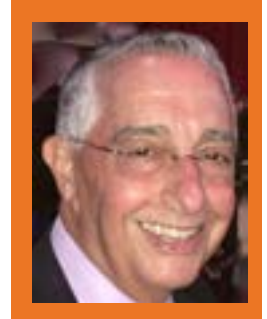


Shana Tova!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Marty Lawson, President



During the summers of 1966 and 1967, I was fortunate to work as a counselor at Cejwin Camps in Port Jervis, New York. Not only was it an amazing Jewish immersion experience for me, but it also provided an unforeseen program beyond compare. The great Jewish philosopher and teacher of Judaism, Dr. Mordecai Kaplan, was residing at Cejwin and serving as our Scholar-in-Residence throughout those summers. As a

staff member I had the opportunity to sit with Dr. Kaplan as he taught us his views on the emerging Jewish future. Then he would respond to our questions. During one of these *shiurim*, we launched into a discussion of change, especially change in Judaism since its beginnings. I remember Rabbi Kaplan speaking of the Jewish People as a living organism. He taught: "The identity of a living organism is not like that of a stone which does not change by adjusting itself to its environment, but only as it is acted upon by environmental forces." Kaplan emphasizes: "Every organism must change in order to live."

We, members of NAORRR, are a living organism that can and must change in order to survive and thrive. There is an ever-increasing number of our female colleagues who are eligible for participation in NAORRR. We need each of you, our members/spouses/partners, to

begin the process of thinking how we can create a more sensitive, welcoming environment as our "organism" changes. The expanding LGBTQ+, gender fluid members of the CCAR will also be eligible to join our ranks in the not-too-distant future. Some already are part of NAORRR. Will we become more sensitive in our discussions and prayers to adapt? Our convention in Boca Raton will provide us with many opportunities to wrestle with these issues.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention the domestic tension in the United States and the multi-dimensional ongoing conflict in our beloved State of Israel. In our recent excellent webinar with our colleague, Jonah Pesner of the RAC, Jonah spoke of our ability to remain engaged with leaders on all levels, given our connections and experience gained over years of service in our communities. Our

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**PLEASE SEE PAGES 8-9
FOR CONVENTION INFORMATION
AND REGISTRATION!**



LOOKING AHEAD

Jack Luxemburg, First Vice President

With summer mostly behind us and the High Holy Days and Festival season nearly upon us, it is a good time to look both back and ahead. I would start by looking all the way back to January 2023 and our Scottsdale conference, our first post-Covid in-person gathering. It was an uplifting and invigorating conference that underscored how important NAORRR is to our members and how well NAORRR met the challenges of the Covid years with our program of webinars, on-line holiday celebrations, and person-to-person contacts. Thank you to all our members whose efforts contributed to that success.

That convention also made clear some things to address going forward. The post-convention conversation highlighted programmatic and logistical aspects for consideration when planning the convention in Boca Raton, January 2024. The remarks from our President, Marty Lawson, and from our Executive VP, Gary Glickstein, helped to set NAORRR on the path towards becoming a community of retired colleagues and spouses/partners that will be welcoming and inclusive of all as the Reform Rabbinate becomes increasingly diverse.

Since that 2023 convention, we have continued to provide a regular series of webinars on a wide variety of topics, reflecting the efforts of a dedicated Program Committee. The success of the webinar program post-Covid demonstrates that NAORRR can bring quality programs to our members year-round, and that our members enjoy gathering with each other, even virtually, to learn, share and socialize. Meanwhile, the Convention Committee has been working diligently and creatively to incorporate the suggestions of our members and to meet the challenges put forward at the last convention.

Here are a few things that will highlight our January 2024 convention – understanding that the final program is still in formation. The convention in Boca Raton will incorporate a strong Social Justice component, including workshops, presentations and

even a field trip opportunity. These program elements have been developed in cooperation with the rabbinic and lay leaders of the local Reform community. Workshops will include a balance of scholarly and popular offerings with a range of choices available in each block of workshops. There will be timely commentary and analysis of current events in Israel. A major program addressing issues of bias and inclusion is being planned. It will be geared towards open discussion in a safe and non-confrontational environment among all those in attendance. We anticipate this will lead to further steps that ensure NAORRR will be the welcoming community we want it to be and which our colleagues, current and future, need it to be. This convention will include programs “about us” that address the life-situations in which we, members of NAORRR, find ourselves.

The goal of our January 2024 convention is to build on the momentum created in Scottsdale, respond to the suggestions from our members, address issues relevant to the time and the place, and to bring our NAORRR community together to share, to socialize and to celebrate one another. It promises to be an exciting, engaging and energizing convention. Fulfilling that promise depends on a strong turnout. The best way to acknowledge the hard work of our committees and to make an impact on the local community is attendance. Start planning now to be with us in Boca Raton, FL, January 4-8, 2024.

Tell Us You Want To...



If you would like to “Go Green” and not receive a mailed hard copy of the Ohr L'NAORRR email us at naorrrglickstein@gmail.com



FOLLOW THE MISHNAH

Bennett Miller, Second Vice President

There is no greater text than *Pirke Avot* to guide us in our lives, for it is grounded in both the real and the aspirational, in everyday speech and in sacred talk, in important words. Here is one small piece for us to ponder: R. Hananiah ben Teradion taught, “If two sit together and there are words of Torah [spoken] between them, then the *Shekhinah* abides among them.” (Avot 3) How true that is for you and me.

Whenever members of NAORRR gather together (at our annual convention or one of our now monthly webinars), words of Torah abound in our conversation. And I always feel that when we gather and share words of Torah, the *Shekhinah* really does abide among us. There is that special feeling of friends (often longstanding and for me friends of more than 60 years) sharing lovingly together, engaged in discussions about each other’s family, welfare, health, and much more. Yes, it does feel that the *Shekhinah* abides among us.

So, as the new year begins, let us plan to gather together and share words of Torah. I invite you to join so many others in Boca Raton this January for our annual convention. If you have never attended, please consider doing so for the first time. You won’t be disappointed! And join us each month for our wonderful webinars. They are rich, stimulating, and full of opportunities to learn more Torah.

Bennett Miller

RABBINIC GEMS

by Rabbi Rifat Sonsino, Ph.D

I belong to a unique rabbinic study group that meets online in the greater Boston area, religiously, every Monday morning, 10 am to 11.30 am. We have been doing this for a few decades. To my knowledge, there is nothing like this in the States. We rarely take a vacation. We are 11 retired Reform Rabbis, and consider this endeavor as a sacred commitment. We are now studying Ruth Rabba, a 6th century CE rabbinic Midrash that comments line by line on the biblical book of Ruth. It was composed in Israel and written in mishnaic Hebrew as well as in Galilean Aramaic, and contains many Greek words.

There are great gems in the text. Here are three examples:

1. Knowing how important it is to preserve a good reputation in life, the ancient Rabbis taught: “Praiseworthy is the person who has departed from this world with a good name.” (RR 2:7) After all, after we die that is all that matters.
2. Teaching appropriate behavior, they also stressed that “One engages in sexual relations at night, not during the day.”(RR 2:16) Many would probably take exception to this teaching. I guess the Rabbis were concerned about issues of privacy.
3. Commenting on the biblical teaching that gives priority to a worthy life here on earth, as stated in Eccl. 9:14, “A live dog is better than a dead lion,” the ancient sages maintained that in this world one can, and should, improve his/her lot but not after death, for it would be too late: They say, “in this world one who is a dog can become (as strong) as a lion, but in the world to come (namely, at the end of time after death), one who is a lion cannot become a dog, and anyone who is a dog cannot become a lion.” (RR 3:2)

These are sound teachings that are worth pondering.



VIEWS אלו ואלו

Rabbi Gary Glickstein

I was taught that when anyone asks a rabbi a question, the very first principle the rabbi must consider is *Koom V'Assey* or *Shev V'Al Ta'as* – Rise and Answer or Sit and Decline to Answer. Some questions that I have passed on are those beyond my pay grade; those beyond my knowledge level; those that were political and/or divisive and/or personal, etc. Once I wrote a column in the local Worcester, MA Jewish paper answering the question, “Should a Jew smoke cigarettes?” I used traditional sources to emphatically answer, “No.” Once the article was published, I received an angry call from the local Orthodox rabbi, who was a chain smoker (except for Shabbat and Yom Tov), admonishing me, “Before you issue a rabbinic decree in this town, check with me. I am the *Mara D'Atra*” (the local halachic authority). A few of our members have raised the question of whether it is appropriate for NAORRR, as a liberal Jewish body of rabbis, to meet in Florida in January 2024.

My answer is that if you are physically able, you should join us for our NAORRR convention in Boca Raton, Florida, January 4-8. And if you need funds to attend, we have them. All you need do is ask me, privately and confidentially. I am well aware that my answer is self-serving, obvious and required, considering my position as Co-Executive Vice President.

Please allow me to explain my point of view. I would hold this way even had I not taken on this position.

One of the lessons I learned early in my

rabbinate is that sometimes it is important to just show up when situations are difficult. I made a clandestine trip to support Soviet Prisoners of Conscience in 1981 and was overwhelmed by the appreciation these brave women and men showered upon me and the positive effect my presence had on their families. Through the UJA National Rabbinic Cabinet, I joined a small group of our colleagues who visited the Reform South African Jewish communities during the days of Apartheid. Our Reform friends felt so alone and isolated at that time and thanked us over and over for our support and encouragement in their struggle. Over the years, I have been in a number of such groups and realized how essential it is to come and give *Hizuk*---Support, Solidarity, and Encouragement---to communities fighting against the forces that surround them.

Our Florida Reform colleagues and their congregants are living in a state whose government has passed some of the most repressive laws in our country over the last few years. These cruel enactments have restricted voting rights, denied women's choice, banned books, dictated corrupt lessons about slavery, oppressed immigrants, denied trans youth health care and more.

Our Reform rabbinic colleagues in Florida have not taken any of this passively. They have rallied their congregations, filed law suits, demonstrated in Tallahassee, organized petition drives, created coalitions. In short, they continue to fight the good fight, even though at this juncture they are not yet victorious.

NAORRR assembling in Boca Raton, Florida at the beginning of the critical 2024 election year will

offer us an opportunity to demonstrate our support for these exemplary colleagues and their congregations.

This convention, of all conventions, is an act of *Hizuk* – a Solidarity convention in one of the most visible and contentious places in our country.

Should we, as liberal Reform rabbis, gather in Florida? Yes, and Yes, and Yes.

Koom V'Assey – It is exactly the right time to get up and act to support our embattled forces attempting to turn the tide in 2024.

Joanie and I will definitely be there. We look for you to join us.

Hizku V'Imtzu – From Strength to Strength.

Gary Glickstein

Co-Executive Vice President
NAORRR

Hesed/Mitzvah Fund stands ready to help.

While reaching out to several of our members, we have come to realize that many are still unaware of the incredible resource that is the Hesed/Mitzvah Fund of the CCAR and NAORRR.

The Hesed fund provides emergency financial assistance to rabbis and the surviving spouses of deceased colleagues.

This fund is substantial and stands ready to help any of our members and their spouses/partners in time of financial need. The process for application is always open and strictly confidential. Many of us have had difficult times and only got through them with the help of others. Our Hesed/Mitzvah Fund stands ready to help you in your time of need. Please contact hesed@ccarnet.org for more information.

NAORRR Board of Directors 2023

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First Vice President

Jack Luxemburg

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Bennett Miller

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Term Expires in 2026

Joyce Foster

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Lennard Thal

Eric Wisnia

Executive Vice Presidents

Gary and Joan Glickstein

Data Manager (ex-officio)

Seth Bernstein

See you at the NAORRR 2024 Convention!

January 4-8, 2024

Boca Raton Marriott, Boca Center, Florida

All rooms \$189 per night plus tax

Stay up to three days before and three days after at the same Convention rate.

Make your flight reservations now and receive a \$150 incentive grant per person towards airfare. All you have to do is email
naorrrglickstein@gmail.com

Remember, to attend the convention and/or to access any of our NAORRR programs, you must be a member of NAORRR!

At the 2024 NOARRR Convention we will be honoring the ordination class of 1974 for 50 years of rabbinic service to our Reform Movement!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Marty Lawson, President

voices must still be heard!

This also applies to *ahavat medinat Yisrael*. Let us join together with the thousands of Israeli citizens who are protesting the dismantlement of democracy in the Jewish State. The Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism and the Israel Religious Action Center are on the frontlines of the struggle to keep Israel from becoming a religious autocracy. Our commitment to Zionism must not be defined by settlers who terrorize Palestinian men, women and children.

“organism” that must change in order to ensure the Jewish future. Our Officers, Board Members, along with our wonderful Executive Vice-Presidents, Gary and Joanie Glickstein, are looking forward to increasing your participation. Please help us reach out to colleagues/spouses/partners and encourage them to join us.

כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה

Yes, all Israel is responsible one for the other!

לשלוש.

Marty

Indeed, we are the living

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

NAORRR CONVENTION 2024



Dr. Andrea Weiss is the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

Dr. Weiss was ordained at HUC-JIR and received her doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. She served as Associate Editor of *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* (URJ Press, 2008), which won the Jewish Book Council's 2008 Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award.

Dr. Weiss's leadership within HUC-JIR has helped reshape curriculum for the rabbinical program across the campuses and built a deeper sense of community at the New York campus. She developed the Worship Working Group in 2003 and has continued to

oversee this group of students and faculty who work together to reflect on and improve worship there. She has played a leadership role in major initiatives such as the Spirituality Initiative of the New York School, the Mandel Initiative in Building Capacity for Visionary Leadership, and the annual New York Kallah.

2024 NAORRR Convention highlights

Lectures by our scholar Dr. Andrea Weiss

A special presentation of the CCAR's Clergy Monologues with interactive discussion

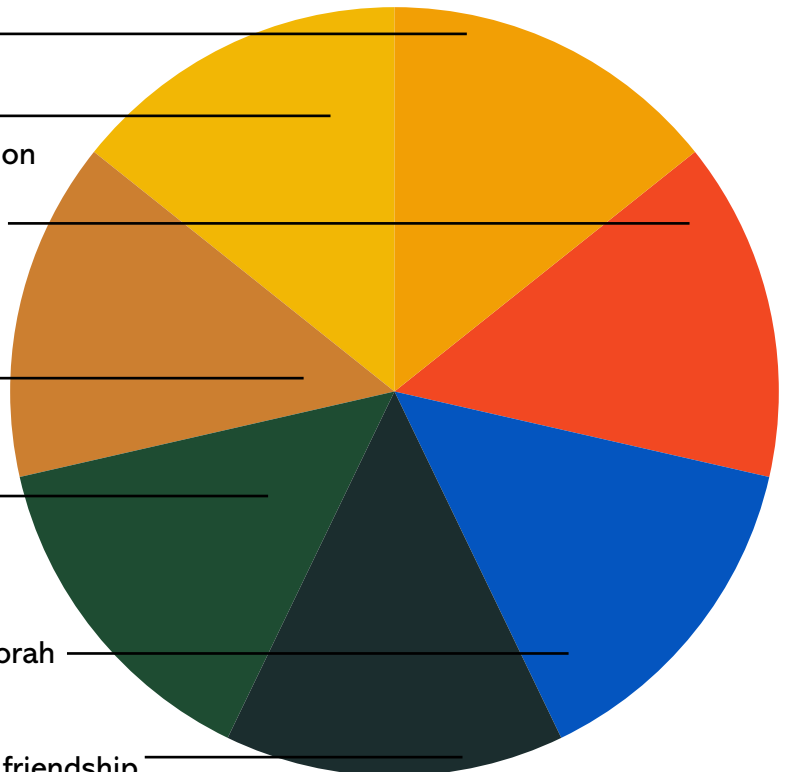
Workshops focused on critical social justice issues and a chance to visit the Spady Cultural Heritage Museum

Additional study opportunities in *Tanach*, poetry, Theology, Israel, Theater and more

Looking at YOU and ME: programs that focus on people of our ages and our life circumstances

Celebrations, *Ruach*, Camaraderie, Prayer, Torah and plenty of eating, drinking and laughing

Join us for days of uplifting and energizing friendship



NAORRR 2024 CONVENTION REGISTRATION & MEAL CHOICES

NAORRR 2024 CONVENTION REGISTRATION Boca Raton Marriott at Boca Center, Florida | January 4-8, 2024

Registration deadline – December 22, 2023

Please complete ALL information below to ensure that our records will be up-to-date

Member Names		
Mailing Address		
City	State	Zip
Home phone	Member 1 Cell	Member 2 Cell
Member 1 Email	Member 2 Email	Emergency contact name & phone #

HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION

The 2024 NAORRR convention is being held at the Boca Raton Marriott at Boca Center, Florida. The room rate is **\$189.00 plus taxes**. This special room rate is also available three days before and three days after the convention. To get this special NAORRR convention rate, you **MUST** book reservations by **December 4, 2023**. **Book your room online at: <https://book.passkey.com/e/5063632>**. You may also register via the NAORRR Website by going to: <https://naorrr.com> ***If you have any questions or problems concerning your reservations or getting NAORRR's special rates or you have mobility requests, contact Joanie and Gary Glickstein at 786-261-1124. Once you register and pay the applicable fees, details about workshops will be sent to you in a timely manner.***

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FEES: Please print clearly

		By 11/15	After 11/15
Member 1	Preferred name on name tag	\$ 125	\$ 175
Member 2	Preferred name on name tag	\$ 125	\$ 175
TOTAL REGISTRATION FEE DUE			\$ A

NAORRR DUES **You must be current in 2023-24 dues to attend!**

2023-24 Dues: Member -\$75. Surviving Spouse -\$0. <i>If you are unsure if you have paid dues for 2023-24, please contact Joanie or Gary Glickstein at naorrrglickstein@gmail.com.</i> Dues enclosed: Member 1 \$ ____ . Member 2 \$ ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Check if this is your first time attending a NAORRR convention		TOTAL DUES \$ B
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Available assistance includes an airfare subsidy of \$150 per member and underwriting from the Wallach Fund. To inquire, please send a confidential email to naorrrglickstein@gmail.com

NAORRR 2024 CONVENTION REGISTRATION & MEAL CHOICES

NAORRR 2024 CONVENTION REGISTRATION Boca Raton Marriott at Boca Center, Florida | January 4-8, 2024

MEAL FEES

OPENING WELCOME DINNER – BUFFET		1 or 2	\$60 each	\$
EREV SHABBAT DINNER		1 or 2	60 each	\$
<i>Select one entrée and one dessert per person</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Oven Chicken Breast Picatta (non-dairy)				
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Pan seared Salmon with Mango Salsa				
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Roasted Peppers filled with Vegetables and Quinoa				
Dessert				
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh Fruit Plate				
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Key Lime Pie				
SHABBAT KIDDUSH (LUNCHEON) BUFFET	<input type="checkbox"/> attending <input type="checkbox"/> not attending	1 or 2	\$25	\$
SATURDAY NIGHT ICE CREAM SOCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> attending <input type="checkbox"/> not attending	1 or 2	No Charge	\$ 0
SUNDAY EVENING BANQUET		1 or 2	\$60 each	\$
<i>Select one entrée and one dessert per person</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Grilled Chicken Marsala				
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Grilled Grouper with Garlic Lemon Sauce				
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Grilled Tofu with Assorted Vegetables				
Dessert				
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh Fruit Plate				
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Chocolate Cake				
TOTAL COST OF ALL MEALS				\$
ADD TOTAL REGISTRATION FEES– from line A				\$
ADD TOTAL DUES - from line B				\$
CONTRIBUTION TO MITZVAH/HESED FUND				\$
CONTRIBUTION TO CONVENTION ASSISTANCE FUND				\$
CONTRIBUTION TO NAORRR FUND				\$
GRAND TOTAL - AMOUNT DUE				\$
ENCLOSE CHECK PAYABLE TO NAORRR Or check here <input type="checkbox"/> if using PayPal				
Please double check your addition*				

NOTE: We cannot process any form without correct payment.

If you have food allergies or special dietary needs, please enclose a note describing your needs.

**Complete BOTH pages and mail with your check (Payable to NAORRR) to
Joanie and Gary Glickstein at 1 Grove Isle Dr. #1803 Miami, FL 33133**

*****(Before mailing this form, please make a copy of both sides for your future reference.)**

NAORRR 2024 CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Boca Raton Marriott at Boca Center, Florida | January 4-8, 2024

Registration deadline – December 22, 2023

PLEASE FIND CONVENTION REGISTRATION AND DUES PAYMENT
INFORMATION ON PAGE 8.



2023 MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAORRR welcomes all CCAR members who are retired or who are 60 or older, their spouses and surviving spouses or partners.

Please complete and **PRINT** clearly

Date:

Rabbi's name Ordination: Year ____ <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NY <input type="checkbox"/> LA <input type="checkbox"/> J Nickname, if preferred _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75
Spouse or Partner's name Ordination: (if rabbi) Year ____ <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NY <input type="checkbox"/> LA <input type="checkbox"/> J Nickname, if preferred _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75
Surviving Spouse's name Ordination year & campus of deceased spouse: Year ____ <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NY <input type="checkbox"/> LA <input type="checkbox"/> J Name of deceased spouse _____	* No dues required
Additional contribution to support Hesed/Mitzvah Fund	\$
Additional contribution to support Convention Assistance Fund	\$
Additional contribution to support NAORRR Re-Imagined	\$
TOTAL AMOUNT REMITTED <i>(make checks payable in US funds to NAORRR)</i>	\$

Check here if you would like to receive your Ohr L'Naorrr newsletter ONLY via an email link.

WE NEED YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION:

Street Address		
City	State	Zip
Member or surviving spouse email	Member or surviving spouse home phone	Member or surviving spouse cell phone
Spouse or Partner email	Spouse or Partner home phone	Spouse or partner cell phone

Send dues and this form to:
 NAORRR – Joanie and Gary Glickstein
 1 Grove Isle Drive, #1803, Miami, FL 33133
 Email: naorrrglickstein@gmail.com
 Website: <https://www.naorrr.com>

Shanah Tovah!

Wishing you all a
sweet New Year.



**Stay tuned for exciting
upcoming programs from NAORRR**

**We have great programs planned for
the next few months (and beyond, of
course!)**

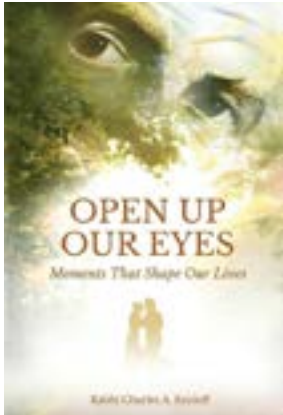
Check your email for updates.



BOOK REVIEW

Review by Rabbi Harry K Danziger

Open Up Our Eyes: Moments That Shape Our Lives by Rabbi Charles Kroloff



One of the hallmarks of Rabbi Charles Kroloff's *Open Up Our Eyes: Moments That Shape Our Lives* is that every life lesson he offers is rooted in his retelling of a real life experience. It may be as life changing as meeting his wife, Terry, when they were only sixteen or as mundane as passing the dreaded freshman swim-

ming test at Yale. This is no theoretical book. He skillfully blends insights from Jewish tradition and world literature with vivid episodes in his life.

Chuck Kroloff has been a key leader in many projects and movements that have touched the Jewish world and beyond. This has given him a rich reservoir of experiences. He tells us of the dramatic influence Soviet refuseniks had on him as they celebrated in 1982 when he and Terry helped deliver “Jewish contraband” to the USSR. He brings to life his and Terry’s “dancing the night away” at the White House on the night of the Israel-Egypt peace agreement. He recalls the effect that the ordination of women had on his worldview. He shares his less joyous moments and times when he fell short so we may learn what he learned.

Rabbi Kroloff is generous in giving credit to many who became his mentors. They were mentors, not only in the formal sense, but in the sense of enriching his life intellectually and spiritually and inspiring him to believe that one person can make a difference. First among them is Terry, who appears in several chapters as love and partner, mentor and wife.

Recently, a colleague asked on Facebook, “Do we say *Shehecheyanu* too often?” I think Rabbi Kroloff would say that we don’t say it enough.

We don’t always recognize the moment as we live it. But we can reach back to events in the past that we relive as *shehecheyanu* experiences. We can “open up our eyes” to discover the times and the persons that made us who we are. We may look back and say “... *vehigiyanu lazeman haHU!*” — not this moment but that moment years ago. Kroloff teaches us by example that, so long as we live, it is never too late to discover “moments that shape our lives.”

After reading the book, I personally wish I could have read it years ago so that I had more time to live its lessons. But, of course, that was impossible. Why? Because Chuck Kroloff had to live the book before he could write the book.



ADDRESS OR OTHER INFO CHANGES?

Has your mailing address or your email address changed recently? We want to keep our data current, so we ask that you please notify NAORRR of any contact information changes.

NOT TUNED IN?

Subscribe to our email blasts!

Are you not receiving our email program flyers?

Please let us know at naorrrglickstein@gmail.com



BOOK REVIEW

Review by Rabbi Steve Garten

Taking Miracles Seriously: A Journey to Everyday Spirituality by Rabbi Michael Zedek

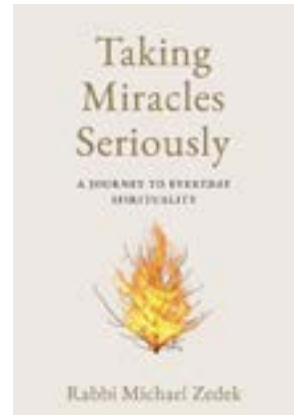
It is often the case that when reading a mystery novel there is an urge to turn to the final chapter and discover “who did it.” Though there may be some satisfaction in knowing how the book ends, doing so will mean that the reader has skipped the most exciting aspect of the book, the journey to discovery. This tendency to read the ending first is just as often part of the “self-help” genre. Readers want the quick and easy answer to their very serious questions: weight loss, parenting advice, marriage counseling, and of course job satisfaction. But doing so in these circumstances likewise denies the reader the joy of following the path “less traveled.”

In the last chapter of this beautiful and insightful book Rabbi Zedek does provide a simple set of nightly discipline to help the reader experience the everyday miracles that surround us. Using the experiences of a woman who survived the horrors of a World War II Japanese POW camp as a basis for his own transformative practices, he urges the reader to end each day by asking themselves: “Did I see something beautiful today? Did I hear something beautiful today?” But following those simple questions would not unleash the power behind them. Traveling the chapters of Rabbi Zedek’s book would place the questions into their proper context.

Many religious writers suggest that the difference between the religious person and the one who de-

clares themselves to be non-religious is the prescription of their eye wear. How they see the world provides meaning to the title they wrap themselves with. Rabbi Zedek masterfully merges the wisdom of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and the insight of modern non-religious writers of poetry and prose to grind a set of lenses

to help us see what stares out at us every day. In Rabbi Zedek’s words: “Reframing experience can remove the barriers that prevent us from seeing the miracles that sustain a rich, spiritual life.” The word spiritual may be somewhat off-putting to those who define themselves as “non-religious.” But is there any serious individual who does not want to live life to its fullest? Is there anyone who does not “yearn to feel that life is a gift, a very precious gift, albeit a fragile one? Do we not all want to feel that life is dear to us and our loved ones? That were it in our power we would never let go.” Rabbi Zedek reminds us in one his most thoughtful chapters that the key to a life of meaning is to remember that, while we cannot control what happens in life, we can control our responses. His thoughtful book is a guide to developing and mastering our responses.



CRUISE OPPORTUNITIES

We have been informed that a number of cruises are still seeking rabbis for this coming season. If you are interested in a cruise chaplaincy, please visit the following website www.CompassSpeakers.com and request an application under the “Religious Services” tab, this will start the enrollment process.

THE EXISTENTIAL DILEMMA OF THE OPPOSITION

by Stanley Ringle

The current coalition government of Israel has initiated a legislative blitz intended to “reform” the Israeli judiciary. The objective of this initiative is broad and far reaching. If successful Israel’s character will be transformed from a liberal democratic state to what the Hungarians call an illiberal democracy. In fact, however, the Hungarian model is one in which the powers of government have been usurped by an extreme right of center political movement led by a prejudiced, narrow minded and self-serving dictator. And lest there be any misunderstanding, the process of upending what was previously a true democratic system with checks and balances, began with an attack and process designed to undermine the legitimate and balanced powers of the Hungarian Supreme Court and Parliament.

The result of the likeminded process underway in Israel, has created widespread consternation about its consequences. The future social, political and economic strength of the country are in question. So too is Israel’s sense of national solidarity.

At the heart of this situation is a telling conundrum. The list of unsettling issues which define the policies and aspirations of the alliance of opportunists and extremists in Israel’s government coalition are the same which have clarified and defined the concerns of a majority of Israel’s people.

The short-term result has been a sharp erosion of security and certainty about Israel’s future. Concurrent with this, however, has been a renewed affirmation of the values and principles which characterized the original declared commitments and aspirations of the State of Israel; as described in our Declaration of Independence.

The principles of liberty, justice and equality of rights are considered to be too precious to allow them to be dismissed or eroded by apathy or ignorance. This explains the incredible outburst of collective anger and passionate assertion of Israel’s vision of itself as a liberal and just Jewish democracy.

The impressive numbers of people who have taken to the streets, day and night for months on end is an expression of the concerns of ordinary families, individuals and organized groups representing every sector of Israeli society. Their *raison d’être* and *raison d’état* is

our struggle to ensure the maintenance of Israel’s image and reality as a secure and responsible member of the community of nations. And no less so, is the desperate desire to protect and ensure the future of Israeli society. With this has come a forthright rejection of the ideological and political principles of the current coalition government.

Ironically, the extremism of elements in the coalition has brought to the fore the controversial and distasteful consequences of Israel’s occupation of the West Bank. The image of the settler population, empowered by their messianic belief in their divine right to the land and their affirmation of Jewish supremacy, as articulated by ideological and religious extremists, has shocked and outraged people across the political spectrum. And not only in Israel. Jews throughout the world are disheartened and disturbed by their ideas and their deeds. The radical aspirations and values advocated by government Ministers and Members of Knesset further accentuates the bitter image which has been pasted on our nation state. Even many of the advocates of Revisionism, including current and previous supporters in the Likud Party, have expressed their distaste and rejection of the current coalition government’s policies.

We are also hurt by a phenomenon of pessimism expressed by growing numbers of professional and business people throughout Israel. More and more are publicly exclaiming interest in finding a more stable and secure place to transfer their families and businesses. Their interest in leaving Israel is deeply concerning. Their struggle and ours is growing in strength and momentum. But it has not yet reached its apex. Nor has the process of individual and collective reflection about the options offered in other western countries. Indeed, for many, the idea of moving is based on the fantasy of living in an affluent country and safe society. However, the reality of life in the western world for Jews is anything but rich in protected social, economic and political benefits. It is difficult to find a place where anti-Semitism is not on the rise and where individual and communal security is ensured. In many western societies, right wing extremism, racial prejudice, social conflict and religious fundamentalism are expanding the fissures in otherwise presumably attractive coun-

tries. One need only ask Jews in the United States, in most countries in Western Europe, or for that matter in nearly every other country in the world.

Reality brings us full circle. Our struggle has only just begun. The passage of one controversial piece of legislation is not the end. It is a yet to be tested decision by the Israeli judiciary.

There is also a phenomenon among coalition members; a growing process of individual and collective review of the legitimacy of their principles. The indexed erosion of support for the Likud Party is expressed in the growth of support for more centrist and moderate political advocates. There is similar evidence of a transfer of allegiance in the Orthodox religious community.

The numbers revealed in recent polls are telling. Were elections to be held now, the governing coalition would suffer a decisive defeat. Clearly the growing recognition of collective disenfranchisement will advance the process of political change. There is much yet to be decided by the rational and clear minded majority of Israeli citizens. And this by definition includes the Arab 21% of the Israeli population. They too are bedeviled by the sharp turn in Israeli policy and the increased threat it represents to their security, their rights and their aspirations as a vital part of the country's population. The dramatic events which have challenged our lives are far from having reached a decisive end. A self-serving response is not only foolishly hasty; it is unrealistic. We can and will yet win this struggle for ourselves, our children and the future generations of our people. When I concluded the historical narrative in my book THE ARC OF OUR HISTORY, I quoted the words of Franz Kafka who wrote in his "Parables and Paradoxes":

"The Messiah will come only when he is no longer necessary.

He will come only on the day after his arrival."

The future will be determined by the work of our hands.

SMALL CONGREGATIONS CLERGY COLLABORATIVE

Recognizing the need to successfully match clergy partners with small congregations in the Reform Movement, the CCAR, in partnership with the ACC and URJ, has created a new path and program to form those connections. This new system is designed to connect clergy looking for part-time work or monthly pulpits to small communities looking for a rabbi or cantor to lead them in their spiritual conversations. Some may be from congregations who previously worked with student rabbis or cantors on our HUC-JIR campuses that will no longer be able to do so, others are small congregations and communities with limited financial ability interested in hiring part-time clergy. For additional information and/or if you are interested in these opportunities, please contact Rabbi Leora Kaye lkaye@ccarnet.org.

Caring Committee: We are there for you

If you or any of our members you know could use a call from a member of our Caring Committee, please contact either Steve Moss at samoss@aptonline.net or Gary and Joanie Glickstein at naorrrglickstein@gmail.com

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