

CLAL UPDATE - Fall 2007



CLAL

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CLAL - The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership

- ❖ Stimulates volunteer, professional and rabbinic leadership to build responsive Jewish communities across America.
- ❖ Helps individuals to imagine new Jewish possibilities.
- ❖ Promotes inclusive Jewish communities in which all voices are heard.
- ❖ Develops insights from Jewish wisdom for the American public square.
- ❖ Enhances Jewish participation in American civic and spiritual life.

Dear Friends,

As 2007 draws to a close, we look at how much we have accomplished. Most excitingly, Rabbi Brad Hirschfield's new book, *You Don't Have To Be Wrong for Me To Be Right: Finding Faith Without Fanaticism* (Harmony), will be published in January 2008. Incisive, thoughtful, and cutting-edge, it offers an original voice on how we confront the "other," celebrating diversity while delivering a message of inclusiveness, acceptance and hope. Grounded in Biblical texts and interwoven with personal stories, *You Don't Have To Be Wrong for Me To Be Right* looks at how we can create a more peaceful world, honor our own faith while remaining part of the broader society, and stay open without sacrificing our customs, cultures and traditions. Part inspirational, part memoir, and part current affairs, this powerful book takes CLAL's vision of pluralism to a new level, building trust along the way.

Two other important new CLAL books – *Remember for Life: Holocaust Survivors' Stories of Faith and Hope*, edited by Rabbi Hirschfield (The Jewish Publication Society), and *How to Spot One of Us*, by Janet R. Kirchheimer (CLAL) – were published this fall. Honoring Holocaust memory, they provide moving tributes to the power of endurance and hope. Offering lessons of fortitude, they give the next generation new tools for remembering.

In addition, Rabbi Irwin Kula's award-winning book, *Yearnings: Embracing the Sacred Messiness of Life* (Hyperion), was just published in paperback. Presenting the complexities of life in a new perspective, *Yearnings* is now included in seminary curriculums, inspiring theological students for the next phase of their work.

Looking abroad, Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard, Ph. D. joined with religious leaders to meet with Pope Benedict XVI in Rome to promote Jewish-Catholic relations. Back home, he is leading a new term of CLAL's highly respected Rabbinic Internship program, encouraging bridge building across the streams.

These are just a few examples of CLAL's busy 2007 agenda. Helping people on their own spiritual journeys while creating vibrant communities engaged in the intellectual and ethical questions of the wider world is our challenge. Through your support, we are able to touch thousands of lives. Thank you for joining with us in this critical work.

B'Shalom,

Fern K. Hurst
Chairman

Irwin Kula
President

Brad Hirschfield
President

Donna M. Rosenthal
Executive Vice Chairman

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE WRONG FOR ME TO BE RIGHT: FINDING FAITH WITHOUT FANATICISM

Groundbreaking New Book Explores the Critical Issues of Our Divided World

How can we create a world with less violence and division? Can we make room for other cultures and beliefs without negating our own? Is there a way to balance commitment and openness without sacrificing one to the other?

These critical questions are explored in a dynamic new book by CLAL President Rabbi Brad Hirschfield. Addressing some of the key issues of our time, *You Don't Have To Be Wrong for Me To Be Right* reveals how to be passionately committed to one's faith community while remaining open to other religious traditions. Drawing on his own experience as a former activist on the West Bank who saw first-hand what extremism can do, Rabbi Hirschfield examines our fears of the "other" with humor, insight, honesty, and thoughtfulness. Never dismissing another's beliefs or treating difference as a zero sum game, he appeals to the common wisdom found in all religions, offering hope and a new perspective to the American spiritual, social and political landscape.

Grappling with his own conflicts – as an Orthodox teenager growing up in a non-religious home, leading a prayer service at the Reichstag for Jews and non-Jews alike, going to Moscow as the only rabbi participant in a Muslim sponsored initiative, and many more – Rabbi Hirschfield presents diversity and inclusiveness in a new light. Using personal stories, Biblical texts, and other references, he asks us to stretch, leaving our preconceived notions and convictions at the door to make room for new foundations. With so much divisiveness in the world, *You Don't Have To Be Wrong for Me To Be Right* offers a concrete and accessible approach for mending fences among people.

You Don't Have To Be Wrong for Me To Be Right: Finding Faith Without Fanaticism will be available in bookstores and online (at Barnes and Noble, Amazon, or Ingram-books.com) in early January 2008. Rabbi Hirschfield will also be on tour, speaking to the media and at book events around the country. Stay tuned for more!

YEARNINGS: EMBRACING THE SACRED MESSINESS OF LIFE

Now in Paperback

Winner of a "Books for a Better Life" and a Spirituality and Health book award, *Yearnings: Embracing the Sacred Messiness of Life*, by CLAL President Rabbi Irwin Kula, is now available in paperback. Newly released, it offers a fresh opportunity to explore ways of coping with challenge, using Jewish wisdom as a tool. More than self-help, *Yearnings* shows how life's messiness can actually lead to fuller experiences– in work, money, relationships, or any other area where conflict can overwhelm us. Recognized as an important resource, the book is now part of the United Theological Seminary's curriculum (Dayton, OH) where Rabbi Kula led a day seminar. Princeton Theological Seminary, one of the country's oldest theological institutions, also invited him to speak as part of its Center for Continuing Education author series, and has made *Yearnings* available to participants.

PLURALISM ABROAD

Religion and Society: An Unprecedented Dialogue

In November, Rabbi Brad Hirschfield was invited by the National Peace Foundation and the Islamic Society of North America, under the auspices of the U.S. State Department, on an inaugural mission to build global citizenship. The trip is the second half of a program designed to help the Muslim world appreciate how Americans integrate their faith and national commitments, while embracing religious and political difference.

The first step brought religious leaders, journalists, and directors of prominent NGO's from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria to America to learn about American Islam, which included seeing the rich relationships forged among the faiths, and meeting with American Muslim, Christian and Jewish leaders. The second step brought the dialogue back to their home countries, with an American mission abroad. "Executed at its best, religion in America welcomes genuine diversity," said Rabbi Hirschfield, the only rabbi on the program. "Our example provides a guiding light for other countries in which the more people claim their faith; the more their country has been embroiled in war."

Participants met with imams, theologians, journalists, and leaders of non-governmental organizations. The trip helped them to grasp the challenges of implementing portions of the American religious identity model in these countries. "Ironically, it was clear that without the teaching of faith, there will not be peace," said Rabbi Hirschfield, "but it is also the teaching that fuels the war."

CLAL Joins Delegation to Meet the Pope

Building Catholic-Jewish relations, Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard, Ph.D., CLAL's Director of Organizational Development, joined a delegation of five American bishops and two rabbis, including CLAL founder Rabbi Irving "Yitz" Greenberg, to Rome for a private meeting with Pope Benedict XVI. His Holiness emphasized the importance of social solidarity – whereby each is responsible for the other, a value shared by both traditions – as a message that must be spread. While overseas, the group also went to Poland to tour Auschwitz, to further sensitize the bishops on Jewish issues and help them understand where the two traditions differ in their points of view. The two-part trip was sponsored by the prestigious Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding.

Mission to Odessa and Israel

In October, Rabbi Hirschfield traveled to Odessa and Israel in his role as spiritual guide for United Jewish Communities' Flight Initiative, a program designed to inspire young Jewish philanthropists. The trip provided participants with a first-hand opportunity to see how they could make a difference improving the lives of those in need, as well as learn about the success stories resulting from Jewish support. In Odessa, a city with few Jews left, a burgeoning Jewish life has begun, with new institutions and a growing population. The trip ended in Israel, the place of Jewish power and possibility, in which the wisdom and experience of American Jews are critical to building an inclusive community.

BUILDING BRIDGES: ABRAHAMIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE WORLD TODAY

Season II Available as a CD Set – January 2008

Based on the resounding success of last year's weekly TV series, *Building Bridges: Abrahamic Perspectives on the World Today*, conceived by and featuring Rabbi Brad Hirschfield for Bridges TV-American Muslim Network TV, a second season was developed in 2007 with Rabbi Hirschfield serving as host. The new half hour series presents timely episodes tied to the news and interviews with "the man on the street." Offering unique perspectives on issues splitting the country, the show provides a thoughtful, respectful antidote to the "name-calling" often found on TV. Topics span from global warming and the environment, to healthcare and immigration. Fast paced, it gives viewers a deeper understanding of how religious leaders of the three major traditions see themselves and the world. Nurturing trust, the series provides a fresh start to building bridges amongst the traditions.

Available for purchase in early 2008, this compelling 2-CD package provides all 15 shows of *Season II*, with an easy to use menu and episode descriptions. The price is \$25. To pre-order, call 212-779-3300, x 129, or check the CLAL website at www.clal.org.

HIRSCHFIELD AND KULA: INTELLIGENT TALK RADIO

Expanded Website Connects Listeners to Show's Hosts

Engaging, entertaining, and smart, *Hirschfield and Kula* is now available in an expanded version through its website, hirschfieldandkula.com. In addition to an archive of past shows, and a listing of future topics and taping dates, the site encourages listeners to keep in touch with Brad Hirschfield and Irwin Kula through their blogs. Writing about today's news, the blogs offer original "takes" on the issues behind the scenes. Other new features include recent media appearances and select CLAL materials. Be sure to catch some of their past shows with guests, anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan, former Deputy Secretary of Defense K.T. McFarland, and *Fox News* co-anchor Steve Doocy.

NEW IDEAS, NEW VENUES

The Aspen Ideas Festival

In July, the Aspen Institute, one of the country's premier think tanks, held its prestigious Aspen Ideas Festival. Gathering the foremost scientists, artists, politicians, educators and other leaders together, it offers a unique opportunity to nurture new thinking.

This year, Rabbi Kula participated in the sold-out program, leading three sessions. The first, "Religion and the Public Square" with noted professor Dr. Alan Wolfe, Rev. Jim Wallis, Nancy Gibbs of *Time*, NPR's Reza Aslan, and moderator Jon Meecham of *Newsweek*, looked at the impact religion has on both the political process and society, and the ever-shifting boundary between church and state. The second, with Sakyong

Mipham Rinpoche, one of Tibet's most respected incarnate lamas, was on "Spiritual Practice for Enlightened Living," and dealt with creating practice. The third, with Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan and The Sakyong, was on "Compassionate Leadership in a Violent World." Maintaining that compassion is not a quality one just has, it must be developed, Rabbi Kula said, "We see the world in a distorted fashion – only fragments of the picture. Compassion is the art of seeing a fuller, more inclusive picture. Ultimately, seeing the full view is what we mean by looking at things from God's perspective."

The Chautauqua Institution

In August, Rabbi Kula was a keynote speaker at the renowned Chautauqua Institution in New York. This 133-year old National Historic Landmark is a center for growth, nurturing people's intellectual, creative, and spiritual potential.

Speaking to an audience of almost 700, Rabbi Kula explored how forgiveness is critical to national security in a program entitled, "Security and Preparedness" (to watch a video of his session, go to www.clal.org, *eclal: CLAL online magazine*). He maintained that to feel secure in this world we will need to include spiritual analyses of world events, as well as the necessary political and economic ones. "There's always a gap between the security we have and the security we yearn for – that's part of what it means to be human. As a country, when we don't realize this, we tend to react to threats in a flight or fight mode – not an evolved response." Rabbi Kula will appear at Chautauqua again next year.

SPIRITUALITY vs. PSYCHOANALYSIS: CAN THEY CO-EXIST?

Religion vs. Science

What is the relationship between faith and analysis? Is there a place for religion in therapy? Can the two practices enhance rather than negate each other? To answer these questions, a special roundtable was held, sponsored by *Psychoanalytic Perspectives: A Journal of Integration and Innovation* and co-sponsored by CLAL, with a group of respected and religious psychoanalysts. While religion and psychoanalysis traditionally have been at odds, there is a new appreciation for how the two can better interact, with analysts from many views reconsidering the role spirituality plays in mental health.

"Historically psychoanalysis has viewed religion with suspicion," said Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard, a Ph. D. psychologist, Orthodox rabbi, and roundtable participant. "But it is acknowledged that science alone cannot fully explain the human condition, particularly in people's search for meaning and purpose. In the last decade, both realms have begun to form a mutual respect by seeing the value of what the other brings."

The dialogue, moderated by Rabbi Irwin Kula and *Psychoanalytic Perspectives* co-editor Amanda Hirsch Geffner, presented panelists from a range of faiths. Many said their religious practice helped them to be more compassionate in their professional lives, and their ability to aid patients improved when they could integrate the spiritual and psychoanalytic orientations. For program highlights, contact the National Institute for the Psychotherapies – Fall/Winter 2006 edition of *Psychoanalytic Perspectives* (released in 2007).

TREMBLING ON THE ROAD

New Film Explores the Impact of Change

A follow up to the landmark film *Trembling Before G-d* with Rabbi Steve Greenberg, Director of CLAL's Diversity Project, *Trembling on the Road* tells the story of taking *Trembling Before G-d* globally and the reactions to it. A celebration of how things have shifted, the film also looks at how much more must be done. In recognition of this, Rabbi Greenberg and film maker Sandi Simcha Dubowski created a campaign during the Ten Days of Repentance (during the High Holidays), as a community-wide effort to grapple with the issues of Judaism and homosexuality. Screenings and discussion events were held in homes, workplaces, and houses of worship, to help individuals and families reconcile their views, build relationships, and create meaningful change. To sponsor a screening or ask Rabbi Greenberg to speak, please phone 212-779-3300, ext. 104.

KIRTAN RABBI

New CLAL Resident

Bringing his unique talents and gifts to CLAL as an associate, Rabbi Andrew Hahn, Ph.D., a well-known and sought-after adult Jewish educator, has developed a new approach to prayer through music and song. Called Kirtan, it is a type of chant developed in India to heighten participation, communal feeling and connection to the sacred. Based on a form of call-and-response singing, it breaks down the barrier between "leader" and "listener," generating a deeply spiritual link with the Divine. In addition, he has developed a Jewish form of tai chi meditation, which he teaches both independently and as part of the chant sessions. Rabbi Hahn will be holding kirtans at the Integral Yoga Center in New York, as well as in other parts of the city and country. To learn more, hear sound clips and read reviews, visit Rabbi Hahn's website, www.kirtanrabbi.com.

REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST

Remember for Life: Holocaust Survivors' Stories of Faith and Hope

What does it mean to "remember for life"? *Remember for Life: Holocaust Survivors' Stories of Faith and Hope*, an unforgettable book conceived and edited by Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, addresses the challenge, suggesting that a traumatic past must be collectively remembered in a way that nourishes the future. Based on an earlier CLAL work, this newly revised, evocative edition published by The Jewish Publication Society (Fall 2007), offers a collection of 71 survivor stories emphasizing fortitude and kindness in the dark days of the Holocaust. With stories arranged to coincide with the cycle of the Torah and the Jewish holidays, *Remember for Life* connects Holocaust remembrance to ongoing Jewish learning using survivors own words. Recalling those small instances in which humanity triumphed over evil, it reminds us and future generations that we can learn how to lead more meaningful, ethical, and joyful lives from even the most painful times. To order, phone 1-800-234-3151, or visit www.jewishpub.org. The price is \$18.

How to Spot One of Us

In his foreword of this hauntingly beautiful new book, Rabbi Kula quotes Theodor Adorno, that “poetry after the Holocaust would be a barbaric act,” but goes on to say that this moving book proves that it can also be “a holy act.” Published by CLAL, *How to Spot One of Us* (Fall 2007), by Janet R. Kirchheimer, a respected poet and CLAL’s Director of Community Development, is a collection of over 80 poems inspired by her family’s tragedy in the Holocaust. The daughter of survivors, she evokes images of the unimaginable while sharing her legacy of love, to create an inspiring resource for all. With an introduction by CLAL Founder Rabbi Irving “Yitz” Greenberg, Chairman Emeritus of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, and an endorsement by CLAL Founder and Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, among others, this volume offers a timeless tribute. To order, phone 212-779-3300, ext. 129. The price is \$15.

OTHER RESOURCES

Three Times Chai: 54 Rabbis Tell their Favorite Stories

A compilation of favorites from rabbis of all streams of Judaism, *Three Times Chai* (Behrman House, 2007), is a collection offering classic Biblical stories, rabbinic and modern commentaries, folktales and legends. Featuring Rabbi Hirschfield as one of the contributors, the book includes notes on each story’s lesson.

Sacred Days Calendar Celebrates Our Connection to Food

From our family tables to our sacred festivities, producing and consuming food is sacred to Jewish experience. Celebrating this relationship, CLAL’s new pictorial *Sacred Days* calendar features the artwork of photographer Helen Nitkin, with insights from the full spectrum of Jewish tradition. More than just a calendar, it offers a new way to look at the world, honoring the connection between Jewish values and food. To order, call 212-779-3300, x129, or check the website, www.clal.org. The price is \$18.

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLAL Around the Country

Bringing their expertise to diverse institutions around the country, CLAL faculty imbues leaders with the skills for creating vibrant Jewish life. Some recent highlights include:

Los Angeles, CA: Rabbi Kula was invited by the Young Leadership Development Institute of the Jewish Federation to help members expand their leadership vision.

New York, NY: Rabbi Blanchard, now an adjunct professor at Fordham Law School teaching Jewish Law, is also leading a continuing legal education program based on his work in Germany.

Ft. Worth, TX: Rabbi Kula spoke at the 10th Annual Gates of Chai Lecture in Contemporary Judaism at Brite Divinity School.

Richmond, VA: Rabbi Hirschfield spoke at a Federation gala on community leadership and philanthropy.

Boston, MA: Rabbi Blanchard presented a series of talks on palliative care to lay leaders, medical staff, and student chaplains at the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center.

Atlanta, GA: Rabbi Kula led a federation leadership program, and participated in community events and a book discussion based *Yearnings*.

Los Angeles, CA: Rabbi Steve Greenberg gave a talk in celebration of Jewish books, at the American Jewish University.

Litchfield County, CT: Rabbi David Kalb led an evening program on Judaism and social justice for the Greater WA Coalition for Jewish Life.

Minneapolis, MN: Sponsored by the UJC, Rabbi Brad Hirschfield gave a talk on how Jewish experience impacts on Jewish identity.

New York, NY: Rabbi Blanchard is providing a special series of staff and board leadership development seminars for the Jewish Child Care Association of NY, infusing the agency with Jewish values.

Chattanooga, TN: Rabbi Hirschfield led a talk on forming community identity with themes from *You Don't Have to Be Wrong for Me to Be Right*, at the local Federation.

CLAL IN THE NEWS

Coverage

Offering new perspectives on today's stories, CLAL faculty provide fresh insights on the issues of the day. Whether it's Rabbi Kula comments, as a panelist for the *Washington Post-On Faith* blog, or Rabbi Hirschfield's compelling High Holiday op ed carried by the secular, Jewish, and Catholic press, CLAL reaches new audiences with provocative thought. Other recent highlights include:

- "New Morning," the Hallmark Channel, 3 shows on: loyalty, turning points, and heroes.
- "The Dennis Miller Show," Westwood One, on religion and the candidates.
- "Jeff Farias Show," KPHX (Phoenix) on Jerry Falwell's death.
- *Good Housekeeping* magazine on assessing your mess.
- *Living City* magazine, on the writings of Chiara Lubich.
- *Airtrain* magazine, on why messiness at work isn't so bad.
- Associated Press, on what to tell kids for families who don't celebrate Halloween.
- Religion News Service, on the comedian Kathy Griffin's "offensive" remarks.
- *The Columbus Dispatch*, *Sacramento Bee* and *Jewish Week*, on the film *Evan Almighty*.
- *The Bergen Record*, on Jewish support for Israel.
- *Minneapolis Star Tribune* and *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*, on return to the Latin Mass.
- *The New York Jewish Week*, profile of Rabbi Kula.
- *The Forward*, Jewish burial rites.