

# Chag Chanukah Sameach!

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DECEMBER 2020  
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# Chanukah

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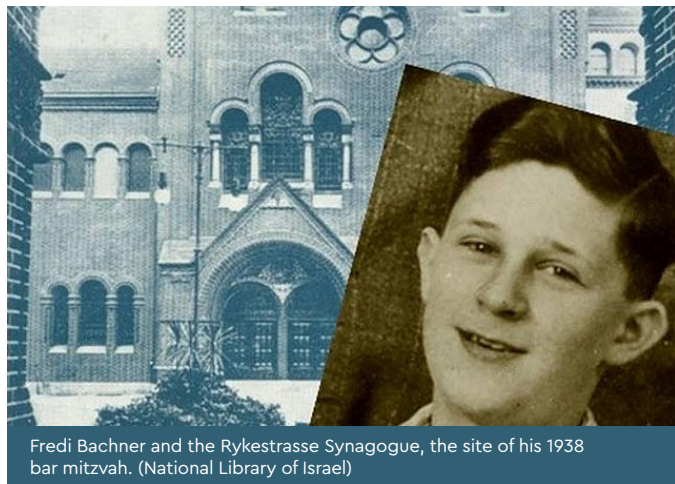
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# The last bar mitzvah before Kristallnacht

By Ellen Bachner Greenberg

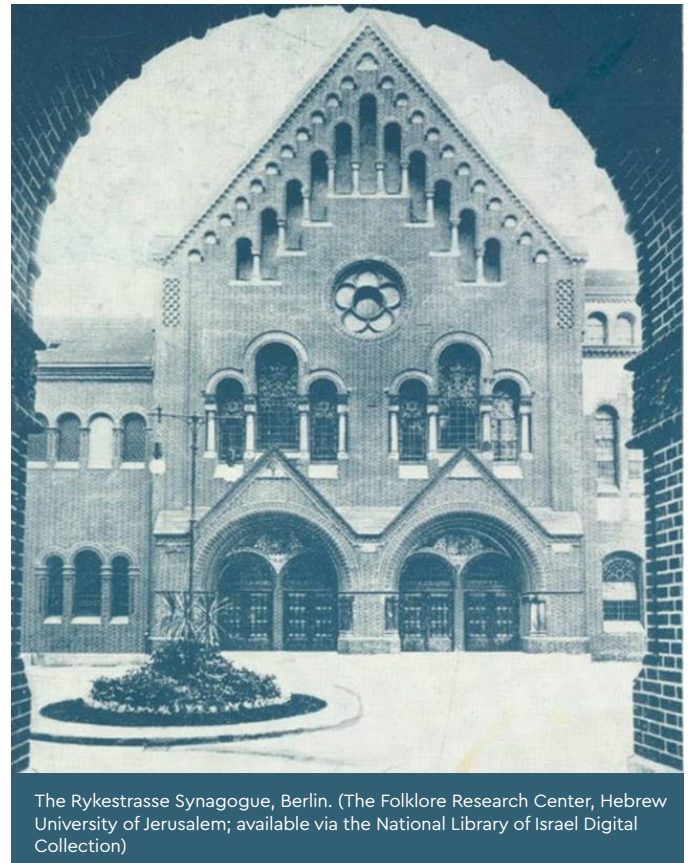
The rabbi's ominous sermon on my father's big day carried him through the pogrom, the camps, and then liberation: 'It doesn't become daytime before it literally becomes night'



Fredi Bachner and the Rykestrasse Synagogue, the site of his 1938 bar mitzvah. (National Library of Israel)

**At the time of my father's bar mitzvah in Berlin, Hitler had been in power for five years. It was October 1938, and Jews were prohibited from participating in nearly all facets of German life. The Bachners desperately wanted to leave Germany, but their attempts to get visas were unsuccessful.**

As bad as things were, they could not have imagined that only a few weeks after Fredi Bachner's bar mitzvah, synagogues throughout Austria and Germany would be destroyed on Kristallnacht, including the Rykestrasse Synagogue, where Fredi's bar mitzvah was celebrated.



The Rykestrasse Synagogue, Berlin. (The Folklore Research Center, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; available via the National Library of Israel Digital Collection)

His bar mitzvah would be the last held at the Rykestrasse Synagogue for many years.

My father was born in Berlin on September 28, 1925, the 10th day of the Hebrew month of Tishrei, Yom Kippur. It was always meaningful to him that he was born on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, for reasons I now understand.

## The last bar mitzvah before Kristallnacht

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Berlin, early 20th century. (The Folklore Research Center, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; available via the National Library of Israel Digital Collection)

Anti-Semitism permeated Fredi's childhood. In 1935, 10-year-old Fredi was stripped of his German citizenship and as a Jew was prohibited from going to public school. The Bachners continued practicing their religion as observant Jews and Fredi went to school at the Rykestrasse Synagogue.

He joined youth groups, such as Bar Kochba and Makkabi, and participated in their outings, sporting events, and meetings. Fredi credits the Jewish community with "being the glue that held us together. They kept the youth happy and busy."

Fredi's bar mitzvah took place on the 13th of Tishrei. The Torah portion was "Haazinu," which he read along with the Haftarah as a small group of friends and loved ones still in Berlin looked on.

**"Haazinu" is the Hebrew word for "listen," and the Torah portion features the famous love poem sung by Moses to God. It is the prophet's last song before dying. In it, he reminds the people of Israel that at times God punished them for their transgressions, yet He also renewed His covenant, forgave and redeemed them.**

**My father distinctly remembered the rabbi's foreboding words to the congregation. Warning them that things were going to get a lot worse before they got better, he said, "It doesn't become daytime before it literally becomes night."**



Bachner family portrait taken at Fredi's bar mitzvah, 1938. (courtesy: Ellen Bachner Greenberg)

As the Bachners posed for the family portrait at Fredi's bar mitzvah, they did not know that this would be their last photo taken as a family. In the days and weeks immediately after Fredi's bar mitzvah, nighttime was beginning to fall.

## The last bar mitzvah before Kristallnacht

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The situation escalated dramatically on October 28th, when 17,000 Jews of Polish citizenship living in Germany, including Fredi's father, were arrested and forced across the border into Poland.

Kristallnacht — the "Night of Broken Glass" — took place on November 9 and 10, 1938. It was a violent, destructive, and coordinated attack on Jewish homes and shops and on synagogues.

The following day it was quiet outside and Fredi went to school. He later recalled:

"The curtains were ripped off the windows and the synagogue in back of the school was in ruins. The ark was open, the Torahs and books were thrown on the floor and had been set on fire."

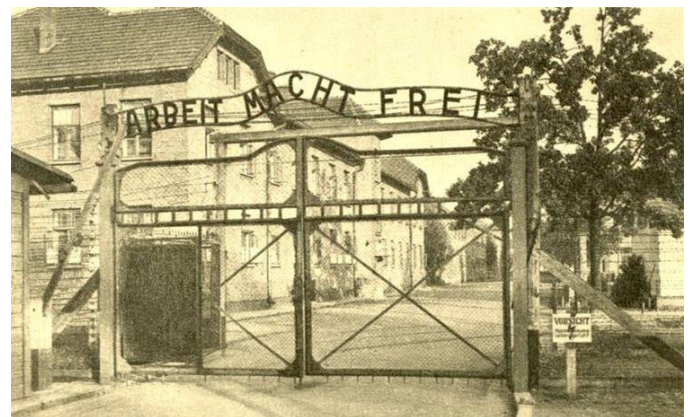
**Kristallnacht was a turning point for Jews throughout Austria and Germany.**

Darkness continued to fall.

Fredi and his mother, "Mutti," were alone in Berlin and were rightfully concerned how they would sustain themselves. They vacated their apartment, sold the family's belongings, and rented a small room in a neighbor's apartment. After several months, they were given permission to join Fredi's father in his hometown, Chrzanow, Poland, a town 10 kilometers from Oswiecim, later known as Auschwitz.

As was required, they worked for the Germans until February 1943, when the Nazis rounded them up for deportation. Fredi's father was sent to concentration camps, Mutti was transported to Auschwitz, where she went directly to the gas chamber, and Fredi spent the next 27 months at five concentration camps, beginning with Gratz and then Annaberg.

**On September 30th, 1944 Fredi's transport from Annaberg arrived at Auschwitz. It was the 13th day of the month of Tishrei. On that day six years earlier, Fredi had stood on the bima chanting Parashat Haazinu at his bar mitzvah in the Rykestrasse Synagogue. Now he stood at the gates of Auschwitz awaiting his fate.**



The main gate to Auschwitz. (The Folklore Research Center, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; available via the National Library of Israel Digital Collection: St. Mucha, Publisher: State Museum in Auschwitz)

Would he be sent immediately to the gas chambers with no chance of living or would he be allowed to work as a slave laborer, enabling at least a slim chance to survive?

The rabbi's ominous words were still fresh in his mind. It was dark and Fredi prayed it would not get darker.

"I knew I was one step closer to death and I prayed to God to guide me," Fredi recalled.

Would God save him, as promised to the Jewish people in Parshat Haazinu?

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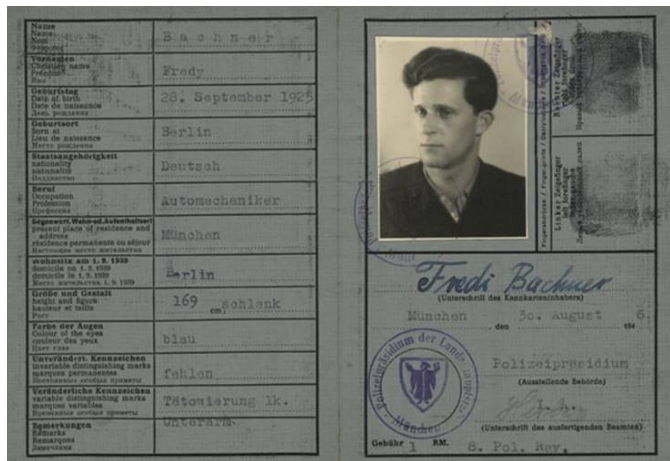
Fredi's life was spared that day, as it was every day at Auschwitz, during the long death march which followed, and finally at Gross-Rosen and Dachau.

**When the war ended in May 1945, my father said, "After what I had been through, I questioned God and did not know if I wanted to practice Judaism. By the time Yom Kippur came, I was back at synagogue." Even though Fredi had been through the unimaginable, he was ultimately grateful to God for sparing his life.**

Fredi immigrated to the United States in 1947. He married and raised a family in New York, where religion was an integral part of his life.



Fred and Ellen Bachner, 1958. (courtesy, Ellen Bachner Greenberg)



Fred Bachner's identity card, 1946. (courtesy: Ellen Bachner Greenberg)

Every year, he would chant the Haazinu Haftarah as he did at his bar mitzvah, and each Yom Kippur, he would lead the afternoon services as cantor.

I now understand that he did these things as a testament that both he and Jewish life had survived.

It certainly also brought back fond memories of his Jewish upbringing and connected him with his youth and the Rykestrasse Synagogue, where he had found a semblance of normalcy during an abnormal time.

My father passed away on December 9, 2008. The last time he was at the Rykestrasse Synagogue was the morning after Kristallnacht when it had been vandalized, its Torah scrolls and books set on fire.

The building was apparently not burned to the ground simply because the Germans were concerned about damage to the adjacent buildings. In a further act of desecration, the German military later confiscated the synagogue, using it as a warehouse.

**In 2005, 67 years after Kristallnacht, the Rykestrasse Synagogue was rededicated after a \$7 million renovation to the interior, which returned the synagogue to its prewar glory. In front of it is a school, just like when my father was a child.**



Exterior of the renovated Rykestrasse Synagogue. (The Center for Jewish Art Collection; available via the National Library of Israel Digital Collection)

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In photos, the synagogue looks beautiful, showing no signs of Kristallnacht or the dark years of Nazi occupation. My father would have been thrilled that the restoration brought it back to the time of his bar mitzvah.



The rebuilt Rykestrasse Synagogue. (Michael Hunter Ochs)

I am in awe of the synagogue's splendor and at the same time I am reminded of Holocaust survivors and the irreparable damage they suffered.

Like the synagogue, they had been brutalized, tortured, and desecrated by the Germans and emerged from the ashes in various states of disrepair. While the numbers branded on their arms and the physical scars were visible, the damage to their psyche was often never as apparent. Many appeared okay on the outside, but it was often a veneer that could not cover up the destruction deep within.

Unlike the synagogue, they could not be made whole again.

My father's birthday this year fell on Yom Kippur, only the third time since his birth in 1925. I planned to go to Berlin and be at the Rykestrasse Synagogue for Parshat Haazinu and my father's birthday, Yom Kippur. I wanted to be in the synagogue where my father was bar mitzvahed and envision him standing proudly on the bima with his impish smile.



Ruth and Fred Bachner, 2005. (courtesy, Ellen Bachner Greenberg)

I wanted to feel his presence.

With COVID-19 restrictions, travel from the United States to Germany was not permitted so I was unable to go. Ironically, I cannot get into the country my father and his family tried desperately to get out of in the 1930s.

Hopefully, I will be able to travel to Berlin next year for Yom Kippur to honor and remember my beloved father, stand in the place he became a Jewish man and listened as his rabbi spoke of unforeseeable darkness – and redemption.

# Covid: Should a religious service get priority over a social gathering?

By Deborah Stone



DEBORAH STONE: The acceptance by Australian political leaders that under Covid, exceptions should be made for religious gatherings over others should not be taken as gospel

## WE MELBURNIANS ARE NOW FREE

**from coronavirus lockdown – up to a point. At the time of writing, I am allowed to meet nine friends outdoors in a public place – unless I plan to daven. If it's a religious service, permitted gatherings are now up to 20, plus a faith leader.**

Clearly the coronavirus does not know whether we are a group of pious souls gathering to read Torah, a party of libertines with intentions to eat, drink and be merry – or perhaps a compromise with a bottle of kiddush wine and an eye to shidduch opportunities.

But the thoroughly secular Victorian Government has clearly accepted that a religious service warrants different treatment from a social or cultural gathering.

Premier Dan Andrews, Chief Health Officer Professor Brett Sutton and their teams who have done an extraordinary job in bringing down Melbourne's Covid-19 rate of new cases from a day of 725 new cases and 15 deaths to several days of zero.

Inconsistencies are inevitable when implementing a gradual plan that can be easily communicated to and observed by an entire State.

But what interests me about this particular inconsistency is that it rests on an attitude to religion that is at odds with how we, as Jews, understand the world.

Is a Shabbat dinner a religious service? Does it matter if we make kiddush or include words of Torah? If it's excluded because it's a meal, then what about Havdalah?

Judaism is something we do far more than something we believe. As a Jew in a non-Jewish world I've often had to sound more pious than I feel in order to live a Jewish life.

When I took my first job as a journalist, I struggled with what to do about Friday nights. It had been impressed upon me that journalists had to be available whenever the job demanded. The New Zealand Herald didn't publish a Sunday edition so Saturdays were usually free but Friday nights – like Sundays – were regular working hours.

I screwed my courage to the sticking place and approached the Chief of Staff, explaining that I was Jewish, that Friday night was a religious occasion for me, and that if I could possibly not be rostered, I'd be very willing to work extra Sundays in exchange.

He eyed me sceptically and said, "I don't know about that. There are a lot of people round here who reckon Friday night is a bit of a religious occasion. They all want to go the pub."

Though I was too junior to dare argue, I wanted to believe my "religious observance"- actually more about culture, family and tradition than belief – was a more compelling reason for special consideration than the Antipodean tradition of Friday night at the pub.



## Covid: Should a religious service get priority over a social gathering?

By Deborah Stone

Apparently, some part of my Chief of Staff did too. Although he never said another word on the subject, in the two years I spent on that paper my name never appeared on the Friday night roster. I was not even rostered extra Sundays.

I was, and still am, grateful for this consideration but I'm less sure now of where it leaves us. Making exceptions for religious observance is complicated and potentially dangerous.

The disproportionately high rate of COVID-19 infections in Haredi communities in Israel and the United States – and the resulting risks for anyone in contact with them – can be traced at least in part to an attitude that privileges gathering in community for prayer over health risks and civil law – an attitude which, importantly, is not justified by Jewish law.

As the recent Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse made clear, terrible things can happen when we don't subject religious actors to the same scrutiny and standards imposed on other parts of society.

Yet, for all its secularism, Australia – and many other Western societies – continue to allow many exceptions for matters of religious belief. Laws preventing discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual orientation or marital status are suspended when it comes to religious institutions and schools. We provide tax exemptions to religious institutions. Some awards allow extra leave for religious holidays.

These exceptions derive from an admirable principle that people should not be compelled to act against their own consciences.

But from a Jewish point of view, the privileging of something done for religious reasons leads to some odd contradictions. Atheist Jews find themselves explaining they are taking Yom Kippur off "for religious reasons" because it is just too difficult or unacceptable to explain why they need the day off if they can't play the religion card.

Jews for whom Jewishness is far more a cultural or ethnic identity name it as religion on the census or on a hospital registration form because that's the only way a world to identify in a world delineated by Christian frameworks of faith.

We are a better society when we appreciate diversity and make it possible for people to do what works for them. Special considerations for personal circumstances – be they religious, cultural, family or personal reasons – should be accommodated whenever possible because they enable us to lead meaningful integrated lives.

But a worldview that elevates religion above other aspects of life should not, if you'll excuse me, be taken as gospel.

**Deborah Stone** is a journalist, content creator and communications consultant. She is a former Fairfax feature writer, and former editor of the Australian Jewish News and ArtsHub.

# Queensland remembers Kristallnacht through the power of message



Michael Arenson Photography

More than 100 southeast Queensland residents attended a special Kristallnacht service at the Brisbane Synagogue on Sunday 8 November.

The evening featured Brisbane author Dr Rochy Miller and Nidean Dickson, Curriculum Leader Religious Education and Gandel Holocaust Studies graduate, from Brigidine College.

Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies president Paul Myers said one of the highlights of the evening was the attendance of more than 20 Brigidine College high school students – all part of a special Suspend Judgment program developed by Ms Dickson.

“The enthusiasm of these students to learn more about the Holocaust was truly inspiring,” Paul said.

In her keynote address, Nidean discussed the importance of keeping the history of the Holocaust alive by being a messenger.

“As an educator, I have a fundamental role to be a messenger and to teach young people how to be messengers,” Nidean said.

Suspend Judgment was developed to support Year 10–12 students at Brigidine College to engage in an extracurricular program about the Holocaust.

“Each student recognised that evil is not enough to explain what happened in the Holocaust, it was ordinary people who were capable of doing the most tragic of things. This is the message. Each student recognised that there is a deep responsibility to ensure this never happens again.”

Rochy Miller, who has written a book on her mother's Holocaust experience, spoke about her personal knowledge of Kristallnacht, passed down from her mother.

“My insights into Kristallnacht are not scholarly – they are intensely personal,” Rochy said.

## Queensland remembers Kristallnacht through the power of message

Kristallnacht defined the moment when a line was drawn in the sand of time – the exact moment when Jewish people all over the world stopped being people and became merely Jews. **The moment when citizens all over the world became complicit by-standers, allowing creeping anti-Semitism to go unchecked, until it crescendoed into the unmitigated horror of the Holocaust – systematic murder of innocent people, based solely on their ethnicity."**

And, for Nidean Dickson that was the message she wanted to convey.

"Tonight, we are here to honour, remember and learn to understand the importance of the message of Kristallnacht."

Please find attached links to the addresses given by Nidean Dickson and Rochy Miller for you to open and appreciate for yourself

**For more information, contact Jason Steinberg on 0411 239 396 or email: [jason.steinberg@qjbd.org](mailto:jason.steinberg@qjbd.org)**



Michael Arenson Photography



Michael Arenson Photography

# Gandel Philanthropy wins award in the 2020 Philanthropy Australia Awards

by J-Wire Newsdesk

Philanthropy Australia has announced the **Australian Philanthropy Awards for 2020** with Gandel Philanthropy and the Australian Foundation for Yad Vashem winning the Bolder Philanthropy category, for the Gandel Holocaust Studies Program for Australian Educators.



John and Pauline Gandel

**According to Philanthropy Australia, "The Australian Philanthropy Awards recognise and celebrate extraordinary achievements in contemporary philanthropy. They also celebrate partnerships between philanthropy and for-purpose organisations and honour those who are working to create lasting, positive change."**

The breadth, depth and transformative impact of philanthropic excellence and innovation have been showcased at the sixth annual Australian Philanthropy Awards ceremony. Following a record number of nominations, Awards were presented to recipients across nine Award categories."

The category of the Bolder Philanthropy Award recognises "philanthropic investment that is used as 'social risk capital' to provide early-stage support for an initiative, helping to scale or evolve it to deliver sustained positive change." The criteria for this award also take into account "additional non-financial role of the grant-maker, such as convening, leveraging, influencing and advocating, which contributes further to the initiative's success".

Following the announcement, Chairman of Gandel Philanthropy John Gandel stated that he was proud that one of his family's most important philanthropic initiatives received industry recognition.

# Gandel Philanthropy wins award in the 2020 Philanthropy Australia Awards

by J-Wire Newsdesk

**He said: "It is heartening that this program and our foundation were selected as the winners of this award. This award, however, is much more than just about Gandel Philanthropy – this is a recognition of the power of partnerships, and truly collaborative efforts of many organisations and supporters, including our key partners, the Australian Foundation for Yad Vashem and the Raoul Wallenberg Unit."**

John Gandel added: "To me, this is as much a confirmation of the significance and ongoing relevance of Holocaust education, as it is a recognition of the importance to invest our philanthropic support for the long-term if we wish to effect change and drive meaningful impact."

**The Gandel family got involved in the Holocaust Education program some 11 years ago when it was a relatively small and geographically limited program. Over the intervening years, they helped to grow and scale the initiative to become a truly national program sending up to 35 teachers every year, with nearly 350 teachers completing the program since, reaching thousands of students with stories of the Holocaust in the process.**

The Gandel Holocaust Studies Program for Australian Educators was itself expanded, from being simply a learning segment in Yad Vashem, Israel to also having a pre-departure online learning element, and then delivery of a Holocaust educational project by teachers in their schools upon return, effectively becoming a year-long professional development program.

Gandel Philanthropy worked to strengthen the Selection Committee and the selection process and had the program evaluated twice, helping identify what works and where it can be further improved.

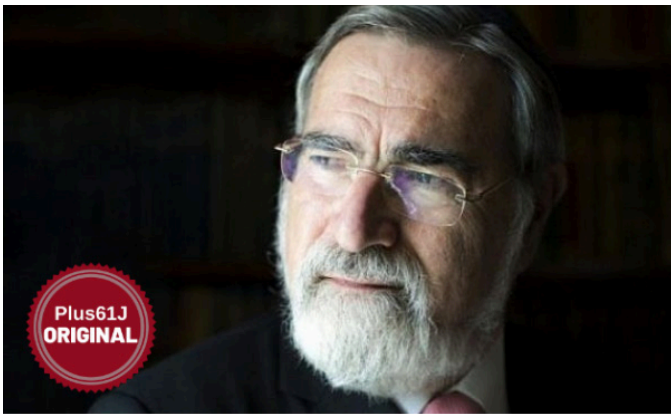
Influencing and advocating were also important, and Gandel Philanthropy and the Australian Foundation for Yad Vashem convened the first Gandel Holocaust Education Conference in 2019, bringing Holocaust experts and Gandel alumni together to share knowledge about Holocaust education.

Gandel Philanthropy also worked with key Jewish community and Holocaust organisations to advocate for the inclusion of Holocaust education into the Victorian curriculum for public schools, which was subsequently adopted. That collaboration continued with the process of the review of existing and development of additional Holocaust teaching materials with the Department of Education.

**John Gandel added that the importance of Holocaust remembrance and its lessons for the young people of today was as relevant as ever saying "given the worrying rise globally of racism, antisemitism and intolerance, the Holocaust messages of humanity, hope, care for the fellow human being, and the importance of protecting and upholding human rights, have arguably never been more important. We hope to continue working with our key partners and supporters to ensure the world 'never forgets'."**

# Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks: A unifier of ideas and a teacher of the world

By Clive Lawton



**CLIVE LAWTON:** Like Maimonides – and I don't shrink from that comparison – he made sense of Jewish stuff for the average person in a way no-one else has done

**AFTER A SUDDEN DIAGNOSIS** of cancer only a month ago and a savagely short illness, Jonathan Sacks died on Shabbat, November 7.

Rabbi Sacks was born in South London and after a successful school career at north London's Christ's College school, he went to Cambridge University to read philosophy from which he emerged with a first-class honours degree. Subsequent study secured him a PhD but he had already considered pursuing a rabbinic rather than an academic path.

By his own account, an encounter during his student days, and further correspondence with the Lubavitcher Rebbe prompted the thought that he should seek to be a Jewish leader first and foremost.

He first became rabbi of the Golders Green Synagogue and then the Western Marble Arch synagogue in London's West End.

But such congregational roles could not contain him. It was not long before he was distinguishing himself on a larger stage. As Principal of Jews College, UK Jewry's rabbinic training college and a college of London University, he organised a series of robustly assertive conferences

bringing to the UK some of the finest thinkers and strongest communicators of the concept of 'Torah im Derekh Eretz', or 'Torah together with contemporary culture and knowledge', in summary, the 'slogan' of the Modern Orthodox position.

I was first aware of meeting him at one of the early Limmuds and, at that time, he was also teaching Talmud at the Leo Baeck College, the flagship seminary for the training of Reform and Liberal Rabbis. His readiness to teach wherever good quality Jewish learning was wanted remained the watchword of all he did thereafter.

As soon as he took up the Chief Rabbinate, he marked out what was for him a central facet of his approach to life. He was relentlessly positive and upbeat and he was, to his very core, a unifier.

I worked again with him when he was seeking to clarify the educational philosophy of a planned new Jewish school, Immanuel College. He mastered the field of curricular and educational philosophy impressively and his guidance helped to create a school with a distinctive and thoughtful ethos.

With commendable intellectual clarity, he saw with certainty that, if anyone was going to try to learn Talmud, it was best if they learnt it from someone like him.

## Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks: A unifier of ideas and a teacher of the world

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But the divisions in UK and world Jewry would not accommodate such intellectual clarity. In preparation for a probable run at the Chief Rabbinate, he dropped that class and was never again to be seen at Limmud either.

Such "political" adjustments paid off. In September 1991, Jonathan Sacks became Chief Rabbi of the United Synagogue, the largest federation of modern Orthodox synagogues anywhere in the world, confirmed in its existence by Parliamentary statute in the UK. It also made him, by the way, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth.

He soon published a number of pamphlets under the general heading of Will we have Jewish grandchildren?, in which he examined the state of contemporary Jewry and proposed the creation of an agency to intervene in the community and liberate energies and possibilities that the current architecture and arrangements of the community did not promote.

The pamphlets and subsequent book galvanised the energies and imagination of a swathe of new enthusiasts for contributing new things to the community. Soon a new organisation, Jewish Continuity, was born (of which I became Chief Executive) and a range of new and established donors gathered round to make a difference. Characteristically, Sacks had attracted enthusiasts from across the spectrum of the community, from every denomination as well as secular and unaffiliated Jews, to seek to turn his clarion call into a program of activity.

Characteristically, Sacks had attracted enthusiasts from across the spectrum of the community, from every denomination as well as secular and unaffiliated Jews, to seek to turn his clarion call into a program of activity.

He was both resilient and philosophical. He (more or less) a book a year and in so doing, frequently went over the heads of the petty politicking of some in the UK Jewish community not only to appeal to any thoughtful Jew but to the wider world.

As soon as he took up the Chief Rabbinate, he marked out what was for him a central facet of his approach to life. He was relentlessly positive and upbeat and he was, to his very core, a unifier. He announced a Decade of Renewal with a flurry of initiatives to help the community celebrate itself, and its under-sung but evident qualities, in a range of ways to lead all the Jews of Britain to see themselves as fortunate and worthy, and that it was exciting to be among their community.

But others rapidly moved in to seek to smash up every one of these attempts. He was accused of not caring about the differences between the different denominations to the point of implying that they didn't matter. He was challenged from both right and left for not including their sensibilities sufficiently. Occasionally, in trying to manage the vicious partisanship of some segments of the community, he mis-stepped and his critics pounced.

## Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks: A unifier of ideas and a teacher of the world

By Clive Lawton



But he was both resilient and philosophical. He frequently regrouped and tried another tack. Already a regular writer, he wrote (more or less) a book a year and in so doing, he frequently went over the heads of the petty politicking of some in the UK Jewish community not only to appeal to any thoughtful Jew who wanted to hear from him directly what he actually meant to say but also the wider world for whom his books, unashamedly written from within the Jewish tradition, were also always designed for uplift and inspiration.

It is no surprise that Prince Charles called him a light unto this nation" and the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, later to be Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, felt him to be the country's foremost moral teacher and

philosopher.

While still Chief Rabbi, he became a Professor at Kings College London and was knighted. After retirement, he was elevated to the House of Lords and was rapidly retained as a visiting professor at a number of universities, both in the UK and abroad, not least Yeshiva University in the United States.

The incident surrounding his book, *The Dignity of Difference*, is indicative and typical of his singular character and conviction. After its publication in 2002, some Haredi rabbis condemned the book for saying that non-Jews could also find their way to God and salvation. They felt this implied that Judaism wasn't special or unique. Rather than tough it out, Sacks sought to conciliate them, even went up to Manchester to meet their leaders over the issue and agreed to amend one or two sections to blunt their criticisms.

He never retracted the central thesis but, by the slight amendments he made, he silenced his critics from the Right. Immediately though, critics from the Left jumped in to say that he had compromised ignominiously and undermined the essence of his original inspiring message.

Overall, no amount of protestation on Sacks's part led people to re-read what was still published in his name, nor did they seem to notice that he never withdrew or repudiated the first edition of the book which remains on bookshelves all around the world.

Jonathan Sacks was equally comfortable between the pages of a Talmud volume or in the corridors of academia. But perhaps even more rarely, he was also entirely comfortable in front of a microphone or a camera. He was a consummate communicator, a brilliant orator and a wonderfully creative thinker.

He never sought to present himself as a halakhist or judge, and it would be hard to find a ruling he made on his own of any great significance. One



## Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks: A unifier of ideas and a teacher of the world

By Clive Lawton

can only speculate as to the creativity he might have brought to the halakhic process had he felt less constrained.

But like Maimonides – and I don't shrink at all from that comparison – he made sense of Jewish stuff for the average person in a way no-one else of this or the last century has done. His masterful introduction to the Siddur (prayer book) and his commentaries on the Torah and festival prayers shine sparkling new light on well-worn material.

He scintillated.

He never sought to present himself as a halakhist or judge, and it would be hard to find a ruling he made on his own of any great significance. One can only speculate as to the creativity he might have brought to the halakhic process had he felt less constrained.

Jonathan Sacks made no apology for his insistence that the world could learn from Jewish ideas and teachings but at the same time he made sure he was fully informed of contemporary ideas and developments. Part of his skill was drawing into his frame ordinary things that so many of us lived with and making us view them again from a new perspective or through a Jewishly refracted lens.

He was sure that his ideas would outlast the small minded who could not understand the great and uplifting edifices he constructed with the use of brilliant insights into the implications of classic Jewish thought and teaching. He was a unifier of ideas and a teacher of the world.

It is customary to say of someone deceased 'zikhron livrakha' 'May his memory be a blessing'. It already is.

**British-born Clive Lawton** is co-founder of Limmud worldwide, and an internationally renowned educator in diversity issues and interfaith activity.

He is currently CEO of the Commonwealth Jewish Council and was CEO of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks' Jewish Continuity initiative.

# A man who exemplified what it meant to be a Jewish leader

By Jonathan S Tobin



You didn't have to agree with everything Rabbi Jonathan Sacks said or wrote to understand the value of what he was trying to teach.

**The former chief rabbi of Great Britain who died of cancer at the age of 72 was a renowned communal leader, author, philosopher and educator who commanded near-universal respect both in his own country where he was appointed to the House of Lords and around the world.**

Although he was widely applauded throughout the Jewish world, he was also subjected to criticism. Liberal Jews decried his willingness to compromise with and to avoid confrontations with the growing ultra-Orthodox movement while that same community nevertheless didn't recognize his leadership and were left cold by his teaching, which was grounded not just in the lessons of Torah, but in the classical scholarship and thinking that he exemplified as someone who had earned a doctorate in philosophy. In an era when Jewish life is primarily defined by division and strife, his wisdom and strong moral voice were appreciated—as evidenced by the honours that were showered upon him—but often went unheeded.

Moreover, at a time when a growing number of Jews identify principally as having “no religion” while recognizing that they have some ethnic ties to their people, the fact that his teaching was primarily based in Torah and its relevance to our lives meant that many American Jews were unable to give his ideas the serious hearing they deserved.

And yet despite that, Sacks could command the kind of nearly universal respect that few others of his generation could summon.

Why was this? Was it the intrinsic value of his writings and speeches? Was it his grave, kindly demeanour and the way so many Americans and Israelis are inclined to treat anyone with a plummy Oxbridge English accent with respect?

Many Jewish scholars and rabbis have written moral and philosophical treatises, though unlike Sacks, most are widely unread. Others have been renowned scholars and speakers.

Still, his résumé doesn't explain why his death seems to have touched so many people.

His importance lies less in his titles than in both the content of his teaching and the conscious effort he made to be a leader and a moral guide to all Jewish people. Moreover, there was a real link between his centrist philosophy and his faith in Jewish unity that has been largely eclipsed by the forces tearing us apart.

The appeal of Sacks lay in a notion of Jewish leadership that was both fully engaged with modernity and rooted in tradition. Such ideas were not original to him, but few have so successfully articulated them or embodied a desire to reach out to diverse groups on terms that so many could readily understand and identify with.

## A man who exemplified what it meant to be a Jewish leader

By Jonathan S Tobin

His work consciously engaged the contradictions in Jewish ideas and life. He acknowledged that the "tribalism" integral to Judaism and Jewish peoplehood appears to be the opposite of the universal values that Judaism also embodies. But he also explained that one flows from the other rather than being inherently at odds with each other. He did much the same with his efforts to reconcile belief in science with that of faith.

Those were not the only contradictions he explored. The rabbi sought to put the notion of morality back at the centre of our lives, and in doing so, made it clear that faith and religion have to be part of it. He sought to promote a sense of collective responsibility and a quest for the common good as part of what he called a "cultural climate change" crisis. But he also saw clearly the dangers of too much collectivism that had produced a cancel culture inimical to free speech and to individual rights.

Like the faith tradition he represented and taught, the wisdom he imparted was both simple and profound. The message at the heart of so much of his teaching was a sense that no matter how divided Jews were, they were still part of the same family that had to engage with each other.

Much of what passes for Jewish leadership today is, in an Israeli or American context, mere partisanship and almost solely linked to the political agendas of one sort or another. Most other prominent rabbis—be they Orthodox or non-Orthodox—are also so entrenched in their particular ideas about Judaism or how Jews should relate to the world around them that whether they acknowledge it or not, they spend more time building walls between Jews than anything else. Although Sacks didn't back down from his particular brand of Jewish observance, everything he did seemed to be consonant with a belief that bringing people together in order to promote the values of Torah, morality and Jewish rights was the real business of any Jewish teacher. That ability to rise above his place on the religious/political spectrum in order to promote transcendent Jewish values is what truly made him special.

Perhaps, as some of his critics thought, his approach was a throwback to an era when outside threats forced more Jews to think collectively and to prioritize unity because the consequences of splitting apart were unthinkable. He courageously stood up against a resurgence of British anti-Semitism embodied by former British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn. Yet the fact that at times this very acute observer of the modern world seemed a bit out of touch with the contemporary zeitgeist of division only made him more valuable to us.

**He will be missed not just because of his great personal qualities and brilliance, but because he showed us exactly how a Jewish leader should act. His calm though reasoned advocacy of morality, Jewish values and Zionism was not as confrontational as some true believers in one vision or another would have liked. We need more teachers, rabbis and voices like Jonathan Sacks instead of less of them. May his memory be for a blessing.**

**Jonathan S. Tobin is editor in chief of JNS—Jewish New Syndicate.**

# Jonathan Sacks

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (1948–2020) was the award-winning author of more than two dozen books.

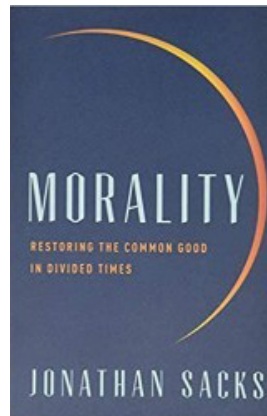
He was heard regularly on the BBC, and received international awards and honorary degrees from universities around the world. From 1991 to 2013 he served as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth. In 2009 he was made a Life Peer and took his seat in the House of Lords. Rabbi Sacks divided his time between Great Britain and the United States, and lectured throughout the world.

## JEWISH TEXT



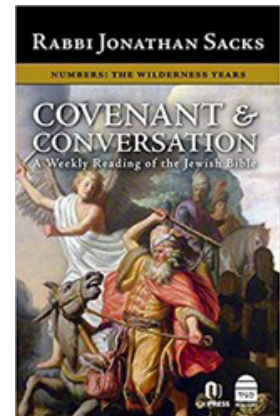
**Koren Sacks Rosh HaShana Mahzor**  
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

## NONFICTION



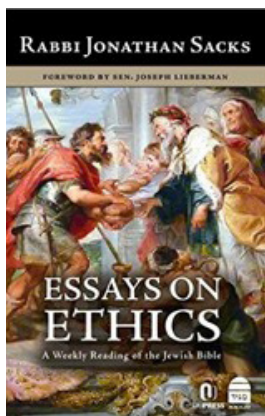
**Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times**  
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

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**Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times**  
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

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**Essays on Ethics: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible**  
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks; Sen. Joseph Lieberman, fwd.

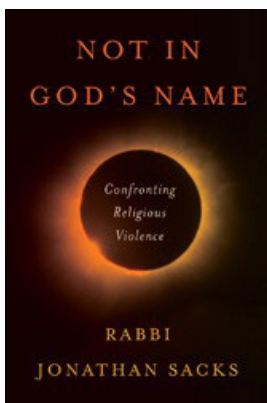
## NONFICTION



**Lessons in Leadership: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible**  
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks; Ronald Heifetz, fwd.

# Jonathan Sacks

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**Not In God's Name:  
Confronting Religious Violence**  
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

JEWISH TEXT



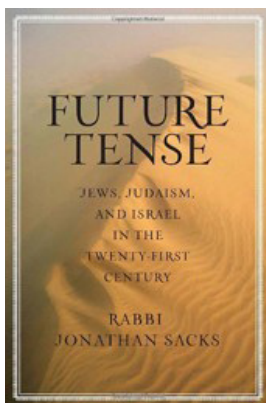
**The Koren Sacks  
Pesach Machzor**  
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

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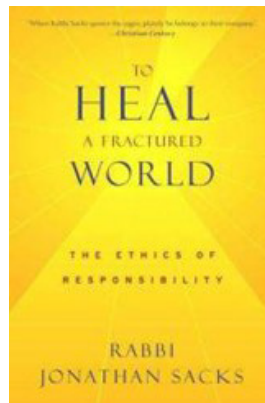
**The Great Partnership:  
Science, Religion, and  
the Search For Meaning**  
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

NONFICTION



**Future Tense: Jews, Judaism  
and Israel in the Twenty-First  
Century**  
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

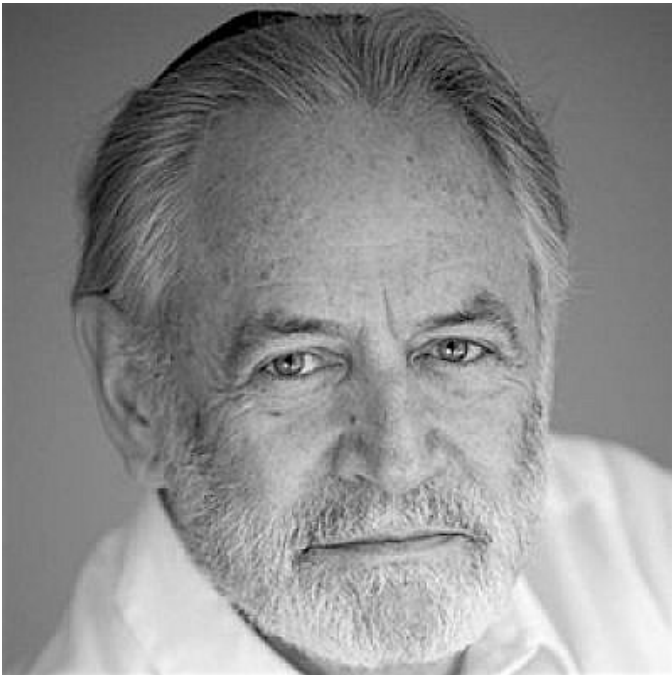
NONFICTION



**To Heal a Fractured World: The  
Ethics of Responsibility**  
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

# Kristallnacht

By Jeremy Rosen



Jeremy Rosen

**The 9th of November was the anniversary of the Kristallnacht attack on the Jews of Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland in 1938.**

The Nazis unleashed a hugely popular, pogrom that murdered nearly a hundred Jews and injured thousands. They destroyed 267 synagogues, and seven thousand businesses, and homes. Some 30,000 Jews were arrested, most of whom were never heard of again.

The official excuse was that a young Jewish student in Paris, Herschel Grynszpan had heard that his parents had been expelled from Germany to Poland. But they were stuck in no man's land unable to enter Poland and distressed. In desperation, Grynszpan shot a Nazi diplomat in Paris. The news came as the Nazi leaders were convened in Munich. Goebbels immediately called on all Germans to purge Germany of the Jews and initiated a horrific medieval pogrom to purge Germany of what he called the Jewish swine.

Some have said that Goebbels called the pogrom Kristallnacht, not because of all the broken glass, but because as he declared, he was now beginning to purify Germany, by removing the dirty Jews, to make it as pure as crystal! Although the attacks shocked a large number of people

around the world, no one lifted a finger. There were no reprisals or condemnations. The world did nothing.

This barbarism was simply the natural result of two thousand years in Europe of hatred, dehumanization, and a church that encouraged violence against Jews. This was the norm. Of course, there were exceptions, religious and secular. But the whole of Christendom was infected with this disease of Jew-hatred. A little historical background.

Before Christianity, conflicts between Jews and non-Jews were entirely social and commercial. Jews had held important positions and functions throughout the Roman and Persian Empires where they were free and equal citizens so long as they accepted the political authority of their overlords.

They had spread all around the Mediterranean and into central and northern Europe. This all changed when in 325 CE, Emperor Constantine made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire and deprived Jews of their equality and rights. It opened them up to religious attacks and hatred. To be fair, Constantine killed far more dissenting Christians than Jews.

As Christianity grew and saw itself as the One True Faith, the narrative changed to one of a Holy War. It was directed at those who refused to join this new religion. This was now an ideological hatred, not just social or commercial. The Jews were declared the enemies of good Christians and God. They were declared guilty of Deicide, killing god, which remained a dogma in the Catholic Church until Pope John 23rd in 1965.

Throughout the Christian world Jews were accused of being in league with the Devil. They were forced to appear differently and live separately from everyone else. They became the scapegoats for every and any disaster. They were not just outsiders, aliens, strangers. The Church saw the refusal of the Jews to accept Christianity as an existential threat. The unwillingness to convert only added insult to injury. They tried persuasion. Disputations were held. Jews had to listen to evangelical sermons. When that failed,

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they tried to de-legitimize Judaism and humiliate "the stubborn Jew." So ironic because Judaism itself, did not seek to evangelize nor did it claim to be the only way to salvation.

**Some rulers were more tolerant than others. Many took advantage of Jewish skills when it suited them. But most of the time they simply milked them when they could and expelled them after they had all their assets confiscated. From 700 CE there was hardly a country or city throughout the Holy Roman Empire that had not expelled or despoiled the Jews. And the remnant just moved on, from one safe haven to another.**

During the Crusades of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, armies heading towards the Holy Land set upon Jews as the nearest non-Christians at hand, giving them the choice of conversion or death. Many Jews even committed suicide to avoid torture and being burnt to death. Whole communities were destroyed. There were massacres throughout what is now called France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland. Whole communities were destroyed in Bern, Coblenz, Cologne, Mayence, Neuss, Nuremberg, Pforzheim, Rottenburg, Sinzig, Speyer, Treves, Weissenberg, Worms, York.

The hatred was encouraged by Barons, Bishops, Lords, and Cardinals. Names, now largely forgotten except by historians, led mobs against the Jews. Godfrey of Bouillon, Count Emicho, Peter the Hermit, St Bernard, Radulphe the Monk, Rindfleisch, the Holy Shepherd of Verdun, and Capistrano, to name only the most notorious. Even after the crusades, in the fourteenth century Jews were blamed for the Black Death and accused of poisoning Christian wells. Thousands of Jews were massacred across Europe.

One might have hoped that the Reformation initiated by Martin Luther in the sixteenth century, would bring relief. But he too whipped up hatred against the Jews. In the Thirty Years' War between the Catholics and Protestant, Jews were expelled from Linz, Brunswick, Cologne Florence, Geneva, Halle, Lucca, Magdeburg, Milan, Moravia, Parma, Pomerania, Rome, Saxony, Thuringia, Vicenza.

Throughout all this, the Jews had no rights and were in effect the property of the princes and rulers of the multiplicity of little states and principalities. They could not own land or join guilds. The only options were trading, lending, and being middlemen. The vast majority of bankers and moneylenders throughout Europe were Christians. The Medicis, the Fuggers, the cities of Sienna, Naples, Florence, Venice, and Genoa were all heavily invested in finance and lending. But Jews travelled, they interacted with locals far from the big cities. They had relatives in other countries they could call on and trust.

As kings needed money, they often found local Jewish sources cheaper and easier to default on.

They could cancel debts and confiscate property from the small Jewish lender. Jews were caught in a vice and suffered both from those above them and those below. Like agents and tax collectors they were unpopular.

Of course, I must not generalize. There were good men, both monastic and papal who at various times championed the cause of the Jews. But the overwhelming majority favoured persecution.

They spread lies. The worst example that never went away was the Blood Libel. The first recorded case was in Norwich in 1144. Jews were accused of killing a Christian child to drink his blood for wine on Passover and use his flesh for Matza.

**Part of the Catholic Mass was to take the wafer symbolizing the body of Jesus and the wine as his blood. According to dogma, a miracle occurred, and the wine and wafer actually turned into the body and blood of Jesus. This ceremony was easily transposed onto Jews (despite the obvious point that blood and human flesh are strictly forbidden).**

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Preachers spread the libel regardless.

**The blood libel was the excuse for killing Jews in Norwich, Gloucester, Bury St Edmunds, Blois, Erfurt, Fulda, Frankfurt, Lincoln, and Trent. The supposed victims of the evil Jews were turned into saints and folk-heroes. The Blood Libel has continued right into modern times, in Russia the Beilis trial in 1904. Even in the USA and Canada, there have been blood libels in Massena, Quebec, and Winnipeg (fortunately without serious consequences but showing how deeply embedded myths are). The Blood Libel is now perpetuated in parts of the Muslim world. Many in the credulous West still believe that Jews in Israel poison wells and lust for blood. Such dangerous lies, like Holocaust denial, perpetuate hatred of Jews.**

There have been other cultural causes of hatred. Perhaps the most notorious in Germany has been the Judensau, the Jew sow. A tradition going back to Medieval times that Jews eat the excrement of pigs and drink sow's milk. It was designed to de-humanize and put Jews on the same level as animals, to vilify their rabbis and their religion.

Sculptures, and pictures of Jews, were placed in churches and on city gates for over six hundred years. The one in Frankfurt was only taken down in the nineteenth century. There is still one at the State Church in the German city of Wittenberg.

The lingering Jew folk-hatred can be seen in the passion plays that were and are still performed on Palm Sundays, cities across Europe, and the catholic world. These dramas about the death of Jesus have always portrayed the Jews as evil devils (in obvious Jewish clothes) who plotted to kill Jesus. Just think of how Hieronymus Bosch painted them as ugly evil hook-nosed deformed beings dripping blood and saliva. Such plays are much fewer nowadays. Still, each year some nineteen are performed and still attract huge audiences. The biggest in Oberammergau in Germany that involves a whole village every ten years, was a favourite of Hitler. Only recently have they begun to tone down the way Jews are depicted.

All this is deeply embedded in the European psyche. Thousands of years of such conditioning is bound to de-sensitize people to Jewish suffering and almost justify violence against us by those too primitive or too blinded to see the truth. Is it any wonder that so many people, even in the USA today, hate Jews? Thousands of years of conditioning and contempt cannot be easily washed away. Even if the Catholic Church has really tried very hard in recent years to do something about it and Evangelical Christians have great sympathy for Judaism. Sadly, in the modern secular world Marxism, the foundation of Left-Wing ideology in the West today still carries with it the virus against Jews as rich, soulless oppressors of the workers and the dispossessed.

**They see Jews as a religion which in itself is a crime (unless it is not Judaism). They refuse to see Jews as a nation with national rights. They deny any history of a Jewish presence in the Holy Land.**

And they claim that if Jews use political influence to advance their goals, they are somehow doing something that no other minority or vested interest does. They insist they are not anti-Semites. But in fact, they are simply showing how ignorant they are of Judaism and its history.

No one will deny that we Jews are imperfect and often our own worst enemies. But hating a whole people regardless is a pathology. There is no inoculation. Even education has only had limited efficacy. All of this leads me to the conclusion that although the world has advanced, and not everyone is infected with the disease of Jew-hatred, the poison still exists. Kristallnacht reminds us of what rabid hatred can lead to. The battle against it must continue.

**Rabbi Jeremy Rosen** lives in New York. He was born in Manchester. His writings are concerned with religion, culture, history and current affairs – anything he finds interesting or relevant. They are designed to entertain and to stimulate. Disagreement is always welcome.



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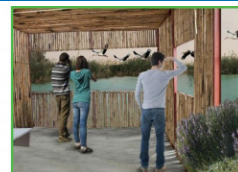
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# Jewish Help in Need Society of Queensland

Jewish Help in Need Society of Queensland is a registered not-for-profit Charity which provides financial assistance in the form of no-interest loans to members of the Jewish Community in Queensland.

Interest free loans are available  
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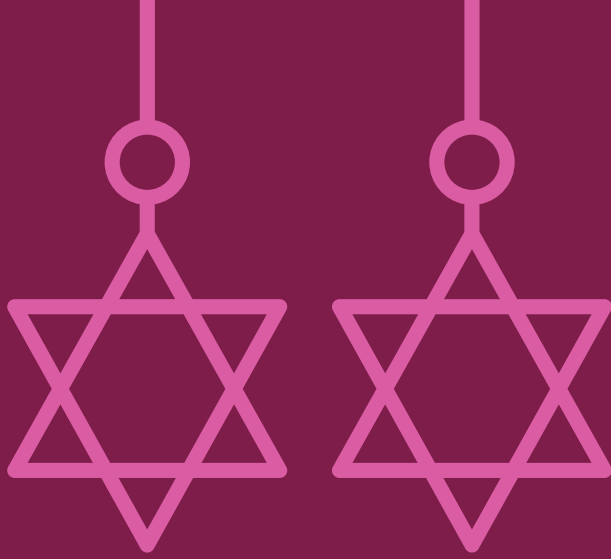
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email: [lee@psarc.com.au](mailto:lee@psarc.com.au)

Peter Goldsmith 0409 765 394  
email: [pgldsmth@bigpond.net.au](mailto:pgldsmth@bigpond.net.au)

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National Council of  
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**NCJWA** is a Jewish feminist organisation committed to promoting social justice and the rights of women in all aspects of their lives.

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1. Gender Representation in Jewish Communal Leadership and Status of Women:
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3. Violence against Women:
4. Uluru Statement of the Heart  
(with a focus on the role and effects on women)

*Applications are open!*

Please go to [ncjwa.org.au/positions](https://ncjwa.org.au/positions) for further information and to apply  
To find out more and to discuss any aspect of the above please email  
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PLEASE HELP US LOCATE THOSE IN NEED



**75** years

.....  
have passed since the Holocaust, an act of unimaginable evil and a continued stain on human history.

Although we can never forget and should constantly revisit this memory we can be proud that Judaism and Yiddishkeit has survived and continues to flourish today.

IN THIS SPECIAL YEAR WE WISH TO RAISE OUR PROFILE TO EXTEND OUR HELP AND SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST AMONGST US, PARTICULARLY HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS IN QUEENSLAND.

**If you know** of any survivor who is struggling in their old age, who needs support and care and who may not be aware of the existence and purpose of our organisation we would like to hear from you.



We remember all the survivors and although many have passed the few remaining provide us with an inspiration **TO NEVER ALLOW THE SHOAH TO OCCUR AGAIN.**



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with visits, transport, social contact, arranging medical help, liaison with Claims Conference, and some limited financial assistance.



Particularly the elderly but also the young who need assistance.



PLEASE CONTACT



**Brisbane and Queensland JCareQld:**

Howard Posner

Tel: 0424335969 • Email: Jcareqld@gmail.com

**NCJWA Gold Coast / Gold Coast Jewish Community Services Inc.**

Barbara Stewart-Kann

Tel: 0412 377 488 • Email: bkann@bigpond.net.au

# Press Release

## Hebrew University Appoints Two New Australian Governors

The 83rd Meeting of the Hebrew University's Board of Governors took place on the 25 and 26 October via zoom.

"It was quite surreal," said Australian Friends CEO Rob Schneider "but nevertheless, an amazing experience to hook up with close to 400 Hebrew University supporters from all over the world to listen to the opening remarks of Israeli President, Reuven Rivlin and Hebrew University President Asher Cohen."

**This was followed by a very interesting interview with famed Israeli author and Hebrew University Professor Yuval Noah Harari – an interview that can be viewed on FACEBOOK <https://www.facebook.com/HebrewU> and on YOUTUBE <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-xsxJT70IsZSn4EEsFsQmg> along with all the proceedings of the Board of Governors' two-day Meeting.**

Australian Friends President Michael Dunkel who is a longstanding Governor and Member of the University's Executive Committee was delighted that the appointment of Jeremy Leibler and Barry Joseph as additional members of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew University was ratified during the proceedings. "Barry Joseph has had a long association with the Hebrew University as a former Executive Director of the Australian Friends and now as its NSW President" said Mr Dunkel "and his many years of dedication and commitment to the University will be of great benefit to the Hebrew University and the Australian presence".

"We are especially excited to welcome Jeremy Leibler as a Governor from Australia" he said "as he brings to the table a voice from the next generation of leadership who is already making an impact in Australia".

Jeremy Leibler is the current President of the Zionist Federation of Australia and a partner in one of Australia's leading law firms, Arnold Bloch Leibler. He is also Deputy Chairman of Leibler Yavneh College, a non-executive director of ASX listed Thorney Technologies Limited and a member of the Australian Takeovers Panel, having been appointed by then Governor General, the Hon Sir Peter Cosgrove, in 2015.

Despite Covid, Hebrew University President, Professor Asher Cohen was able to report on sterling results for the Hebrew University with increased financial support from donors around the world; an increase in the number of students and an increase in the number of prizes and awards.

The proceedings also included an interview with Noble Laureate, Professor Roger Kornberg and French philosopher and Hebrew University Honorary Doctorate recipient, Bernard-Henri Levy. Another highlight was a panel discussion on "Student Life in the Shadow of the Coronavirus" moderated by Professor Mona Khoury-Kassabri, the first ever, Arab woman Dean of a faculty appointed at a university in Israel and a guest of the Australian Friends in Melbourne and Sydney last October.

The 83rd Board of Governors' Meeting ended with a magnificent musical performance by Bo and the HUJIs – a group of researchers who combine science and medicine with their love of music. "We look forward to next year's Board of Governors being able to take place physically in Jerusalem in May to coincide with the birthday of the Rothberg International School" said Rob Schneider – "B'Shana Ha'ba'ah B'Yerushalayim!"



Barry Joseph



Jeremy Leibler

### ENQUIRIES:

Rob Schneider [ceo@austfhu.org.au](mailto:ceo@austfhu.org.au)  
Tel 02 9389 2825 Mob 0414672183



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## Euthanasia

Q. Would Judaism allow a patient in pain to end their life?

**A. Obviously Judaism fully recognises the problems of the dying patient and the agonies of the family.**

But it cannot condone deliberately shortening anyone's life, even if it is a patient whose life no longer seems to have meaning.

Life is God's precious boon. Only He has the prerogative of ending it. The body is His property. Only He is entitled to determine its destiny. No human being may shorten anyone's life, even by a moment.

Tractate S'machot (1:1) rules, "A 'gosses' (a dying person) is a living person in every respect... One may not close the eyes of a dying person. He who touches them or moves them is a shedder of blood, for Rabbi Meir used to say: This may be compared to a flickering flame. As soon as a person touches it, it becomes extinguished. So, too, whoever closes the eyes of a dying person is deemed to have taken his life."

No distinction is made between one person and another when it comes to the right to life.

Lord Jakobovits wrote: "It is morally irrelevant whether one shortens life by 70 years or only by a few hours, or whether the victim of a murder was young and robust or aged and physically or mentally debilitated."

The proponents of euthanasia say there can come a time when life is not really life and a person is no longer really a person.

In "The Sanctity-of-Life Doctrine in Medicine: A Critique", Helga Kuhse quotes Dr Michael Tooley's contention that the ability to see oneself as existing over time is a necessary condition for the possession of a right to life or the wrongness of killing. Tooley suggests that "we reserve the term 'person' for those beings who are capable of understanding that they are continuing selves".

Kuhse advocates that competent patients should have the right to choose death; incompetent patients (where their express wishes are not known) should be dealt with in a way that considers the patient's well-being and the prevention of pointless suffering; and infants and the severely retarded and brain-damaged are not "persons" and killing them is not directly wrong.

This sort of thinking has no place in Judaism, which insists that the right to life is absolute, not relative. To borrow a phrase from the Talmud, who has the moral right to determine that one person's blood is redder than another's?

It is the most dangerous moral judgement of all to relativise people's lives – the sick as against the healthy, the almost-dead as against the fully living, the old as against the young and, as the moral slide gains momentum, the poor as against the rich, the coloured as against the white races, the Jew as against the gentile...

From the Jewish point of view, then, active euthanasia is forbidden.

## Euthanasia

How about passive euthanasia, withholding artificial impediments which may not be prolonging life but delaying death?

The 13th century Sefer Chassidim introduces the issue in terminology echoed in later works: "If a person is dying and someone near his house is chopping wood so that the soul cannot depart, then one should remove the wood-chopper from there."

In his glosses to the Shulchan Aruch the R'ma makes an even sharper distinction: "If there is something which inhibits the soul's departure, such as a nearby noise of knocking like wood-chopping, or if there is salt on the patient's tongue and these hinder the soul's departure, then it is permitted to remove them from there because this does not entail a (positive) act but only the removal of an impediment to death." The militant campaigners try of course to bully everyone into thinking that euthanasia on demand is a natural human right – just as others try to dragoon us into believing in abortion on demand.

We're dealing with human life here, and that's not a moment for militancy, for bullying or dragooning.

The right attitude is humility, reticence, uncertainty and reserve. It's better to stand back and think it over and over again. Once a life has been terminated, it's rather difficult to restore it. There are mistakes we should never allow to happen.

**Rabbi Raymond** Apple was for many years Australia's highest profile rabbi and the leading spokesman on Jewish religious issues. After serving congregations in London, Rabbi Apple was chief minister of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, for 32 years. He also held many public roles, particularly in the fields of chaplaincy, interfaith dialogue and Freemasonry, and is the recipient of several national and civic honours. Now retired, he lives in Jerusalem and blogs at [www.oztorah.com](http://www.oztorah.com)





# Communal News



## **Congratulations and Mazel Tov to *Lorraine Jacobs* who in November received the 2020 UPJ (Union for Progressive Judaism) Ner Tamid award.**

This award is presented to worthy candidates who have provided dedicated service to their congregations, the Progressive Movement and the Jewish community.

Since 1993, it has been the custom for the Union for Progressive Judaism to recognise the "Unsung Heroes" in progressive congregations and affiliated bodies with a Ner Tamid Award.

The "Unsung Heroes" are defined as those members around the region who perform exceptional service for their congregations, for the Jewish community – both Progressive and otherwise, and within the wider community.

**Lorraine's award is certainly well deserved – she is currently a Board member of Beit Or V Shalom and has since 1996 been a board member of each Progressive Congregation she has been a member of. For many years she has been involved with NCJWA (Brisbane), JNF QLD and SHALOM Magazine when she together with George Frey and others edited and published the monthly publication. She has also assisted other Jewish communal groups. In the broader community, she is a volunteer at the Greenslopes Private Hospital.**

**Lorraine is well known in the community as a result of her time as the Office Administrator for the State Zionist Council of QLD (SZCQ).**

**She was awarded the Rabin award by the SZCQ for her commitment to the Jewish Community and to Israel.**

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## **Congratulations and Mazel Tov to *Mervyn Rudd* who also received a 2020 Ner Tamid award from the UPJ.**

Mervyn is truly an "Unsung Hero" in the Jewish Community being a stalwart who has dedicated himself to the Progressive movement in Brisbane over many years – he is a member of Beit Or V Shalom (having previously served on the Board of Management) and is a tireless worker for the congregation.

**Mervyn's dedication and contribution was formally recognised when in recent times he was made a life member of the Congregation.**

**Mervyn over the years has also provided support for Sinai College, the Communal Centre and the Communal Retirement Village.**



# YIDDISHE CUISINE

by Tova Blumberg



Tradition dictates that a piping hot Cholent, a food inspired by the prohibition of lighting a fire on the Shabbat, be the highlight of the Shabbat midday meal. From the icy winters of Europe and from the Orient it came, now to be eaten with pleasure and with reverence by Jews the world over.

Round the Shabbat lunch table family and friends gather in joyful anticipation of that grand moment when the Cholent is brought in to be served – and that delicate combination of meat, vegetables, grain and legumes, plus seasoning, which has been slow-cooking since Friday afternoon, nonstop through the night, under the watchful eye of a dedicated cook, delights the palate – tantalises the taste buds – and warms the cockles of the heart. No praise is too high!

**Ultimately, it gives stimulation to lofty discussions of matters Sabbatical and voices raised high in hearty Zmirot: "Tzoor, Mi Shelo, Shelo echalnoo" (Rock, of Thine, of Thine we have eaten).**

Finally, it lends support to that grand institution, the "Shabbasdicker Schloof" (Shabbat Nap).

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JCareQld is a charitable association that provides help to members of the Queensland Jewish Community.

**We offer assistance with issues of aging, mental health, family trauma, disability assistance, and Shoah survivor assistance.**

**We have volunteer professionals, including family therapists, social workers and psychologists, as well as access to Claims conferencing for Shoah Survivors, NSW Jewishcare Sight Impaired Services including free access to current news and affairs.**

**Our volunteers are also available to assist with transporting people with mobility issues to social events, shopping, and Shule.**

If you think you might need our services, or know someone who might, please contact :



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JCAREQLD EMAIL : [Jcareqld@gmail.com](mailto:Jcareqld@gmail.com)  
JCAREQLD HELPLINE :1300 133 660



Gold Coast Jewish Community Services / NCJWA Gold Coast Inc.  
BARBARA STEWART-KANN : 0412 377 488



**Reaching out  
to support members of the  
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For a confidential discussion please contact:

**Romy Dinte**  
P 02 9386 9559 E [romy@jnf.org.au](mailto:romy@jnf.org.au)



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# BRISBANE HEBREW CONGREGATION



**THE BRISBANE SYNAGOGUE**  
98 Margaret Street, Brisbane

**Regular Services**

Shabbas, Friday evening: Ma'ariv 6pm

Shabbat Morning: 9am

Shabbas Discussions: Shiurim (Study Group)

Conducted by Rabbi Levi Jaffe 8.30am to 9:00am  
each Shabbas prior to service.

Kiddush is held after Shabbat morning service.

Weekday Services: Mon and Thurs at 6am

**Synagogue Office Tel: 07 3229 3412**

Sick Visitations Phone Rabbi Jaffe: 0419 136 451

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

# Brisbane Chevra Kadisha

[www.bck.net.au](http://www.bck.net.au) | PO Box 1296 Toowong QLD 4066

Should the need arise please call our 24/7

**EMERGENCY NUMBER**  
**0406 169 511**

for the person on call to assist you.

For other enquiries:

**Graham Eshensky**

President  
Phone (M) 0433 414 762

**Paul Gould**

Vice President  
Phone (M) 0422 638 663

**Bernie Goldman**

Secretary/Treasurer  
Phone (M) 0419 652 441

**Leah Steinberg**

Director of Tahara  
Phone (M) 0403 171 268

**George Hartnet**

Funeral Directors  
Phone: 3356 4277

**Rabbi Levi Jaffe**

Phone (M) 0419 136 451



**Beit Or v'Shalom**  
בית אור ושלום

**SERVICES**

10 am every Shabbat

Cheder

9:30am – 12 noon every second Sunday

Enquiries Phone: 0404 034 060

13 Koolatah Street Carina QLD 4152

[www.beitorvshalom.org.au](http://www.beitorvshalom.org.au)



Beit Or v'Shalom is proudly affiliated with UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM



**GIVAT ZION**

South Brisbane Hebrew Congregation

**SHABBAT SERVICES**

Friday 6:15pm | Sat 9:15am

**Children's Service on the first Shabbat of each month**  
commencing at 10.20am

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**MISHKAN ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE**

2 Moxon Road Burbank, QLD 4156

**Regular Services**

**Friday Evening:**  
(Summer time)

**Saturday Morning:**

**Saturday Afternoon:**

**Saturday evening:**

**Sunday Morning:**

**Monday evening:**

**Kabalat Shabbat 6:30pm**

Maariv 7:00pm

Shacharit 8:00am

Mincha 17:30 followed by Shiur until Maariv

Maariv 7:00pm

Shacharit 7:30am

Monday Evening: Shiur 6:30pm, covering the weekly Torah portion, the festivals and our sages

Eli Saranga  
**Chairman**

Email: [sarangaeli@gmail.com](mailto:sarangaeli@gmail.com)  
Mobile: 0434 724 052

Shlomo Cohen  
**President**

Email: [Shlomocohen357@hotmail.com](mailto:Shlomocohen357@hotmail.com)  
Mobile: 0411 150 896



## ORGANISATIONS

### QUEENSLAND

<b>Jewish National Fund Qld</b>	07 3807 9212
www.jnf.org.au	jnfqld@jnf.org.au
<b>United Israel Appeal Qld</b>	07 3229 4462
www.uiaaustralia.org.au	
<b>State Zionist Council Qld</b>	07 3229 4462
www.szcqld.org.au	www.zfa.com.au
<b>Maccabi Qld</b>	0402 428 213
<b>Wizo</b>	07 3715 6562
	wizoqld@gmail.com
<b>Qld Jewish Board of Deputies</b>	0406 692 491
www.jewishqld.com	
<b>CSG 24 Hour Hotline</b>	1300 000 274
<b>BETAR Alon Nusem</b>	0421 159 910
www.betar.org.au	qld@betar.org.au
<b>AUJS President - Carly Rosenberg</b>	
www.aujs.com.au	crosenberg@aujs.com.au
<b>Australia Israel Chamber of Commerce</b>	07 3847 0259
	brisbane@aicc.org.au
<b>QAJEX</b>	loris_r@hotmail.com
<b>Qld Jewish Community Services</b>	0423 194 737
<b>JCare Qld</b>	1300 133 660
	jcaredqld@gmail.com
<b>Jewish Help in Need Society of Qld</b>	
Lee McNamee 0417 723 399	Peter Goldsmith 0409 765 394
<b>Courage to Care</b>	0427 380 235
Kayla Szumer	kayla@couragetocare.com.au

### BRISBANE

<b>Beit Or v'Shalom</b>	0404 034 060
www.beitorvshalom.org.au	
<b>Chabad Brisbane</b>	07 3843 6770
www.chabadbrisbane.com	
<b>Chevra Kadisha</b>	0406 169 511
www.bck.net.au	
<b>Communal Centre Burbank</b>	
Lewis	0419 705 417
<b>Gan Gani Kindergarten &amp; Preschool</b>	07 3378 9233
<b>NCJWA - Brisbane Section</b>	ncjwbne@gmail.com
President Sheila Levine	www.ncjwa.org.au
	0418 744 854
<b>QLD Kosher Kitchen</b>	0430 321 314
	dvorahjaffe@bigpond.com
<b>Rose's Army</b>	07 3345 9509
<b>Sinai College</b>	07 3349 9088
www.sinaicollege.qld.edu.au	

### GOLD COAST

<b>Gold Coast Hebrew Congregation</b>	07 5570 1851
www.goldcoasthc.org.au	
<b>Friends of Hebrew University</b>	07 5539 0632
www.austfhu.org.au	
<b>Magen David Adom</b>	07 5539 0632
www.magendavidadom.org.au	mdaqld@hotmail.com
<b>Temple Shalom Gold Coast</b>	07 5570 1716
www.templeshalomgoldcoast.org	
<b>Sar - El David Samson</b>	0429 236 160
<b>Gold Coast Chevra Kadisha</b>	
Robbie Ventura	07 5596 6919

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### BRISBANE - REGULAR EVENTS

<b>Community Diary Bookings</b>	Kathy Gould
	07 3411 3664
	0402 497 413
	kathygould45@msn.com
<b>WIZO Aviva</b>	2nd Tuesday each Month (n)
	07 3715 6562
	wizoqld@gmail.com
<b>NCJWA Meeting</b>	3rd Monday 7:30pm

### GOLD COAST - REGULAR EVENTS

<b>NCJWA Gold Coast</b>	Monthly Meetings
www.ncjwa.org.au	7:30pm - 1st Monday of each month
	0412 377 488 goldcoast@ncjwa.org.au
<b>Temple Shalom Services</b>	Office 07 5570 1716
	Erev Shabbat 6:30pm Shabbat Morning 10am
	Oneg Shabbat 2nd Friday each month following services
	Se'udat Shabbat Last Shabbat each month following Torah Service
	Groovy Movers Exercise
	Mon & Wed 10am-12 Noon
	Friday 8-10 am
<b>Gold Coast Hebrew Congregation</b>	All enquiries call 07 5570 1851
<b>Services</b>	Friday Night Live
	Uplifting Service every Friday Night starting 5:30pm
	Shabbat Kiddish
	Following the service every Shabbat at 9am
	Kabbala and Jewish Mysticism
	Journey of the Soul,
	Monday evening at 7:30pm
	Talmud Classes
	Thursday evening at 7:30pm

**HAVE SOMETHING YOU WOULD LIKE FEATURED IN**  
*Communal News*



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## FEBRUARY (2021) DEADLINE

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