served for less than two years, was the target of anti-Semitic vandalism on August 17. Suddenly Jeffrey was appearing live on the local morning TV shows and being pursued for interviews by the local press. Communication with the media became an essential skill.

Faced with this unexpected challenge, Jeffrey relied on what he had learned from the Broden Communications team: stay on point, stay on message, be careful of what you do and don't say. The goal of Dan Broden, team leader, was "to work with us on the big picture of staying on point," by presenting a scenario and playing the role of a media person conducting an interview. Colleagues were instructed to come up with—and stick to—the major points they wanted to make in the interview. They were cautioned that since the media asks leading questions, "don't answer by repeating the question. Jeffrey found it a "good learning experience" watching colleagues "trying to stay on point" and thought if he had to use this experience it would most likely be on the subject of Israel.

But then the first anti-Semitic incident in San Antonio since 1985 occurred in the Modern Orthodox community, followed five days later by vandalism during the night at Agudas Achim. Synagogue property was stolen from a storage shed and the shed was covered with anti-Semitic graffiti. These attacks were a source of grave concern in the community and a subject of great interest for the local media. Knowing that live appearances on the morning shows would leave no room for error, Jeffrey came up with

the "top five things" he wanted to say, "completely led the interviews" and got his message across. While the media wanted to focus on how horrible the vandalism was and the fear people must be experiencing, Jeffrey had a different focus.

While acknowledging that these crimes were terrible, Jeffrey wanted "to focus on the need to move forward" and the need to educate everyone in the community "so there's less ignorance and more tolerance." He wanted to build on the history of unity



among the religious groups in San Antonio, the fourth fastest growing American city, whose mayor is an African American woman. The unity and solidarity in this diverse city became one of the major points Jeffrey emphasized in interviews and in his articles for the local papers. It was underscored by a lunch with Catholic and Hispanic groups that Federation organized, by meetings with Baptists and Muslims and in Jeffrey's preaching from his pulpit about the need to move forward, taking the positives away from this experience. Jeffrey is confident that he has accomplished his goal given the messages of praise he has received from members of the community. He credits the experience at the RA's Communication Conference with the success of his communications strategy and is delighted to report that his congregation has grown by more than 70 families in the time he has been in San Antonio!

An added note from Rabbi Dan Dorsch

"Attending this wonderful conference gave me a safe and supportive space among colleagues to take risks and experiment with developing a personal public speaking style. As a result of the training, I feel increasingly more natural when I speak and more comfortable

going "off-notes" from the pulpit. The Torah we studied together relating to themes of the Yamim Noraim was a bonus that aided in my preparation this year. The conference was just the jolt that I needed to take my speaking to the next level during the Yamim Noraim."

Rabbinic Education in Germany — Wissenschaft Returns to Its Origins



The Zacharias Frankel College in Berlin was founded in 2013 in affiliation with the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies. It is a sister-arm of the Abraham Geiger College and both schools benefit from an extraordinary association with the University of Potsdam just outside Berlin. Rabbinical students enroll in the Judaica program at Potsdam towards

a masters or doctoral degree and this academic work is coordinated with the rabbinical school. Students can decide if they want to pursue CCAR membership (through Geiger) or RA membership (through Frankel).

A successful applicant to the Frankel College must satisfy the religious and academic requirements that are coordinated with the Ziegler School. Frankel students must then fulfill the curricular requirements, taking many of the professional rabbinical courses together with Geiger students and some separately. The program, generously funded mostly from German government sources, includes a unique combination of academic university training, professional training for the broader non-Orthodox rabbinate with students from all over Europe, and special preparation for the RA provided through the Ziegler School's oversight.

The Frankel College is an exciting development, not only because of its potential to train an indigenous European RA rabbinate, but also because of its historical significance in achieving, together with the Geiger College, a dream that could not be realized in its time. The founders of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in 19th century

Germany imagined a world where Judaica would be accepted as a strong branch of humanities. While they were not able to achieve that goal, they sowed its seeds and instead founded seminaries where Judaica could be taught. Today Jewish studies has become that strong branch, taught in the world's leading universities. What is happening today in Germany where students for the ministry receive their academic training at university brings the odyssey full circle. In 2013 the University of Potsdam, in a formal ceremony just yards away from the palace of the last Kaiser, declared that it would offer training towards the rabbinate in collaboration with the Geiger and Frankel Colleges. As I sat at that ceremony, I was most moved by the words of the head of the German Lutheran Church, remarking how important this development is as we approach the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Only now, she said, do we have true acceptance of difference.

We owe many thanks to Walter Homolka, the rector of the Geiger College, for personally seeing all the pieces in this complicated puzzle come together to make the dream a reality; to our colleague Brad Artson for bringing the Ziegler School into Europe and creating Frankel as an authentically Conservative/Masorti program; and to our colleague Gesa Ederberg for creating and maintaining a Masorti presence in Berlin, a fertile ground for the Frankel College and for her essential support and engagement. Thanks to these good colleagues, our approach to Judaism is flourishing in new/old places.

Rabbi David J. Fine

Interfaith Efforts in Berlin: Begin with the Children

At a time of such dreadful events in Europe, it is heartening to hear from our colleague, Gesa Ederberg, rabbi of the Masorti congregation at the Oranienburgerstrasse Synagogue in Berlin who writes about the interfaith nursery school being created in Berlin. The project is to house three independent nursery schools under one roof - Jewish, Christian and Muslim. Each school will have its own space and the three will share a common space where parents and children will meet face to face and shape their daily lives in neighborly friendship, enabling them to experience the religious and cultural diversity of Berlin as an enrichment of their daily lives. The partners are: the Protestant Association of Nursery Schools in Central and Northern Berlin that runs 26 child care centers in Berlin; the German speaking Muslim Circle in Berlin, an organization that strengthens the German and Muslim identity of children and their families through religious and cultural education; and Masorti Germany whose nursery schools are bilingual, with German and Hebrew or English. Masorti serves currently as the liaison to friends and supporters in the United States and Gesa Ederberg serves as its Rabbinic Advisor)

Each nursery school will continue to schedule the school year in accordance with its own religious calendar, extending hospitality to the other two schools for holiday celebrations whenever possible.

The goals of this collaboration include:

- To create a safe space where Jewish, Christian and Muslim families can meet and share their many different cultures and countries of origin, beginning with early childhood education.
- To experience religious and cultural diversity as enriching.
- To strengthen children and their families in developing their religious and cultural identities.
- To teach religious values in the context of interreligious dialogue.
- To take part in shaping the future of our cosmopolitan city
- To enable children to grow up in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect

Continued on page 15

The Masorti Foundation: A Conservative Movement Success Story



In spite of the complications of being a non-Orthodox Israeli movement, Masorti Israel is growing and gaining ground in many areas. There are 74 Masorti kehillot and 19 pulpit rabbis serving some of these communities, only nine of them full time. Laura Lewis, Executive Director of the Masorti Foundation, describes the “gathering steam and momentum” of this uniquely organic, indigenous movement that has taken root in Israeli soil. She reports great interest all over the country in building Masorti communities from the ground up with fledgling kehillot meeting in all kinds of settings including kibbutzim, air raid shelters and caravans. Revuta, a new program of the Foundation has been established to provide congregational rabbis with various tools for building communities, opportunities for learning and coaching in order to build capacity for community leadership.

Masorti Israel was recently in the news because the Mayor of Rehovot cancelled the bnei mitzvah service for severely autistic children with only 48 hours notice only because it was to take place in a Masorti synagogue. However, the ongoing success story is the increasing number of Israelis joining Masorti and the NOAM youth movement with over 2,000 kids (ages 10-18) in 20 chapters throughout Israel, now large enough to receive at least minimal support from the Israeli government. Similar to USY in the States, NOAM sponsors twice-weekly activities at local branches, national events throughout the year, Shabbatonim, and seminars focusing on Jewish identity, Zionism, Jewish education and social action projects. Members are encouraged to assume leadership positions as NOAM counselors for younger grades and many go on to form NOAM units in the army and become active Masorti leaders in their kehillot and greater communities. A critically important aspect of the NOAM program is respect for all, based on the Jewish teaching that we are all made b'tzelem elokim. The Masorti Movement is a founding member of Tag Meir, a word play on Tag Machir (Price Tag), an organization whose supporters have perpetrated acts of violence against Arabs. This summer—prior to the appalling arson attacks—NOAM members were already responding to acts of violence on the Jerusalem Light Rail — riding the train, speaking with riders in Arabic, and wearing shirts that said in both Hebrew and Arabic, “Y'allah, let's speak Arabic in Jerusalem.”

Kids Being Counselors for Kids

This year over 750 young people attended Camp Ramah-NOAM, a two-week sleep-away camp and the only traditionally Jewish, egalitarian camp of its kind in Israel. Children with disabilities are served by Adraba, the Shirley Lowey Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, a partner of Masorti Israel and a driving force behind providing an array of Jewish empowerment and inclusion opportunities for 4,000 children over the past 20 years. A camping experience for these children with disabilities is integrated into Camp Ramah-NOAM where all typical children are encouraged to help their peers with disabilities.

Ongoing projects of Masorti Israel include establishing Jewish Pluralism Watch (Al Mishmar haKnesset), a watchdog institute which sends interns to the Knesset to monitor and record the positions of MK's on critical issues of religious pluralism, all of which is uploaded to the MK's page daily on JPW's website. Masorti is an active leader in Israel's Civil Marriage Coalition and the Foundation represents our interests here in the States through the umbrella organization, Jewish



Religious Equality Coalition. Supported by the Masorti Foundation with its new chair, colleague Rabbi Robert Slosberg and new chair of the Rabbinic Cabinet, Rabbi Jay Kornsgold, the work of Masorti Israel relies on many of our colleagues including most especially attorney, Yizhar Hess, Executive Director of the Masorti Movement in Israel and Rabbi Andy Sacks, RA Executive Director in Israel. Kol haKavod l'hem!

Ha MaKom Y'nachem **המקום ינחם**

(as of November 26, 2015)

Perla Blima Lipszyc Brandriss, widow of Rabbi Joseph Brandriss, ז"ל.

Zipporah Jacobs, widow of Rabbi David J. Jacobs ז"ל.

Dorothy Spevack, widow of Rabbi Joseph J. Spevack ז"ל.

Cynthia Spritzer, widow of Rabbi Richard W. Winograd ז"ל & Rabbi David J. Spritzer ז"ל.

Steven Morgen on the death of his father Sidney Morgen, ז"ל.

Mark Biller on the death of his mother, Geraldine Biller, ז"ל.

Daniel Gordis and David Gordis on the death of their father and brother, Levi Menachem Gordis, ז"ל.

Susi Frydman Levin (Rabbi Mordechai Levin) of the death of her mother Eva Frydman, ז"ל.

Richard Eisenberg on the death of his sister Susan Eisenberg, ז"ל.

Lisa Gelber on the death of her father Jules Gelber, ז"ל.

Ira Rothstein on the death of his mother Beverly Rothstein, ז"ל.

David Ebstein on the death of his mother Roslyn Ebstein, ז"ל.

Lori Koffman on the death of her father Morley Koffman, ז"ל.

Hanan Alexander on the death of his brother Arthur Alexander, ז"ל.

Joe and Miriam Wernik on the death of their son Rami Wernik, ז"ל.

Howard Buechler and Yael Buechler on the death of their mother and grandmother, Elaine Buechler, ז"ל.

Alfredo Borodowski and Shira Leibowitz on the death of their mother and mother-in-law,

Teresa Waxman Borodowski, ז"ל.

Zvi Dershowitz on the death of his wife Tova Dershowitz, ז"ל.

Tobi Cooper (Rabbi Daniel Horwitz) and our colleague, Sarit Horwitz on the death of their father and grandfather, Leon Cooper, ז"ל.

Dorothy Steinberg (Rabbi Theodore Steinberg, ז"ל) on the death of her daughter Sarah Steinberg Goldberg, ז"ל.

Jan Uhrbach on the death of her father Harold S. Uhrbach, ז"ל.

Ilana Foss, Jonathan Lipnick and Kass Abelson on the death their mother, sister and step-daughter,

Miriam Foss, ז"ל, daughter of Rabbi Jerome Lipnick, ז"ל.

Ben Lanckton, on the death of his brother Sam Lanckton ז"ל.

Joyce Weckstein (Rabbi Elliot Pachter) on the death of her mother of Naomi Weckstein, ז"ל.

Jason Gitlin on the death of his motheron Ronnie Gitlin, ז"ל.

Shoshana Boyd Gelfand on the death of her sister Miriam Gelfand Oberstein, ז"ל.

Bettina Schwarzman (Rabbi Steven Schwarzman) on the death of her father Abram Chaim Krauze, ז"ל.

Lori Forman-Jacobi on the death of her father Phil Forman, ז"ל.

Steven Kane on the death of his mother Gladys Kane, ז"ל.

Benjamin Sendrow on the death of his mother Florence Sendrow, ז"ל.

Cecelia Beyer on the death of her father Charles Beyer, ז"ל.

Ellen Dobrusin (Rabbi Robert Dobrusin) on the death of her father Mathias Berman, ז"ל.

Sari Allen (Rabbi Uri Allen) on the death of her mother Linda Roy, ז"ל.

Arthur Oleisky and Betejoy on the death of their son Michael Oleisky, ז"ל.

Martin Berman on the death of his mother Florance Berman, ז"ל.

Carl Astor on the death of his sister Heidi, ז"ל.

Daniel Pressman on the death of his father and our colleague, Rabbi Jacob Pressman ז"ל.

Stuart Seltzer on the death of his mother Evelyn Seltzer, ז"ל.

Reuben Landman on the death of his wife Gila, ז"ל.

Matthew Bellas on the death of his father Joel Marvin Bellas, ז"ל.

Gary Perras on the death of his son Joshua, ז"ל.

Dana Kurzweil (Rabbi Irwin Kula) on the death of her mother Janice, ז"ל.

David Krishef on the death of his father Robert, ז"ל.

Liba Casson (Rabbi George Nudell) on the death of her mother Sophie, ז"ל.

Mazal Tov מזל טוב

(as of November 26, 2015)

BABIES!

Rabbi Robyn Fryer Bodzin and Aaron Bodzin on the birth of their daughter, Ariella Yardena (Ariella Bella in English).

Rabbi Shira Wallach and **Rabbi Adam Roffman** on the birth of their daughter.

Rabbi Juan Mejia and **Rabbi Abby Jacobson** on the birth of their son Zvi Adin Mejia Jacobson

Rabbi David Siff and Tanya who have welcomed baby Aliza to their family, a sister for Hannah and Daniel.

Rabbi Sharon Cohen and Jeffrey Siegel on the birth of their son, Joshua Avishai Cohen Siegel who joins big brother Jonah Raz Cohen Siegel.

Rabbi Roni Tabick, Dr. Shoshana (Shoshi) Burke Tabick and big sister Danya on the birth of Meital Ruth.

Rabbi Loren Monosov and Jeremy who are delighted with their daughter, Yael Keren Monosov, as is big sister Hannah.

Rabbi Claudia Kreiman and Ebn Leader on the birth of their daughter Ariel.

Rabbi Marc Blatt and **Rabbi Rachel Blatt** and big sisters Hannah and Tova on the birth of Rafael (Rafi) David Blatt.

Rabbi Uri Allen and Sari on the birth of their son Yediyah Aharon and to the grandparents **Rabbi Danny Allen** and Mary Lou and great aunt and great uncle Dr. Phyllis Goren and **Rabbi Morris Allen**.

Rabbi Jeremy Fine and Jessica on the birth of their daughter, Trudy Leah.

Rabbi Ephraim Pelcovitz and Rachel Weber on the birth of their son, Felix Raphael Weber-Pelcovits, joining brothers Alexander and Lev.

Rabbi Daniel Isaacson and Liora on the birth of Yehuda Kalev (Judah Caleb), brother to Elijah and Asher, who came into the world in the hospital parking lot after "crashing around ten red lights during rush hour traffic". Mother and baby are "good and healthy."

Rabbi Gary Atkins and Iris announce the birth of their 12th grandchild, Liad Matan Assido, to their daughter Shimie and son-in-law Ariel, in Yuvalim, Israel.

Rabbi Eric Woodward and Katherine Baker on the birth of a daughter, Tamar Devorah Baker-Woodward.

Rabbi Adam Baldachin and Maital Friedman on the birth of their son, Lior Adir.

Rabbi Avi Olitzky and Dr. Sarah Olitzky. Aliza, Akiva and Miryam on the birth of Yonatan Shimon and grandparents Rabbi Kerry and Sheryl Olitzky as well as aunt and uncle **Rabbi Jesse Olitzky** and Andrea.

Rabbi Scott Shafrin and **Rabbi Jessica Shafrin** on the birth of their son, Amitai Moshe.

Rabbi Deborah Zucker on the birth of Daniel Simon (Daniel Shalom) Zuker, big brother to Joey.

Rabbi Jeremy Yuskowitz and Dr. Lisa Cohen on the birth of their son, Jonah Alexander and to big brother David Lawrence.

Rabbi Josh Ratner and Dr. Elena Ratner on the birth of Sasha (aka Sarah) Ryan Ratner.

L'DOR Va'DOR

Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein on the birth of a granddaughter to her daughter Ilana and Rabbi Elie Bercuson and to big brother Dov Netanel.

Rabbi Alan Lavin and Vera on the birth of two grandchildren - Gabriel Shemuel to Meira and David Werblowsky and Eliyana Navah to Dr. Gabby and Micki Pell of Jerusalem.

Rabbi Neil Cooper and Lauri on the birth of a son to Yoni and Eliana Cooper and to grandparents Rolinda and **Rabbi Joe Schonwald**.

Rabbi Ronald Androphy and Nancy on the birth of their grandson, Natan Oz to Joshua Androphy and Dina Mann and on the birth of their granddaughter, Yael Golda, daughter of Drs. Aviva and Evan Marlin and sister of Gabriel.

Rabbi Daniel Allen and Mary Lou on the birth of Livya Arielle to their children Rena and Noah Allen. Livya is the niece of **Rabbi Uri Allen** and Sari, grandniece of **Rabbi Morris Allen** and Dr. Phyllis Gorin.

Rabbi H. J. Simckes and Chana celebrate the birth of a great granddaughter, Lea Esther Simckes in Jerusalem and the bat mitzvah of granddaughter Avia Sarah Simckes in Elazar, Israel.

Rabbi Dr. Bernhard Rosenberg and Charlene announce the birth of Sarah Lily to their children Ayelet and Ari Feder.

Rabbi Irving Spielman and Selma on the birth of great grandson Moshe Avishai, son of Dr. Michael and Melissa Kohanski.

Rabbi Kenneth Berger and Cheryl on the birth of a grandson to Ari Berger and Naomi Brenner and to the uncle and aunt, **Rabbi Jonathan Berger** and Laura.

Rabbi Harold Berman and Beth on the birth of their grandson, Seth Bloomekatz Berman, son of Micah Berman and Rachel Bloomekatz.

Rabbi Carol Levithan on the birth of Benjamin Howard Daniels to daughter Sarah and husband Michael David Daniels.

Rabbi Barry Dov Schwartz on the birth of twin grandchildren, Alex Lev Dinowitz & Jesse Menashe Dinowitz to daughter and son-in-law, Tamar & Eric Dinowitz and the birth of a third grandson, Noah Menachem Schwartz, to his son and daughter-in-law, Jonathan & Alyssa Schwartz and to sister Channah Nina.

Rabbi Vernon Kurtz and Bryna on the birth of their grandson, Samuel Ryder (Shlomo Yitzchak). Mazal Tov also to the great uncle and aunt, **Rabbi David Wise** and Judith Krinitz.

Rabbi Alan Lucas and Edy on the birth of grandson #5 to their daughter Michal and her husband Uri and the birth of grandson #6 to our colleague **Rabbi Ari Lucas** and Talya in Los Angeles.

Rabbi Gerry Skolnik and Robin on the birth of Hadar Eliana to our colleagues **Rabbi Hillel Skolnik** and **Rabbi Sharon Barr Skolnik**.

Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff on the birth of his grandson to Malka and Justin, a big brother for Simon.

Rabbi Paul Teicher and Shoshana on the birth of three more great-grandchildren: Rivka Leah to Elisheva and Moshe Danzger, grandparents Debra & Martin Hirsch; Ora Temima; to Atara and Michael Turoff, grandparents Debra and Martin Hirsch; Davyn Rose to Lauren and David Teicher, grandparents Debra & Mark Teicher.

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In Memoriam זכר צדיק לברכה

(as of November 26, 2015)

Rabbi Ben-Zion Bergman, ז"ל

Born in Grand Forks, ND and ordained at JTS in 1948, Rabbi Bergman spent his entire rabbinic career in Southern California serving pulpits including Valley Beth Shalom. He was one of the founders of the University of Judaism (now AJU) where he remained on the faculty for over 50 years. He established the Western Region RA Bet Din, served on the CJLS for 20 years and was a founding member of the Joint Bet Din in 1990. He is survived by his wife, Bella; children Avi and Aviva; and one granddaughter.

Rabbi Milton Feierstein, ז"ל

He spent most of his career in Upstate New York serving pulpits in Buffalo and Syracuse before becoming rabbi in 1974 of Kneseth Israel Synagogue in Gloversville, NY until being named emeritus in 1996. After retirement, he became rabbi of Temple B'nai Shalom in Braintree, MA and became rabbi emeritus there in 2011. He served on the RA Va'ad Hakavod (chair 1996-2002) and is survived by his wife, Lenore; children Dr. David Ariel, Nita Aines, and Judy; eight grandchildren; and one great-granddaughter.

Rabbi Jonathan Fine, ז"ל

A scholar and novelist, he was ordained by Machon Schechter in 2006. At the time of his death, he was senior researcher at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) and a professor at the Lauder School at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya. He was the author of numerous articles and books including *The Israeli Governmental System: the Establishment of a Sovereign State, 1947 – 1951*, *Religious Violence in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – from Holy War to Modern Terror* and three novels. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Ruti; and sons Micky and Danny.

Rabbi Seymour Friedman, ז"ל

After a career as a social worker, he returned to rabbinical school and was ordained by JTS in 1962. He was the rabbi of the Spring Valley Jewish Center (NY) and spent most of his career in South Florida including as director of the Southeast Region of United Synagogue and as rabbi of Temple Sinai in Hollywood. After retirement he served several synagogues and became a stockbroker. He established the first Conservative conversion institute in South Florida. He is survived by his wife, Dvora; children Aryeh, Reena, Aaron, and our colleague, Raphi along with 13 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

Rabbi Evan A. Jaffe, ז"ל

Ordained from JTS in 1987, he spent 7 years as a professional dancer in New York. Upon ordination, he became rabbi of the Flemington Jewish Center (NJ), a post he held until his passing. He expanded synagogue membership, involving many young people in the work and prayer life of the congregation. He also served as chaplain of the Hunterdon Developmental Center

where he invited its Jewish residents into the synagogue and held an annual b'nai mitzvah ceremony for those excluded from religious life. He is survived by his wife, Phyllis; and daughters Atara and Jordana.

Rabbi Alex Kaplan, ז"ל

After ordination from JTS in 1956 (and a stint as the captain of the Columbia basketball team), he became the founding principal of the Solomon Schechter Day School in Queens where he served until 1970. The following year he and his family made aliyah and in Israel he taught English and Talmud. He came back several summers to teach at Camp Ramah in the Berkshires where he had previously served as Rosh Sport. He is survived by his wife, Sandra; children Zvi David, Jonathan Joseph, Baruch, Rabbi Dov, Raphy, Ashira Koren, Libby, Mendy and Chanalee Arusy and over 60 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Rabbi Jacob Pressman, ז"ל

After ordination at JTS in 1945, he spent four decades as rabbi in Los Angeles, 35 of them as senior rabbi of Temple Beth Am. Under his leadership, Beth Am became an observant Conservative community and a flagship American congregation. He was one of the founders of Camp Ramah Ojai, Akiba Academy and established the Solomon Schechter School at Beth Am now called the Pressman Academy. He was active in civil rights, Soviet Jewry and Israel advocacy during his rabbinic tenure. He is survived by his wife, Marjorie; children Judy and our colleague, Danny; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Rabbi Allan Schranz, ז"ל

After ordination at JTS in 1972, he became rabbi of Temple Israel in Ridgewood (NJ) until 1981 when he became assistant to the Chancellor at JTS. He served Congregation Beth Shalom (San Francisco) and then became senior rabbi of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles. He taught Bible and advised rabbinical students at the UJ. In 1998, he became the rabbi of Sutton Place Synagogue (Manhattan) until his retirement in 2012). He is survived by his wife, Ellen; children Molly and Dr. Asher; and siblings Bernice Pleeter, Esther Cohen, Toby Rusgo, Howard and our colleague, Rabbi Mitchell.

Rabbi Byron L. Sherwin, ז"ל

Ordained by JTS in 1970, he joined the faculty of Spertus College in Chicago and remained at Spertus for his entire career. He served as Distinguished Service Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Mysticism until his death and from 1984 until 2001 was also dean and senior vice president at Spertus. A disciple of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, he wrote over 30 books and scores of articles including *Toward a Jewish Theology*, *Kabbalah: An Introduction to Jewish Mysticism*, and *Jewish Ethical Values*. He is survived by his wife Judy; son Dr. Jason; brother Elliot; and mother Jean.

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המכשולים העומדים בדרכם.

כאשר הפונים אלינו אנשים שנתקלים בקשיים, בין אם הם גרים או מי שהוכחת היהדות שלהם נדחתה - כנסת הרבנים בישראל נכנסת מיד לתמונה. אנו מתבקשים לסייע בכמה מקרים בשנה - המתחלקים באופן שווה בין פונים מצפון אמריקה לבין פונים מקהילות מסורתיות אחרות.

אחד מעמדי התווך של עבודתנו הוא שיתוף הפעולה בין הרבנים שלנו בכל רחבי העולם. כאן ברצוני לציין את עבודתם החשובה של בית הדין האירופי שלנו, בתי הדין שלנו באמריקה הלטינית, וכמה מהרבנים שלנו העובדים עם קהילות יהודיות מתפתחות.

קיימים תחומים שבהם טרם הצלחנו להשיג את הזכויות המגיעות לגרים שלנו. נכון להיום, משרד הפנים מסרב להכיר באבאיואדיה (הקהילה היהודית באוגנדה, שרוב רובם מזדהים עם התנועה שלנו) כיהודים. אין גל של גרים מאוגנדה המנסים לעלות לארץ. אך כיוון שהאבאיואדיה אינם נחשבים ל"קהילה יהודית מוכרת", גם לא ניתנות אשרת כניסה (ויזה) של סטודנטים לאלו מהם המעוניינים ללמוד בישיבה הקונסרבטיבית בישראל.

כך גם מרבים מהגרים שלנו מפרו נשללה זכות השיבה לישראל כי קהילותיהם אינן מוכרות. כל האנשים הללו גוירו על ידי בתי דין מסורתיים.

אנו נאבקים בהחלטות של משרד הפנים שסוגיית הגזע מהווה בהן גורם מרכזי, תוך שאנו משתדלים להימנע מלפרסם זאת ברבים כדי שלא לתת תחמושת למי שמנסים בכל דרך לפגוע בתדמיתה של מדינת ישראל.

ועדת הגיור של כנסת הרבנים בישראל, בראשות יונתן לובלינו, החלה לטפל בסוגיות אלו שכה חשובות לכולנו. עם נציגים מאירופה, ישראל ואמריקה הצפונית והדרומית המשתתפים בוועדה, אנו יכולים לתרום תרומה חשובה בסיוע לגרים שלנו ולרבנים העומדים לצידם. ברור שיש מכשולים בדרך אל ההצלחה שלנו אבל יש לנו תקווה. כנסת הרבנים בישראל שותפת לעבודת הקודש של יצירת נשמות יהודיות ותמיכה במי שמעוניינים לקיים את מצוות יישוב הארץ.

הרב אנדרו סאקס

מזכ"ל, כנסת הרבנים בישראל

פינת כנה"ר בישראל

כנסת הרבנים בישראל כוללת כמאה ושישים רבנים. בעלוני החדשות הבאים אנו נציג בפניכם את הפעילויות וההישגים של הארגון.



התבקשתי לכתוב מעט על נושא הגיור שאנו מקדישים לו זמן ומאמצים כה רבים. אב בית הדין בישראל הוא פרץ רודמן שתורם בנדיבות מזמנו למטרה זו. דרכו של פרץ נסללה על ידי ראובן המר, שעשה עבודה חלוצית מאוד במהלך כהונתו בתפקיד זה במשך שנים רבות.

הפונים אלינו לגיור באים מרקעים שונים ומגוונים ואין קטגוריית פונים אחת שניתן לומר כי הנה "טיפוסית" למתגיירים. אנו פוגשים במי שזכו למעט מאוד חינוך יהודי ובמי שגדלו וחונכו כיהודים לכל דבר. אנו גם עדים ליותר ויותר מקרים של "זרע ישראל" - מי שעשויים להיחשב כיהודים על פי חוק השבות אך לא על פי ההלכה. אותם גרים מזרע ישראל אנחנו מקבלים בידיים פתוחות ומקילים בדרישות על בסיס עמדתם של הרבנים הגדולים שדרשו שנושיט יד להם ולמשפחותיהם. בית הדין מגייר מידי חודש גם כארבעה תינוקות שנולדו בחו"ל בעזרת אמהות פונדקאיות, בעיקר להורים הומוסקסואלים. אין לנו גישה למקוואות. (עומדים לרשותנו רק שני מקוואות גם כעת, כשאנו מתדיינים על כך בבית המשפט). אולם אנו מסתדרים עם מה שיש.

אנו יכולים לבצע גיורים בישראל אך ורק לבעלי תעודת זהות ישראלית. כאשר הגיור הושלם, הגר רשאי לשנות את רישומו/ה בסעיף הלאום ובסעיף הדת במשרד הפנים ל-"יהודי". המדינה מחויבת להכיר בגיורים שלנו, אך הרבנות הראשית לישראל אינה מכירה בהם. אי-ההכרה של הרבנות משפיעה בעיקר על הדרך בה יוכלו להתחתן במדינת ישראל ולא על תחומים אחרים.

גם גיורים שנערכו בחו"ל על ידי רבנים החברים שלנו בכנה"ר מופרים על ידי מדינת ישראל (בהנחה שהגיורים נערכו על פי אמות המידה וההליכים שנקבעו על ידי כנסת הרבנים). הגרים רשאים לעלות לישראל ועל משרד הפנים לרשום אותם כיהודים. אך גם במקרה של גרים עולים, הרבנות הראשית לישראל אינה מכירה ביהדותם של הגרים שלנו.

פיתחנו יחסי עבודה עם הסוכנות היהודית (המסייעת לנו במקרים רבים) ועם משרד הפנים. אנו עובדים בישראל עם עורכי דין המאמינים בפלורליזם דתי אשר מסייעים לכל מי שנתקלים בקשיים להתגבר על

Mazal Tov מזל טוב

Continued from page 12

Rabbi Michael Gold and Evelyn on the birth of grandson Judah Jeffrey Simons to their daughter and son-in-law Aliza & Darren Simons.

Rabbi Frank Fischer and Dr. Patricia Fischer report that their granddaughter, Gavi Fischer, daughter of Dr. Bernard and Shari Fischer was called to the Torah as a bat mitzvah on Shabbat Hol Hamoed.

Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins and Maxine celebrated the bat mitzvah of their granddaughter, Leila Sol Adatto, daughter of Shira Batya Elkins Adatto and Dany Adatto.

Rabbi Leonard Rosenthal and Judy on the birth of Elijah and Zev Gerstle to Adina Rosenthal and Jeremy Gerstle and to uncle and aunt, **Rabbi Adam Rosenthal** and Sarah.

HATTAN v'KALLAH

Rabbi Mayer Gruber on his marriage to Judith Weissman Cohen.

Rabbi Howard Tilman on his engagement to Naomi Karp.

Rabbi Mordechai Silverstein and Shira on the engagement of their youngest daughter Keren to Joseph Kaufman of Petah Tikvah.

Rabbi Zach Fredman and Yocheved Zivar Amrami on their recent marriage.

Deana Stein and **Joseph Grundfast** on their August 2nd marriage. Deena is the daughter of Hazzan Stephen and Abbe Stein and Joseph is the son of **Rabbi Stephen Grundfast** and Judy.

Rabbi Morris J. Allen and Dr. Phyllis Gorin announce the engagement of Avi Allen to Sarah Gold. Mazal tov to uncles, **Rabbi Danny Allen** and **Rabbi Howard Gorin** and to cousin, **Rabbi Uri Allen**.

Rabbi Harold Berman and Beth on the marriage of their son Jordan to Elizabeth Cantu.

Rabbi Paul Shrell-Fox and Saralee are delighted to share the news that their son Maayan is engaged to Sharon (שרון) Granner from Petach Tikva.

Rabbi Sarit Horowitz on her marriage to Abe Schacter-Gampel. Mazal tov to the parents, JTS Professor Benjamin Gampel and Miriam Schacter and to **Rabbi Danny Horwitz** and Tobi Cooper.

Rabbi Jacob Luski and Joanne on the marriage of their daughter Rachel to Alan Medvin

Rabbi Paul Teicher and Shoshana on the marriage of grandson Jonathan David Schenker, son of Miriam and Leon Schenker, to Stefanie Dara Gordon.

In Memoriam זכר צדיק לברכה

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Rabbi Philip Silverstein, ז"ל

Ordained by JTS in 1955, he joined the military chaplaincy (USAF) after which he served several pulpits. In 1971, he returned to the chaplaincy achieving the rank of Lt. Colonel and became the chief Jewish military chaplain in Europe. He retired from the Army in 1989 and assumed the pulpit at Beth zShalom Synagogue in Columbia, South Carolina, where he served until his retirement in 2004. Rabbi Silverstein is survived by his wife Susan Levi Wallach; daughters Terri McWilliams and Meira; grandchildren Daniel and Adinah; and sister Anna Heifetz. His wife Adinah died in 2003.

Rabbi Marshall Maltzman, ז"ל

Ordained from JTS in 1949, he began his rabbinic career at Congregation Beth Jacob in Norwich, Connecticut. He then served Congregation Beth El in Philadelphia followed by a stint in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He assumed the leadership of Temple Beth Hillel in Wynnewood, a Philadelphia suburb in 1961, where he remained until he was named rabbi emeritus in 1991. He is survived by his wife, Amy; children, Susan Gordon, Seth, and our colleague, Rabbi Jonathan; and seven grandchildren. His first wife, Ruth, died in 1989.

Interfaith Efforts in Berlin: Begin with the Children

Continued from page 9

The teams from the three institutions are looking for a house with four floors and a garden that will provide each nursery school with its own space, accommodating 45 children; a shared space on the entrance level hosting a café, library, class rooms and much more, providing the framework for family education and inter-religious and intercultural exchange and for the everyday encounters that will give birth to joint projects and events; a garden that can serve as a natural meeting place while allowing free play; and a joint kitchen that will follow religious dietary laws, serve healthy food and be a resource for educating towards healthy eating habits.

Gesa reports that they are currently looking at a property where they could build something new, incorporating the old school house of the neighborhood: "Our project is met with a lot of sup-

port by politicians and the general public. Especially now, when everybody is so busy with helping the refugees, just keeping their heads above water, opening new shelters, organizing to fulfill basic needs, it is wonderful to work on a project which will have long and deep impact on the lives of the families that will be touched by it. We are also confident that as soon as we are up and running, this "Gardens for Three" will become a model for more institutions. It will become a creative place where new models of religious early childhood education can be developed, deciding freely when each religion stays by itself and when cooperation between the three will be enriching for the children, their families and the educators. Already now, deep friendships are developing around this project – and it is these friendships that keep us hopeful in these difficult times.

Placement Update — Who's Where

NAME		INSTITUTION	CITY	STATE	SCHOOL (for new graduates)	POSITION
Matt	Abelson	Keshet Zion Synagogue	Reading	PA	JTS	Rabbi
Seth	Adelson	Congregation Beth Shalom	Pittsburgh	PA		Rabbi
Raphael	Adler	Temple Anshei Shalom	Delray Beach	FL		Senior Rabbi
Aaron	Alexander	Adas Israel	Washington	DC		Assistant Rabbi
Carl	Astor	Shaarei Tikvah	Scarsdale	NY		Interim Rabbi
Ari	Averbach	Congregation Beth Shalom	Northbrook	IL	Ziegler	Assistant Rabbi
Ruven	Barkan	Anshei Israel	Tucson	AZ		Director of Education and Youth
Sami	Barth	Samu-El Or Olom	Miami	FL		2nd year Interim
Joshua	Barton	West End Synagogue	Nashville	TN		Assistant Rabbi
Evelyn	Baz	Temple Emanuel	Newton	MA	Ziegler	Assistant Rabbi
Dana	Bogatz	First Hebrew Congregation	Peekskill	NY		Rabbi
Rachel	Bovitz	The Jewish Theological Seminary	New York	NY		Director of Millennial Engagement
Rachel	Brown	American Hebrew Academy	Greensboro	NC		Conservative Rabbi & Faculty Member
Dror	Chankin-Gould	Anshe Emet	Chicago	IL		Assistant Rabbi
Kerry	Chaplin	Vassar College	Poughkeepsie	NY	Ziegler	Associate Director of Spiritual Life
Paul	Drazen	Adath Yeshurun	Syracuse	NY		Rabbi
Ryan	Dulkin	Franklin & Marshall College	Lancaster	PA		Faculty
Mark	Fasman	Temple Emanu-El	Reno	NV		Rabbi
Ron	Fish	Temple Israel of Sharon	Sharon	MA		Rabbi
Catherine	Fleischman	Jewish Foundation for Education of Women	New York	NY	JTS	Pastoral Fellow
Catherine	Fleischman	The Jewish Theological Seminary—Ctr for Pastoral Education	New York	NY	JTS	Research Associate
Abe	Friedman	Beth Zion Beth Israel	Philadelphia	PA		Senior Rabbi
Jonah	Geffen	Congregation Shaare Zedek	New York	NY		Rabbi
Michael	Gilboa	Ahavat Achim Hebrew Congregation	Wichita	KS		Rabbi
Adir	Glick	West Suburban Temple Har Zion	River Forest	IL	Ziegler	Rabbi
Ron	Goldberg	Los Angeles Jewish Home	Reseda	CA	Ziegler	Campus Rabbi
Yosef	Goldman	Beth Zion Beth Israel	Philadelphia	PA		Rabbi
Meir	Goldstein	Elon University	Elon	NC		Associate Chaplain for Jewish Life
Andrew	Green	Congregation Beth El	Voorhees	NJ	Ziegler	Assistant Rabbi
Ariella	Greenberg	Agudas Achim	San Antonio	TX	JTS	Dir of Congregational Learning
David	Greenspoon	Congregation Shaare Shalom	Leesburg	VA		Rabbi
Sarit	Horwitz	B'nai Jeshurun	Voorhees	NY	JTS	Senior Rabbinic Fellow
Ari	Isenberg-Grzeda	Temple Israel Center	White Plains	NY		Assistant Rabbi
Rebecca	Joseph	Bucknell University	Lewisburg	PA		Chaplain for the Jewish Community

NAME		INSTITUTION	CITY	STATE	SCHOOL (for new graduates)	POSITION
Oliver	Joseph	Elstree Borhamwood Masorti Congregation	United Kingdom		Ziegler	Rabbi
Joshua	Kalev	Congregation Tikvat Jacob	Manhattan Beach	CA		Rabbi
Benjamin	Katz	Temple Beth Sholom	Las Vegas	NV		Assistant Rabbi
Barry	Kenter	Beth Israel	Greenville	SC		Interim Rabbi
Paul	Kerbel	Temple Beth Sholom	Roslyn Heights	NY		Assistant Rabbi
David	Klatzker	Temple Emanuel of the Pascack Valley	Woodcliff Lake	NJ		Interim Rabbi
Lori	Koffman	Bet Torah	Mount Kisco	NY		Director of Community Engagement and Learning
David	Kosak	Neveh Shalom	Portland	OR		Rabbi
Hillel	Lavery-Yisraeli	Beth Jacob Synagogue	Hamilton	Canada		Rabbi
David	Lazar	Temple Isaiah	Palm Springs	CA		Rabbi
Amy	Levin	Congregation Rodeph Sholom	Bridgeport	CT		Interim Rabbi
Leah	Loeterman Fein	Syracuse University	Syracuse	NY	JTS	Hillel Campus Rabbi
David	Mattis	Temple Sholom of Ontario	Ontario	CA		Rabbi
Gil	Nativ	Kehilat Hakerem	Karmiel	Israel		Rabbi
Elliot	Pachter	Frankel Jewish Academy	West Bloomfield	MI		Director of Student Services
Ita	Paskind	Beth El Synagogue Center	Norwalk	CT		Rabbi
Shuli	Passow	Congregation B'nai Jeshurun	New York	NY	JTS	Director of Community Engagement
Ephraim	Pelcovits	Ziegler	Los Angeles	CA		Assistant Dean
Michael	Ragozin	Congregation Shirat Hayam	Swampscott	MA		Rabbi
Jonah	Rank	Faculty SSDS of Manhattan	New York	NY	JTS	Teacher
Evan	Ravski	Congregation Olam Tikvah	Fairfax	VA	JTS	Assistant Rabbi
Mira	Rivera	CPE Residency for Chaplaincy - Mt Sinai Hospital	New York	NY	JTS	Candidate
Mira	Rivera	Door-to-Door Tutoring	New York	NY	JTS	Rabbi
Ariella	Rosen	Adath Israel	Merion Station	PA	JTS	Assistant Rabbi
David	Rosenn	Hebrew Free Loan Society	New York	NY		Executive Director
Eric	Rosin	Congregation Neve Shalom	Metuchen	NJ		Rabbi
Zalman	Rothschild	Congregation Beth-El	Massapequa	NY		Interim Rabbi
Marcus	Rubenstein	Sinai Temple	Middletown	NY		Rabbi
William	Rudolph	Fauquier Jewish Congregation	Warrenton	VA		Part time Rabbi
Stephanie	Ruskay	The Rabbinical School of JTS	New York	NY		Associate Dean
David	Saiger	Miliken High School	Los Angeles	CA		Faculty
Alexander	Salzberg	Pelham Jewish Center	Pelham Manor	NY		Rabbi
Jennifer	Schlosberg	Glen Rock Jewish Center	Glen Rock	NJ		Rabbi
David	Schuck	Beth El Synagogue Center	New Rochelle	NY		Rabbi
Ilan	Schwartz	Ohio State Univ.	Columbus	OH	Ziegler	Senior Jewish Educator
Joseph	Schwartz	Conservative Synagogue of Fifth Avenue	New York	NY	Ziegler	Rabbi

2014

Placement Update — Who's Where (Cont'd)

NAME		INSTITUTION	CITY	STATE	SCHOOL (for new graduates)	POSITION
Moshe	Schwartz	Krieger Schechter	Baltimore	MD		Head of School
Daniel	Schweber	Temple Israel of Great Neck	Great Neck	NY		Associate Rabbi
Dan	Selsberg	Temple Sholom	Bridgewater	NJ		Rabbi
Charles	Sherman	Melrose B'nai Israel Emanu-El	Elkins Park	PA		Rabbi (Part time)
Benjamin	Shull	Tikvat Israel	Rockville	MD		Rabbi
Toni	Shy	JCC of the Greater Five Towns	Cedarhurst	NY		Disaster Relief Specialist: Dual Response (Clinical and Spiritual Counseling)
Howard	Siegel	Beth Tikvah	Richmond	BC		Rabbi
Moshe	Silberschein	Agudath Achim	Savannah	GA		Interim Rabbi
Mia	Simring	CPE Residency for Chaplaincy— Mt Sinai Hospital	New York	NY	JTS	Candidate
David	Singer	University of California in San Diego	San Diego	CA		Executive Director of Hillel
Melvin	Sirner	Shearith Israel	Atlanta	GA		Interim Rabbi
Aaron	Starr	Congregation Shaarey Zedek	Southfield	MI		Rabbi
Jay	Stein	Greenburgh Hebrew Center	Dobbs Ferry	NY		Rabbi
Roni	Tabick	New Stoke Newington Synagogue	United Kingdom		JTS	Rabbi
Roni	Tabick	New North London Synagogue	United Kingdom		JTS	Assistant Rabbi
Kara	Tav	Elmhurst Hospital	Elmhurst	NY		Director of Pastoral Care
Neil	Tow	Woodbury Jewish Center	Woodbury	NY		Rabbi
Larry	Troster	Kesher Israel Congregation	West Chester	PA		Interim Rabbi
Daniel	Victor	Temple Beth El	Poughkeepsie	NY		Rabbi
Fabian	Werbin	Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County	Bethesda	MD		Associate Rabbi
Eugene	Wernick	Or Olam—East 55 Street Synagogue	New York	NY		Interim Rabbi
Melinda	Zalma	Congregation B'nai Israel	Fleischmanns	NY		Rabbi

Commission for a Vital Connected Rabbinate: An Update

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The work of the Commission for a Vital, Connected Rabbinate has provided important groundwork for the “Re-Imagining” effort that is now underway. We are indebted to Stewart Vogel who has served as Chair of the Commission and will now pass the chairmanship to Jacob Herber. Appreciation is also due to Commission members, Mychal Springer and Carie Carter for creating the Processing Groups; Steven Lindemann, Ellen Wolintz-Fields and RA Vice-President Phil Scheim for leading the initiative on Regions; Elliot Goldberg and Gail Swedroe, who have led the committee on the Transition from Student to RA Member; Jacob Herber and Charles Schwartz who have led the committee on Rabbinic Education and

David Schuck for his leadership on the program for rabbinic guides.

Going forward with Jacob Herber as Commission Chair, Gail Swedroe will chair the committee on student outreach; Joshua Gruenberg will chair a new committee to enhance RA outreach to recently ordained colleagues; and Charles Savenor will lead the effort to enhance the RA’s offerings of rabbinic education to colleagues. We look forward to the continuing work of the Commission and to the inclusion of many colleagues in the work of each of its committees.

Rabbi Bill Lebeau

From the executive vice president

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home when my father unexpectedly died. I appreciate the good wishes for my health and reassure everyone that there is no need whatsoever for concern, but I was too ill that week to receive shiva visitors and am still trying to recapture my strength. Your good wishes and thoughtful notes were a balm and please know that I read and was comforted by each one.

As powerful as it is to receive good wishes from afar, there is no substitute for the profound way in which participation in a synagogue community brings friendship and comfort. Certain

public thinkers tell us that synagogues are no longer relevant and that bold new ideas ought to replace them. Yet, when all is said and done, those big ideas did not come into my house during shiva and put food in my refrigerator. These acts of kindness come when people live in proximity. We are always reminded, in such times, of the blessing of living amongst the people who care enough to build our synagogue communities and a renewed appreciation for them. May we all go from strength to strength and may the memories of those who came before us be a blessing.

From the president

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In addition to the Vision Team spending many hours working together, each member of the Vision Team is conducting at least two dialogue interviews with members of the RA (many are doing more than two), two immersions, which are visits to institutions related to the work of the RA or actual aspects of the RA, such as National Ramah, JTS (and in the near future Zeigler), meeting with rabbinical students and newly ordained rabbis, focus groups with retired rabbis, Inside the Vaad Hakavod, attending a media dialogue with Gary Rosenblatt of The Jewish Week, visiting the Hartman Institute of North America, the JCC in Manhattan and others. Other visits that are in process include: the CAR, RAVSAK, CLAL, Rabbis Without Borders, USCJ, Penn Hillel and the Covenant Foundation, to name a few.

The purpose of these encounters is to listen carefully to our members and to learn from organizations outside of the RA, with an eye on needs, perception, advice on how the RA can move forward and models of disruptive innovation. To include as many members of the RA as possible in this process, we are conducting Listening Forums (either in person or online) to get input and feedback from colleagues. Many of these have already taken place and more are being scheduled.

The Vision Team is also engaging in Learning Journeys (visits to outside organizations in different fields) to bring back wisdom on disruptive innovation, new models of thinking and organization. Guiding all our work are nine key questions that our revisioning process must answer:

1. In these changing times, what should be the purpose of the RA now and for the future? As our profession changes, how do we shift the work of the RA to support, strengthen and co-inspire a strong and meaningful rabbinate for these times?
2. How can we be a robust international membership organization of religious leaders that unifies across vast di-

versity—diversity of points of view, of identity, across age and demographics, across political polarization?

3. What are the deepest aspirations of our rabbis and how do we position the RA to be essential in achieving their highest potential?
4. How does the RA amplify the moral voice of the Conservative rabbinate in these times?
5. How does the RA skillfully move through a transition that may be a moment of ambition or a moment of retrenchment for Conservative Judaism?
6. How do we shift from a crisis, problem-centric culture of insecurity to an aspirational future focus?
7. What is the future of the rabbinic profession? What placement process matches that future and serves our rabbis given a tighter job market? What is the appropriate role for CJLS?
8. How do we engage our rabbis in a new narrative for the RA and for themselves?
9. What is our place in the Conservative/Jewish ecosystem?

The most important part of this process is YOU! — every member of the RA. As we move forward, there will be opportunities for every member to take part in a Listening Forum and to complete a survey to provide important input in this process. We want every member to feel invested in the RA and to have a voice in our future. It is our hope that by Convention, which is taking place in New York City at JTS, May 22-25th, we will be presenting our findings and the key strategic direction for the future of the Rabbinical Assembly. The revisioning process will be a major component of the Convention. This is your Rabbinical Assembly. Be a part of it; help shape it as we look to our future with great anticipation and hope.



Rabbinical Assembly

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