

Jlife

SGPV JEWISH LIFE

August 2025
Av — Elul 5785

SUPPORTING AB 715
The bill that offers a
much-needed civil
rights response
to the rise in
antisemitic incidents
in K-12 settings

**A CRASH COURSE
IN EARLY
JEWISH HISTORY**
From biblical times
to the emergence of
Rabbinic Judaism

THE EDUCATION ISSUE

GOT KIDS?
Look Inside for
kiddish



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Following Services

ROSH HASHANAH DAY

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EREV YOM KIPPUR/ KOL NIDRE

Wednesday, October 1

7:30 PM Featuring

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Thursday, October 2

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SUPPORTING AB 715

The bill that offers a much-needed civil rights response to the rise in antisemitic incidents in K-12 settings

Over the last several years, as issues have arisen, and a response from the Jewish community has been needed, our Jewish Federation has served as that voice. As a result, we have found ourselves in need to advocate on a variety of different issues, including the rise of antisemitism.

As you may remember, back in the spring of 2023, our Jewish Federation worked diligently to get 29 of our community's 48 city councils to adopt resolutions condemning antisemitism and all forms of hate. While I knew that this would not eliminate antisemitism, it was clear to me that this was a way we could address and confront the rise of antisemitism locally. I firmly believe that for us to diminish the frequency with which antisemitism takes place, we need to hit it from all sides, looking at every possible way to combat it.

This is why, for the last couple of months, my colleagues and I in other Jewish organizations have been rallying behind AB 715, a bill to tackle the rise of antisemitism in California's elementary, middle, and high schools.

In the 2023 Annual LA County Hate Crimes Report, the data showed that anti-Jewish hate incidents surged by 153% to the largest number of anti-Jewish crimes ever recorded in the history of this report. These incidents accounted for 90% of all religiously motivated hate incidents. (It is important to remember that this report came out before Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, leading to an exponential increase in anti-Jewish hate and sentiment since then.) And hate crimes taking place at schools grew 46% and accounted for 10% of all hate crimes.

Sadly, as the number of anti-Jewish hate crimes has grown, they have found their way into our elementary, middle, and high schools

over the last several years. Jewish students are increasingly experiencing bias-based incidents that disrupt their sense of belonging and ability to focus on learning. Schools must address these issues with care, transparency, and accountability to address the growing sense of intimidation and a lack of protection. In January 2024, the DOJ released a first-of-its-kind report stating that hate crimes had steadily increased since 2020. And the report also indicated that schools were now the third most common location for reported hate crimes in the US. And instances of anti-Jewish offenses were second to anti-Black or African-American offenses. According to the report, the most frequently reported offenses at schools were "Intimidation, Destruction/Damage/Vandalism, and Simple Assault."

And even with this report, we know that a significant majority of hate incidents, including anti-Jewish hate incidents, go unreported in schools as well as in society. When hate incidents occur at schools, most often school administrators attempt to handle them internally and rarely report them, despite offers from our Jewish Federation and other organizations to work with local school districts to encourage them to utilize outside resources.

Unfortunately, due to a lack of sufficient clarity and guidance, school administrators are ill-equipped to address antisemitic incidents, leaving students to feel unsupported. AB 715 can help bridge this gap by ensuring schools are better equipped to respond appropriately and equitably.

When students do not feel safe in their learning environment, it is the school's responsibility to improve the situation. I am fully aware that there is opposition to this bill because there's a perception that it will limit free speech. But what this



bill does is help protect Jewish students from feeling isolated, intimidated, and ridiculed, often leaving many to feel unsafe in the place where they should be protected. School should be a place where students feel comfortable and supported in learning and growing. However, when students feel intimidated and scared and feel they need to hide their identity, school officials, as well as elected officials, must take action to make the students feel safer than they currently do. AB 715 will do this.

There is an urgent need and opportunity for California's schools to strengthen protections and cultivate a climate of inclusion for Jewish students, aligning with their existing support for other vulnerable groups. AB 715 offers a much-needed civil rights response to the rise in antisemitic incidents in K-12 settings. It brings parity to how antisemitism is addressed within existing anti-discrimination frameworks and offers a systematic and long-overdue response to the alarming rise in antisemitism across California's K-12 schools.

This is why I am doing what I can to help get this bill passed, as it will help Jewish students feel safe and proud of their Jewish identity. ☆



JASON MOSS IS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
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OF THE GREATER
SAN GABRIEL AND
POMONA VALLEYS.

“If you are extremely disturbed by a terrorist incident that took place thousands of miles from your home, can you imagine going to sleep after a missile siren has sounded?”

GET OUT THERE & “DRIVE”

Learning from Israelis About Fear Management

BY TEDDY WEINBERGER



Jerusalem, Israel highways around the desert of the Judeean Hills

The June 1 firebombing of a “Run for Their Lives” in Boulder, CO exacerbated the already frayed nerves of American Jews. First came the arson committed at the home of Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro, then came the killing in Washington D.C. of Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky, and, for the third month in a row, another hate-crime against Jews. All this was taking place while Israel is still at war in Gaza, a time when antisemites are disguising their views as legitimate criticism of the State of Israel. And yet to Israelis, talk of a “shattering of our sense of security” (as per Halie Sofer, chief executive of the Jewish Democratic Council of America) and op-eds like “Jews

are Afraid Right Now” (by Sheila Katz, chief executive of the National Council of Jewish Women, in the *NY Times*) strike us as exaggerated. If you are extremely disturbed by a terrorist incident that took place hundreds or even thousands of miles from your home, can you imagine going to sleep after a missile siren has sounded?

Though we were visiting my in-laws in the Boston area when the war with Iran started on June 13, there was no shortage of sirens due to Houthi missiles at the very beginning of that month. Sirens sounded on June 2 at around 9:00 p.m. and on the next night at around 10:00 p.m. We had company during the first siren: our son Elie, his wife Hadar, and their three small

children were in the middle of packing up after spending the Shavuot holiday with us. The siren was greeted by Yehuda (6), Ayala (4), and Itamar (21 months) with much excitement, as Sarah ushered everyone into our home’s “safe room” (like our elderly neighbor with whom we share the bomb shelter, I tend to continue what I am doing when a siren sounds). After a few minutes, everyone came out of the shelter; sometimes you can hear the Iron Dome’s interception of the missile, but this time we did not. The kids were chattering about the experience but not alarmed in any way (they tend to take cues from the adults around them; of course, it’s quite a different story if there is a siren in the middle of the night: who

likes to be woken up at 3:00 a.m.?). Then Elie and his family drove off to their home in Jerusalem. I'll just remark in passing that the kids have gotten so used to sirens that Yehuda over the holiday showed me how if you put your hands around your mouth in a certain way and blow through them, it makes a sound similar to a siren.

Dear Reader: The Israeli attitude to fear management can be summarized by my friend Shlomo Dubinsky's motto: "If the road is open, drive." Going back 25 years when we both lived in Givat Ze'ev, Shlomo came up with his motto during the terror attacks of the Second Intifada. A few miles of road separated our "West Bank" town from Jerusalem, with Arab villages on either side of the road, and people were very concerned about that drive. The basic principle is a reliance on the state's security apparatus. If those who are paid to protect us (and these are people with much more information than us) deem it okay to travel on Highway 436 to Jerusalem, then it's safe to make the trip. In terms of American life, this doesn't mean that you should not be vigilant; i.e., if you see a suspicious person hanging around



Iron Dome system intercepts Gaza rockets aimed at the city Ashdod

your children's Jewish day school you should certainly report him. But it does mean that not only may you attend synagogue services in Seattle without fear but you may also do so in Boulder. There are security people charged with protecting you, and you can take your

cues from them. So by all means: if there is a Jewish film festival near you, or a rally at an Israeli consulate, or a "Run for Their Lives" calling for the release of the hostages, or just a pick-up basketball game at your JCC, get out there and "drive." ☆

TEDDY WEINBERGER IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JLIFE MAGAZINE. HE MADE ALIYAH WITH HIS FAMILY IN 1997 FROM MIAMI, WHERE HE WAS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES. TEDDY AND HIS WIFE, SARAH JANE ROSS, HAVE FIVE CHILDREN.

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WHAT IS CIVILIZATION FOR?

**The clearer we are about what we value,
the more likely our technologies will benefit us.**

BY DAVID ZVI KALMAN, MY JEWISH LEARNING



The School of Athens. Hand-colored wood engraving based on the fresco (1510/11) in the Vatican by Raphael (Italian painter, 1483 - 1520), published in 1873.

Sometime in the distant future, say the rabbis of the Talmud, the nations of the world are going to line up before G-d to recount their achievements. Each will be found wanting for having not served the interests of the Jewish people.

This revenge fantasy—a tale so blunt it makes *Inglorious Basterds* look tame—is located at the beginning of Tractate Avodah Zarah. Unsurprisingly, it's not a story that gets a lot of airtime; the contempt with which the rabbis hold other nations, the understanding that they all exist to serve Jewish interests, the glee they exhibit at imagining G-d putting them in their place—this is the sort of story that can get a minority religion in trouble.

I like the story anyway. I like it because it is one of the few times the rabbis ask a question that has

become increasingly pressing in an era of world-changing technologies: What exactly are we trying to accomplish? What is civilization supposed to achieve?

For the Romans, civilization is about construction. The Romans tell G-d: "We built many marketplaces. We built many bathhouses. We amassed silver and gold—and we did it all so that the Jewish people can learn Torah."

The Persians aren't much different. "We built many bridges," they say. "We conquered many cities. We fought in many wars. All so that the Jews could learn Torah."

G-d doesn't believe a word of it. All for the Jews? Please. Roman marketplaces are for prostitution. Bathhouses are for pleasure. Bridges are for tax collection. Cities are conquered to acquire slaves. The nations each come before G-d and each is found



The Beautiful Ancient City of Persepolis in Iran

lacking.

What's the point of this story? One obvious element is the rabbinic desire to locate justice in a world that often seems hostile to Jews. But this isn't just a story about comeuppance. The fantasy of ultimate justice also allows the rabbis to move past the shame of being politically disenfranchised, of not being the people who build bridges and markets. It creates a framework where Jews don't need to build civilization because they're supposed to be its beneficiaries, because a well-functioning state is a state that allows Jews to learn Torah.

This stance is more important than it seems. The Jewish relationship to technological progress is a strange one—Jews were never opposed to it, but until the 20th century, they also weren't driving it. The Talmud is notable for not talking about invention. Genres of Greek, Latin and Arabic literature devoted to the specifics of human progress are basically absent from Jewish texts. Without the money or power to commission major projects or (in Christian Europe) admission to the guilds where craftspeople improved their tools, Jews had to find a meaning for their existence that didn't revolve around human progress or human

might. They found it in the study of Torah, an activity without economic benefit that functions best inside of well-functioning societies.

There's a broader reading of this story that is even more interesting. Societies aren't always honest with themselves about the purpose of their technologies. Space travel may be important because our destiny is to travel the stars, but it could also be about advancing military and political interests. Often it's both. But the presence of grand narratives allow the people and governments driving these projects to claim they are doing something for all humankind.

Grand narratives aren't inherently bad, but they can create the illusion of consensus and suppress debate. This is especially true for grand technological narratives, which in our day are often crafted by a small number of people creating products for billions. The best way to respond is not with counter-narratives, but with clarity about our values. The clearer we are about what we want to spend our time doing—be it studying Torah, writing poetry, rock climbing or even working—the clearer we'll be about which technologies will redound to our benefit. ☆

DAVID ZVI KALMAN IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND JLIFE MAGAZINE.

ZIONISM 101

The Jews as a nation in the land of Israel

BY ELI BARNAVI, MY JEWISH LEARNING

The roots of Zionism lay in Eastern Europe, notably within the confines of the Russian Empire. It was there, towards the end of the 19th century, that the largest and, in many ways, the most dynamic of Jewish communities was located—though it was also the most troubled. Conceived by czarist autocracy as a major obstacle to its drive to transform the population into a uniform and malleable society, Russian Jewry was subjected to extremely severe pressure to change its customs, culture and religion.

The Jews, for the most part, tended to bear with the laws that regulated their daily lives and cumulatively humiliated and impoverished them. But when wholesale expulsions from certain areas and successive waves of physical attack were added to the long familiar misery, life under Russian rule in the 1880s began to be judged intolerable.

The Jewish predicament precipitated several reactions, all with a view to finding a lasting solution: a vast movement of emigration, chiefly to the West; the radicalization and politicization of great numbers of young Jewish people, many bending their energies to the overthrow of autocracy; and, among the increasingly secular intelligentsia, a rise in modern nationalist consciousness. It was the latter tendency—Zionism—that bore the most radical implications and was to have the most remarkable results.

The Zionist analysis of the nation's afflictions and its prescription for relief consisted of four interconnected theses. First, the fundamental vulnerability of the Jews to persecution and humiliation required total, drastic, and collective treatment. Second, reform and rehabilitation—cultural, no less than social and political—must be the work of the Jews themselves, i.e., they had to engineer their own emancipation. Third, only a territorial solution would serve; in other words, that establishing themselves as the majority population in a given territory was the only way to normalize their status and their relations with other peoples and polities. Fourth, only in a land of their own would they accomplish the full, essentially secular, revival of Jewish culture and of the Hebrew language.

These exceedingly radical theses brought the Zionists into endless conflict with an array of hostile forces, both Jewish and non-Jewish. On the one



People gathering with Israeli flags at Jaffa Street in the center of Jerusalem to celebrate Israel's Independence Day.

hand, Zionism implied a disbelief in the promise of civil emancipation and a certain contempt for Jews whose fervent wish was assimilation into their immediate environment. On the other hand, by offering a secular alternative to tradition, Zionism challenged religious orthodoxy as well—although, given the orthodox view of Jewry as a nation, the two had something in common after all. The Zionists were thus condemned from the outset to being a minority among the Jews and lacking the support that national movements normally receive from the people to whose liberation their efforts are directed.

The other struggle that the Zionists had to face resulted from their political and territorial aims. They had to fight for international recognition and for acceptance as a factor of consequence, however small, by the relevant powers. In the course of time they have had to contend with the political and, eventually, armed hostility of the inhabitants and neighbors of the particular territory where virtually all Zionists desired to re establish the Jewish people as a free nation: Palestine, or in Hebrew, Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel.

They were more successful in the broader international arena than on the local front. Ottoman opposition hobbled the movement almost totally in its early years, and the violent opposition mounted by Arab states and peoples has to this day shaped the physical and political landscape in which Zionism has implemented its ideals. In the final analysis, it is nonetheless the reluctance of the majority of Jews worldwide to subscribe to its program in practice that has presented the strongest challenge to Zionism, and has proved the greatest obstacle to its ultimate triumph. ☆

ELI BARNAVI IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND JLIIFE MAGAZINE.

HISTORY OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT

America's largest Jewish denomination, Reform began in 19th-century Germany.

BY MY JEWISH LEARNING

Reform Judaism is the largest of the three main American Jewish denominations.

The movement's principal North American organization, the Union for Reform Judaism, has roughly 900 member congregations and 1.5 million adherents, and is an affiliate of the international arm of Reform Judaism, the World Union for Progressive Judaism, based in Jerusalem. The URJ operates rabbinical seminaries in four cities (three in the U.S. and Jerusalem), a network of 16 North American summer camps, an advocacy arm in Washington, D.C., and a national youth group.

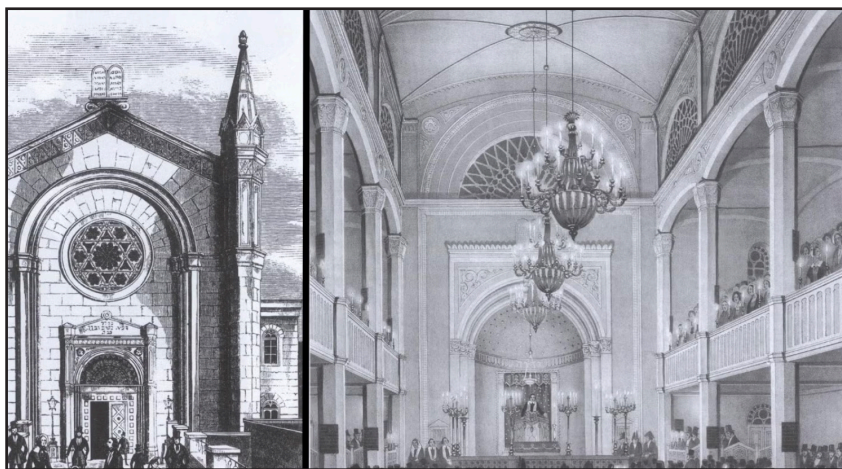
Internationally, the movement is much smaller, encompassing only about 40 communities in Israel and about twice that number in England. Smaller numbers of Reform communities are found in a handful of other European countries.

The movement, which was established in Germany in the mid-19th century, was born of an attempt to reconcile Judaism with contemporary life and harmonize it with emerging currents in Western thought. The movement is politically liberal, egalitarian on gender issues, active in interfaith efforts and religiously progressive—accepting patrilineal descent and ordaining women and gays as rabbis, among other innovations. Historically, it has emphasized the ethical aspects of Jewish tradition over its ritual requirements, though in recent decades it has begun to re-embrace some of the religious practices it once dismissed.

Origins in Germany

The backdrop to the movement's emergence was the Emancipation, the process begun in late 18th century to grant European Jews equal rights and eliminate the legal barriers that had impeded their social and economic progress for centuries. The emergence from the European ghetto had an enormous impact on the practice of Judaism, leading some Jews to abandon long-observed religious practices in an effort to assimilate more easily into the broader culture.

"Eager to participate and demonstrate to their neighbors what loyal and productive citizens they could be, many Jews decided to jettison kashrut [Jewish dietary laws] and other traditional laws and practices which prohibited them from eating at the homes of their gentile friends or attending social gatherings at cafés," the Reform Rabbi Lawrence Englander has written in an essay on the movement's



Hamburg Temple, the first permanent Reform synagogue. (Wikimedia)

origins. "They were embarrassed, too, should neighbors accustomed to the decorum of the Protestant or Catholic church visit the synagogue and witness a spectacle of men wrapped in strange prayer shawls noisily davening [praying] a repetitive liturgy while children tore up and down the aisles."

The early Jewish reformers sought to fashion a Judaism more consonant with European life. Rabbis led services in black clerical robes similar to those worn by Christian clergy and employed professional choirs and organ players. Men and women sat together, rather than in separate sections of the synagogue, and male worshippers prayed bareheaded, without the traditional kippah (head covering). For a time, the main Shabbat service—conducted in the vernacular, rather than Hebrew—was held on Friday night (or Sunday) so as not to interfere with activities on Saturday, which was generally a work day. (The two-day weekend wasn't introduced until the early 20th century.) And the vast body of ritual practice that had served to set Jews apart from the wider culture was de-emphasized in favor of universal ethics and the prophetic vision of justice and peace.

The first permanent Reform temple was founded in 1818 in Hamburg, Germany. Early Reform leaders preferred to call their houses of worship temples rather than synagogues, partly to distinguish them from traditional synagogues and partly to signify that they had abandoned the Jewish longing to rebuild the ancient temple in Jerusalem. A number of other Reform congregations were established in Germany and elsewhere in Europe in the early 1800s, but the movement really began to flourish in the United States, where it was embraced by the German Jews who were

then the dominant force in American Jewish life.

Flourishing in the United States

In 1846, the man credited as the Reform movement's founder—Isaac Mayer Wise—arrived in the United States. Wise took a pulpit in Albany, New York and set about instituting a series of reforms there. He was the chief author of the first American Reform prayer book, *Minhag America*, published in 1857. After a split from the Albany temple, Wise relocated to Cincinnati, Ohio, where the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was formed in 1873 and, by 1903, claimed 115 member congregations. In 1875, the first Reform seminary, Hebrew Union College, opened its doors. The movement's rabbinical association, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, was founded in 1889.

In 1883, at a dinner for the first graduates of HUC, shellfish, frogs legs and other non-kosher foods were served—while it is unclear whether the blatantly *treyf* menu was an intentional provocation or an oversight, it was widely seen as a reflection of the movement's disavowal of Jewish dietary practices. The event came to be known as the Trefa Banquet and was a major factor leading to a split in the movement that ultimately birthed the more traditionally minded Conservative movement.

The split was effectively sealed by the adoption in 1885 of the Pittsburgh Platform, a formal statement of the tenets of Reform Judaism. The document declared that only Judaism's "moral laws" are binding and rejected all those "such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization." Jewish laws regulating diet are "foreign" to the modern mind and as such are "apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation." The document further declared that Jews are no longer a nation "but a religious community" and formally renounced the wish for a return to Israel and the doctrines of bodily resurrection and heaven and hell.

From Anti-Zionist to Zionist

Reform's antagonism toward Zionism, the movement to create a Jewish state, was evident long before Zionism's emergence as a modern political movement in the years immediately following the Pittsburgh Platform. Prayers for the restoration of Jewish sovereignty in Palestine had been eliminated by Reform congregations as early as 1845, and the movement's 1869 conference in Philadelphia declared that Judaism's goal is "not the restoration of the old Jewish state under a descendant of David, involving a second separation from the nations of the earth, but the union of all the children of G-d in the confession of the unity of G-d." Wise and other early leaders of the movement opposed Zionism in part because they considered it counter to their efforts to forge a Judaism fully consistent with their European identity. In an 1897 resolution sponsored by Wise, the CCAR declared: "We totally disapprove of any attempt for the establishment of a Jewish state."

This opposition would not survive Hitler's rise to power in Germany in the 1930s and the mounting threats to European Jewish life. The Columbus Platform of 1937, an effort to update the earlier

statement of Reform ideology, endorsed the quest to build a Jewish state in Palestine, though it passed by a single vote. In the wake of the Holocaust, Reform support for Israel accelerated, pushed along by two prominent Zionist Reform rabbis—Stephen Wise and Abba Hillel Silver.

Today, support for Israel is considered a relatively uncontroversial tenet of Reform Judaism, although the movement has at times been severely critical of Israeli policy toward the Palestinians and the lack of equality granted by the government to the Reform movement and other non-Orthodox religious denominations.

Innovations and Tradition

After World War II, the Reform movement continued to grow as American Jews increasingly assimilated into American culture and left the dense inner cities for the suburbs. However, it trailed the Conservative movement in size until the 1980s. In 1961, the movement established the Religious Action Center, a liberal advocacy arm in Washington, D.C. In 1963, its seminary, Hebrew Union College, opened its fourth campus in Jerusalem to complement its three U.S. locations—in Cincinnati, New York and Los Angeles.

The movement also continued its legacy of innovation even as it continued to reconsider traditional practices it once derided as inconsistent with its rationalist modern ethos. In 1972, the Reform movement was the first American movement to ordain a female rabbi, Sally Priesand. In the 1980s, the seminary began admitting gay and lesbian rabbinical students, and in 2003 it admitted its first transgender student. In 1983, the movement officially accepted patrilineal descent—recognizing as Jewish the child of a Jewish father provided the child is raised Jewish (traditional Jewish law recognizes Jewish lineage only through the mother). The movement has welcomed interfaith couples into its synagogues. According to Pew, half of married Reform Jews have a non-Jewish spouse, and many Reform rabbis officiate at interfaith weddings.

At the same time it has innovated, the movement has dropped its opposition to traditional items like the yarmulke and tallit prayer shawl it once renounced. Hebrew is commonly found in religious services that were once conducted entirely in the vernacular; many services are conducted in a mix of Hebrew and English. *Mishkan T'filah*, the movement's newest prayer book, published in 2007, offers multiple liturgical options to reflect the range of beliefs and practices within the movement. It also reintroduced the blessing for the resurrection of the dead—a concept explicitly rejected as un-Jewish in the Pittsburgh Platform. And Rabbi Eric Yoffie, who led the Union for Reform Judaism (the UAHC's successor organization) until 2012, has encouraged Torah study among Reform Jews and called for a return to Shabbat observance—albeit not "the Shabbat of eighteenth century Europe," but one that reflects "the creativity that has always distinguished Reform Judaism." The movement's 1999 statement of principles affirmed the importance of Hebrew, called for the observance of *mitzvot* "that address us as individuals and as a community, and encouraged "some form" of Shabbat observance. ✧

JEWISH ART 101

An introduction to Jewish visual arts from Bezael to the 21st century

BY MY JEWISH LEARNING

Jewish visual arts date back to the biblical Bezael, commissioned by G-d to create the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Since then, Jewish visual arts have flourished, bearing the imprint of Jewish wanderings around the globe. Jewish art divides into categories of: folk art, such as paper-cuts; ritual art—artistic renditions of ritual objects; and art by Jews, which encompasses a broad range of visual expression by Jewish artists, from painting to sculpture to avant-garde art.

What Is Jewish Art?

Words and ideas have always been a focal point in Jewish life, but fine arts and handicrafts have played a prominent role as well. The Jewish attitude toward art has been influenced by two contradictory factors: The value of *hiddur mitzvah* (beautification of the commandments) encourages the creation of beautiful ritual items and sacred spaces, while some interpret the Second Commandment (forbidding “graven images”) as a prohibition against artistic creations, lest they be used for idolatry.

With the age of Enlightenment in Europe, Jewish artists left the ghetto to become prominent artists worldwide. In their visual arts, Jewish artists displayed varied relationships with their Jewish identities, and some Jewish artists did not incorporate their Jewishness into their artistic work at all. With the rise of such artists came the question of what constitutes “Jewish art,” a question still debated today. Some artists, such as Marc Chagall, clearly drew upon their Jewish heritage for their work. For others, such as Camille Pissaro, Judaism was tangential or even irrelevant to their work. Regardless of how one might define “Jewish art,” Jewish artists—painters, sculptors, and others—have flourished in North America, Europe and Israel.

Jewish folk art has pervaded Jewish homes and synagogues for centuries. This has included the *mizrach*, an emblem placed on the eastern wall of the home to remind family members which way to direct their prayers; the *shiviti*, an adornment in the synagogue intended to focus attention; and the art of micrography, which uses sacred words and texts to create drawings. Artistic ritual art has included kiddush cups, *mezuzot*, candlesticks, and more. These



Marc Chagall's *The Paradise*

art forms were once an expression of folk-piety by Jews who worked without the benefit of artistic training. Today Jewish folk art has grown in sophistication as trained artists focus their skills and sensibilities on these traditional crafts.

Israeli Art

From the beginning of the 20th century, visual arts in Israel were emblematic of the unique encounter between East and West in Israel. Artistic visual expression was enhanced in Israel in 1906 with the founding of the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Crafts in Jerusalem. The school aimed to create an “original Jewish art” by blending European artistic techniques with Middle Eastern influences. Artists from this school—along with other artists who were part of the burgeoning visual arts movement—created paintings of biblical scenes depicting romanticized perceptions of the past linked to utopian visions of the future. Examples of such artists include Shmuel Hirszenberg, Anna Ticho, Nachum Gutman, Mordecai Ardon, and Reuven Rubin.

As the State of Israel has matured, so too have its visual arts. Yaakov Agam has attracted international attention for his unique use of shape and dimension. As Israel has continued to attract Jewish immigrants from around the globe, they have brought with them their artistic training and sensitivities shaped by their host culture. Throughout Israeli history, the visual arts have been used to interpret and make meaning of the difficulties of Israeli and Jewish history. ☆

WHAT DOES 'BALABUSTA' MEAN?

A one-time Jewish homemaker ideal that continues to inspire.

BY MY JEWISH LEARNING

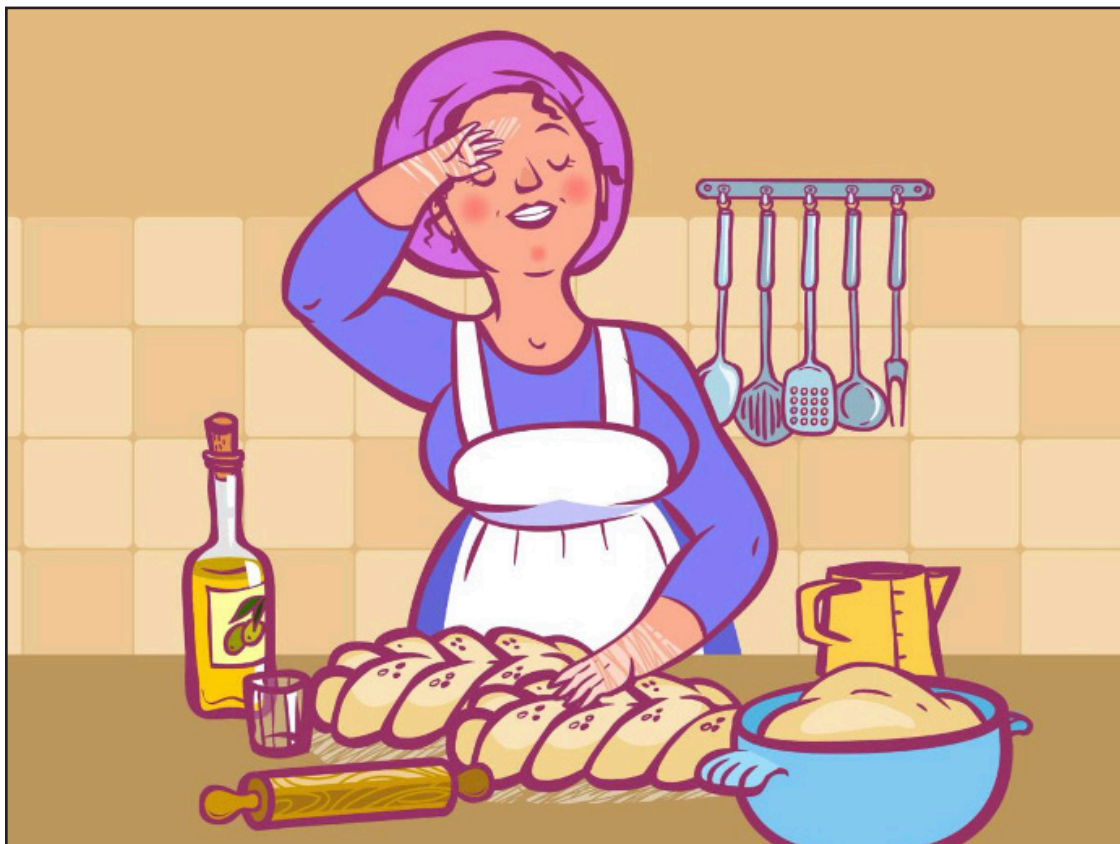
The Yiddish word *balabusta* (also spelled *baleboste*)

refers to a Jewish woman who is a capable, competent mistress of her home. A true *balabusta* is not just a homemaker—she is a figure of strength and resourcefulness, deeply embedded in Jewish tradition and identity.

The word *balabusta* is derived from the Hebrew words *ba'al* (owner or master) and *bayit* (house), but it is in fact a Yiddish word. Literally, a *balabusta* is the “mistress of the house”—the home manager. The masculine form is *balabus* (in Hebrew, *ba'al ha-bayit*) and it refers to the male head of the household. But the feminine *balabusta* carries more complex resonance, implying reserves of strength and upstanding character, as well as impressive stamina and efficiency.

In consonance with the centuries in which the term took hold, a *balabusta* is a woman who efficiently performs domestic labors, manages the household finances, rears the children and makes the family's religious life beautiful by cooking Shabbat and holiday meals. She is also a generous hostess and charitable to the poor. She is someone who exemplifies the characteristics of the *eshet hayil*, the “woman of valor,” described in Proverbs 31, which is traditionally chanted by husbands in honor of their wives at Shabbat dinner. Being a *balabusta* requires fortitude to uphold the physical and cultural infrastructure of Jewish life in the home. The title is considered a high compliment.

In modern usage, the word *balabusta* can have both positive and critical undertones, depending on context. On the one hand, it can be an affectionate compliment: “She’s such a *balabusta*!” might mean



someone hosts beautifully, keeps an immaculate home, or cooks up a storm for guests. On the other hand, it can imply someone who is overly controlling and narrowly focused on domestic life to the exclusion of other pursuits. This change in meaning coincided with a cultural shift in the 20th century, which saw a Hollywood trope of men complaining of wives who were “ballbusters”—an English term that, despite sounding similar, has no etymological relation to *balabusta*.

Feminist critiques have also wrestled with the *balabusta* ideal, recognizing how it both honors women’s labor and confines them to traditional roles. Some contemporary Jewish women embrace the label with pride, reclaiming it as a badge of competence and power. Others reject it as outdated or restrictive.

Despite enormous cultural shifts that have redefined women’s roles, *balabusta* remains a beloved word in many Jewish households. It appears in cookbooks, family lore, nostalgic stories and even playful memes. Some Jewish women today refer to themselves as “modern *balabustas*”—not necessarily traditional homemakers, but multi-taskers who juggle family, career and Jewish commitments with skill and warmth.





Davidson archeological park,
outside the old city walls, Jerusalem

A CRASH COURSE IN EARLY JEWISH HISTORY

From biblical times to the emergence of Rabbinic Judaism

BY MY JEWISH LEARNING

Israelite religion shared a number of characteristics with the religions of neighboring peoples.

Scholars have long noted parallels between the creation and flood myths of Mesopotamia and Egypt and those found in the Hebrew Bible. The Israelite G-d, also shares many characteristics and epithets with the Canaanite gods El and Baal. **The Importance of Covenant**

The Israelites' relationship with G-d, however, set them apart from their neighbors. This relationship was based on a covenant binding G-d and Israel to one another through a series of obligations. Thus, the biblical authors depicted a direct correlation between the patriarchs' (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) prosperity and their fidelity to G-d. Similarly, the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt into the Holy Land is cast as being conditional on the Israelites' following YHWH's precepts. It follows that the biblical authors attributed the misfortunes that befell the Israelites (e.g. plagues and military failures, etc.) to the Israelites' failure to comply with terms of this covenant.

The First Temple

The establishment of the Temple under David and Solomon (c. 1000 BCE) marked a major development in Israelite religion. The Temple, intended to be the official focal point for Israelite religion replacing the family shrines and cultic places of earlier periods, served as a primary place for sacrifices, worship, and regular pilgrimages. Perhaps most importantly, the Temple served as a symbol of YHWH's presence among the Israelites, and by extension, divine protection.

Despite this effort to centralize the Israelite cult, biblical and archaeological evidence indicates that traditional cultic sites and family shrines continued to exist throughout the monarchy (c. 1000–587 BCE).

The biblical prophets played a special role in Israelite religion. They fervently condemned religious infidelities, including the worship of foreign gods. They were also very vocal in their intolerance of social injustice, especially abuses of power committed by



The ancient city of Jerusalem with Solomon's Temple. (U.S. Library of Congress)

Israelite elites. The eighth-century BCE prophet Isaiah went so far as to declare that religious practices, including sacrifice and observance of festivals, were meaningless as long as social injustices remained.

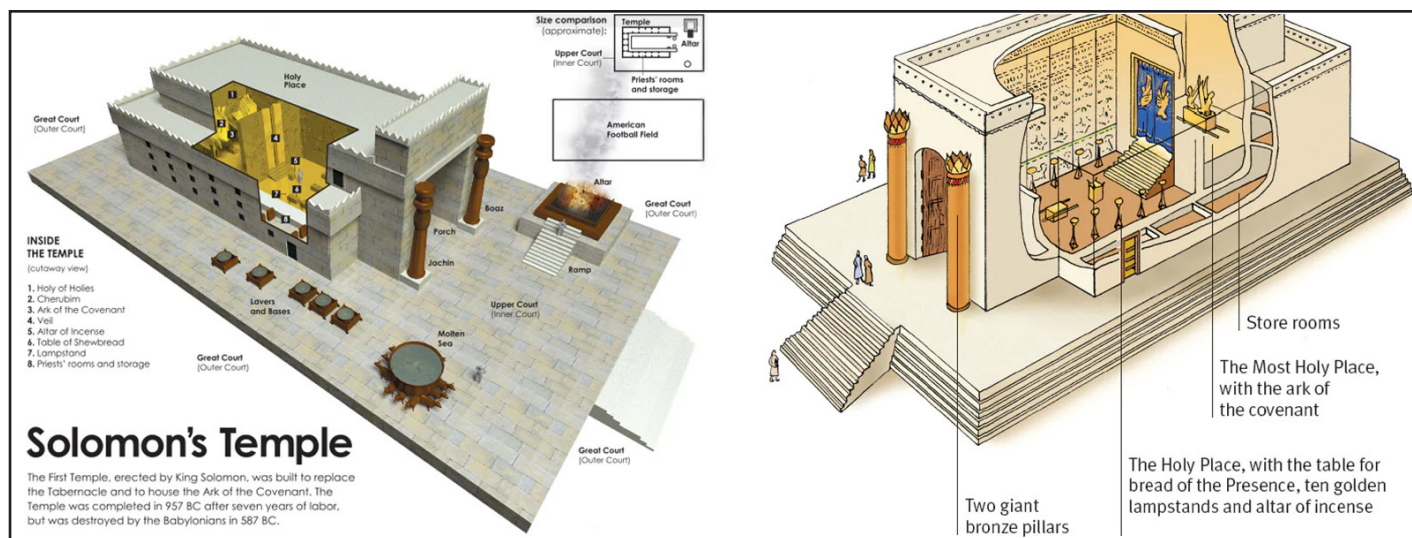
The Babylonian Exile

The Babylonian exile had a grave impact on Israelite religion. The Temple was destroyed, the "eternal" Davidic dynasty interrupted, and the people driven from the land G-d had given them. Little is known about religious life during the exile except that solemn days were designated to mourn the loss of Israelite institutions. The prophets attempted to soothe the pain of these losses by promising a glorious restoration, the promise of which was never fully realized.

The Second Temple

The return from exile witnessed efforts to unify the Jews by the likes of Ezra and Nehemiah (early leaders of the Second Temple period) including the canonization of scripture and reaffirmation of the covenant with G-d. Such measures, however, were countered by growing discontent, as evident from the apocalyptic writings of the period and the emergence of numerous sects.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were the two most prominent groups of the period. The Pharisees, the presumed predecessors to the rabbinic tradition, promoted incorporating religion into every aspect of life and generally rejected Hellenism. The Sadducees, with ties to the priesthood, maintained their religious



The First Temple in Jerusalem



Model of the City of David, Jerusalem in the late Second Temple period. Located in Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

identity, but were more open to Hellenistic culture. Other groups, such as the Essenes (who some scholars associate with the Dead Sea Scrolls) held more radical beliefs. The early Jewish Christians were yet another significant Jewish sect—not yet adherents of a separate religion.

The Second Temple's Destruction and the Emergence of Rabbinic Judaism

The destruction of the Temple, which had served as the religious and political center for the Jewish people, presented a major challenge. The Jews survived this crisis by giving new prominence to institutions that played only minor roles during the Second Temple period. Synagogues absorbed the role of the Temple as places for worship and learning; prayer took the place of sacrifice; rabbis sought to replace priests as teachers and guardians over the law.

The rabbis' ability to adapt biblical traditions—including dietary laws, observance of Shabbat and the festivals, and worship—for life in exile enabled Judaism to survive the transition beyond the Temple period, and ultimately to persevere throughout the ages. The Mishnah (a collection of law edited around the year 200 CE) and the Gemara (a commentary on the Mishnah, discussing its teachings and connecting it to the biblical text, compiled in approximately 500 CE), record opinions and discussions relevant to life in a world that no longer preserved Temple-based institutions and traditions.

Rabbinic authority, however, did not remain unchallenged. In addition to references to resistance in rabbinic writings, there are numerous amulets and incantation vessels attesting to the use of magic among the Jews of this period. ☆

SGPV'S JEWISH YOUTH & PARENTS

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***Back to
School***

Hit the ground running

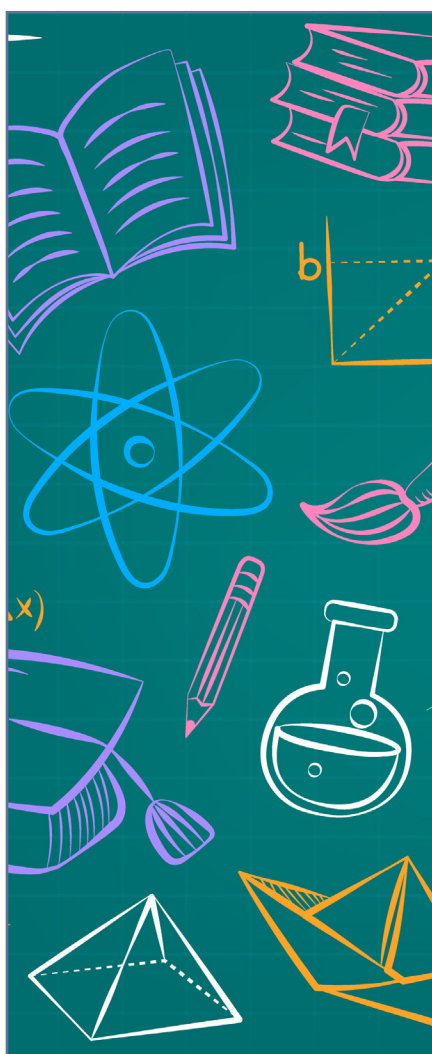
AUGUST 2025

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6 JEWISH TIPS TO GET YOU THROUGH THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SEASON

Preparing for a
brand-new school
year, with some
Jewish wisdom



kiddish

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Back to School

There's a Prayer for That

BY RABBI MELINDA MERSACK, MY JEWISH LEARNING



I feel a little anxiety. A little sadness. I'm excited, but also a little helpless. For the first time, my kids don't want me to drive them to school. I expect this from my middle schooler, but my 9-year-old? When did he stop needing me?

I know this is healthy. This is normal. I want my kids to be independent, but is it bad if I also want them to need me just a little? We hear experts talk about helping kids transition from summer vacation to the routine of the school year (e.g., [parents.com](https://www.parents.com)). Summer homework completed? Check. School supplies purchased? Check. Early to bed? Check. Discussion to prepare them for their first day and new schedule? Check.

I never thought I'd need to prepare myself. I didn't expect to feel anxious wondering if my kids would get to school safely and on time. I didn't expect to feel a loss that I didn't get that one-more-hug before they disappeared into the building. Don't get me wrong. I give my kids space. I encourage them to succeed and fail on their own. This is just another

first day of school. I suppose it's a glimpse of what's to come and, for that, I'm unprepared: first day of college, becoming an empty nester, weddings and births. I just need to quiet my brain and hold on to the moment.

Thank G-d, there's a prayer for that.

Barukh Ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiyimanu, v'higiyanu la'z'man ha'zeh. Loosely translated, "Thank you, G-d, for this moment in time." (More on Shehecheyanu)

Thank you, G-d, for the health of my children. Thank you, G-d, for allowing them to be filled with confidence and strength. Thank you, G-d, for the opportunity to be their mother. Thank you, for enabling me to witness their growth.

My kids are ready for this transition and this new year. I will be, too, eventually. I just hope they give me a ginormous hug when they get home. ☆

RABBI MELINDA MERSACK IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND KIDDISH MAGAZINE.



Home From Camp & Back to School

BY SARA BETH BERMAN, MY JEWISH LEARNING

Camp ended. I can't believe it's over. All of a sudden, I transitioned from the tie-dyed 24/7 magic of camp to the polo shirts, big binders and giant potential of a year of learning and teaching at a really cool school. I can't believe school has started. All of a sudden, I'm transitioning to the daily magic of the classroom buzz—and non-classroom activities—at school from the 24/7 constant young role modeling of camp.

Kids, for sure, can't believe camp is over. Take a look at their Instagram accounts, their most recent tweets. Picture after picture. Camp dates and rates for summer 2026 are already being re-tweeted. Countdowns have begun - only 330 more days until I get to go home again!

As I look around my office, it's like I never left. My Moses action figures kept my office safe, and my eclectic collection of books and toys are perfectly positioned to get pulled at a moment's notice to teach learners yet again! But, if you look closely, you'll see changes. A new water bottle from our camp's Sustainability Shabbat. A copy of *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein, ready to teach about silent prayer to 8th graders before they go for a hike in the shady wooded areas on a retreat. My laptop, perched in an unprecarious but funny-looking position next to my desktop. A ceramic mug and a new picture frame on the wall, both gifts from awesome camp staff.

I look at your kids (former campers, future campers, current students) and it's like they've never left. The bright eyes. The shy smiles. The neon-colored backpacks. But again, look



closely. They're taller. Their hair is less Bieber-esque than last year. They learned to read Torah, or lead blessings, or how to climb a tall tower or to make shattered glass into a stunning mosaic. They can't wait to talk about the sights they've seen: The waterfall! The South! The capitals of Europe!

Looking at it both ways, it's hard to decide what to love more—school or camp? Camp or school? Without school, who would these kids be? Without camp, how would their lives turn out? The combined experiences in our communities (camp, school, home, synagogue, JCC, a university alumni's mommy and me group, whatever works) are shaping our Jewish future. So I don't love one place more than the other. I love the promise of a bright and exciting future. ☆

SARA BETH BERMAN IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND KIDDISH MAGAZINE.

Jewish Tips to Get You Through the Back-To-School

Preparing for a brand-new school year, with some Jewish wisdom

BY SHARON D. ESTROFF, MY JEWISH LEARNING

The back-to-school season is, for all intents and purposes, a period of pure parental mayhem. From tracking down the coolest Batman or Barbie backpack on the block to searching out that elusive five-subject, wide-ruled, perforated spiral notebook that our

The Pressure

Still for many modern parents, the stress of preparing our kids for their return to academia pales in comparison to the pressure we endure once they actually get there. After all, in our achievement-obsessed society, it often feels that our parental efficacy is directly correlated with our children's standardized test scores. It's no wonder that the sheer thought of homework, report cards and parent-teacher conferences has our stomach turning somersaults.

And if all this academic pressure is tough on us as parents, it's wreaking absolute havoc on our kids. Research reveals all kinds of worrisome trends showing up en masse in 21st century schoolchildren—from anxiety and depression to psychosomatic illness to drug and alcohol consumption. So intense is the pressure to perform in school, in fact, that a recent cover story of *Newsweek* magazine titled “Fourth Grade Slump” reported a rampant and unprecedented academic malaise—characterized by declining interest in reading and gradual disengagement from school—that's striking American kids.

One of the most marvelous aspects of the Jewish tradition is its ability to guide, protect, and strengthen us at times when we need it most. As if our forefathers could see eons into the future—knowing their ancestors would one day be faced with back to school stress of biblical proportions—they've sent sage advice our way. The following golden nuggets of ancient Jewish wisdom promise to keep your family sane, happy and healthy this back to school season—and for many school-years to come.

Study for Its Own Sake

The Mishnah states that Torah should be studied lishmah, or for its own sake. In other words, we shouldn't learn Torah with ulterior motives (i.e.



getting on G-d's A-list or wowing others with our biblical mastery). Rather, we should release ourselves to the beauty and majesty of the text-enjoying it in its own right. In doing so, it is believed, we achieve a divine level of existence.

By the same token, we should not present the act of learning to our children as a means to an end (i.e. you study science so you can ace the exam so you can get into a really good college one day). Instead, we must help them recognize and embrace the inherent magic, excitement and privilege of discovering the world around them.

“We live in a goal-oriented society. The value of activities is measured in the results achieved. We study to pass tests. We attend classes to earn a degree. Thus, for most of us, the Jewish value of learning for its own sake is often regarded as a quaint but antiquated tradition,” writes Rabbi Jerome Epstein of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. “It is time for Jews to reappropriate the value of Torah lishmah not only for our personal growth but for the healing that it can bring.”

This is not to suggest, of course, that we place no focus on scholastic performance. We should do all we can to help our children realize their potential—academically and otherwise. But we should be careful not to depict education simply as a step-

ping stone to bigger and better things, while we're at it.

There's a beautiful Jewish custom of drizzling honey on the letters the first time a child learns the Aleph-Bet. The purpose of the honey is not to disguise the work that inevitably lies ahead, but to serve as a reminder to savor its sweetness. Similarly, by following up the nightly homework drill with a family nature hike together-or setting aside an hour one evening to cuddle up on the couch with a bowl of popcorn for some family DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time-we can recapture the inherent yumminess of learning without undermining the importance of school-work.

And on the Seventh Day G-d Rested

Let's face it. Try as we might to reduce our kids' academic stress, we can't do away with it completely. School is after all, hard work by design. While studying is enlightening and empowering it can also be demanding and rigorous. And that's exactly the way it should be. Judaism places great value on work, and diligence, and of course, on study.

But our religion also believes in downtime. "Six days shall you labor and do all your work" reads the Book of Exodus "and the seventh day is the Sabbath to the Lord your God [on which] you shall not do any work."

Our kids spend their school-weeks in constant motion, schlepping from classes to baseball practice to violin lessons to Hebrew School. They desperately need a time to recharge and refuel. And in Shabbat, they have it. But Shabbat is far more than just a weekly chill session for our kids. In the Sabbath rituals our children find the consistency and predictability they need to thrive despite a frenetically paced life. They find the spirituality and hope that will keep them emotionally healthy in an unpredictable 21st century world.

Educate a Child According to His Way

In modern day America, cramming kids into societally constructed Harvard-bound boxes has become parental sport. But the reality is that not every child is hardwired to go to Harvard.

The wise King Solomon recognizes this truth in the Book of Proverbs when he teaches us that we must "educate a child according to his way". Notice, he doesn't say anything about our way; or the school system's way; or the college entrance board's way. He says simply the child's way.

On one level these words entail a basic acceptance of our child's academic realities-coming to terms with the fact that our son may have certain

learning challenges that require a unique educational approach, or that our daughter is simply going to be-despite tutoring sessions galore-a perfectly average math student.

But the commandment of educating a child according to his way also requires us to go a step further by recognizing and nurturing our children's unique sets of gifts and talents-whether or not they're considered "gifts" and "talents" by modern societal standards. In his Book of Jewish Values, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin shares his take on Solomon's words. "As a parent you are obligated to be conscious of your child's special intellectual and artistic abilities and interests. Yet I've met parents who have definite views about precisely what sort of person their child should be, and who do not take into account the child's personal interests. Such an attitude denies a child's very individuality."

One of my favorite tools for illuminating children's unique gifts is Howard Gardner's highly acclaimed theory of multiple intelligences (1983, 1999) in which he delineates at least eight distinct types of intelligences of value to society that exist in human beings. Eight different realms in which to uncover the sparks of genius in our children.

Kids who are masters of puzzles and Legos, for example, exhibit what Gardner calls spatial intelligence, while children who love reading and telling stories possess linguistic intelligence. Bug-loving kiddies tend to exhibit naturalistic intelligence, while children who get a kick out of strategy games often have logical-mathematical intelligence. Children with natural leadership skills show have interpersonal intelligence; while introspective, spiritual children have intrapersonal intelligence. Kids with bodily-kinesthetic intelligence are agile and physically coordinated, while those with musical intelligence have a knack for singing and playing instruments.

And if you're especially lucky along your parenting journey, you'll get to know a child with menschlich intelligence-a spark of G-d-given sweetness and compassion that far transcends the 99th percentile on the California Achievement Test.

But even if you conclude that your child is not a budding Albert Einstein, you're in good company. At the end of the day most of our kids are, well, regular old kids-good at some things, not so good at others. And counting on us to love and support them in all their wonderfully regular-kid glory. ✨

SHARON D. ESTROFF IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND KIDDISH MAGAZINE.



COOKING JEWISH

Lifestyle

KOSHER BY DESIGN

**Picture Perfect Food
for the Holiday &
Every Day**

BY JUDY BART KANCIGOR

Hot And Crispy Chicken with Mango Slaw

With the frenzied anticipation generally reserved for the appearance of a rock star, the orthodox community is always abuzz when Susie Fishbein comes to town! I've been to her appearances. The excitement is palpable.

Fishbein burst on the scene in 2003 with the publication of "Kosher by Design: Picture Perfect Food for the Holidays & Every Day" (Mesorah Publications, \$27.47). Eight more cookbooks in the Kosher by Design series followed.

This effervescent author has turned kosher cooking on its proverbial ear. Julie Ghodsi of Golden Dreidle in Tustin, Orange County's headquarters for all things Judaica, reports, "All of Susie's cookbooks have a loyal following, and my customers love them, from the very observant to reform. They sell themselves."

Just what is this revolution in kosher cooking that Fishbein has spawned? An orthodox Jew and mother of four, Fishbein understands that today's observant Jews want to prepare many of the same exciting dishes found on restaurant menus and serve them with style. Those who grew up on Grandma's shabbos brisket now embrace the likes of Rack of Lamb with Fig-Port-Shallot Sauce. "Kosher food doesn't have to be simple or bland," noted Fishbein by phone from her New Jersey home. "Just about every ingredient is available out there kosher."

Routinely dubbed the Jewish Martha Stewart, Fishbein squirms at the comparison. "I'm flattered, but it's not really accurate," she said. "Martha Stewart is all about a lifestyle. I take shortcuts she would never take. It's not about putting on a show. These are recipes the family will want to eat over and over." And they do. So popular are these dishes that guests recognize them on each others' Shabbos tables!

"The recipes and serving ideas require a minimum of fuss to achieve the maximum aesthetic

impact," Fishbein noted. "I don't aim for the level of chef. I'm aiming for the person who cooks on an everyday basis, every Shabbos basis, every holiday basis, people who want things to look elegant and different, but don't want to spend seven hours in the kitchen. Whenever I can I try to keep in mind all levels of expertise. Many people don't have a lot of confidence in the kitchen. I want to give them that confidence."

In 2016, Fishbein announced that the ninth book in the series, "Kosher By Design Brings It Home," would be the last. Far from going into retirement, she has continued to lead culinary tours and give cooking classes, calling on skills she developed years before as a fourth grade science teacher. Her "Kosher By Design Cooking Coach" (\$29.75) really shows off her teaching skills. Its 120 recipes ranging from simple to complex, every day to special occasion, and spanning the globe with delicious international options, are accompanied by over 400 full-color photos and Susie's personal food and budget stretching tips. The book is divided into ten coaching sections containing "game plans" for refining one's culinary skills in the kitchen, and each major section is preceded by valuable lessons, including tips and techniques such as how to skin and pin-bone fish, how to prep fresh herbs, why you only need three primary kitchen knives (and how to sharpen them), how to plate and garnish, and how to "reincarnate" leftovers.

The book is full of tips that take the guesswork out of any recipe. Want to defat your chicken cutlets? Bake them instead. "If you are watching your fat intake, this is a good technique to try," she writes. "Place a cookie cooling rack in a jellyroll pan. After breading your chicken, place it on the rack. This will elevate it out of its juices and allow air to circulate above and below the breaded cutlet as it cooks. Spray with nonstick cooking spray for a little crispness. Bake in a preheated oven, usually 375°F for

20 minutes."

These days the thing that is keeping her most busy are her culinary tours to Italy and Israel.

"Each November I take groups to Florence and take a classroom in the Cordon Bleu cooking school," she said, "and all day long we're out in the beauty of Tuscany, and then in the evening I teach classes with the Italian chefs and the Jewish history piece. Then in May I do northern Italy, and we do things like truffle hunting, and we learn about things like Giandujot, which is the predecessor to Nutella, and we drink wonderful kosher wines."

Her next culinary tour to Israel will be in September. "We basically use food as a vehicle to get people to share their stories," she added. "There's so much untapped food beauty in Israel. There are people who have been to Israel 20, 25 times who come on my trips and say they see a side of Israel they have never seen before." ✨

“There’s so much untapped food beauty in Israel. There are people who have been to Israel 20, 25 times who come on my trips and say they see a side of Israel they have never seen before.”

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.

**MAKE
ME!
EASY TO
FOLLOW
RECIPE**



Gooney Walnut Brownie Pie

Gooney Walnut Brownie Pie

This recipe calls for a box of brownie mix, but you need only half the box. Easy solution: Make two pies! "You can store the second one, covered in the fridge for up to five days – or make a friend's day!" Fishbein writes.

6 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
1 cup dark brown sugar, packed
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
3/4 cup light corn syrup
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
3 large eggs
2 cups shelled walnut halves
1 (19.9-ounce) package chewy brownie mix and ingredients listed on box for fudgy, not cakey result (I like Duncan Hines brand)
2 frozen deep-dish pie shells

Hot And Crispy Chicken with Mango Slaw

Mango slaw:

1 bag (16 ounces) coleslaw mix (cabbage and carrots)
1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced
1 ripe mango, peeled, pitted, cut into small dice
1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted
1 cup mayonnaise
5 tablespoons sweet chili garlic sauce
3 cloves fresh garlic
1/2 jalapeño pepper, with seeds
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Hot and crispy chicken:

All-purpose flour
3 large eggs, lightly beaten
2 cups cornflakes
1/2 cup sliced blanched almonds, toasted
1/3 cup sesame seeds
2 tablespoons sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons red pepper flakes
2 teaspoons coarse sea salt or kosher salt
6 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
Canola oil

1. Place coleslaw mix, onion, mango, and almonds into large bowl. In quart container using an immersion blender (or in food processor), combine mayonnaise, chili garlic sauce, garlic clove, jalapeño, salt and pepper. Pour over slaw and mix well. Allow to stand while preparing chicken.
2. Place flour into first part of 3- part breading station.

1. Preheat oven to 350°F

2. In bowl of stand mixer, beat melted butter or margarine with brown sugar and salt until smooth. Pour in corn syrup and vanilla. Beat until thoroughly combined. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing between each addition. Stir in walnuts and set aside.
3. Prepare brownie batter as instructed on package for a chewy, not cakey result, if it gives you that option.
4. Remove 2 frozen pie shells from freezer and divide brownie batter evenly between the two. Spread walnut mixture evenly over brownie batter.
5. Bake, uncovered, for 50 to 55 minutes, until golden brown and slightly puffy. The centers will still be a little jiggly. Cover with foil if crusts start to brown towards end of baking time. Store in refrigerator and serve cold.

Place beaten eggs into second part.

3. Place cornflakes, almonds, sesame seeds, sugar, red pepper flakes, and salt into bowl of food processor fitted with metal "S" blade. Pulse a few times, leaving coarse crumbs. Place mixture into third part of bread-ing station, starting with flour, shaking off excess; then into eggs, wetting chicken evenly; then into crispy coating. Press down to get a nice even coating.
4. Heat canola oil in large, heavy skillet over medium heat to come up 1/4-inch on skillet. Test oil to see if it is hot enough by dropping a bit of coating into oil. If oil bubbles around it and it turns golden, oil is ready. Place chicken into hot oil and cook 3 to 4 minutes per side until golden brown. You may need to do this in batches. Use tongs to carefully flip each piece. Remove to platter. Top each piece of chicken with some of the slaw.

WHAT DO THE WORDS ABBA AND IMA (EMA) MEAN?

Though not originally Hebrew terms, they are now among the most commonly used Hebrew words.

BY MY JEWISH LEARNING

The words abba and ima are used commonly by Hebrew speakers to mean father and mother. They are not, however, originally Hebrew. The Hebrew terms for male and female parents are av and em. Abba and ima are Aramaic in origin. However, they entered the Hebrew lexicon in ancient times.

In the talmudic period, abba and ema were not only titles, they were frequently used as names. For example, the rabbinic sage Rav was named Abba Arikha and the wife of Rabbi Eliezer was named Ima Shalom. Abba was also used as an honorific for some esteemed rabbis.

The Importance of Parents

Jewish tradition requires children to honor their parents. This is, in fact, one of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16), and the only one which has a reward attached to it: living long and well.

Parents also have obligations toward their offspring. The Torah requires fathers to circumcise their sons (Genesis 17:10–14), and obligates parents to educate their children (Deuteronomy 11:19). The Talmud elaborates on these obligations in several places, including the following:

A father is obligated with regard to his son to circumcise him, and to redeem him (if he is a firstborn), and to teach him Torah, and to marry him to a woman, and to teach him a trade. And some say: A father is also obligated to teach his son to swim. (Kiddushin 29a) **G-d as a Parent**

In Jewish tradition, G-d is figured in many ways: a mighty creator, a fearsome warrior, a majestic ruler, a jealous spouse and a loving parent. Rabbinic literature



explores this idea through an interpretation of the passage above, found in Numbers Rabbah 17:

Our rabbis taught: A person is obligated to do five things for his son. G-d can be compared to a father and the Jewish people to G-d's son ... Just as a father is obligated to teach his child Torah, G-d taught the Jews Torah as it says (Deuteronomy 11:19): "Teach them to your children." And it is written: "I am G-d your teacher." Just as a father is obligated to teach his children mitzvot, G-d taught the mitzvot to the Jews. Just as a father is obligated to marry his son to a woman, so too God told mankind: "Be fruitful and multiply." A father is obligated to his son in the following ways: to give him food and drink, to bathe him, to give him ointments, and to clothe him, and thus did G-d for the Jews, as it is written (Ezekiel 16:9): "And I washed you in water, and I washed away your blood ... and I clothed you with embroidered clothing ... and My bread which I gave you..."

Jewish prayers build on the parental metaphor, perhaps most notably in the prayer *Avinu Malkeinu*, which translates to "Our Father, Our King."

In modern times, abba and ema have remained the everyday Hebrew terms for mom and dad, used by children who speak Hebrew as their first language. ☆

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FRIDAY,

AUGUST 1

6:30 - 8:30 PM

AUGUST 22

7:30 - 9:30 PM

AUGUST 29

7:30 - 9:30 PM

Shabbat Services @

Temple Beth David, TBD

SATURDAY,

AUGUST 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30

10:15 AM - 12:15 PM

EVERY WEEK

Shabbat Morning Services @

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10:00 AM - NOON

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www.bnaisimcha.org

Chabad Jewish Center of

South Pasadena

[www.jewishsouthpasadena.](http://www.jewishsouthpasadena.com)

[com](http://www.jewishsouthpasadena.com)

Chabad of Arcadia

(CoA)

www.jewisharcadia.com

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Chabad of the

Inland Empire (CIE)

[www.chabadinlandempire.](http://www.chabadinlandempire.com)

[com](http://www.chabadinlandempire.com)

Congregation Hugat

Haverim (CHH)

www.hugathaverim.com

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www.jewishsgpv.org

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Temple & Center (PJTC)

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NEWS & JEWS



UCLA settles antisemitism lawsuit with \$6.13M payout, including donations to Jewish groups

The settlement is the largest of its kind in a campus antisemitism case and includes funding for Hillel, the ADL and others.

By Asaf Elia-Shalev

The University of California has agreed to a sweeping settlement in a high-profile lawsuit that accused UCLA, one of 10 campuses in the UC system, of enabling antisemitic discrimination during campus protests in 2024.

The agreement, announced Tuesday, includes roughly \$6.13 million in payments, according to Becket, the religious liberty law firm that backed it—a number that may resonate with many Jews. It also includes a permanent court order requiring the university to prevent the exclusion of Jewish students from public spaces.

The lawsuit, *Frankel v. Regents of the University of California*, was filed by students and supported by Becket. It alleged that during last year's pro-Palestinian encampment, UCLA officials allowed protestors to establish what the lawsuit called a "Jew Exclusion Zone," barring Jewish students and faculty from accessing parts of campus, including classrooms and libraries.

A federal judge granted preliminary relief last summer, ordering UCLA to ensure the free movement of Jewish students, and this week's agreement makes that injunction permanent.

"When antisemites were terrorizing Jews and excluding them from campus, UCLA chose to protect the thugs and help keep Jews out," said lead plaintiff Yitzchok Frankel, a recent UCLA Law graduate. "That was shameful ... but today's court judgment brings justice back to our

campus."

The settlement comes amid growing national scrutiny of how universities handle campus protest and antisemitism — and mounting pressure from the federal government for them to take a hard stance. In the aftermath of the UCLA encampment, the university set up a task force, which acknowledged the university allowed antisemitism to fester amid pro Palestinian protests, citing incidents such as swastikas drawn inside classrooms, hateful slogans like "Israelis are native 2 hell," and assaults on Jewish students and staff that went insufficiently addressed by administration.

Still, UCLA initially fought the lawsuit for over a year before conceding to a judgment and settlement. In a joint statement with the plaintiffs, both parties said, "We are pleased with the terms of today's settlement. The injunction and other terms UCLA has agreed to demonstrate real progress in the fight against antisemitism."

As part of the settlement, UCLA will contribute \$2.33 million to eight Jewish and antisemitism-focused organizations, including Hillel at UCLA, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles's Campus Impact Network. An additional \$320,000 will go to UCLA's Initiative to Combat Antisemitism, a program launched earlier this year by Chancellor Julio Frenk, who is Jewish and assumed his position on Jan. 1.

The total financial outlay, including damages to the plaintiffs and attorney's fees, makes the deal the largest private settlement in a campus antisemitism case, according to Becket. Columbia University recently agreed to pay more than \$200 million in a settlement with the Trump administration over antisemitism allegations there.

University of California officials framed the agreement as an extension of ongoing efforts to combat antisemitism systemwide.

"Antisemitism, harassment, and other forms of intimidation are antithetical to our values," UC Board of Regents Chair Janet Reilly said in a statement. "Today's settlement reflects a critically important goal that we share with the plaintiffs: to foster a safe, secure and inclusive environment for all."

Daniel Gold, Hillel at UCLA's executive director, applauded the settlement as a move in the right direction.

"This settlement is an important and meaningful step forward in addressing the very serious challenges that Jewish students have faced at UCLA," Gold said in a statement. "There is still much more work left to be done to build a safer, more welcoming, and more supportive campus that is free from antisemitic harassment and intimidation, and we look forward to working closely with the university and the UC system to counter antisemitism and bias at every turn."

The Jewish Federation of Los Angeles also welcomed the outcome.

"Accountability is a vital first step," its board chair Orna Wolens and CEO Rabbi Noah Farkassaid in a statement. "While no settlement can erase the sense of isolation and fear that so many Jewish students continue to feel, this settlement clearly affirms: antisemitism has no place at UCLA or on any campus."

The case sets a legal precedent, said Mark Rienzi, Becket's president. "Campus administrators across the country willingly bent the knee to antisemites during the encampments," he said in a statement. "They are now on notice: Treating Jews like second-class citizens is wrong, illegal, and very costly." ☆



*"Who is wise? He who learns
from every person."
— Pirkei Avot*

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