



## Reclaiming *Mikveh*

### *Bringing New Life to Sacred Waters*

BARBARA ROSMAN PENZNER

**T**he *mikveh* guide holds the oversized white sheet before her face, so the woman descending into the water is modestly screened. The gentle lapping as she takes each of the seven steps down can be heard through the transom, into the light-filled atrium where three rabbis stand. They can hear the guide softly explain how to immerse, then a splash, silence, and another splash. A blessing rises through the transom and three rabbis respond vigorously, "Amen." We welcome a new Jew.

Since Mayyim Hayyim opened in Newton, Massachusetts in May, 2004, I have been present at many more immersions than in my previous seventeen years as a rabbi. Many more conversions of adults and affirmations for infants and children, than before; I have also been with a woman who celebrated receiving her driver's license three years after an auto accident left her with brain damage. One woman came to celebrate taking on a Hebrew name, a symbol of her renewed interest in Jewish study and practice. Six women stood in the atrium and sang before each immersed, in preparation for her adult bat mitzvah. Brides and grooms have come as well. And I have fulfilled a personal dream of immersing every year prior to leading Yom Kippur services.

In fact, the past two years at Mayyim Hayyim: Living Waters Mikveh and Education Center has brought in over 2,000 individuals, most of whom had never seen a *mikveh* before.

*Twenty years ago, The Reconstructionist* journal published my first article about *mikveh*,



LITAL YITZHAKI

and a dream was born. Along with colleague Rabbi Amy Small (then fellow-RRC student Amy Levenson), we created a ritual for brides and explained to our Reconstructionist audience what a *mikveh* is, and how one practices immersion. That ritual entered contemporary Jewish culture through Anita Diamant's first book, *The New Jewish Wedding*. Anita, who is the founding president of Mayyim Hayyim, shared an interest in *mikveh* through her experience of witnessing her husband's conversion at the Orthodox *mikveh* in Boston. For years we talked about creating a *mikveh* we could call our own.

Today, the dream we all nurtured is flourishing and *mikveh* is now "in vogue" in Boston, and catching on among liberal Jews across North America. People call and visit from across the continent, as well as from Israel and Europe, to learn what we have learned: that *mikveh* can be one of Judaism's most meaningful ritual acts and that people are thirsty for its transformative power.

Discovering *mikveh* as rabbinical students was a bit like finding a beautiful artifact at an archaeological site, dusting it off and displaying it in a private museum. Over the (→ page 6)

#### INSIDE

- 2
- ISRAEL ON OUR MINDS
- 5
- FOR THE SAKE OF THE INNOCENT FIFTY
- 10
- TESHUVAH FOR KIDS
- 12
- CAMP JRF
- 14
- WHERE STUDY AND ACTIVISM MEET
- 16
- CONGREGATIONAL PUBLISHING
- 19
- INTERFAITH ISSUES IN MOURNING

a voice  
for  
creative  
Jewish  
living



# Israel on Our Minds

## A Summer of Violence and Reflection

CARL A. SHEINGOLD

On June 27th I was on a plane taking off from Ben Gurion Airport when the pilot announced that our route would be changed because “a military action has begun in the south.” An Israeli soldier had been kidnapped by Hamas — an event that dominated the Israeli newspapers during the time of our visit there. Little did we know that a “military action” would turn into a war with enormous potential implications for the future of Israel.

This is not the place to offer detailed commentary or opinion on the events that began that day and are still unfolding. Indeed, much will undoubtedly change in the time between my writing and your reading these words. One aspect of this story that seems durable to me is connected to my view of the importance of the Reconstructionist Movement's relationship to Israel.

*My own and many others people's response to these events — including many Israeli friends — felt qualitatively different from responses to previous wars involving Israel. A partial exception was the '67 War. Many of you will recall*

*Dr. Carl A. Sheingold is executive vice president of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation.*

*Reconstructionism Today* (ISSN 1072-3250; USPS 457-140) is published quarterly by the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation (JRF), 101 Greenwood Avenue, Jenkintown, PA 19046. Subscriptions are \$16 per year; \$20 foreign; single copies, \$5. Individual membership in JRF (\$80 per year) includes a subscription. Manuscripts and queries should be sent with a stamped, self-addressed envelope, to: Editor, RT, 101 Greenwood Avenue, Jenkintown, PA 19046 (e-mail: ltuttle@jrf.org).



Editor: Lisa Kelvin Tuttle

Editorial Board: Robert Barkin, Lawrence Bush, Daniel Goldman Cedarbaum, Dan Ehrenkrantz, Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer, Shai Gluskin, Seth Goldstein, Ron Goldwyn, Richard Hirsh, Melissa Klein, Nina Mandel, Victoria Free Presser, Carl A. Sheingold, Andrew Silow-Carroll, David Teutsch, Shawn Zevit

Periodicals postage paid at Jenkintown, PA and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send change of address to JRF, 101 Greenwood Avenue, Jenkintown, PA 19046.

the build-up to the war and the accompanying anxiety about Israel's security. That was followed by the dramatic Israeli victory and what turned out to be a brief period in which we could feel an innocent pride in, and sense of security about, Israel. I was struck by how much I cared about Israel's fate during those days — a degree of caring not predictable from the level of my involvement in Jewish life or in the life of Israel at that time.



SUSAN GRISS

I understood this to be a consequence of the fact that the events preceding the war forced me to contemplate a world without Israel. I experienced this projection as a personal and historical tragedy. At the time I couldn't fully explain why, but I knew that the reactions and feelings were deep. Those days provided the first hint of what would later become a personal journey that led me to put Judaism at the center of my life.

In many ways, the circumstances preceding this summer's events couldn't be more different. In the years since '67, Israel has become in the eyes of many the Goliath of the Middle East rather than the small, vulnerable state we thought it to be in the build-up to the '67 War. In the years since, criticism and doubts about Israel have been prominent in many circles, including Reconstructionist circles.

Having said that, I see this summer as an echo of '67 that derives from the nature of Israel's enemy (Hamas and Hezbollah), the enemy's sponsor (Iran), and the vexing and confusing challenge of confronting the tactic of terror and geopolitical goals that are indifferent to nationhood and national boundaries. Clearly, Israel was confronting people for whom "occupation" referred not to the West Bank and Gaza, but to Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem. These were opponents for whom compromise is seen as sinful, and surviving to fight another day is seen as victory.

The war forced all of us to confront existential questions about Israel's existence (whatever our opinion about the short- or long-term degree of threat). It also made us confront the importance of that existence to us, irrespective of our opinions about any specific aspect of the life, culture, or politics of Israel and irrespective of our opinions regarding any particular actions Israel was taking in defense of its right to exist. I'm not suggesting that our opinions have become irrelevant, only that they played out, this summer, in an existential context. We did not have the luxury of taking Israel's very existence for granted, even if that existence was not in immediate peril.

*How does this relate to our movement's relationship to Israel?* One connection has to do with themes of community and history, which are bedrocks of Reconstructionism. In the Spring 2006 issue of *The*

*Reconstructionist*, Rabbi Richard Hirsh offers an insightful analysis of the distinction between the three non-Orthodox movements, with a focus on their different understandings of the source of authority or obligation. Without replaying his entire argument, at its heart are the distinctions among *halakha* as the ultimate source of authority and obligation (Conservative); the individual as the ultimate source (Reform, even in its current, more traditional incarnation) and, he proposes, *minhag*, "norms that evolve within a community context" (Reconstructionism). To quote Hirsh, "*Minhag* locates divinity in the interaction and the resulting responsibilities that emerge from a faithful community that strives to transcend individuality. *Minhag* evolves from the ground up." I agree that community is the bedrock of Reconstructionism, and that it is within community processes that we seek to transcend, without rejecting, the autonomy of the individual and individual integrity.

Of course, we live in community on many levels. Most of the time it is in the face-to-face communities that are our congregations and *havvurot*. It is in the nature of such communities that they simultaneously provide opportunities to serve and to have our own needs met by others. We can also connect to larger-scale communities such as the Reconstructionist movement or, more broadly, the Jewish people worldwide. These community connections and commitments are necessarily →

## Kaplan's Theology

I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed Lawrence Bush's essay, "Atheism Versus Reconstructionism" (Winter 2005/06). He has articulated what has been difficult for me and, I believe, for others to express. *Yasher Koakh* and thanks to him for the past 13 years of helping to deliver a journal that we always look forward to receiving.

**David Benjamin**

*Dorshei Emet, Montreal*

•

In his article, Lawrence Bush modeled humility and open-mindedness by acknowledging that his very argument — that we resist our "temptation" to engage in religion — could be turned on its head. He presents a



logical alternative to combating the ill effects of religion by suggesting that liberal/skeptical folk might prevent the excesses of religion by deeply engaging in religious communities. By presenting a logical alternative to his own argument, Bush gives us an example of the best of liberal thought.

## Letters to RT

*RT welcomes letters and feedback. Given our space constraints, please try to limit letters to 300 words.*

I found his humble harangue to be a valuable and inspiring finale to his tenure as editor of *Reconstructionism Today*.

I'm in the camp of folk who believe it is best for liberals and skeptics to engage with Judaism and not resist its temptations. I think the religion that we would need to resist is one that doesn't acknowledge the human hand in the creation of religion. Reconstructionism acknowledges and celebrates the human creation of religion. (→ page 21)

## Israel on Our Minds

→ more intermittent and limited. But they also have the potential to reflect more consistently commitments beyond ourselves, commitments that do not directly meet our individual needs. Such communities, by definition, are also more heterogeneous, less based on identification with others who are, to some degree, mirror images of ourselves.

*These reflections suggest why I believe that* our relationship to Israel is so fundamental. An authentic Jewish life cannot be lived alone. It requires community. But I don't believe that the living of Jewish life through community and the potential to transcend individuality can ever be fully realized without ties that go beyond family and congregations to the Jewish people more broadly, and especially to Israel. The reality of Israel, more than fifty years after its creation, is unavoidably experienced as part of Jewish history. That is one of the reasons why the raising of existential questions about Israel's existence has such a profound impact on us. It is impossible to imagine life without Israel without reacting in terms that are both personal and historical.

*Community provides opportunities to relate to* the real lives of many others, opportunity for a modest but real intimacy on a broad scale. This is true at any level of community, but is more challenging the more distant and different the lives of the others with whom one shares ties. Similarly, community affords us the opportunity and challenge of taking responsibility for the real consequences that our actions and opinions have on others. In community, you can't afford to do things only because they make you feel good or affirm your own values. You also need to confront the actual impact of your actions on others, and consider that your worthy values may be in conflict with other worthy values. For some, this challenge is a reason to avoid community involvement. For others, it leads to the deepest rewards of such engagement.

One bane of the Israel-Diaspora relationship is the degree to which it has often been rooted in myths about "the other." Our opinions about each other — cultural, religious, and political — have often been shaped by a combination of myth (positive or negative) and the desire to feel a sense of rectitude. Too rarely have they been shaped by knowledge of the real lives of the other and the real consequences to them, individually and as a


society, of the things we wished they would do or not do.

This changes during a crisis, particularly during a moment of existential crisis. This summer we were obviously attuned to the impact of events on the real lives of people, and there is no doubt in my mind that one of the reasons so many were hesitant to reach certain judgments about Israel's strategy and behavior was precisely that they were forced to assess the real and long-term consequences of Israel's choices, rather than thinking about how Israel's actions made them feel.

It is important that our relationship to Israel be based on reality and not myth — and not just in times of crisis. It is important that it be based on respect for the different circumstances of our lives, differences that can lead to creative learning but may also require us to achieve a degree of modesty in our judgments — to resist facile, self-reflective and self-serving judgment. A key to this is to have real and deep relationships with Israelis, based on common concerns and compatible perspectives. To be real, however, they must also be anchored in a recognition of the profound difference between creating a Jewish life in a Jewish state in the Middle East, and doing so in a physically secure, voluntary community (which presents its own challenges.)

*There is a growing, informal movement in* Israel of individuals and organizations attempting to do something very similar to what we as a movement are striving to do in North America: to create alternatives to rigid Orthodoxy and pallid secularism. They are not our mirror image, and we should resist the temptation to see them as Reconstructionists who only lack the label. Still, they are potential partners in creating vibrant Jewish lives, and in building connections between Israel and Diaspora that can feel like the two wings of a true Jewish community.

Several of these individuals will be joining us at the JRF Convention in November in Philadelphia (see the attached brochure). We will have an opportunity to get to know them, to hear about what the events of this summer have meant to their lives, and to hear their views on the existential questions that have been raised. I hope that we will take the opportunity to build a relationship with them and those with whom they work — as individuals, as congregations, and as a movement.

I look forward to seeing you in November. 

# For the Sake of the Innocent Fifty

ELLIOTT BATZDEK

*Genesis 18: 22-33: God determines to destroy Sodom. Abraham argues with God, reminding God that God must live by the moral rules God established, and asks if God would destroy the guilty along with the innocent if Sodom had fifty innocent people. God says that, if there are fifty such people, the whole will be forgiven for their sake. Abraham continues haggling, bargaining God down to saving the entire city for the sake only ten innocent people. God agrees, "I will not destroy, for the sake of ten."*

This is the scale of justice established by Abraham and God — all of the evildoers on one side, ten innocent people on the other. And, as Jewish commentary cautions, not just any ten people, but ten people who are a subculture of righteousness, who work together to try to change their society from within. For only ten such people, even a land mired in deceit and destruction must be spared.

As a U.S. citizen, I find this equation reassuring. Within the deceit and corruption and violence and hate, there are so many more than ten of us working together so hard, so constantly. But can I, can we, apply the standard of God's justice to other societies? In other societies, as in our own, where some people commit, justify, and glorify acts of tremendous violence, can we even begin to believe that ten justice-seeking people might turn the tide? That just ten people, working together, can be reason enough to save a civilization from the power of God's wrath, or even from the human-made curses of confinement, starvation, of death by disease and hunger and despair?

Can my own people — as human and frightened and irrational and generous and kind and vengeful and forgiving as any other — can my own people honor God's scale for mercy, compas-

---

*Elliott batTzedek is a member of Mishkan Shalom in Philadelphia, where she read this piece to culminate the counting of the omer at Shavuot. She is a founding member of the Philadelphia chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace and works with other combined Jewish/Arab/Muslim campaigns for justice in the Middle East. Two of her poems can be found in the current issue of Sinister Wisdom.*

sion, justice? Dare we? If so, how many of the thousands upon thousands upon thousands upon thousands of non-violent, justice-building Palestinians need my people acknowledge before we stop our obsessive counting of only those few who do violence? How many, knowing that God, with God's compassion and mercy beyond understanding, established that all must be saved for the sake of ten?

Can we be one-half as compassionate as God?

Then twenty is the number of good people, working for change, to require that all be saved.

There are twenty such people in Palestine.

Can we be one-quarter as compassionate?

Then forty is the number.

There are forty.

Dare we try to be 1/60th as compassionate as God?

Then six hundred is the number.


There are six hundred.

And what if, as human as we are, we can be only 1/1000th as compassionate as God?

Then the number is ten thousand.

There are ten thousand.

*Oh, my people, my chosen people, can you see them? Do you dare let yourself see them? And when you dare see them, do you dare be Abraham, willing to barter for their lives even with God, so certainly with our elected and hired and self-appointed community leaders — our rabbis, institutional officials, even with the Israeli government? How many will be enough, for us to stop counting only the bombers and the rocket launchers and their screaming supporters? How long until we look through Abraham's eyes, and seek reasons to save, not to condemn, knowing that merely ten is the number bargained for in our names?*

On this, the 49th day of a counting which we do to remind ourselves that counting matters, I offer this prayer for the 50th day: *Baruh atah Yah, eloheynu veylohey avoteynu ve'imoteynu*: For the sake of the righteousness of my ancestors, for the sake of their good deeds: Please teach us to count with compassion, even when we are afraid, and to count with justice, especially in the face of violence. May we stand proudly in the long shadow of Abraham, and count with a fierce determination to stand up for what we know to be right. 

**DO YOU DARE  
BE ABRAHAM,  
WILLING TO BARTER  
FOR THEIR LIVES  
EVEN WITH GOD?**

## Mikveh . . .

(→ from the cover)

years, we encountered individuals, one by one, who shared our passion for this ancient ritual, and left large groups of listeners and readers a bit bewildered. “Why would a modern woman want to return to such a primitive ritual?” they asked. It took the creation of a *mikveh* that belongs to everyone who enters, no matter what his or her background, marital status, or Jewish affiliation, to answer that question. Traditionally, men also use the *mikveh* before *Shabbat* and at other times. At Mayyim Hayyim, both women and men have taken to the water for spiritual nourishment at times of life transition that lack any formal Jewish blessing or ceremony.

*Our dream burst forth into a thousand seeds* this past June, when Mayyim Hayyim hosted its first international conference, “Reclaiming *Mikveh*: Pouring Ancient Waters into a Contemporary Vessel.” Cosponsored by every arm of the Reconstructionist movement, along with

the Conservative and Reform movements, ALEPH, and other local and national Jewish agencies, the event attracted many who have been nurturing a new vision of Jewish ritual for decades, as well as young and old who encountered *mikveh* for the first time. The conference provided workshops on multiple uses of *mikveh*: for conversion, celebration, and healing. Text study was offered at every session, and workshops were geared for educators, clergy, and lay people. Dr. Norman

Cohen, professor of *midrash* at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, opened with a moving keynote tracing the connections between water, song, and redemption, reminding us that “Miriam’s well is everywhere” — that is, we need to draw on our own wells of potential.

A high point for me was a robust conversation about “new rituals” featuring feminist scholars who have dug many wells over the years: Dr.

*Rabbi Barbara Rosman Penzner serves Hillel B’nai Torah in Boston. She is a past president of the RRA and serves on the board of Mayyim Hayyim.*

Rachel Adler, Rabbi Elyse M. Goldstein, Dr. Lori Hope Lefkovitz, Dr. Vanessa Ochs, as well as a younger Conservative rabbi, Lauren Berkun. The presentations drew upon deep experience of the art of creating new rituals and their impact on liberal Judaism as we know it today. As I looked around the packed auditorium, I was gratified to see excitement and understanding on so many faces, including a number of young Reconstructionist rabbis.

This renewed approach to *mikveh* has much in common with a Reconstructionist approach to Jewish ritual in general. We have taken one of the simplest and most basic elements of life and rediscovered the symbolic effects of cleansing our souls. Mayyim Hayyim’s library contains an astounding collection of texts on *mikveh* and on women and ritual that truly reflect the revolution that has taken place in Judaism in North America over the past twenty years. The library also contains prayers for “just add water” rituals: collections of readings for a variety of life passages, much like the resources found on Kolot’s ritualwell.org (which had its roots in the RRC “Creative Liturgy Library” of an earlier generation). The ritual of immersion is grounded in ancient traditions and simultaneously draws on our contemporary sensibilities.

**Mikveh is a unique ritual in that it requires *kavvanah* to be considered effective.** Merely immersing because it’s the thing to do touches the body, but not the soul. One of my favorite texts comes from Rambam’s *Mishne Torah* (Maimonides’s code) on the rituals of *mikveh* and immersion, in which he reminds us firmly that the water must be added to a substance to have an impact:

The Sages have said, if a person immerses, but without special intention, it is as though he or she has not immersed at all. . . . we may find a hint of the inner meaning of this *mitzvah*: just as one who sets his heart on becoming clean becomes clean as soon as he has immersed, although nothing new has befallen his body, so, too, one who sets his heart on cleansing himself from the uncleanness of the soul — namely, wrongful thoughts and false convictions — becomes clean as soon as he consents in his heart to reject those counsels and brings his soul into the waters of true beliefs (*Hilkhot Mikveh* 11:12).

Mikveh is not magic. Just as one prepares to

### DISCOVERING MIKVEH

AS RABBINICAL STUDENTS  
WAS A BIT LIKE FINDING  
A BEAUTIFUL ARTIFACT AT AN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE,  
DUSTING IT OFF AND  
DISPLAYING IT IN A  
PRIVATE MUSEUM.


do *teshuvah*, to repent one's misdeeds prior to the *Yamim Nora'im* (High Holy Days), one must come to the *mikveh* with intention.

Not everyone has a beautiful, open communal *mikveh* nearby, but maybe you'll be surprised and discover that one is being built in your community in the near future. Those who attended the Reclaiming *Mikveh* conference came away with a new vision of immersion, and possibly of Jewish life itself, and may be bringing that to your city. If not, there may be an ocean or lake near you, where you can experience this same ritual.

The idea that thousands of people are eager to strip down to their naked essence, to remove piercings and nail polish and makeup and contact lenses, gives me hope. If we are so willing to shed these layers of our outer identity, then perhaps we may also be ready to cast off

## resources

For more on *mikveh*, read Aryeh Kaplan's *Waters of Eden (OU/NCSY)* and Rivka Slonim's *Total Immersion: A Mikveh Anthology* (Urim Publications). You can also visit *Kolot*, the Center for Jewish Women's and Gender Studies at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College ([www.kolot.org](http://www.kolot.org)).

the dirty little secrets, the annoyed looks and tight lips, and all the other manifestations that prevent us from being our best selves. When I am at *Mayyim Hayyim*, I notice that this is a place where anger does not take root. In this place, people are kind and gentle, understanding and patient. Whatever is happening behind the closed doors of the *mikveh* is flowing out and watering parched souls. 

## A Wedding Gift

### *Our First Mikveh*

JUDITH PILCHIK ZUCKER

IT WASN'T LONG after my daughter, Amy, and I started working on her wedding plans that I noticed a quiet yearning stir within me.

We were spending a good deal of time on the phone exchanging ideas about locations, colors, and menus in an effort to define a direction from which to begin our planning. Meanwhile, the stirring persisted. It seemed spiritual in nature and although I have a leaning toward spirituality I don't have much practice in acting on those sorts of impulses.

I had taken a few classes in Judaism several years before which probably prompted the stirring. The coursework was taught by a rabbi who inspired me to think about the spiritual legacy I wanted to leave for my children as a mother and a Jew.

---

*Judith Pilchik Zucker is a family therapist serving as a bereavement coordinator at St. Barnabas Hospital in Livingston, NJ. She is the daughter of Rabbi Ely Pilchik z"l, rabbi of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in Short Hills, NJ for 37 years. In addition to her daughter, she also has a son with whom she will not be sharing a mikveh at any time in the foreseeable future.*

Although my father was a highly respected Reform rabbi and an effective educator, I grew up lacking in some of the basic foundation of Jewish history, ritual and thought. My experience as my father's daughter was less as student to the academic and theological substance he taught than as a student of how to cultivate personal and meaningful relationships with the people who enter our lives.

When the rabbi who had been my teacher heard that Amy was going to be married, she invited me for a celebratory lunch. While waiting for our turkey sandwiches, I babbled about how happy I was for my daughter and how after several years of downright bad luck maybe our tide was turning. The guy she was marrying and his family were terrific and I had never seen her happier. Barely taking a breath, I described where the wedding was going to be, how many people were invited, how we found the wedding gown, and on and on.

I talked about how the relationship between Amy and me had been partially shaped by circumstances that required a reversal of our roles in the family. I had been a strong and present mother during her growing up years. Two years before her engagement, I became ill. Amy stepped in without a thought and took over as the nurturing and protective mother I needed to see me through some frightening times. She handled the medical staff in two hospitals and once I returned home, ran both the household and me

with a smooth solid confidence that allowed me total peace of mind.

*When I began helping her plan the wedding* our roles automatically reversed again. Years of experience brought me back to being a teacher, nurturer, organizer of large parties, and interpreter of relational issues. Coaching Amy about the hows and wherefores of invitations, caterers, florists, and the other purveyors of the wedding trade, as well as discussing the concerns and anticipation of married life, placed me on top of the heap again.

Amy and I have talked about our changing roles; how easily we shift our positions and maintain a rhythm with each other as our needs and vulnerabilities change.

"It's really quite wonderful," I boasted to the rabbi.

"Why don't you mark the occasion of the wedding with a *mikveh*?" she suggested.

"A *mikveh*?" I asked, surprised by the idea. Growing up in a modern Reform congregation I only knew of *mikveh* as an observance of strictly Orthodox Jews.

*For generations mothers have passed down this mitzvah* to their daughters. The most commonly

known use of *mikveh* is as a ritual bath in which observant Jewish women immerse themselves monthly as an act of spiritual purification after their menstrual cycles to prepare for the resumption of sexual relations with their husbands. According to Jewish law, a primary responsibility of women is to marry and

to bear children. "Be fruitful and multiply," we learn early on.

"I could think about it," I said, although the idea of immersing naked into a pool of water with my daughter seemed a bit much.

"There's a new women's center in Boston," the rabbi continued, ignoring my cool response. "You don't have to be observant to participate. The liberal Jews in the area built a center for women who want to create a ritual to mark significant life changes. Women are using it to celebrate divorce, adoption, healing from illness, even coming out in public as gay. Any life cycle event you want can be developed into a personal ritual as a symbol for moving forward in your life."

She had planted a seed. When I returned to

Boston I told Amy about my conversation with the rabbi.

"It sounds interesting," she said. "We're both starting new lives at the same time. You're recovering from illness and getting divorced and I'm getting married. Let's find out more about it."

Inspired by the idea of sharing our experience, we visited the Mayyim Hayyim Education Center to learn more. The inner yearning that had been stirring within me began to feel satisfied as we wove this element of spiritual meaning into the wedding preparations. I wanted Amy to partake of an aspect of the event that spoke to the reverence of marriage and its seriousness within our tradition. As we returned to the more prosaic details of the wedding arrangements, I noticed that the subject of our upcoming *mikveh* became a part of our conversations as naturally as the talk about our table arrangements, colors, and menus. I knew that as important as the ambience Amy wanted to create for the wedding celebration, our participation in this ancient tradition would grow in significance for her as time passed. She will relay our story to her daughter and another generation will preserve the sanctity of our heritage.

*The morning of our mikveh we drove to the center* excited and apprehensive. The unfamiliarity of engaging in such a formal observance, as well as our lack of facility to read Hebrew, the language in which we would speak our prayers, made us a bit ill at ease.

A "*mikveh* guide" greeted us. She escorted us to separate dressing rooms where we prepared for the bath. Everything from dental floss to shampoo, conditioner, razors, and nail polish remover were provided in order to cleanse ourselves in preparation for our immersion. We were to meet at the small pool to the right of the building wearing only the terry cloth robes that were lent to us. Amy entered the bath first because she was the bride. She was instructed to disrobe and walk down the seven steps to the pool where she turned on a spigot that added natural rainwater to the pool water.

I read her the first prayer in Hebrew and in English, thanking God for bringing us to this day of celebration. Amy dunked down deep into the pool. When she came up, I read her another prayer referring to her growing from childhood into an adult. She dunked again. The last prayer spoke of going forth from daughter to wife and her commitment to teach and maintain Jewish values and traditions in her own home. She dunked the

## I WAS MOVED

BY A SENSE OF SOOTHING WHOLENESS  
WITH MYSELF, MY TRADITION, AND THE

## WORLD AROUND ME.

third time after saying *Amen*.

Amy emerged from the water smiling and shivering. I wrapped a large plush towel around her and pulled her toward me. Her head rested on my shoulder.

"You have grown into an exceptional woman," I whispered. "I am very proud. May you be blessed with health and peace and joy and luck as you enter this new stage of life called marriage. May the Lord shadow you everyday so you know you are not alone. I love you."

I kissed her cheek drawing her closer. A tear fell on my shoulder.

"Mom," she said quietly. "May you be my shadow and be with me forever to guide me the way you always have. I love you."

It was my turn. I took off my robe and walked down the seven steps. Amy read me the prayers I had selected about renewing my strength and moving forward in my life. I will choose to take what I want from my previous life and cast off what didn't work for me.

The water felt warm and soft around me creating a sense of refuge. I was moved by a sense of soothing wholeness with myself, my tradition, and the world around me.

That we are not observant Jews made our participation in this ancient rite particularly meaningful to us. We chose to step out of the material world and embrace a ritual that was given to us through our birthright. The intimacy of witnessing each other's immersion sealed our bond. We will stand by and hold each other as we go forward connected by our tradition and, above all, by our love. ✡

## THE ISRAEL CRISIS FUND

was launched by United Jewish Communities (UJC) in order to dramatically step up our efforts during these extraordinary times. Your contribution will help Jews in Israel, threatened by the recent escalation of events. One hundred percent of funds raised will go directly to help those in need. You can make a donation now on the JRF home page, [www.jrf.org](http://www.jrf.org).



## recreating

### "MOSES" BY DAVID SETH BRASS

Congregation Beth Evergreen  
Evergreen, Colorado



**David Seth Brass** is a stone sculptor, arts writer, and sculpture educator, and was one of 180 American artists invited to exhibit his work in Florence, Italy last year at the *Biennale Internazionale dell'Arte Contemporanea*, the largest contemporary art exhibition in the world. He is in the process of carving a 3,000-pound, 8-foot tall basalt monolith entitled, "Who They Might Have Been" — a Holocaust memorial incorporating the handprints of three generations of Holocaust survivors within the stone. To view more of David's work, visit his website: [www.davidsethbrass.com](http://www.davidsethbrass.com).

# Teshuvah for Kids

## Making Yom Kippur Meaningful for Our Children

DEVORA BARTNOFF

Helping religious school students experience the richness of the Jewish holiday cycle is one of the great joys of Jewish education. Yom Kippur, however, is probably the most challenging holiday to explain meaningfully on a child's level. Void of an historical/political backdrop, Yom Kippur is a day full of abstractions which often elude adult understanding. What does it really mean for us to create a state of "purity"? What are the ways we need to work on our social relationships and the ways we need to clarify our relationship with God? How can we get to the place of surrender and acceptance that enables the process of true repentance to occur? For children, who exist in the realm of the concrete, Yom Kippur poses a unique pedagogic challenge.

*I have three goals in teaching the holiday to children. Keeping in mind Lawrence Kohlberg's lesson that children advance in their moral reasoning when exposed to reasoning slightly above their own, I seek to help them "plug in" to their current level of moral understanding and then reach higher levels. Children should come away with a deepened understanding of how they view their own actions and how they want to improve.*

My second goal is to impart a "taste of the spiritual." What does it feel like for a child to let go of the constraints of ego and be uplifted with a sense

of joy and serenity? How can a child feel the awe and potential within and around him/her? Underlying the prayers we teach, this "taste" is the goal for which we strive.

My third goal has to do with illustrating how the solemnity of Yom Kippur is based on the goal of spiritual growth, not suffering. Underlying Yom Kippur is a joyfulness, a sense of the ultimate possibility of change and betterment. We want that sense of joyous belief to be felt by our children.

If we can impart a deepened sense of self-understanding in the context of the holy environment of prayer, and a realization that this process is an inherent part of Jewish life, we will have given our children the essence of *teshuvah*: of returning, of valuing the continual striving for self-awareness and self-improvement in the context of a belief in the possibility of change.

*One way I have tried to reach goal #1 is by asking students to study parts of the *Al Heyt* prayer ("For the sin that we have sinned before you," which I have predetermined as having the most relevance for their lives) and, working in twos, to write commentaries. After some sharing, the group then discusses the significance of the collective nature of the *Al Heyt*. This is a crucial discussion, helping to bridge between Kohlberg's first stage of moral development, in*

which the avoidance of punishment is most operative, and his second stage, in which the perspectives of others are considered.

Each dyad is then instructed to write a brand new, contemporary *Al Heyt* including three items plus commentary. These prayers are then discussed and put in a finished form, which the entire congregation reads on Yom Kippur day. This exercise gives students a chance to grapple with issues that, for them, pose important moral questions. It also allows them to connect meaningfully with the rest of the congregation.

*In striving to meet goal #2 — the taste of spirituality — I offer some ideas that I have used in conducting children's services on Yom Kippur Day.*



SOLOMON CHIGRINSKY

*Rabbi Devora Bartnoff z"l (1952-1997) was a Reconstructionist rabbi, educator and counselor. In 1998, the headquarters of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation were named 'Beit Devora' in her honor. This article appeared in the premiere issue (Autumn 1993) of Reconstructionism Today.*

One is to ask children to close their eyes and think for a minute about a time in their lives when they experienced God (it's helpful for the leader to offer an example first). Often this leads to a discussion of how we can make God more present in our lives. Another idea is to have everyone chant a phrase involving the name of God over and over, with a simple movement that they can do while standing at their seats. Children love the rhythm of the chanting and the opportunity to move their bodies. Often I introduce this exercise after having told an Hasidic story with a theme about how everyone is able to communicate with God in very basic ways.

*My third goal — experiencing the joyousness of Yom Kippur* — is perhaps the most difficult. One suggestion I have for the classroom setting is for each child to stand in front of the group and share one way he/she wants to change over the coming year and one way he/she has changed in a good way over the past year. After each presentation, the class raises imaginary *shofarot* and has a mini *shofar*-blowing ceremony. (I try to have as many real *shofarot* as possible for kids to use.) This allows children to feel empowered and positive about the process of change in their lives.

The above teaching ideas can easily be adapted to family programs and home use. The essence of what I have suggested is the creative use of the “technology” that Yom Kippur offers us — the

**The Jewish Reconstructionist Federation  
invites you to the 41st JRF Convention**



*Our Evolving Jewish Journey:  
Peoplehood and the Quest  
for Spiritual Community*


November 9-12, 2006 / 18-22 Heshvan  
Hyatt Regency Philadelphia at Penn's Landing  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Hundreds of Reconstructionists and likeminded friends will gather to learn, daven, and celebrate together as we mark a new chapter in our collective evolving Jewish journey**



**Highlights: Plenary on Reconstructionism, Special Program on Israel  
Shabbat Services, Beit Midrash, JRF Community Kumsitz  
Networking & Affinity Groups and more!**

**Register and see details now at [www.jrfconvention.org](http://www.jrfconvention.org)  
Call 800-237-1517, ext. 324, to request a registration form**

prayers, the ideas, the stories, the symbols — to enable us all to better understand and appreciate its message. 

## recreating

### “PI CHAI”

**BY AARON GOLDBLATT**

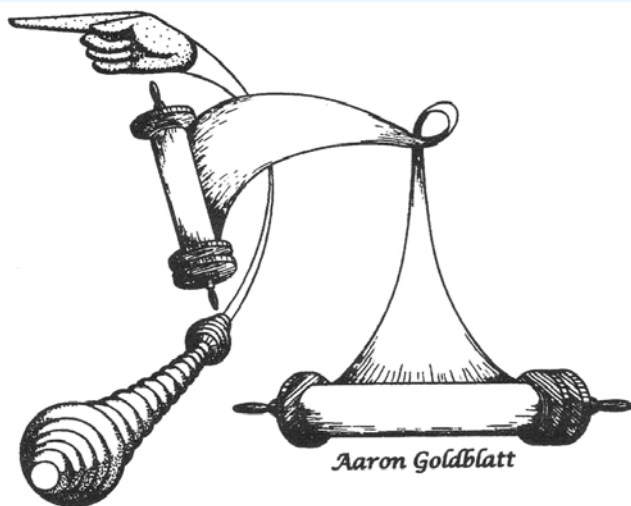
Tiferes B'nai Israel  
Warrington, Pennsylvania

**Aaron Goldblatt** creates a three-dimensional, spiritual style of art influenced by Escher and Dali.

*Reconstructionist artists are invited to submit their original, Jewishly-themed artwork and photography to:*

*RT Editor*

*Jewish Reconstructionist Federation  
101 Greenwood Avenue  
Jenkintown, PA 19046*



וְתִלְמֹד תּוֹרָה כְּנֶגֶד כָּלֵם

And the study of torah is equal to them all, because it leads to them all.

# Camp JRF's Best Season Yet!

JEFFREY EISENSTAT

The fifth summer at Camp JRF was surely the best yet. Our new Aaron and Marjorie Ziegelman Campus accommodated over 280 campers from nearly 50 Reconstructionist communities. Highlights included the expansion of our program so that campers could come for not only one but two sessions; our "taste of camp" program for our younger campers; having eleven Israelis on our staff; honoring our campers and staff who have been with us for five years; and, of course, dedicating our new, permanent home on the Aaron and Marjorie Ziegelman Campus.

We were able to create a dynamic program filled with arts, sports, music, a "challenge course," drama, dance, swimming and boating instruction, Jewish learning, and of course, participation in an inclusive, welcoming, and supportive Reconstructionist community.

All of the above was made possible through our outstanding *tzevet* (staff), including bunk counselors and specialists, food services, maintenance, support and health service workers, RRA faculty members, our Corporation Board, supportive families and donors, and our fantastic campers.

With another successful summer behind us, Camp JRF is eagerly planning Summer 2007. Beginning on September 18<sup>th</sup>, the first 150 campers to register will receive a \$100 discount off of camp tuition. You can register online at [www.campjrf.org](http://www.campjrf.org). You can also send registration forms through the mail to Camp JRF, c/o Beit Devora, 101 Greenwood Avenue, Jenkintown, PA 19046. If you have any questions, contact us at (877) CAMP-JRF [877-226-7573] or e-mail us at [info@campjrf.org](mailto:info@campjrf.org). We look forward to seeing your registration forms shortly! ✡

Rabbi Jeffrey Eisenstat is JRF Director of Youth and Camping.



ANDREW DICKERMAN

# A Pretty Place in the Poconos

## *A First-Time Camper Finds a Home*

RACHEL GIOVANNIELLO

**H**idden along a winding road among the mountains of the Poconos is a refuge for all who are willing to take the risk of entering. There is a place where one can step away, for a couple of weeks, from a world constantly pushing him or her to conform. There is a place where one is safe to change, or grow, or become his or her self. There is a growing, loving community, ready to embrace the world. They call it Camp JRF.

*I was terrified as I entered camp for the first time.* All I could see was the world I was about to lose, the world in which I was comfortable, the world that I knew. Yet from the moment I got to camp, I was greeted from a thousand sides with smiles. I found myself thrown amongst a group of people who didn't care what I looked like or where I came from or who I was during the rest of the year. There was only the present, only the people we were going to with be here and now, and every person at camp was willing to become a part of that.

Very few people at camp had ever seen each other before in their lives. Yet each felt an immediate connection to everyone with whom they were sharing the summer. We were all Jewish. We were all together. And that was enough. Within a day, we all felt we had been a part of camp and of each other's lives for weeks, if not longer. We were with each other every moment of every day. We knew each other's fears and hopes. We accepted them without question.

From the moment camp began, we were not merely a bunch of people spending a couple of weeks together; we were a community in the making, ready to share with each other our every emotion and experience. When you're surrounded by laughter, it's hard to hold back your own.

It wasn't that no one got homesick, or missed the world they'd left behind. It was, rather, that we were with people who accepted that, and un-

---

*Rachel Giovaniello is a ninth-grader at Manhasset High School and a member of the Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore in Plandome, NY. She intends to return to Camp JRF next summer.*

derstood that, and knew how to make us laugh. I found myself enjoying the dancing I'd sworn I would hate. I found myself joining in. There was no one there to question who I chose to be. Most of the people there had never known me before. They accepted whoever I was, at whatever moment.



At every minute of the day, someone was singing. We sang during services and meals, and shouted our cheers as we made our way through the day. There was too much joy to hold inside, and so instead we let it out, allowing everyone around us to share in our happiness.

*There were 8 year-olds living in close quarters* with 16 year-olds, yet for those couple of weeks, age ceased to matter. Each of the older kids was paired up with one of the youngest campers, and the differences between us served only to strengthen our growing community.

When camp finally came to an end, each of us left still singing the songs that had filled our lives for the past two and a half weeks. Each of us had been given a chance, for no matter how short an amount of time, to better become our selves. Even without knowing it, we had grown close to the people around us, the people we had come to take for granted. We had formed connections too strong to be broken by time or space. Somehow, within the span of nineteen days, we had formed a loving, laughing community, open to growth and to change. The changes were too great, the friendships too deep, the pieces of ourselves that we had reclaimed suddenly too precious, to lose again. As we split up, to resume lives in different states and time zones, we each carried with us a newfound willingness to leap into life, knowing that, sometimes, it would be worth it. ✧

# Sustenance for Body and Soul

*Where Study and Activism Meet*

SHAWN ISRAEL ZEVIT

*A theology which is not a plan of social action is merely a way of preaching and praying. It is a menu without the dinner.*

—Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan,  
Not So Random Thoughts

**T**HROUGHOUT THIS YEAR, we at JRF have been collecting data in order to learn about the wide range of *tikkun olam* initiatives taking place in JRF congregations. Every congregation responding to our survey reported some form of active engagement related to alleviating hunger and poverty in their community, country, or even internationally.

Based on this, we developed this past year’s *Omer* Project learning initiative on the theme of hunger and poverty. Over the seven weeks of teaching, congregations and individuals had the opportunity to teach us about the projects their congregations have been involved with, present background information related to the issue, and help us think about ways in which our communities might respond to hunger and poverty in our midst.

The *Omer* Study Initiative (<http://omer.jrf.org>) included teachings on: “Justice and Sustainability,” “Who Benefits from Tzedakah?,” “El Salvador: Encountering Poverty and Possibility,” “Living Wage Issue Handbook,” “Proactive Permanent Solutions Versus Reactive Band-Aids,” “*Kiddush HaShem* — Sanctification of God’s Name: Can Grace and *Hamotzi* Co-exist at the Homeless Shelter?,” “Anonymous Versus Public Acts: The First Interfaith ‘Out of the Cold’ Program,” “Where *Tikkun Olam* Work and Religious Life Intersect,”

*Rabbi Shawn Israel Zevit is the Director of Outreach and External Affairs/Tikkun Olam for the JRF.*

“Sustenance for the Whole Person,” “Preserving the Dignity of Those in Need,” “The Difference Between Charity and Justice,” and “Healing the World, Healing Ourselves.” We thank all the participants who offered teachings during this year’s *Omer* initiative and provided us all with additional perspectives and tools in confronting hunger and poverty in our community and around the world.

**Mordecai Kaplan argued that Jewish life must** provide us with recipes for justice in our actions in the world. As members of Jewish community, we are challenged to discern how to embody these values in our lives and in our communities. Kaplan also urged us to move beyond self-realization and the ongoing renewal of the Jewish People to see peaceful interdependence and Godly living as what we would term today our “global responsibility.”

In this respect, I suggest that the future of the Jewish People can only be found in a globally sustainable, evolving religious culture — interdependent and interconnected with healthy and conscious environmental, religious, political, social, cultural, and economic global systems. While there are a multitude of ongoing, situational concerns

that ask for compassionate and committed acts of *tikkun* (repair) and *gemilut hasadim* (acts of kindness) in our world, a spiritual approach to sustainable development is, I would suggest, a crucial issue to for the Jewish People and for humanity in the 21st century to address.

One way JRF tries to facilitate this global responsibility is through our work in the area of *tikkun olam* and external affiliations.

One initiative we are involved in this year, through our affiliation with the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) and a

growing partnership with The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), is a major national Jewish communal response to climate change and emerging environmental issues. These partnerships build on our own movement’s resolution on the environment and our current commitment to this climate change campaign (see resources box).

In 1986, the JRF Board passed a resolution



BETSY PLATKIN TEUTSCH

supporting MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger. The resolution encouraged all our affiliates to become active partners with MAZON in ending hunger. Founded in 1985, MAZON (“food” or “sustenance” in Hebrew) is a national nonprofit agency which provides food, help, and hope to hungry people of all faiths and backgrounds. It allocates donations from the Jewish community to the most effective hunger relief organizations in the United States, Canada, and Israel, and in poor countries worldwide. As partners with MAZON, congregations raise funds for hunger-relief during the High Holy Days and other times. Many Jews also give to MAZON three percent of the cost of weddings, bar and bat mitzvahs, and other joyous events. We can be proud that the current elected president of MAZON is Rabbi Arnie Rachlis, a graduate of RRC and the rabbi of University Synagogue in Irvine, California.

Through the invitation of Eric Schochman, the executive director of MAZON, we participated in an anti-hunger convocation in Washington in June, 2005, and lobbied Congress with a cross-religious team to preserve food stamps and subsidies. It was the collaboration and presence of every religious denomination in the United States that made the biggest impression on the politicians we visited. Out of this convocation, an ongoing religious coalition was formed that has continued to communicate through the auspices of Bread for the World and MAZON about national and international hunger and poverty concerns.

*We were also invited by MAZON to represent* the Jewish perspective on responding to hunger and poverty at The National Hunger Awareness Day 2006 Symposium, held on June 5 in Washington, D.C. The symposium was attended by leaders across the religious spectrum. Once again, the re-


## resources

Learn more about the COEJL/JCPA Climate Change initiative, “A Light Among the Nations,” aka, “How Many Jews Does it Take to Change a Light Bulb?” at <http://www2.jrf.org/to/environment.php>.

To read the full JRF resolution supporting MAZON, see [www.jrf.org/to/resolution-mazon.html](http://www.jrf.org/to/resolution-mazon.html). For a full list of JRF’s *tikkun olam* initiatives, check out <http://www.jrf.org/to/to-main.html>.

lationship-building and confluence of leaders elicited hope and energy to take action to stem the growing food insecurity (defined as the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate or safe food) that now affects an estimated 38 million people in the United States.

The year 2007 will be an important year for all our members to be active, not only in their congregations, but in speaking out publicly and conveying our Jewish values to politicians as well. Every five years, the U.S. government revisits the Farm Act, which includes provisions for food stamps, temporary food relief, and ongoing food subsidies in various agencies.

The Torah states, “Justice, justice you shall pursue” (Deuteronomy 16:20). Our imperative is to pursue responses to the many areas of concern we face in North America. For us as Reconstructionist Jews, social, economic, or environmental problems are not “inconvenient truths,” but realities to be fully met as part of our Jewish values of Spiritual Peoplehood in the broadest coalitions and the smallest local initiatives. Together we can pursue the Divine call to do what is just for *tikkun hanefesh* (healing the individual soul) and *tikkun olam* (healing the world). 

## resources

### SIDDUR KOL HANO’AR: THE VOICE OF CHILDREN

by Rabbis Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and Jeffrey Schein

This beautiful hardcover Shabbat prayer book for children ages 5-9 makes a wonderful gift for the whole family to share at home.

Features include:

- Magnificent full-color illustrations by Joani Rothenberg
- Accessible, creative translations
- Folktales with questions for discussion
- Inspirational poetry
- Songs in Hebrew and English
- Two versions — one with, and one without, transliteration



**\$24 (U.S.)**  
plus shipping  
JRF discount and  
bulk orders discounts  
available.  
Order online at  
[www.jrf.org/siddur](http://www.jrf.org/siddur)  
or call  
(877) 573-7827

# Congregational Publishing

## *The Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation's New Labor of Love*

ADRIENNE LIEBERMAN

**O**n a cold night in December 2005, a tall woman strides to the *bima* at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation (JRC) in Evanston, Illinois. Her voice cracks, then recovers, as she tells of discovering her birth mother ten years ago. Later, a 15-year-old boy revisits the sunny day a car knocked his father off a bike, almost killing him. Afterwards, listeners stand to applaud. The applause intensifies when the boy's father slowly rises.

This occasion isn't a twelve-step meeting or a family therapy group, but a party to launch *From There to Here: Points on the Circle of Life*. The book is a 176-page softcover volume of memoirs and poetry about life transitions, written by more than fifty JRC members, illustrated with photographs, and published by the synagogue's own press. The tall woman and the teenage boy are two of the twelve authors who have been invited to share their carefully crafted pieces with an audience of more than 150 people. A tuxedoed emcee, another contributor,

introduces each story or poem. Punctuating every few readings, JRC's Heavy Shtetl klezmer band offers an evocative melody to extend the mood just a little longer.

*Such a party, let alone such a book, could hardly* have come about without plenty of planning and hours of volunteer labor. But the people who work on it — including me, as contributor and editor — consider it a labor of love.

Our synagogue began its foray into the world of book publishing in 1999 with *Is God a Cubs Fan?* This popular book was one member's annotated compilation of his yearly Yom Kippur open mike speeches about our city's hapless but perhaps not

God-forsaken team. It's now in its second printing with a slightly altered title, *Is God Still a Cubs Fan?*

In January 2000, a member of our congregation decided that the religious book *Pirkei Avot* told only half the story. To showcase the wisdom of our foremothers, she convened a small committee that began planning our first collection of member-written pieces. *Pirkei Imahot: A Celebration of Our Mothers* came out in late fall. Fifty authors contributed stories and poems, which were edited for inclusion, as well as photographs. Writer Letty Cottin Pogrebin compared the vignettes in this book to "potato chips, or rather, great *latkes* — you can't read only one."

When this first collection proved successful, we embarked on a second anthology. *From Oy to Joy: Our Holidays Across the Years*, published in November 2002, recalled our favorite celebrations, religious and secular, sacred and profane. More than fifty authors were featured, and journalist Roger Simon called it "a holiday of a book."

At the beginning of 2005, announcements in our synagogue's monthly and weekly newsletters and at services called upon members to submit pieces for our latest book, this one about personal experiences of transition, passages, or turning points. Fifty members responded, and their edited pieces plus photographs became *From There to Here: Points on the Circle of Life*, published last November.

*JRC contains a lot of talented people, but your own synagogue could also do this or something like it. Most people have stories to tell, and a community performs a *mitzvah* by providing a forum for polishing and presenting them. Making a book together has also been a wonderful community-building activity. Each book has inspired some repeat contributors as well as many new ones. People take a justifiable pride in having their writing published in a high-quality book. From the beginning, we determined to avoid the spiral-bound "do-it-yourself" look of many self-publications. Certainly the publication parties have provided magical evenings for writers and non-writers alike.*

Finally, the bottom line: your synagogue could earn a tidy windfall from book sales. *Pirke Imahot* sold out of its entire first printing of 2,000 copies within three months. At the December, 2005 book party, well over 300 copies of *From There to Here* were sold. With the books priced at \$14.<sup>95</sup> and the printing and shipping costs

### **MOST PEOPLE**

HAVE STORIES TO TELL,  
AND THE CONGREGATION  
PERFORMS A MITZVAH BY

### **PROVIDING A FORUM.**


*Adrienne Lieberman has been a member of JRC since 1979. A freelance health writer, she has authored several books on childbirth and parenting.*

underwritten by a few generous members, JRC earned more than \$4,800 for the first night's sales alone. Of course, we always plan for publication right before the Hanukkah buying season.

After each volume in our series has come out, members of our committee hear the question, "What's the subject for the next one?" People meant to write a story and didn't get around to it, or they have a story on another topic they'd really like to include. We look forward to creating

more books in our series, and we'd enjoy knowing we've inspired other congregations to do the same. We are, after all, the people of the book.

***Interested in tapping your congregation's***

***hidden talents?*** Want to read our stories for inspiration? You can order our books on JRC's congregational website, [www.jrc-evanston.org](http://www.jrc-evanston.org), or from the synagogue office, (847) 328-7678. Be sure to ask for our generous volume discount! 

## Ten Suggestions for Congregational Book Publishing

1. **Gather a committee.** Your first task is to brainstorm ideas for the book's theme. Try to find a theme general enough to elicit responses that will vary in mood and style. We work with a small committee: three or four editors, a designer/production manager, and a project coordinator. Our editors are all published writers and/or experienced editors. Our designer/production manager is an accomplished artist who works in design and production at a textbook publishing company. She scanned photographs and designed the cover, layout, and order page, and she communicated with the printer. The same editors and designer have worked on each book, letting us build on our successes and learn from the inevitable errors. Our detail-oriented coordinators have helped us divide responsibilities and track timetables.

2. **Ask for contributions.** We composed a short, snappy request that ran in the synagogue newsletter, then announced it at services and kept repeating the announcement. We specified prose or poetry of no more than 1,000 words on our chosen theme, written from a personal point of view. We personally solicited pieces from people who had spoken on these or related topics at High Holiday services or who had experiences we thought might be relevant. We kindly sent back the very few pieces that missed the mark, such as impersonal essays or poems. We encouraged contributors to send electronic versions to facilitate the editing. At several points, we requested photographs on our theme from authors and other synagogue members.

3. **Set your schedule.** For each book, we worked toward a deadline of early fall for files to go to the publisher in order to produce bound books by the end of November. We set a deadline of April 1 for submissions to give the editors at least one month to read all the pieces, get back to authors with suggested changes, and agree on a final version. For *From There to Here*, with each editor juggling more than ten pieces, this process took two months. We advise setting an artificially early deadline because a flurry of submissions will inevitably arrive immediately after the due date. At some point you'll have to decide to stop accepting new pieces. You'll miss some good ones, but you'll save yourself even more headaches.

4. **Assign pieces to editors.** At an evening meeting after the initial deadline, we divided up the pieces. Each editor had read them all by then, so we had an idea of which ones were already publishable, which needed minor editing, and which demanded more extensive revision. We divided the pieces to equalize this work, and the editors shared with each other their impressions of various pieces. Later, we also exchanged our edited versions. By having several editors and assigning each author to one of them, we gave each author an advocate and contact person. This approach also offered each editor several sounding boards for concerns about any particular piece. We accomplished most of our communication via e-mail and the "track changes" system on Microsoft Word.

5. **Work with authors.** Only a few people resisted changing what they had written and chose to withdraw their pieces from consideration. Happily, some of these people contributed to later books. Most writers appreciated — or at least graciously accepted — reasonable changes, such as adding subheads to a story, inserting an explanation for an implicit theme, or making judicious cuts or additions to coax out a story's meaning. The more fully we explained our suggestions to writers, the more

## Ten Suggestions *(continued)*

willing most were to give their piece a fresh look. These dialogs took time, but they resulted in tighter, more polished stories. After the individual editors and authors agreed on the final version of a story, authors signed a legal form drawn up by an attorney member. This form assigned JRC the right of first publication, with future rights to revert to the author. The few pieces that had previously been published in a slightly different form were so designated. We haven't been sued yet.

**6. Define your terms.** At one point in the editing process for each book, editors highlighted the Hebrew and Yiddish terms that might puzzle some readers. Then, when the pieces were in final form, a synagogue member with an advanced degree in Jewish studies compiled a glossary.

**7. Finalize your foreword, introduction, and table of contents.** Our rabbi wrote the foreword to each volume in our series. A committee member wrote the introductions, relating the book's history and thanking the many people who participated. A synagogue member who is a professional storyteller helped us order the pieces for each book, mixing them by genre, length, and mood. For the holiday book, for example, stories about Passover far outnumbered those about other holidays. We organized this book chronologically, with the Passover pieces divided between the beginning and the end of the book.

**8. Get printed.** Our designer determined the book's appearance and layout, and created several sample covers for editors to ponder. She spoke with the printer beforehand to determine how many photographs we could print and what their specifications should be. Each editor looked over the pieces she had edited before the pdf file went to the printer, while one editor took major responsibility for copy-editing the entire file. Committee members played Jewish Geography to locate blurb writers, to whom we sent a sampling of the book's contents. The designer added these blurbs to the back cover.

**9. Throw a party.** After publishing three previous books, we knew how to throw a great bash. One of our members, an enthusiastic baker, headed a committee of cookie contributors. Another member, an artist, commandeered a decorations committee that has variously transformed the JRC sanctuary into a baseball stadium; a 1950s living room adorned with photographs from the book, blown up and framed in gold- and silver-painted cardboard frames; a family room filled with balloon-headed relatives, dressed up for a party and suspended from the rafters; and, now, an interlocking highway system sporting clever road signs echoing our transition theme stuck into pots of grass. The editors and our resident storyteller chose the readings for the party, the Heavy Shtetl band swung into rehearsal, the bakers fired up their ovens, and invitations went out to each author. They got specially calligraphed nametags, in case anyone requested an autograph.

**10. Publicize and sell the book.** For each book, an editor has written a press release and sent it to local newspapers. In addition, we've sent the books to potential reviewers, stocked local Jewish retailers, listed them on Amazon.com, set up readings at local bookstores and Jewish organization meetings, written synagogue gift shops offering them free inspection copies, and set up tables at Jewish book fairs and Chanukah bazaars. This step of the process is has been challenging to coordinate, because of the many and complicated efforts that go into promoting and marketing a book. It's well worth the effort, however, because every dime that's collected is pure profit and goes straight into the synagogue's coffers. ✎

## resources THE JRF POCKET DIARY FOR 5767 / 2006-2007

- Comprehensive calendar for the Jewish and secular year, including explanations of all Jewish holidays and important shabbatot
- Ample space to jot down appointments, with blank pages for notes and addresses
- Current listing of all JRF synagogues and havurot
- The platform and program of the Reconstructionist movement

## STILL SOME LEFT!

**\$8 (U.S.)**

from

JRF, Beit Devora  
101 Greenwood Ave.,  
Jenkintown, PA 19046  
or call (215) 782-8500

# Interfaith Issues in Mourning

## *Mourning for Non-Jews and Non-Jews as Mourners*

RICHARD HIRSH

In view of the changing demography of the Jewish community, with increasing numbers of intermarried and conversionary families welcomed into congregations, questions arise regarding mourning practices. In view of the complex and highly personal nature of these issues as they occur in individual families, it is helpful to consult with a rabbi when making decisions about observances of mourning. While the evolution of community customs and norms in this area is still very much in process, the following guidelines reflect an emerging sense of how to respond sensitively to interfaith issues of Jewish rituals for mourning.

### 1. Mourning for Non-Jews

The question of whether Jews are obligated to observe mourning practices for non-Jews has received consideration in traditional Jewish sources, primarily in the context of the obligations that converts to Judaism have to mourn the death of their (non-Jewish) parents (and by extension, other first-degree relatives). The majority of opinions indicate that while a convert to Judaism has no obligation to observe traditional Jewish mourning practices, including *Kaddish*, for her/his parents, the convert may certainly do so if s/he wishes. A minority perspective suggests that such observance might be mandatory rather than optional. It can be deduced from this reasoning that a Jewish spouse might not be obligated to observe traditional mourning practices for a non-Jewish partner, but would certainly not be prohibited from doing so.

*Rabbi Richard Hirsh is Executive Director of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association and was editor of The Reconstructionist from 1996-2006. This article is excerpted from his new publication, A Guide to Jewish Practice: The Journey of Mourning, available from the Center for Jewish Ethics of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.*

The assumptions behind this reasoning are not necessarily shared by contemporary Jews. Whereas traditional Jewish law focused on the religious identity of the deceased, Reconstructionist Jews would more likely focus on the emotional and spiritual needs of the surviving family members. The resources of Jewish tradition should help Jews throughout the period of loss and mourning. When the non-Jewish spouse/partner in an interfaith marriage dies, it is entirely appropriate for the surviving Jewish spouse/partner to observe the rituals of mourning. For these reasons, most Reconstructionist rabbis would encourage converts to observe Jewish mourning practices for their non-Jewish relatives.

### 2. Non-Jews as Mourners

When a non-Jewish spouse/partner experiences the death of a Jewish spouse, the circumstances can be more complex. The non-Jewish spouse/partner may want a high degree of involvement with Jewish ritual, or, conversely, may not want to be under the presumption of participating in specifically Jewish observances.

The degree to which a non-Jew chooses to participate in Jewish rituals of mourning will vary. If the non-Jewish spouse/partner is an active and/or affirming member of another religious community, s/he presumably participates

in the rituals and traditions of that faith community as they pertain to and help support mourners, and will look primarily to that community at a time of loss.

When the non-Jewish spouse/partner is not active in or affirming of another religious tradition, the synagogue may, in fact, be

his/her sole religious community, notwithstanding that s/he has never converted to Judaism. A community should show support for this member as it would for any other member. There may be adaptations and/or modifications of Jewish mourning practices. For example, at a *Shiva* observance, there may or may not be a recitation of the Jewish evening prayers; if there is, the surviving spouse may or may not recite the *Kaddish*, but the Jewish members of the congregation present should do so as a way for the community to mourn the loss. →

## NON-JEWS


IN RECONSTRUCTIONIST  
COMMUNITIES WOULD BE  
ENCOURAGED TO SHARE IN THE  
RITUALS OF MOURNING THAT ARE  
**IN THE REALM  
OF CUSTOM.**

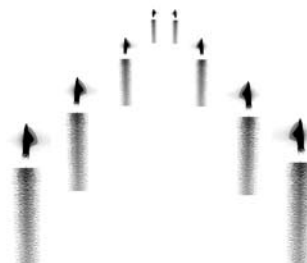
## resources

Learn more about Reconstructionist Judaism's practices regarding death, burial and mourning by reading Rabbi Richard Hirsh's *A Guide to Jewish Practice: The Journey of Mourning*, available from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College ([www.rrc.edu](http://www.rrc.edu)), and *Tefilot Leveyt Ha'evel: Prayers for a House of Mourning*, available from the JRF ([www.jrf.org](http://www.jrf.org)).

→ Non-Jews are not obligated to observe *mitzvot*. They need not take on specifically Jewish observances, such as *k'ria* (rending of garments as a sign of grieving) and the *Kaddish*. However, consider the example of a family with a Jewish father, non-Jewish mother and Jewish children. If the husband dies and the children (and other Jewish family members) are observing rituals of mourning while the wife is not, she would perhaps rightly feel excluded at a significant emotional moment in the life of the family. From that perspective, wear-

ing a torn garment or a *k'ria* ribbon and joining the recitation of the *Kaddish* might be appropriate.

In general, non-Jews in Reconstructionist communities would be encouraged to share in the rituals of mourning that are in the realm of custom (as examples: placing earth in a grave, washing one's hands upon returning from the cemetery, sitting on low stools during *Shiva*) while considering the appropriateness of sharing rituals that specifically presume Jewish identity (as examples: reciting the *Kaddish* or the benediction for the *k'ria*). 



## From Our New Editor


(→ from back cover)

have graced its pages, sometimes pushing the envelope of the current discourse (see responses in this issue to his article, "Atheism Versus Reconstructionism," from the Winter 2006 issue). Happily, Larry will be staying on as a member of *RT*'s Editorial Board and as an advisor and contributor.

**As we approach this year's JRF Convention, it** is particularly fitting to revisit the purpose of *RT*. The convention's theme, "Our Evolving Jewish Journey: Peoplehood and the Quest for Spiritual Community," points to a central aspect of the magazine's *raison d'être*: to serve as a means for those who consider themselves Reconstructionists, and those in the greater Jewish community who resonate to the Reconstructionist movement's

principles, to communicate with each other about their journeys. Through this communication, community is strengthened and made more vibrant. Our congregations are the manifestations of our best efforts to build spiritual community. Sharing our journeys through the pages of this magazine encourages and informs Jews of all denominations in their process as well.

It is my vision, and that of our new Editorial Board, that *RT* will continue to be a venue for lively dialogue, where diverse viewpoints are expressed and where our entire Reconstructionist community finds a platform to contribute to the evolution of Reconstructionism and the evolution of Judaism. Therefore we invite you to share your own creative thinking, to send us news of your *shul's* milestones and *simchas*, and to respond to articles that inspire you as well as those that get your goat.

An experience or idea that you share today may inspire someone else across the country. They in turn may contribute something that will further inspire you a year or two from now. This is one way our *kehillah shel kehillot* — our community of communities — is built. 

## resources

Learn more about Reconstructionist history, and access our library of articles from *Reconstructionism Today* (1993 to the present), and the past twelve years of *The Reconstructionist*, at [www.jrf.org](http://www.jrf.org).

# Letters

(→ from page 3)

Contemporary American Jewish life revolves, to a great degree, around religious services. Bush and others are frustrated by this. Kaplan certainly imagined and hoped for a more dynamic Jewish community with the synagogue “center” at the heart of a diverse Jewish cultural life in which religion would play a part. Those visions, still pursued and admired by many in the Jewish community, don’t describe the daily life of American Judaism. Most Jewish gatherings are for religious services in synagogues. Because of this, the challenge to Jewish liturgy is very great because it plays such a major role in Jewish communal life. Intellectually serious people like Lawrence Bush take the words of liturgy seriously and then feel uncomfortable in services, even Reconstructionist services, in which God is a major character.

**Bush studied Kaplan’s approaches** to God and concludes, “I can even believe in Kaplan’s ‘God’ — most of the time.” He seems to assume that Judaism and the Jewish community are asking its adherents, “Do you believe?” and desiring the answer to be “Yes.” Bush’s internalization of this assumption, I think, might be a result of American culture’s generally Christian approaches to religion, which have seeped their way into Judaism.

Judaism, fundamentally, is not asking its adherents about questions of belief. I would argue that Judaism’s core demand is to find meaning in life and in texts that support the betterment of the world. It also assumes a Jewish community that shares a history, a future, and obliges its members to participate in its practice and ongoing evolution. So I think it is understandable, given the amount of God language there is in our prayer books, that many could easily attribute far too much importance to

the role that theology and belief in God have in Judaism.

**Bush writes, “If there’s no personal** God to hear prayer, then religious services consist of people talking to themselves, simultaneously, side by side. I’d much rather we talk to one another, face to face, each and every *Shabbat*.” I disagree. The liturgy consists of poetry and metaphors that reflect our personal and collective longings, desires, losses, triumphs, goals, and more. It is absolutely not a catechism of belief. I fully understand that the metaphors may not work for many people. Creative liturgical development is a hallmark of the Reconstructionist movement. But just as we innovate, it is crucially important that we stay rooted to our past and to the whole of the Jewish people.

Understanding prayer language as metaphor and as the creative act of our ancestors helps to inoculate us against the fear that we lack intellectual integrity in reciting what we don’t believe. The act of intellectual gymnastics employed to simultaneously “translate” prayers as we recite them is not an act of hypocrisy but rather an act of great dignity and humility. We honor our ancestors and stay connected to the Jewish people *and* find (or attempt to find) meaning all at the same time. Sometimes it seems that Reconstructionists respond to prayer and Torah as if someone was asking them to proclaim that these texts were written by God when we’ve made it clear that we don’t assert that.

Bush suggests we might sit in a circle and talk to each other on *Shabbat* in place of religious services. Many “sermon” slots in Reconstructionist congregations consist of exchanges of ideas among congregants. This is good. But prayer also plays a vital role. Jewish groups are often quite intellectual and verbal. It is therefore salutary that we stand together in silence or sing together. By facing the same direction we physically commu-

nicate that we are part of a community. Even as we utter old prayers, we create a space for an inner life to be tended.

**Rabbi Shai Gluskin**


*Rabbi Gluskin is Director of Publishing and Online Resources for the JRF.*

**Lawrence Bush replies:**

I thank David Benjamin and Shai Gluskin for their kind words about my article.

The majority of American Jews have long indicated just how much they want to participate in public prayer by attending synagogue services only rarely. Many who attend, moreover, do so mainly in the name of Jewish communal connection — synagogue being the only Jewish show in town — and leave the experience with a half-satisfied feeling, perhaps for the very reason that Rabbi Gluskin describes: that they are given “old prayers” as the means of exploring their “inner lives.”

Kaplan had a different vision of prayer as “one of the functions of the synagogue, but by no means the only one, nor even the principal one” (*Judaism as a Civilization*). If this vision does not, in Rabbi Gluskin’s words, “describe the daily life of American Judaism,” that is because of the choices our synagogue and denominational leaders, most especially our rabbis, are making. Other choices, and a different apportionment of both time and money, could be made, and *should* be made, if Kaplan’s vision of a broadly based, living Jewish community is valued.

I have an allergic reaction to prayer, for whatever reasons. As long as I view my synagogue as a place to go to worship, I’m not likely to go. But if my synagogue were truly a place to go to hang out with Jews, hear Jewish music, view Jewish art, study Jewish philosophy and history, play Skee-ball, open my laptop, have an egg cream, do the hora or the hokey-pokey — well, *that’s* what it’s all about! 

# Around the Regions

LISA KELVIN TUTTLE

**MIDWEST**

## Sukkot Across the Midwest

On October 6-7, Reconstructionist congregations across the Midwest will be participating in a simultaneous celebration of Sukkot. The event will be highlighted by a service supplement including poems, prayers, readings, and songs submitted by members of our Midwest congregations. Check your synagogue newsletter or call your shul for the date and time of your service.

## “Founders’ Day” at Kehillath Shalom

Rabbi Arthur Schwartz and members of Kehillath Shalom in Cold Spring Harbor, New York along with many of the *shul*'s founders from around the country, will gather on November 5 to pay tribute to the community's founding rabbi, Rabbi Lloyd Tennenbaum z"l, on the occasion of his *yahrtzeit*. Rabbi Joy Levitt, a student of Rabbi Tennenbaum's when he was the rabbi of the Huntington Jewish Center, will be a keynote speaker, along with Kehillath Shalom's first president, Sam Goldman.

**NEW YORK**

For more information, contact Elaine Koenig at 631-757-9602 or call the synagogue office at 631-367-4589. Updates on the event will be posted at [www.kehillathshalom.org](http://www.kehillathshalom.org)

## Temple Beth Sholom Moves In!

**Francine Shetterly**, President of Temple Beth Sholom in Salem, Oregon, writes:

**WEST COAST**

Temple Beth Sholom is an old community. In 1948, we built our first building, a lovely *shul*, on the north side of town, next to the tracks. It has been our home every since, but we have long since outgrown it. In 2000, we began a capital campaign to remodel our current location by doubling its square footage, mostly by adding classroom space, a social hall and offices. We worked with an architect and set our sights on raising \$2 million to build the wonderful addition that he had designed for us. We hired a professional capital campaign coordinator and set to work seeking out contributions from members and local organizations. After two years (we limited the duration of the campaign), we had raised \$1.6 million in pledges. We took a look at what we could do for that amount and our architect drew scaled-back plans.

Unfortunately, the space would have been beautiful, but too small to accommodate future growth. We were, however, about to embark on the remodel and plan for future additions when we learned that a local church was on the market for \$1.54 million. The Temple board went to check it out and found that it seemed to perfectly meet our needs in every way. First of all, the structure on the outside was not too “churchy.” There were 100 parking spaces (as opposed to the 18 that we had!). The beautiful sanctuary was oval. It was twice the size of the one we had (which could not be enlarged), was designed by the same architect as our building, and faced east. The kitchen and social hall were the same square footage as our architect's drawings, and we would gain twice as much classroom and office space. The building as a whole was more than two times as big as our remodel would be. So, for the same dollars, we would get twice the space! Plus, it was in a lovely tree-lined neighborhood. →

→ After several congregational visits and meetings, we made the emotional decision to shift from a remodel to purchasing the church. Everything has gone smoothly from that point on. We have secured a 5% loan from a private foundation to cover our last payment to the church until we sell the old building and collect all our pledges. Today we are beginning a minor cosmetic remodel of the church to make it into a Jewish place. Countless members and friends have been involved in the preparation for the move. On September 17, we will celebrate our Torah Trek, when we will carry our Torahs five miles across town to our new location. We will celebrate our first high holidays in the new space. I can't think of a more exciting thing to be a part of than this!

SEE MORE NEWS  
AND PHOTOS  
OF THESE EVENTS  
AT [WWW.JRF.ORG](http://WWW.JRF.ORG)

## Temple Beth Israel Breaks New Ground

On Sunday, September 10, over 200 members of JRF affiliate Temple Beth Israel in Eugene, Oregon came together to celebrate at a dedication ceremony at its new site. The event was the culmination of a decade-long fund raising campaign, spearheaded by member Sean Hoar. The sound of the shofar, played by Rabbi Yitzchak Husbands-Hankin, launched the festivities, which included a *hakafah* — circling — of the lot where the future *shul* will be built, along with much singing, dancing, and *simḥa*.



*Top left:* From left to right are Temple Beth Israel congregant Saul Wood; Sean Hoar, chair of the steering committee; Judy Hoar, vice president at TBI; and Martha Osgood, chair of the Amazon Neighborhood Association. The new building is smack in the middle of the Amazon Neighborhood and they are delighted to have TBI.

*Bottom left:* The whole *kehillah*. With shovels, Rabbi Maurice Harris, Rabbi Yitzchak Husbands-Hankin, and TBI President Sharon Rudnick. Photographs by Andy Gordon and JJ Bienn.



Groundbreaking at Temple Beth Israel.



The next generation lends a hand.

# From Our New Editor

LISA KELVIN TUTTLE

The year was 1969, and fifty families including mine, along with our leader, Rabbi Lloyd Tennenbaum z"l, left a large suburban Long Island Conservative synagogue to found Kehillath Shalom in Cold Spring Harbor, New York. Lloyd had been a student of Mordecai Kaplan's

at the Jewish Theological Seminary and introduced the founders of his fledgling *shul* to Kaplan's ideas. The families voted unanimously to affiliate as a Reconstructionist congregation. It was an exciting time to affiliate because historically it landed on the heels of a decision to transform Reconstructionism from a school of thought into a denominational movement.

As a second-generation Reconstructionist, I grew up taking for granted what my parents and many of my Reconstructionist-by-choice

contemporaries left other denominations to pursue. Egalitarian participation in Jewish life and worship,

non-gender-specific God language, a "civilizational approach" to Jewish education, and a feeling of taking part in an important progressive experiment in Judaism were all handed to me. Though it took two decades of exploration in other spiritualities and modes of Jewish practice for me to realize the riches in my own backyard, I am now raising my own children in this dynamic movement of ours, and since early 2006 have taken on the role of JRF's Communications Director.

*Long before there was a Kol Haneshamah* prayer book series, a Camp JRF, and a Reconstructionist Educators of North America (RENA), there was a magazine called *The Reconstructionist*. It is reported that Kaplan himself considered the launch of this publication in 1935 as marking the establishment of Reconstructionism as a school of thought. Part literary magazine, part journal, part newsletter, it aimed to cover both theory and practice and was the sole voice of the movement.

In 1993, it was decided that another voice was needed to directly address the needs of congregants with hands-on information about Reconstructionist approaches to Jewish practice, and *Reconstructionism Today (RT)* — "a voice for creative Jewish living" — was born. (*The Reconstructionist*, now in its 71st year, continues to be published by the RRC Press as a scholarly journal.)

Lawrence Bush was *RT*'s founder and served as its editor for the past thirteen years. Under his guidance, this publication has covered nearly every conceivable area of Jewish life and thought. Through *RT*, Larry has helped to distill Kaplan's thinking for a broad audience and has given the movement's leaders and congregants a place to meet. In addition, Larry's own articles, artwork, and progressive sensibilities often (→ page 20)

## AS A SECOND-GENERATION

RECONSTRUCTIONIST,

I GREW UP TAKING

FOR GRANTED WHAT

MY PARENTS AND MANY OF

MY RECONSTRUCTIONIST-BY-

CHOICE CONTEMPORARIES WERE

## SEARCHING FOR.

*Lisa Kelvin Tuttle is Communications Director for the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation and a member, along with her husband Alan and sons Adam and Jeremy, of Mishkan Shalom in Philadelphia. For the past seventeen years, she has been a communications consultant, editor, and writer serving academic and Jewish nonprofit organizations.*



### Reconstructionism Today

Jewish Reconstructionist Federation  
Beit Devora  
101 Greenwood Avenue  
Jenkintown, PA 19046