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April 2026
Nissan — Iyar, 5786

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STORY OF
FAITH, IDENTITY AND
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CONTENTS

JLIFE | Nissan — Iyar, 5786 | April 2026

ON THE COVER:
THE HEALTH & WELLNESS ISSUE

VIEWPOINTS

- 7 FROM WHERE I SIT
The Oath to Serve

FEATURES

- 8 **SAVING, CHANGING,
AND REBUILDING LIVES**
Beit Ruth Village empowers
at-risk girls to become
their best selves.
- 12 **WE WILL REHANG
THE MEZUZAH**
- 14 **WAITING BETWEEN
EATING MEAT AND DAIRY**
Why some Jews wait six
hours, while others
wait one or three.
- 16 **WE KNOW HOW TO
PREVENT JEWISH
CLERGY FROM
BURNING OUT.
WHY AREN'T
WE DOING IT?**
Rabbis and cantors
shouldn't have to seek
outside training to
flourish in their work,
writes a cantor and
licensed social worker.

- 18 **COVER STORY:
HEART OF A STRANGER,
AN UNLIKELY RABBI'S
STORY OF FAITH,
IDENTITY AND BELONGING**
A Jewish Tapestry Book
Group Selection for
our times and
our community

Kiddish (insert publication for
Jewish youth) begins on page 21

LIFESTYLE

- 22 **COOKING JEWISH**
Recipes with
Judy Bart Kancigor
- 25 **JUDAISM AND
FERTILITY TECHNOLOGY**
Jewish authorities do not
object to fertility technology,
but have concerns with some
of the specific methods.
- 26 **CALENDAR**
Community Calendar
- 28 **NEWS & JEWS**
SGPV Jewish Scene
- 29 **LAST WORD**

THE OATH TO SERVE

My service on the Board of Governors of our Jewish Federation continues a family legacy. I grew up in a home where community service was a generational priority. My grandmother, in particular, was a leader I adored and aspired to be like. Along with my siblings, I was encouraged to serve others each day, whether by helping with a food drive, picking up trash, or volunteering with community organizations.

My commitment to service continued into my career, as I joined the Peace Corps and served as a health educator at a rural medical clinic in the central Asian country of Turkmenistan. Peace Corps Volunteers, along with all other US federal employees, take an oath as they begin their federal service. I took the federal oath on Thanksgiving Day, 1999. The oath is the same for all: military personnel, Peace Corps volunteers, postal workers, and elected officials, including the three branches of the federal government. That oath is:

I do solemnly affirm that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me G-d.

In the years since taking this oath, I have not often contemplated its meaning. I rarely thought of it. However, in recent times, I have found myself reflecting on the meaning and value of this oath. When the halls of Congress were stormed on January 6, this oath came back to me in meaningful ways. When our country has responded to antisemitism and hate, I have reflected on this oath. When our country has succeeded or failed to respond to natural disasters or



other emergencies, I wonder how we are meeting the obligations of this oath. As our nation debates immigration, healthcare, and war, I reflect on this oath and consider how it guides our decisions as a country. Are the actions our nation is taking aligned with this oath? How does my Jewish identity coincide with this oath?

To me, this oath is about placing aside one's personal interests for the greater good. It is the heart of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world. I am not a Jewish scholar, but when I searched for writings about Jews and the federal oath, I was surprised to find nothing written. There are discussions about allowing witnesses in court cases to swear to "tell the whole truth, nothing but the truth." Since one of the Ten Commandments is not to bear false witness, some say that swearing in may not be necessary, but a good reminder. I found nothing on the federal oath and Judaism.

I wonder what commitment we, as Jews, especially those of us who have served with our federal government, share with our nation, and how we can best serve our communities. Although I took my

oath many years ago, there is no end date to my allegiance, even though the duties of my office are complete. Today, I meet this obligation by serving my local community, specifically through our Jewish Federation.

As we near the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, I find myself reflecting on the oath I took so many years ago and looking for new ways to support and defend the Constitution. Opportunities to do so can be found within the work of our Jewish Federation. Our Jewish Counseling and Referral Network, Jewish Community Relations Council, and other programs help build and strengthen our Jewish and adjacent community. Please join me in learning more about these important programs and how you can serve through them. Together, we can create a vision of the future for the next generations. ✨



JEANINE BORLAND MANN IS PRESIDENT OF THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE GREATER SAN GABRIEL AND POMONA VALLEYS





Beit Ruth Village

SAVING, CHANGING, AND REBUILDING LIVES

Beit Ruth Village empowers at-risk girls to become their best selves.

BY ILENE SCHNEIDER

Raz, a young Israeli woman, had extremely low self-esteem and an exceptionally low self-image when she arrived at Beit Ruth for Young Women & Girls At Risk when she was fourteen and a half years old. "I had very little confidence in myself, and I was very suspicious of the people around me," Raz, who stayed there for two years, said. "Before coming to Beit Ruth, I had lived in another group home for at-risk girls where I was made to feel that nothing would really come out of me. Because of that, my sense of capability was very low."

She added, "At Beit Ruth, unlike other places I had been, there was a strong focus on empowerment. They tried to strengthen each girl through her own strengths. Sometimes it was through music, sometimes through school, and sometimes through very simple

everyday things like preparing dinner together, taking responsibility for tasks in the house, or being part of the daily life there. Looking back, I understand that one of the most important things I received there was the combination of boundaries and support. Boundaries and structure give a person a sense of safety. At Beit Ruth they created a framework that was clear and structured, but also warm, supportive, and empowering."

Today, besides being a nurse, Raz is also a mental coach (like a life coach, but with a focus on mindset and self-awareness). As she explained, "During my studies I learned about research showing that one of the key elements of a fulfilling life is living according to your strengths. I think that in Beit Ruth, whether intentionally or not, that is exactly what they did. They

helped us recognize our strengths and believe in them.”

The concept for Beit Ruth developed when New York philanthropists Michael and Susan (z”l) Ashner were on a mission in Israel in 2003. When touring a residential village for boys at risk, they wondered why there was no such village for girls. Susan, a third-generation survivor of familial abuse, spent the next several years speaking to the Israeli Knesset and many other government, mental health, and related organizations and experts.

Beit Ruth launched a pilot program at a youth hostel near Tel Aviv for 12 girls in 2006. Then the Women’s International Zionist Organization (WIZO) granted land for the Beit Ruth village in Afula in northern Israel.

Now Beit Ruth is a long-term therapeutic residence, school and youth village that endeavors to give vulnerable and at-risk girls and young women the opportunity to thrive emotionally, socially, and academically, thereby breaking the cycle of violence for themselves and future generations of children in Israel. Beit Ruth works along two simultaneous and equally important efforts to achieve its mission to end the cycle of generational violence – direct on-the-ground educational and therapeutic programs and services that are provided in the Beit Ruth Village and a Center of



Beit Ruth Center of Knowledge Director and one of Israel's foremost authorities on gender-based violence, Ronit Lev Ari, addressing Knesset committee.



Beit Ruth's STEM Program

Knowledge that takes the organization’s expertise beyond the village to grow its reach and impact toward ending the cycle of violence. The third leg is Alumnae support and resources for young women now making their way in the world after leaving the Beit Ruth Village – some in the IDF or National Service, some in higher education or the workplace.

In a safe, structured, and loving home environment, Beit Ruth offers academic and therapeutic resources for abused and at-risk girls and young women, aged 13 to 18 years old from all over Israel, to re-enter society as caring, educated, independent, and empowered young women. The objective is to give each girl the necessary life, education, and social and emotional skills to leave the village as a healthy, happy, educated, and empowered young woman. Beit Ruth operates 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

According to Danielle Burenstein, Beit Ruth’s executive director, who has held her position for 10 years, “Beit Ruth is a place that doesn’t give up on a girl who needs us most. It is an incubator of ideas to be shared.” She is proud of “the personal connections with girls and young women who are healing and growing before my eyes, witnessing their transformation and being part of it, first-hand, and one life at a time – I know we are doing something extraordinary.”

She added, “Then when you look at the big picture, having been instrumental in the formation of Beit Ruth’s on-site Center of Knowledge, the full extent of our impact far beyond the Village becomes clear. This is the



Beit Ruth Village

place where doctors and judges, teachers and police, public policymakers, human resources managers, and so many others come to learn from Beit Ruth, how they too can change the course of girls' lives when those girls have suffered the type of abuse and neglect we see. And this is happening across Israel and far beyond. Lastly, knowing that we have a cohort of 400+ alumnae and growing, whose lives have been saved, changed, transformed by this place called Beit Ruth, and knowing that by extension the people in their lives and if they choose to have children, families—they too will be impacted by Beit Ruth."

As to challenges, Burenstein cited the passing of Susan Ashner in 2024, adding, "But immediately, our growing community of friends, supporters, and partners, showed just how strongly they are committed, not simply to carrying out Susan's vision for Israel's girls at risk but continuing to build on it—for every girl, every young woman who needs Beit Ruth today and who will in the future."

Burenstein also talked about how females were disproportionately affected by the rise in domestic violence during the COVID pandemic, October 7th and the ongoing war since then, and the current war. Many girls and women have hesitated to call reporting hotlines, saying they felt "their personal problems are 'not as important' as the national war effort." Factors like personal loss (parents, friends, and family killed), economic loss (loss of jobs and livelihoods), absentee parents (called up for duty), and displacement in temporary housing have heightened the risk of abuse within families and for those in temporary living quarters.

In 5 years Burenstein "would like to see Beit Ruth grow in its role as a thought leader and a leading voice in the national and international conversation concerning abuse and violence against girls and women. I'd like to see our impact and reach continue to grow, not just in the number of lives we touch, but

the means through which we can advance healing and transformation. We're not here for transactional care; this is transformative care. And together with Beit Ruth's growing network of partners, leaders, champions, and supporters, we will continue to innovate for our own girls and for the countless more like them throughout Israel and the world who deserve lives of dignity, safety, independence, and endless possibility."

She concluded, "Beit Ruth is changing lives. We are changing the face and the fabric of Israel, both broadly and one young woman at a time."

Beit Ruth's Annual Gala will be held on Monday, May 4, at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York City. The gala will honor Anya Gross, a member of the Board of Directors, with the Leadership in Action Award in recognition of her steadfast guidance and stewardship of Beit Ruth's mission and future and Stephanie Wilf Kahn, a rising force on the Young Leadership Council with the Spirit of Beit Ruth Award for her passion and commitment to ensuring a stronger future for Israel's most vulnerable girls.

Today, Israel is facing profound trauma. Two years of war and ongoing crisis have left many more girls vulnerable. Beit Ruth is on the front lines—providing safety, a path to healing, and quality education that empower our girls to build lives of dignity and independence. As the need grows, so does Beit Ruth. At the request of Israel's Ministry of Welfare, Beit Ruth is expanding capacity by 25 percent. Beyond that, Beit Ruth has begun planning its next phase of capital growth. This will ensure Beit Ruth remains ready and able to save even more girls and young women for generations to come.

For questions, contact Melissa Mundy at BeitRuth@dsconsultinggroup.com or (212) 888-7003. ✨

ILENE SCHNEIDER HAS BEEN CHRONICLING JEWISH LIFE IN ORANGE COUNTY FOR FIVE PUBLICATIONS SINCE 1978. SHE HAS SERVED AS A COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT FOR A NUMBER OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS. SHE IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JLIFE MAGAZINE.

WE WILL REHANG THE MEZUZAH

BY STACY ABRAMS



Growing up Jewish, I always knew—in the way you know something without truly feeling it—that there were people in this world who hated us. People who wanted to hurt us. People who wanted to see us erased. But that hatred always lived somewhere else. In another country. In another century. In the pages of a history book.

I knew the stories of Purim, Hanukkah, and Passover—stories of a people who refused to be broken, who rose up again and again to survive. But they felt like legends, ancient and distant. I knew about the Holocaust, about the systematic slaughter of six million of our people, but even that felt somehow unreal—too enormous, too monstrous to fully absorb as something that actually happened to actual human beings. I knew about the bombings in Israel, the sirens, the shelters, the constant vigilance—but that was far away. That was over there. That couldn't happen here.

Until today.

Today, the hatred came to my backyard. Less than a mile away.

I was going about my regular day—working, moving through the ordinary rhythms of life — when my phone screamed with an urgent alert: active shooter at Temple Israel. Seconds later, an email from our community association: effective immediately, the community was on lockdown. The gates were sealed.

We were told to shelter in place.

Shelter in place. As if those words could protect us.

My heart began to pound. My mind raced to the geography of our neighborhood—directly in the path between the synagogue and the Jewish Community Center, the shooter's likely next target. I wanted to hide. I wanted to pull my children into a closet, hold them tight, and cry until it was over. I felt utterly unprepared, as though I had been yanked without warning into some terrible chapter of history I thought I'd only ever read about.

But there was no time to hide. No time to cry. No time to prepare. There was only now—and my children, whose eyes were wide with a terror no child should ever know, who suddenly didn't feel safe in their own home.

No one teaches us this. No one in America prepares us for the moment history stops being history and becomes the present tense. I had nothing but instinct, love, and a handful of close friends sending messages of support to carry me through.

In the thick of the panic, my kids begged me to take down the mezuzah from our front door—afraid that if someone came running past, it would mark us. Identify us. Target us.

I stood there and felt the weight of that request in my chest.

I debated it. I wrestled with it. And then I did it—because in that moment, my only job was to give my children whatever thin, fragile sense of safety I could

offer in a world that had suddenly stopped feeling safe at all.

But as I stood outside in the open air, heart hammering, hands moving quickly, something shifted inside me. I thought about the Jews in Nazi Germany who would have given anything not to wear the yellow star sewn onto their coats. I thought about the Jews of the Maccabean era, praying and studying in secret, hunted for the crime of belief. I thought about Moses's mother, placing her baby into a basket on the river— out of abandonment, but out of a love so desperate and fierce it looked like letting go.

We have always been here before.

We put on a Disney movie. I sat with my phone in my hand, watching the messages pour in—love, fear, solidarity—and I pulled my children close. And somewhere in those hours of waiting and holding and pretending to be calm, it hit me with full force:

This is not ancient history. This is not far away. This is my street. My home. My children's faces.

The hatred I had always known about in the abstract—it was here. It was real. And it was happening to us.

After several agonizing hours, word came that the shooter had been taken down, thanks to the extraordinary courage of the synagogue's security team, its staff, and the first responders who ran toward the danger. The lockdown was lifted. We were told we were "safe."

Safe. What a complicated word that has become. With Passover only weeks away, I find myself

thinking about what it means that we are still here—still fighting, still surviving, still having to explain to our children why someone would want to hurt them for being who they are. More than three thousand years have passed since our ancestors were slaves in Egypt, and yet in some profound and painful way, we are still not entirely free. We are still slaves—not to Pharaoh, but to the hatred that refuses to die.

And yet.

The Jewish people have a one-hundred percent survival rate. Every empire that has tried to destroy us has crumbled. Every Haman, every Pharaoh, every force that has tried to extinguish this people has failed. We are still here. We are always still here. We rise—again and again—like a phoenix from the ashes, carrying our history in our hands and our hope in our hearts.

When my children are ready, we will rehang the mezuzah. That will be our rising.

I will not raise my children in fear—but I will always do whatever it takes to make them feel safe. We will not be slaves to hatred and antisemitism. We will fight for our freedom, even if the road is long, even if it winds through the wilderness for years. We will keep going.

And when we gather for Passover, I will look my children in the eyes and tell them the truth: the hatred is not only in ancient stories. It is not only in other countries. It is here. It has been in our backyard. It has knocked on our door. ✨

STACY ABRAMS IS THE DIRECTOR OF CHAPTER INITIATIVES & OUTREACH FOR UNITED SYNAGOGUE YOUTH (USY). SHE LIVES IN MICHIGAN WITH HER FAMILY. SHE IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JLIFE MAGAZINE.



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WAITING BETWEEN EATING MEAT AND DAIRY

Why some Jews wait six hours, while others wait one or three.

BY RABBI LEXIE BOTZUM, MY JEWISH LEARNING



The prohibition of eating meat and dairy together is derived from the Torah's injunction: "you shall not cook a kid in its mother's milk," which is repeated in three different places. (Exodus 23:19, Exodus 34:26, and Deuteronomy 14:21) The Talmud states that each repetition teaches a prohibition: to cook meat in milk, to eat meat cooked in milk, and to benefit from meat cooked in milk. (Chullin 115b) The Talmud is less clear about what it means to refrain from eating meat and dairy together—specifically, whether one simply can't eat them simultaneously, or whether one must wait in between consumptions; and if one must wait, for how long.

Note that the waiting interval, for many Jews, differs depending on which—dairy or meat—is consumed first. The stricter prohibition is on eating meat followed by dairy and that will be the primary focus of this article.

Today, the amount of time Jews wait between

eating meat and dairy varies. Most Sephardi and some Ashkenazi Jews wait six full hours, but some only wait "into" the sixth hour, i.e. five hours and a few minutes. Three hours is customary according to German Jews while some Dutch Jewish communities only wait one hour.

What the Talmud Says

On Chullin 104b, the Talmud seems to suggest that meat can be eaten after dairy without pause or cleaning. However, it notes that dairy cannot be eaten immediately after meat. While Rav Hisda states, "One who has eaten meat, it's forbidden to consume dairy," he doesn't clarify whether the prohibition consists of a necessary waiting period (and if so, what length), a necessary cleaning of the hands and mouth, or both.

The *sugya* (Talmudic discussion) concludes with this note from Mar Ukva:

Mar Ukva said: I am, with regard to this matter, like vinegar, son of wine, with respect to Father. As Father, if he were to eat meat at this time, would not eat cheese

until tomorrow at this time. But as for me, only at this meal, during which I ate meat, do I not eat cheese; at a different meal on the same day I will eat cheese. (Chullin 105a)

Mar Ukva's language suggests that his father's practice of waiting a full 24 hours between meat and dairy is more laudable than his own of waiting until the next meal. Nonetheless, today there are no Jewish communities that require a full day of waiting.

Talmudic Commentaries: Different Interpretations

Rav Yitzhak Alfasi, also known as the Rif, an 11th-century rabbi in North Africa and codifier of *halakhah* (Jewish law), determined that Rav Hisda's statement implies a necessary waiting period between meat and dairy and that Mar Ukva's practice of waiting from one meal to the next sets the minimum required time. But he doesn't give a count in terms of hours.

A century later, Maimonides codified the waiting time between meat and dairy as six hours, asserting that this is the standard time between meals. The *Shulchan Aruch*, an authoritative Jewish legal code compiled by Yosef Karo in the 16th century, agrees with Maimonides: After eating meat, one must wait six hours. (Yoreh Deah Siman 89) Various commentators attest that for centuries this had been the normative Sephardi practice.

In Ashkenazi circles, the custom developed differently. The Tosafot—medieval talmudists in Western Europe who were students and often descendants of Rashi—ruled that the “next meal” referred to by the sugya isn't determined by a defined time. Rather, once one has said *Birkat Hamazon* (Grace After Meals) and cleaned the table, the meal of meat is concluded and one is permitted to eat dairy immediately. This, they claim, is what *Mar Ukva* meant by “at a different meal” (Tosafot Chulin 104b-105a)—it's not about time, but about completing the rituals of one meal before beginning another.

But soon Ashkenazi Jews also developed a custom of waiting a fixed time between meat and dairy. Centuries after the Tosafot, Rabbi Moses Isserles (also known as the Rema) a 16th-century Ashkenazi rabbi whose commentary is incorporated into the text of the *Shulchan Aruch*, notes that the typical practice in Ashkenaz is to wait one hour between meat and dairy. There's no clear textual basis for this timing—rather, the one hour seems to be a *chumra* (stringency) on the position of the Tosafot which requires no waiting at all, only a separate meal.

The Rema, while referencing the custom of one hour and acknowledging its validity, encourages the more pious to wait the full six. Only a century or two later, other Eastern European commentators on the



Shulchan Aruch insist that any properly observant Jew should wait the full six hours, indicating a normative shift in practice. This is how many Ashkenazi Jews came to wait a full six hours like their Sephardi counterparts.

There are exceptions, however. This shift to six hours occurred within Eastern Europe, but in Dutch communities the practice of one hour persisted and is still the norm to this day. Meanwhile, German communities in early modern times adopted a custom of waiting three hours. This seems to be a stringency on the practice of one hour, though some suggest it stems from shortened waiting time between meals.

Eating Meat After Dairy

As mentioned previously, the Talmud suggests there is no need to wait after eating dairy before consuming meat. *Maimonides* agrees that there is no waiting period but says a person must wash their hands and clean their mouths, and most agree with this *psak* (halakhic decision), while noting that if one eats chicken following dairy even this cleaning isn't necessary.

However, over the centuries most Ashkenazi communities developed the custom of waiting half an hour to an hour between eating dairy and meat (along with the hand and mouth cleaning), based on a comment of the Zohar. Others suggest that one should be required to recite *Birkat Hamazon* after a dairy meal before consuming meat.

With most forms of dairy, this is considered a stringency, but not a fundamental requirement. But we see in the Rema's commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch* (Yoreh Deah Siman 89) that a different practice developed around hard cheeses (defined as those that have aged at least six months). These cheeses, due to their sharpness and fattiness, were believed to remain in the mouth longer and take a longer time to digest, and therefore are treated akin to meat: However long one waits between meat and dairy, that's how long they wait after consuming hard cheese. ✧

RABBI LEXIE BOTZUM IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND JLIFE MAGAZINE.

WE KNOW HOW TO PREVENT JEWISH CLERGY FROM BURNING OUT. WHY AREN'T WE DOING IT?

Rabbis and cantors shouldn't have to seek outside training to flourish in their work, writes a cantor and licensed social worker.

BY LAURA STEIN, THE JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY (JTA)



During my early years of cantorial school, I noticed a significant gap in my studies. While the coursework included extensive classes on biblical grammar, liturgy and text study, I received only surface-level training in providing pastoral care, and little attention was given to my character development, spiritual formation, or to learning to tend to my own well-being as I prepared for a career in religious leadership.

I was being taught, sure. But was I being formed? That question would later inform my understanding of clergy burnout as structural—rooted not in individual weakness, but in how seminaries are training clergy long before they enter the field.

As a future cantor aspiring to guide community members through meaningful rituals and lifecycle transitions, I felt unprepared both for how to best

support congregants on their Jewish journeys and how to protect myself from burnout while doing so. I kept hoping that training would come, but by the end of my second year, I realized I would need to seek additional education outside of the seminary walls.

I decided to apply to a part-time Master of Social Work program at New York University, which I completed at night and on the weekends, alongside my cantorial studies. My seminary pushed back, saying it was unnecessary, but I felt strongly that if I was going to thrive in the role, I would need both an expansive education and an experience that would tend to my growth.

My experience is part of a wider problem. Atra's recent report showing widespread burnout in the rabbinate and articles highlighting similar trends among cantors showcase the seriousness of the issue. Meanwhile,

seminaries have long expressed confusion over why prospective students are becoming increasingly hesitant to enroll in their training programs.

Burnout is, of course, not unique to clergy. Research comparing clergy burnout with other vocations shows that rabbis and cantors experience burnout at levels similar to other helping professionals—and even lower than police and other emergency responders—yet face a uniquely unbounded role marked by constant emotional labor, blurred boundaries, and around-the-clock expectations that may require unique skills to combat.

And while we may be quick to recognize burnout by only its hallmark of exhaustion and simply propose self-care in response, the research is clear that other dimensions of burnout prevalent among clergy—such as job-related cynicism that emerges over time, or feelings of diminished effectiveness caused by systemic barriers—require solutions centered in personal development, relational health and structural and institutional support.

So then why the confusion? It seems simple to me: to prepare rabbis and cantors to thrive in their roles, graduate-level theological education needs to catch up by grounding clergy training in intentional formation and practical skill-building, both central to preventing these trends and promoting long-term success.

It's time to move to action. We need to enact evidence-based practices that support clergy during their education and beyond, helping them to build resilience, not just master content or complete degree requirements.

To find those evidence-based practices, we can look to research findings coming out of academia and the ways that other faith communities have implemented the research's recommendations in their seminary programs.

I can vouch for the necessity of applying these practices and research outcomes. In my social work program, I learned the relational theories, justice skills and psychology chops I knew I would need in order to succeed as a cantor, and which I rely heavily on in my clergy role today. I gained clinical skills that equipped me to explore the personhood of the individual sitting in front of me while also learning to maintain boundaries, protect myself from becoming burnt out as a helping professional, and flourish as a person who loves what she does.

In 2021, I went on to pursue a PhD in Practical Theology with a focus in the Psychology of Religion from Boston University to further deepen my knowledge of this intersection. As a doctoral candidate, I'm part of a research team collecting and publishing data about clergy burnout risks, flourishing potential, formation goals, and the crucial role seminaries play in shaping rabbis and cantors in training.

Our empirical study at a Jewish seminary—the first of its kind—found that students value the formation they already experience through the school's supportive social and academic cultures, impactful

t'filah (prayer) program and processing spaces, and relational growth studying in chevruta (partnered study) and with professors and mentors, among other things. The seminarians also recognized that as the needs of the Jewish community change, their role is changing too, and that developing the relational capacities to facilitate meaningful community is the only way forward.

Students expressed a strong desire to learn more about responsible uses of power, spiritual abuse and teshuva (making amends), the social sciences and mental health, and how to cultivate personal virtue capacities such as compassion and humility in order to promote their well-being. The students requested training in the kinds of skills I gained through my social work education, citing them as essential both to their effectiveness as spiritual leaders and to their personal sustainability as helping professionals.

These results are encouraging and show us what it can look like when seminary systems are enthusiastic about and invest in their students' formation—and they must stir us to action. Potential solutions include establishing or building upon already-existing formation programs to shape future rabbis and cantors as whole people—programs that attend to the strengths and vulnerabilities students bring into their training, and which engage in regular evaluation of their growth. Programs must shift from frameworks that approach burnout as an individual problem to one that highlights systemic challenges and prepares students as healthy, holy vessels with capacities to navigate them—from one that simply educates students to one that forms them for leadership.

Relatedly, and importantly, seminaries must adopt an intersectional lens that acknowledges the unique challenges faced by clergy of marginalized social locations (e.g., women, queer people, people of color) and support those students in developing the tools to respond to the additional obstacles they may encounter in the field.

The impact of this will be broad. By supporting future clergy members' development and well-being, we also help them better serve their eventual communities from places of strength. Research in Christian seminaries shows promising results: when seminarians are supported in their struggles and growth, and studying in institutions that invest in their personal and moral formation along with their knowledge acquisition, flourishing is not only possible, but likely.

We no longer have to wonder about what to do, nor fear that the next generation of Jewish clergy will enter the field without the capacities to thrive in their work. It's time we integrate the research into clergy training programs and ongoing professional development to address issues of burnout, long-term sustainability, and well-being.

Rabbis and cantors shouldn't have to pursue additional degrees to flourish in their work and learn to protect their mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Seminaries can be a part of the solution, if they invest in the work. ✨

LAURA STEIN IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JTA AND JLIFE MAGAZINE.



COVER STORY

HEART OF A STRANGER

AN UNLIKELY RABBI'S STORY OF
FAITH, IDENTITY, AND BELONGING

ANGELA BUCHDAHL

HEART OF A STRANGER, AN UNLIKELY RABBI'S STORY OF FAITH, IDENTITY AND BELONGING

A Jewish Tapestry Book Group Selection for our times and our community

BY DIANE BURR, CO- CHAIR JEWISH EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (JEDI) COMMITTEE
AT PASADENA JEWISH TEMPLE AND CENTER (PJTC)

// This is the story of an unlikely rabbi. A story that could only happen in America. A journey that only became possible when I entered the world in the seventies, thanks to its pioneers and revolutions.

A story of loving parents who didn't let their wildly dissimilar families stand in the way of building their own, of mentors who told me to ignore the naysayers, of lucky breaks, stubborn determination and more than a touch of the Divine Hand," explains Rabbi Angela Buchdahl in the introduction to her book, *The Heart of a Stranger, an Unlikely Rabbi's Story of Faith, Identity and Belonging*.

"Rabbi Buchdahl's story exemplifies all that our book group celebrates," says Veronica Andersen, chair of PJTC's Jewish Tapestry Book Group that is open to all. The narrative is rich with history, while telling the story both of being the other and including the other. Each chapter ends, poignantly with a *Drash*, as if punctuating the story with the Divine.

From Seoul, Korea to Tacoma, Washington

Rabbi Buchdahl, born in Seoul of a Korean Buddhist mother and an Ashkenazi American father, moved with her parents and sister to Tacoma, Washington at age five. Her parents chose to raise their daughters in the small tight-knit Tacoma Jewish community. "They wanted us to have a faith and a religious identity. I got the best of my mother's curiosity and worldview combined with my father's Jewish vocabulary." Growing up, she and her sister were the only people with Asian appearances in Hebrew school and at Jewish Summer camp. Yet she found the blessing of belonging to the Korean and Jewish peoples as "the gift of knowing the heart of a stranger" as both an insider and an outsider.

Searching for Belonging

By age sixteen she felt a strong desire to become a Rabbi despite periods of self-doubt that a mixed-race immigrant would ever be accepted as a Rabbi.



She couldn't imagine herself as a Rabbi because once she left Tacoma she was often questioned about her authenticity in Jewish spaces. She went from feeling, in some challenging life situations, an outcast, to becoming one of the most admired religious leaders in the world.

Her story of both the challenges and joys of being a part of the Korean and Jewish culture offers a kind of comfort to the reader in understanding how the search for belonging without forsaking any part of one's identity is not only possible but healing.

The book is a memoir with short narrative chapters. Each chapter pairs with a *D'var Torah* (literally a word of Torah, also called a *Drash*) connecting the reader to aspects of Jewish tradition such as *Shabbat*, kindness, humility, *tikkun* (repair, as in the teaching to "repair the world"), and patience. In the chapter on "chosenness", she notes that this may be an uncomfortable concept for Jews in our age of multiculturalism, diversity and mixed faith families. She admits that "being chosen" will sound excluding and arrogant to some unless we ask: "chosen for what?"

Her answer, in part, is that Jews were not chosen to be better, but to make things better. Jews, she explains, are called

upon to harness our challenges as our greatest source of strength, and to remember to protect and welcome the stranger.

Radical Compassion and Our Community

Threaded throughout the book is the concept of radical compassion, with the recognition that feeling empathy is a sacred obligation to see the humanity in each of us.

If you are reading this, chances are that you live in or near Los Angeles County, one of the most diverse counties in the nation, including 1.5 million Asian Americans who call the area home.

Learning about cultures around and within the




JEWISH TAPESTRY BOOK GROUP


Come enjoy light Korean & Ashekenazi bites

JOIN A DISCUSSION ABOUT INFLUENTIAL RABBI & AUTHOR ANGELA BUCHDAHL AS WE EXPLORE HER JOURNEY TO THE RABBINATE AND HOW HER INTERSECTIONALITY SHAPED HER JOURNEY



SCAN TO READ MORE ABOUT HEART OF A STRANGER

 10:30 AM

 Apr 26, 2026

 Frostig School

971 N Altadena Dr., Pasadena, CA 91107

RSVP to noni@alumni.ucla.edu

By Jewish, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center



JEDI Members Rob & Claire Reading Heart Of A Stranger

Jewish community is a focus of the Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center's Jewish Tapestry Book group. The group will be discussing *The Heart of a Stranger*, Sunday, April 26 at 10:30 am.

To RSVP for this free event and for the location, email noni@alumni.ucla.edu. Come for the book review and stay for the scrumptious Korean and Romanian snacks (representing food served in Rabbi Buchdahl's home.) And, as always, come as you are. ☆

DIANE BURR IS THE FOUNDER, AND CO-CHAIR WITH CAREY MCINTOSH OF THE JEWISH EQUITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (JEDI) COMMITTEE AT PASADENA JEWISH TEMPLE AND CENTER AND A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JLIFE. TO LEARN ABOUT PJTC'S JEDI COMMITTEE, PLEASE EMAIL JEDI@PJTC.NET, OR CALL 626 798 1161.

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APRIL 2026

Overcoming Life's Obstacles

Lessons Learned from an Israeli Hostage

BY CHARLOTTE

Choose life. Be resilient. Express gratitude. Eli Sharabi, an Israeli hostage, tells my congregation, "Be grateful. If you're lucky enough to sit with your family tonight, you already have everything." At the end of the day, he's telling us that nothing matters more than your family. Not the stress of school, friends, deadlines; not the things we convince ourselves are urgent.

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege to listen to Eli Sharabi as he spoke about his experience as a hostage in the Israel-Hamas War. Sharabi was held captive in Gaza for 491 days before his release in February 2025. Unbeknownst to him, his wife and his two daughters were killed in the initial attack. Visiting my synagogue was one stop on his international book tour. Sitting among a thousand of my fellow Jewish congregants, I bore witness to the atrocities he experienced. Although overwhelmingly sad, I was surprised by the optimism and hope that I felt after hearing his story. I walked away with valuable lessons that I want to share with you.

1. Always choose life, regardless of your circumstances.

Eli Sharabi enforced that although he was not in control of his surroundings, he could control how he reacted. Even in the most dire circumstances, one can choose to overcome life's challenges. I believe that this is a lesson that applies to anyone whether you're facing depression, having conflicts with friends, or experiencing difficulty in school. Find what you can control. By shifting your mindset, you can change your situation.

2. Stay strong and persevere.

Resilience comes from within. Eli Sharabi and his fellow captives found ways to be resilient. They exercised every morning, building physical strength and maintaining their mental health. They celebrated Shabbat weekly. They created a system of sharing. These were the ways they created structure in their day and ultimately coped with their living situation. Small acts of courage helped them survive. We can also



persevere through difficult times. Managing your time, seeking assistance, exercising, and having faith are ways to build your resilience and overcome obstacles.

3. Express gratitude daily.

Eli Sharabi held a nightly routine with the other hostages where they had to say one "good thing" that happened that day. For them, it was an extra piece of bread or the absence of a cruel guard. If Eli Sharabi and the other hostages could find positivity and express gratitude in the most horrific situation, I believe anyone can find something that they are grateful to have in their life. Gratitude has been shown to be an effective tool to improve mental health. It can help you feel grounded, shift your view, and positively impact your mood.

Sometimes the stress in your life feels like the biggest weight. Friends, work, family, school—they loom over you and can be overwhelming stressors. One strategy you can use to alleviate this pressure is to ask yourself the following questions. What can I control? What steps can I take to be resilient? What am I grateful for? It may be helpful to take these steps in order to alter your outlook and change your situation. That large stress may begin to feel smaller and more distant. Your problems can turn into opportunities for growth. ✨

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Keep Movin'

How to Incorporate a Consistent Exercise Routine Into a Busy Schedule

BY KAYLA FINK



For decades, people have turned to movement to get into and stay in physical shape, to keep their body healthy, and to feel good inside and out. However, it wasn't until the last 10 or so years that people started to value the impact exercise has on our mental well-being. While the physical benefits of a workout are great (and so important for a healthy life,) the mental aspects are equally important (if not more).

As teenagers, we have heard our parents, family members, doctors, school counselors, and coaches tell us how important it is to exercise regularly. What they did not mention, however, is that in order for a workout to benefit us mentally, we have to enjoy what we are doing. When you enjoy the workout, the benefits of it increase. Many people argue that there is a workout type for everyone; whether it's weight-lifting, indoor cycling / spinning, zumba, dance cardio, boxing, barre, pilates, or walking. Thanks to the internet

and the digital revolution, there are thousands of workout options we can access right from our phones, computers, or tablets, many of which are very affordable or even free via Youtube or Instagram TV. Our responsibility is to make it a priority and fit it into our already stacked schedules.

For me, I found exercise when I began running track in middle school. I then sought out other types of workouts to get stronger, faster, and become an overall better athlete. I fell in love with strength training and it became an important pillar in my life; every afternoon after school and practice I would spend 40-60 minutes lifting weights. It was a great stress-reliever for me, however about 2 years later I discovered the world of low-impact workouts like pilates, yoga, and sculpt. I completely transitioned to these styles of workouts and I quickly learned that it was the right decision. I realized that high-impact, intense workouts were not best for my

body and that slower, low-impact ones felt better internally and had a transformational effect on my mind. Now, I turn to yoga and pilates (and the occasional cycling class) to feel good in my own body and to let some of that pent-up energy and anxiety go. My new mentality is to focus on feeling good, being present, and moving slower throughout the day. Long story short, I want you to try different workouts and see how your mind and body feel. If you exit a workout not feeling great, that is a sign that it may not be for you and that there is something out there better for you specifically! Remember, everyBODY is different and what works for one person might not work for you. Once the goal switches to just feeling better, that's when the results happen, externally and internally.

Finally, here are my tips for carving out time to move your body

How To Workout When You Have A Busy Schedule:

1. Find workouts you enjoy: there are a multitude of ways to get moving that aren't boring or horrible. If you belong to a gym or club, try out some classes they offer. Try out something you have never done before and don't judge a workout by its cover. Try barre, mat pilates, yoga, and more- you would be surprised! One of the best things about the world wide web is the access we have to thousands of workout classes online. For free, search on YouTube for any kind of workout you are looking for and get moving. Nowadays, there are so many fun & awesome classes.

Check out MadFit, Melissa Wood Health, Sydney Cummings, Five Parks Yoga, PopSugar Fitness, and Hot Pilates for great, free options. There is also a multitude of paid on-demand subscriptions like Variis, CorePower Yoga, Peloton, and The Sculpt Society that offer free trials. Also, you can check out websites such as Sweats & The City and The Sweat Review which have in-depth reviews of online workout classes so you can learn about what they are first! All of these and more will be linked below.

2. Any length of workout is great! Remember that a workout does not have to be a whole hour. Even if you can find 10-15 minutes between classes, club meetings, and volunteer work, that is more than enough! Studies say that getting moving for a few minutes to break up the workday is so beneficial. However, if you can find the time to work out for 30-45 minutes, that is great too. Don't get caught up in the numbers: feel good about exercising for however long your schedule allows. Because guess what? After those 10 minutes, you will feel just as good. (Tip: search 10-minute workouts on Youtube

for a ton of quick, effective classes).

3. Write it on your calendar! It is good to use a planner or calendar to write out your events and tasks anyway, but if you can visually see when you have periods of time between activities, you can schedule your workout (location, time, etc.) which can be very helpful in staying consistent. If you see it on your schedule and treat it like a non-negotiable, you are way more likely to do it.

4. Listen to your body. Understand that each day will feel different. Some days you might have a lot of energy and feel amazing. Others, you might be in a negative headspace and not want to get moving. I do believe that the days you resist working out are the days you need it the most, but please listen to your body. I will say it again because it is so important: LISTEN TO YOUR BODY. Your body knows and will tell you when you have energy for a hard workout and it will also tell you when you need rest. Don't ever feel bad about giving yourself a day or two to rest because that is also a form of self-care. Take advantage of high-energy days and let yourself relax on days you don't feel great.

The goal is to start somewhere and be consistent. If you never workout, I encourage you to start with a 15 or 20 minute workout 2-3x a week. If your schedule allows, increase the days you workout and the length. Make it work for you. Remember, there is a workout for everyone and there are so many options via the internet for free. Make sure to eat well, drink water, and get enough sleep as well. Working out should be fun and a great way to release stress and pent-up energy. Don't forget to listen to your body and take it day by day. In the end, it's all about feeling good and being present in your body. ✨

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FITNESS RESOURCES

YouTube workouts:

MadFit

PopSugar Fitness

Sydney Cummings

Five Parks Yoga CorePower
Yoga

Alo (yoga + strength)

Paid Subscription Services:

Melissa Wood (pilates +
yoga)

The Sculpt Society (dance
cardio + sculpt)

Peloton (all styles of
workouts)

Body by SJ (pilates,
mediation, strength)

Aubre Winters / Sweat
Sessions (dance cardio,
sculpt, barre, HIIT)

Other Class Review Sites:

Sweats & The City

The Sweat Review

How to Silence the Critical Voice in Your Head

You have more control over this voice than you may think!

BY RAY CRAIG



Everyone deals with little critical voices in their heads, but believe it or not, you actually have a lot more control over this voice than you may think! Below are some tips, tricks, and reminders to help you get that critical voice under control because it definitely doesn't have to control you.

1. If it says something negative, talk back to it out loud.

It may talk in your head, but you control your mouth.

2. Remember that other people are not judging you, they are too busy judging themselves.

This is not necessarily a good thing, but if your

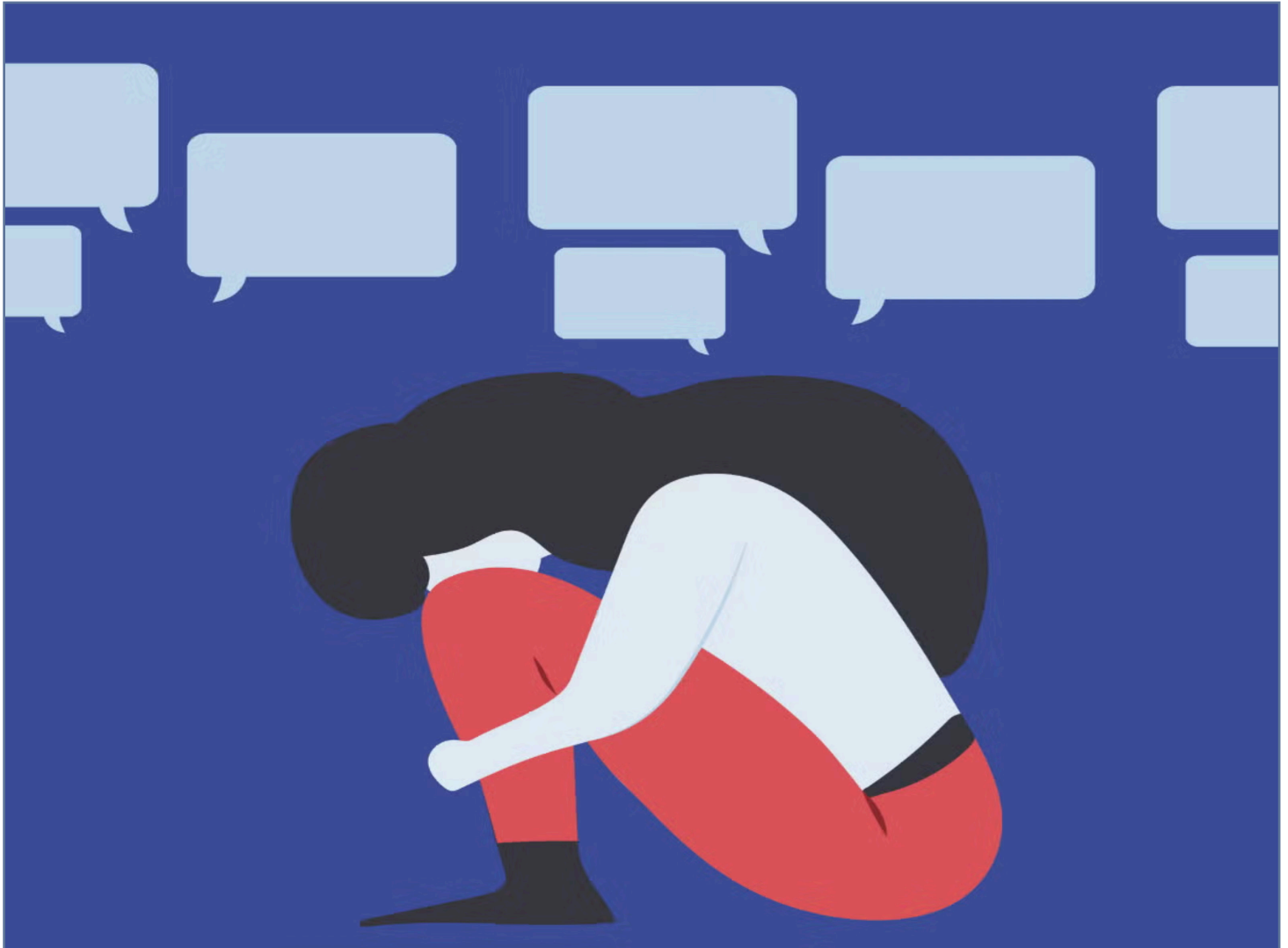
critical voice makes you feel like other people are judging you or aspects of your personality, don't worry about it! No one noticed.

3. Notice what situations cause the voice to say negative things about you.

Paying attention to your actions will help you figure out exactly what you did that you are judging yourself for. That way, you can address the insecurity, forgive yourself for it and avoid it in the future.

4. Give yourself freedom.

Try something new- an outfit that's just a little bolder, talk to your friend crush, raise your hand in Spanish class. You'll feel better after you do it, and



people can be surprisingly supportive when they notice someone trying something new.

5. Stop making self-deprecating jokes.

Maybe you're kidding, maybe you're not, but the more you say negative things about yourself, the easier it is to believe them. Steer clear.

6. Ask for validation when you need it.

Instead of insulting yourself in the hopes of getting a compliment, tell your friends or family if you're feeling insecure! It will foster better communication and you'll avoid the self-deprecation step (see #5).

7. Be aware of the words you hear from your critical inner voice and either avoid or reclaim them.

If the voice calls you stupid, stop using that word in your everyday life! No one will notice your slight vocabulary change and it will make the word less accessible to your spur-of-the-moment thoughts.

8. Accept compliments.

Not only will conversations go more smoothly,

but you'll start to believe the nice things people say, which will make it easier to be nice to yourself.

9. These thoughts are really just impulses.

Try to anticipate them before they start and stop them in their tracks. It's not easy to stop a thought before it comes, but it gets better with practice.

10. Stop pretending to be someone you aren't.

Presenting a true version of yourself to the world will make you feel like less of a disappointment internally (which is good, because you aren't one). And there's no need to act like you're doing great all the time- it's okay to need support sometimes.

11. Remember that it's okay to like yourself.

We sometimes degrade ourselves because self-love is frowned upon in society, but that attitude can stop with you! You are in control of your self-image, so remind yourself that you are the best thing to ever happen to you every day. ✨

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COOKING JEWISH

Lifestyle

HEALTHY COOKING TODAY

Rethinking wellness
at the table.

BY JUDY BART KANCIGOR

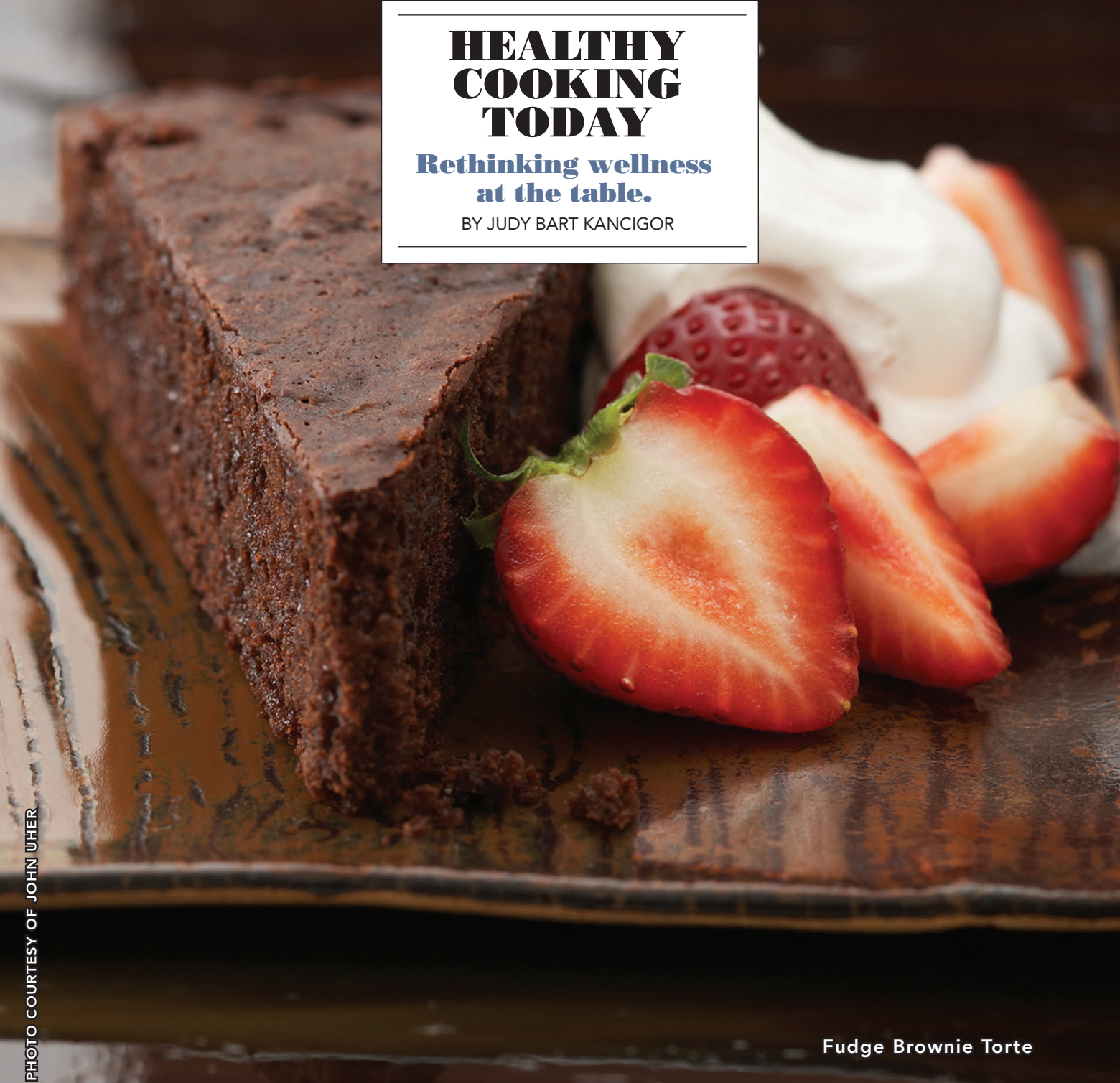


PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN UHER

Fudge Brownie Torte

From a technicolor mango salad bursting with tropical flavor to a surprisingly lighter brownie torte, healthy cooking today is less about restriction than reinvention. Two well-known cookbook authors, vegan food writer Ellen Kanner and kosher cooking icon Susie Fishbein, are helping home cooks rethink wellness at the table.

Award-winning food writer Ellen Kanner, author of “Miami Vegan” (LCIX Editions) stopped eating meat at 12 “because I love cows,” she told me. “It was also an effective way to yank my parents’ chain. But I had to figure out what to eat, so I taught myself to cook. As I grew up and learned more about food, I transitioned from vegetarian to vegan. The three main reasons people choose a vegan diet are personal health, animal welfare and sustainability. But to stick with a vegan diet, you need what you eat to be not just nourishing but fun and fabulous. I hope ‘Miami Vegan’ gives you that.”

As a fifth-generation Miamian and a new vegan, Kanner “fell hard” for the “technicolor, techniflavor fruits and vegetables of the tropics,” she writes. “Even in the blistering heat of summer, relief is as close as a mango. Anyone who thinks being plant-based is about deprivation clearly hasn’t tasted a sweet, sensual, sticky mango plucked fresh from the tree.”

Kanner’s Fireworks Black Bean and Mango Salad from “Miami Vegan” was invented for a July 4th party, but the explosion of flavors makes it a perfect accompaniment any time of year, one which vegans and carnivores alike will appreciate. I caught Kanner demonstrating this easy preparation in a zoom presentation sponsored by Melissa’s Produce (and you can too. Search for Kanner on YouTube.)

“I created this recipe a few years ago to bring to my friend’s annual Fourth of July party,” she said. The hostess needed a last-minute vegan dish for the party spread, “so with little warning, and using what I had in the kitchen, I came up with a winner. This salad combines tender, earthy-flavored black beans; sweet, juicy mango; tart lime; sweet and hot peppers; soft, fresh greens; and buttery toasted pepitas”—pumpkin seeds—“for healthy fats and a fun crunch. It’s a no-cook wonder that

can sit out on a picnic table for hours without wilting. Oil-free fans, this is your moment. And even if you’re not oil-free, this is your salad. It’s naked – in a sexy way, I hope—it doesn’t have a real dressing. It doesn’t need it. The cumin, lime juice and mango create the flavor, and the mango also provides the right amount of moisture that holds everything together. These flavors, textures, and colors come together like a burst of fireworks.”

Mango is the perfect foil for the fiery flavors and textures in the dish. “The mango is the second most popular fruit in the world,” noted Robert Schueller, Director of Public Relations for Melissa’s Produce—banana is the first—“although it’s only number 17 in the U.S. Although its peak is late spring through summer, the mango is available year-round. Not all mangoes taste the same, and color means nothing. What gives away that a mango is ripe is its smell and softness. If it gives a little, then you know it’s time to cut into it. And never refrigerate mangoes unless they become really soft.”

In “Kosher by Design Lightens Up” (Artsroll, \$35.99), the ebullient, wildly popular Susie Fishbein teams up with certified nutritional expert Bonnie Taub-Dix, spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association, to bring over 145 new recipes and dozens of tips and entertaining ideas to jumpstart your plan for a healthier, trimmer you.

“Bonnie commented on every single recipe,” Fishbein told me, “pointing out areas that could be lightened up. She confirmed to me that the philosophy of this book was the right one—forget diets, learn what is good for your body, work change in slowly, and eat what you love.”

Pass on the cottage cheese and Melba toast—this is “health food” with pizzazz! Steamed Veal Dumplings, Japanese Udon Noodle Soup, Mile-High Chinese Chicken Salad, Ratatouille Polenta Pie, Chicken Skewers with Ponzu Dipping Sauce, Grilled Reuben Sandwiches, Huevos Rancheros, Pumpkin Barley Risotto and oh, those desserts: Coconut-Lime Tart, Fudge Brownie Torte, Banana Chocolate Strudel, Pistachio-Cherry Biscotti...23 luscious desserts in all. And every recipe is photographed in that signature mouthwatering, Kosher by Design style by John Uher.

Never did wholesome foods and healthy ingredients look so good!

“This is not a diet cookbook,” Fishbein explained. “It’s not about numbers or nutritional analysis; it’s about becoming a more knowledgeable eater. Learning the virtues of various foods will lead you to use them in new and exciting ways.”

For example, you already know about trans fats and MSG, but have you heard of resistant starch? The fiber found in certain carbohydrates like potatoes, barley, bananas and beans, when cooked and cooled, “resists” digestion and suppresses appetite! From allium (the immune system booster in garlic) to zeaxanthin (antioxidants for eye health), Fishbein explains how superfoods boost your health and keep you fit.

“These nutritious recipes are easy to integrate into your everyday menus,” Fishbein noted. “Anyone looking to migrate into a better way of eating and living will find delicious options here.” Her recipe for Fudge Brownie Torte represents her goal for this cookbook, she writes. “If I was going to get my family, which includes four children, to live a healthier lifestyle for the long run, it had to be about more than steamed spinach and chicken without the skin. Practically, I needed a repertoire of healthy versions of things they would naturally crave and expect. What could be more apt than a brownie dessert? While not a health food, it is a realistic recipe that my kids and their friends will happily eat. By shaving off a lot of fat and sugar from my old standards, I’ve taken another step in the right direction.” ✨

“**Learning the virtues of various foods will lead you to use them in new and exciting ways.**”

JLIFE FOOD EDITOR **JUDY BART KANCIGOR** IS THE AUTHOR OF “COOKING JEWISH” (WORKMAN) AND “THE PERFECT PASSOVER COOKBOOK” (AN E-BOOK SHORT FROM WORKMAN), A COLUMNIST AND FEATURE WRITER FOR THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS AND CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEB AT WWW.COOKINGJEWISH.COM.



Fireworks Black Bean and Mango Salad

Fudge Brownie Torte

Yield: 12 servings

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 ounces semi-sweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 tablespoons chocolate syrup, like Bosco
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1/2 cup Dutch process cocoa powder (I like Droste)
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 large eggs
- 1 egg white (from large egg)
- 2 tablespoons low fat or non-dairy sour cream
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee dissolved in 2 tablespoons warm water
- Low-fat whipped cream
- Strawberries, quartered

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9-inch springform pan with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. In double boiler or metal bowl set over pot of simmering water, melt chocolate, sugar, butter or margarine, chocolate syrup, and oil. Stir until melted and smooth.
3. Meanwhile, in medium bowl, whisk cocoa, flour, salt, and baking powder.
4. In bowl of stand mixer, beat eggs, egg white, sour cream, vanilla, and coffee until smooth. Add melted chocolate mixture. Combine. With machine running, add cocoa mixture in two parts. Mix until smooth and creamy. Scrape down sides as necessary.

Fireworks Black Bean and Mango Salad

Yield: 4 servings

- 1 jalapeño, minced
- 1 red pepper, diced (about 1 cup)
- 2 stalks celery, chopped fine (about 1 cup)
- 2 (15-ounce) cans black beans, rinsed and drained or 4 cups cooked black beans
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- Juice of 1/2 lime (about 1 tablespoon)
- 2 mangoes, peeled and diced (about 2 cups)
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped
- Sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste
- 3 to 4 cups fresh greens like spinach, arugula or frisee
- 1/4 cup toasted pepitas (pumpkin seeds) for garnish, optional

1. In large bowl, gently mix together jalapeño, diced red pepper, and celery. Add black beans and combine well.
2. Add cumin and lime, and toss to coat.
3. Just before serving, add mangoes and cilantro to black beans. Season to taste. Place black beans and mango atop greens and serve at once, garnishing with toasted pepitas, if you like (and you will).
Source: "Miami Vegan" by Ellen Kanner

5. Spread batter into prepared pan. Bake 25 minutes. Do not overbake and don't test with toothpick. Release sides of pan. Allow to cool. Top with whipped cream and strawberries.
Source: "Kosher by Design Lightens Up" by Susie Fishbein ☆



JUDAISM AND FERTILITY TECHNOLOGY

Jewish authorities do not object to fertility technology, but have concerns with some of the specific methods.

BY MY JEWISH LEARNING

One of the first commandments in the Torah is to “be fruitful and multiply,” and procreation has always been an important value in Jewish tradition. Modern medical technologies—such as artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization, and surrogate motherhood—can help people who have difficulty conceiving and bearing children. As a general rule, Jewish authorities do not object to fertility technology, but have concerns with some of the specific methods.

Artificial Insemination

“Artificial” insemination (AI) is the oldest form of non-traditional conception, and is usually divided into two categories: artificial insemination using a husband’s sperm (AIH) and artificial insemination using donor sperm (AID).

Most Jewish authorities allow AIH, though some, like Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg, do so reluctantly and only in extreme situations. Because of the traditional prohibition against masturbation, there is some disagreement about how to retrieve the husband’s sperm. Some authorities suggest that the husband use a condom during sex and then retrieve the semen from the condom. Others allow masturbation in this situation, since the semen will be used to impregnate and will not be “wasted”—which would normally be a concern with ejaculation which does not take place during intercourse.

AID is more complicated. Some authorities, such as Rabbi Judah Leib Zirelson, consider AID to be adultery; Waldenberg believes that AID is akin to adultery and calls it “a great abomination.” However, according to others, such as Rabbis Moshe Feinstein and Ben Zion Uziel, there can be no adultery without intercourse.

There are other reasons why AID might be problematic. Because a sperm donor is usually anonymous, some authorities are concerned that the offspring of an AID conception might end up marrying his or her sibling, committing unintentional incest.

Waldenberg and others cite this as a reason to prohibit AID, but because of the remoteness of this possibility and the prospect of using semen from non-Jewish men, many authorities are not concerned about potential incest. Still, even those Orthodox authorities that permit AID permit it only in extenuating circumstances. The Conservative and Reform movements both permit AID.

In Vitro Fertilization

In vitro fertilization (IVF), in which eggs extracted from a woman are fertilized outside of her body and then implanted in her uterus, raises several related issues. Usually, several eggs are taken for fertilization, and the “best” embryos are chosen for implantation.



Jewish authorities have concerns about what to do with the unused zygotes (fertilized eggs). If they are discarded, is it akin to “wasting seed” or, more seriously, abortion? In the end, most Jewish authorities agree that an egg fertilized outside of a womb does not have any human status and can be discarded.

In addition, because the success rate of IVF is still relatively low, doctors often implant several zygotes to increase the chances of one of them attaching to the uterine wall and developing. If all or even many of them attach, however, then the woman will be carrying four or five embryos, potentially dangerous for both her and the developing fetuses.

Selective abortion of some of the embryos is often recommended in such cases. While Judaism permits abortion when a woman’s life is in danger and some authorities permit abortion in other serious cases, actively pursuing a situation in which abortion might well be necessary is potentially problematic from the standpoint of Jewish tradition. Rabbi Elliot Dorff has suggested limiting implantation to two or three zygotes, thus avoiding even the potential need for selective abortion.

Surrogate Motherhood

Surrogate motherhood raises a host of halachic (Jewish legal) and moral problems. In general, a surrogate is paid to incubate and give birth to a baby for another couple, and many rabbis are disturbed by this “commodification” of a woman’s body and the reproductive process. Others are concerned about the effect that it might have on the marriage of the couple trying to conceive. For these and other reasons, many rabbis—across denominational lines—reject surrogacy.

Others, however, believe that the legal and moral objections can be allayed and approve of surrogacy when it is the only possible way a couple can have children. However, there are lingering questions for these authorities as well, such as which woman is considered the child’s mother. ✪

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

PASSOVER EVENING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 – THURSDAY, APRIL 9

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 7:30 - 10:00 PM

Passover Celebration
Chabad of the Inland
Empire at Manor Room
1318 W. 9th Street Upland
Warm and inviting
atmosphere Gourmet
Passover cuisine
Enjoy a meaningful and
interactive Seder
Adults \$54
(\$59 after March 23)
Children \$30
(\$35 after March 23)
Register online at
ChabadInlandEmpire.com
*nobody will be turned
away due to lack of funds,
CIE

THURSDAY, APRIL 2 6:00 - 8:00 PM

Second Night Seder at
Temple Shalom of Ontario
Temple Shalom of Ontario
963 West 6th Street
Ontario, CA
Seder will begin promptly @
6:00 P.M.
Price: \$45.00 per person
Children 5 and under are
free
Catered Passover Dinner,
TSO

FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 10, 17 & 24

7:00 - 8:00 PM EVERY WEEK UNTIL MAY 29, 2026

Erev Shabbat
Temple Ami Shalom
On Zoom, TAS

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 11, 18 & 25 10:00 AM - NOON EVERY WEEK UNTIL MAY 30, 2026

Shabbat services at
Temple Ami Shalom, TAS

FRIDAY, APRIL 10 7:30 - 9:30 PM

Shabbat Service
Temple Beth David, TBD

SATURDAY, APRIL 11 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Celebrate our Musical Roots
at Temple Beth Israel
of Pomona
Contact Paul Buch
909.575.7858
cantor@tbipomona.org, TBI

SUNDAY, APRIL 12 10:30 AM - NOON

PJ Library Makes Music In
the Park with Mr. Mark
Lewis McAdams
Riverfront Park
2944 Gleneden St
Los Angeles, CA 90039
Contact
Natalie Karic
nkaric@jewishsgpv.org

SUNDAY, APRIL 12 4:00 - 6:00 PM

Yom HaShoah
Commemoration at Temple
Beth Israel of Pomona
Contact
Cantor Paul Buch
909.575.7858
cantor@tbipomona.org, TBI

SUNDAY, APRIL 12 6:30 - 9:30 PM

Remember My Name - Yom
HaShoah Commemoration
Staged Play Reading
Temple Beth David of the

San Gabriel Valley
Contact
Cantor Judy Sofer
jsofer@jewishsgpv.org

SUNDAY, APRIL 19 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Swap for Good: A Schmatta
and Sefer Exchange
Temple Sinai of Glendale
Contact
Natalie Karic
nkaric@jewishsgpv.org, TSG

SUNDAY, APRIL 26 9:30 - 11:30 AM

Bagel Breakfast at Temple
Beth David of the San
Gabriel Valley
Contact
Mike Sirota
626.287.9994
office@templebd.com

TUESDAY, APRIL 28 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Israel in Focus:
A Conversation
with Herb Keinon
Temple Beth Israel of
Pomona
Contact
Jason Moss
jmoss@jewishsgpv.org, TBI

FRIDAY, APRIL 17 6:30 - 8:30

L'Dor Vador Shabbat
Temple Beth David, TBD

FRIDAY, APRIL 24 7:30 - 9:30 PM

Shabbat HaGadol
Temple Beth David, TBD

SATURDAY, MAY 2 7:30 - 9:30 PM

JFed Players Present:
Southern Fried Funeral
every week on Thursday,

Saturday, Sunday until May
10, 2026
Ahiyah Center
150 N. El Molino Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101
Contact
Cantor Judy Sofer
jsofer@jewishsgpv.org,
JFGSGPV

Beth Shalom of Whittier (BSW)

[www.
bethshalomofwhittier.net](http://www.bethshalomofwhittier.net)

B'nai Simcha Community Preschool www.bnaisimcha.org

Chabad Jewish Center of South Pasadena [www. jewishsouthpasadena.com](http://www.jewishsouthpasadena.com)

Chabad of Arcadia (CoA) www.jewisharcadia.com

Chabad of Pasadena (CoP) www.chabadpasadena.com

Chabad of the Inland Empire (CIE) [www.chabadinlandempire. com](http://www.chabadinlandempire.com)

Congregation Hugat Haverim (CHH) www.hugathaverim.com

Congregation Emanu El (CEE) <https://emanuelsb.org/>

**Jewish Federation of
the Greater San Gabriel
and Pomona Valleys
(JFGSGPV)**

www.jewishsgpv.org

**Pasadena Jewish
Academy (PJA)**

www.pasadenajewishacademy.com

**Pasadena Jewish
Temple & Center (PJTC)**

www.pjtc.net

**Temple Ami Shalom
(TAS)**

<https://templeamishalom.org/>

**Temple Beth Israel of
Pomona (TBI)**

www.tbipomona.org

**Temple Beth David of
the San Gabriel Valley
(TBD)**

www.templebethdavidsgv.org

**Temple Beth Israel of
Highland Park and Eagle
Rock (TBILA)**

www.tbila.org

Temple B'nai Emet (TBE)

<https://templebnaiemet.org>

**Temple Sinai of Glendale
(TSG)**

<http://temple-sinai.net>

**Temple Shalom of
Ontario (TSO)**

www.templeshalomofontario.org

**Tree of Life Preschool
(formerly TBI Preschool)
(ToL)**

<https://tbipomona.org> ☆



**Hope you will join us
for the Security Briefing
and CSI Town Hall on
May 14, 2026, from
9:30 AM to 12:30 PM**

This event will provide a security briefing from local law enforcement and an opportunity to learn more about CSI's partnership with our Jewish Federation. Attendees will hear up-to-the-minute updates and the information presented at the event is aimed to empower community members – both Jewish and non-Jewish – to improve security awareness and to improve security postures throughout the community. Everyone is invited to attend.

NEWS & JEWS

Fortnite tops ADL's new 'leaderboard' ranking video games on antisemitism safeguards

The ADL's Online Gaming Leaderboard ranks 10 top online games on their efforts to curb antisemitism.

By Gracie Gilson, The Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)

The online video game Fortnite tops the Anti-Defamation League's "leaderboard" ranking online video game companies on their efforts to curb antisemitism and extremism on their platforms.

The Online Gaming Leaderboard, which the antisemitism watchdog billed as the "first comprehensive public evaluation" of how online multiplayer games address antisemitism, ranked 10 popular online games based on safety features, moderation, player protections and written policies meant to address antisemitism and hate.

Fortnite was followed at the top of the rankings by Grand Theft Auto Online, Call of Duty and Minecraft. Games labeled as having "limited protection" by the ADL included Counter-Strike 2 and PUBG: Battlegrounds.

Madden NFL, Valorant, Clash Royale and Roblox, a collaborative computer gaming platform for children as young as 7, were ranked as having "moderate protection."

"Without strong safeguards, these platforms can become breeding grounds for harassment and hateful activity that harms players directly, normalizes hateful ideologies and damages trust," Jonathan Greenblatt, the CEO of the ADL, said in a statement Wednesday. "This leaderboard provides the transparency that parents, gamers and the industry need to understand where companies are succeeding and where urgent improvements are necessary."

The leaderboard's release coincided with a landmark Los Angeles jury verdict finding Meta and YouTube liable for harming a young user through addictive design features.

In the virtual worlds of online gaming, players have posted abusive messages in chats, created antisemitic imagery and even given themselves bigoted usernames.

While Fortnite ranked first, the popular online game has also previously faced scrutiny over allegations that it enabled antisemitic content. Last September, it disabled a character dance feature after users said its gestures resembled a swastika.

Roblox, which has long faced criticism over content moderation, has also been the subject of controversy, including in 2022 when it removed a user-created simulation of a Nazi gas chamber. In the wake of the Oct. 7 attacks in 2023, the Israeli government also urged users to report pro-Palestinian activity in the game that it said included antisemitic content.

"Genesis opens with chaos and void," said Allen. "Creation doesn't wait for clarity; it begins in the dark. At a time when fear constricts our collective imagination, creativity is how we participate in that original creative act again—bringing new worlds into being."

Registration and campaign information: <https://www.jewishstudioproject.org/we-the-process-celebration>. ✪



Fairgoers play video games at the Japanese publisher Nintendo Switch's stand during Milan Games Week and Cartoomics 2024 at Fiera Milano Rho on November 22, 2024 in Milan, Italy. Photo courtesy of Emanuele Cremaschi

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white one-piece swimsuit with a purple and pink floral pattern, is floating in a swimming pool. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The water is clear and blue, with ripples around her. The pool's tiled bottom is visible through the water.

LAST WORD

“Spiritual awareness is one of the key components of healthy lifestyle that impacts the whole body and rejuvenates the spirit. Physical fitness and healthy nutrition allows that spirit to flourish to new dimensions and many people experience a closer relationship to G-d.”

– Samir Becic

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