

CLAL UPDATE - Spring 2007



CLAL

Spring 2007 ❖ 5767 אביב

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,

These last months have been busy at CLAL. In March, *Newsweek* magazine named CLAL Co-Presidents Rabbis Irwin Kula and Brad Hirschfield, CLAL founder Rabbi Irving (Yitz) Greenberg, and CLAL Senior Associate Rabbi Joseph Telushkin in its "Top 50 Rabbis in America." Rabbi Kula's well-received book, *Yearnings: Embracing the Sacred Messiness of Life*, won a "Books for a Better Life" Award. And Rabbi Brad Hirschfield was named national Scholar-in-Residence by the Jewish Community Centers Association of North America.

Reaching across the waters, CLAL brought our message of pluralism overseas. Rabbi Hirschfield led a mission to Ethiopia as part of his continuing role as spiritual guide to United Jewish Communities' Flight Initiative, accompanying a group of young leaders and philanthropists to bring more than 50 Ethiopian immigrants to Israel. In Paris, Rabbi Kula joined a group of highly successful business leaders on a two-day program on transforming business. And in Germany, Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard, Ph.D., CLAL's Director of Organizational Development, was invited to teach at the prestigious Humboldt University School of Law, lecturing on Jewish and comparative law.

Back home, CLAL's thought-provoking radio show, *Hirschfield and Kula, Intelligent Talk Radio*, airing on KXL in Portland, Oregon, has sparked listeners with new perspectives on the issues of the day. Going beyond the predictable, the show uncovers the partial truths on the most divisive topics. And on television, Rabbi Hirschfield's successful series, *Building Bridges*, airing on Bridges TV (American Muslim Network TV), proved so popular that a new series is now in development.

CLAL faculty also continues to teach, lecture, and consult across the U.S. From Florida to California, from Kansas to Georgia, CLAL provides the unique training, tools, and resources that link Jewish tradition to contemporary challenges, helping people to connect spiritually.

These are just a few of the many programs CLAL has developed to touch people in creative and meaningful ways. Fortifying communities and aiding individuals on their own sacred journeys is our mission. You are an essential partner in this. Through your support we remain innovative, bringing Jewish wisdom to new arenas and enriching countless lives. Thank you for your commitment and confidence in this critical work.

Fern K. Hurst
Chairman

Irwin Kula
President

Brad Hirschfield
President

Donna M. Rosenthal
Executive Vice Chairman

NEWSWEEK NAMES CLAL RABBIS IN “TOP 50 RABBIS IN AMERICA”

Ranking the top 50 most influential rabbis in America, *Newsweek* magazine listed a virtual “Who’s Who” of America’s foremost rabbis in its April 2, 2007 issue. Rabbi Irwin Kula was ranked No. 8 for his commitment to “taking Jewish public” and “reshaping America’s spiritual landscape.” Rabbi Brad Hirschfeld was listed at No. 37 for his outspokenness as a “proponent of interfaith dialogue.” Rabbi Irving (Yitz) Greenberg was No. 26 as CLAL’s founder, and Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, CLAL Senior Associate, was listed No. 21 for being a best-selling author and speaker.

Culled together by Sony Pictures CEO and Chairman Michael Lynton, Gary Ginsberg of Newscorp., and Jay Sanderson of JTN Productions, and using a scoring system, the list brings together a variety of leaders from the full range of denominations. Criteria for the selection included: Are the rabbis known nationally/internationally? Do they have a media presence? Are they leaders within their communities? Are they considered leaders in Judaism or their movement? Do they have political/social influence? Have they made an impact on Judaism in their career? Have they made a “greater” impact?

The list provides an indication of who is speaking for American Jews today. CLAL is proud to be so prominently included.

YEARNINGS WINS “BOOKS FOR A BETTER LIFE” AWARD

On February 26, at the eleventh annual “Books for a Better Life” Awards, *Yearnings: Embracing the Sacred Messiness of Life* (Hyperion 2006) by Rabbi Irwin Kula, was selected as the best book in the Spiritual category. Beating out books by such notable authors as Harold Kushner and Gary Willis, *Yearnings* was honored as one of the leading self-improvement books of 2006 that helps people to live a better life.

The Awards ceremony, emceed by Meredith Vieira, co-anchor of NBC-TV’s *The Today Show*, and chaired by Steve Murphy, President and CEO of Rodale Inc., brought out the foremost authors in the self-help field. Winners in the nine categories — Childcare & Parenting, Inspirational Memoir, Motivational, Personal Finance, Psychology, Relationships, Spiritual, the Suze Orman First Book Award, and Wellness — were selected by a distinguished group of authors, journalists and educators from such fields as personal finance, spirituality and media, who had to judge from a record breaking 450 submissions. The event took place at the Millennium Broadway Hotel in New York City, with proceeds benefiting the National Multiple Sclerosis Society — NYC Chapter.

In his acceptance speech, Rabbi Kula stated that “we are living in a moment when religion is being used in dangerous ways by all communities...We need to mine our traditions for the wisdom that can enhance our personal and communal lives, helping us to love more deeply and live more vitally.” *Yearnings*, he said, was his contribution to helping anyone deal with the messiness of their lives.

BUILDING BRIDGES

Airing on Bridges Television (American Muslim TV Network), *Building Bridges: Abrahamic Perspectives on the World Today*, a landmark 18-part series conceived by and featuring Rabbi Hirschfield, brings together religious leaders from the three major faith traditions to probe their own faiths for answers to the tough questions dividing America. From debating when life ends, to the role of women, to religion's impact on popular culture, this stirring series looks at the similarities and differences amongst the traditions as it nurtures a new kind of listening to promote peace. The series will soon be available through CLAL as a packaged set. A new series hosted by Rabbi Hirschfield will air this Spring.

In addition to *Building Bridges*, Rabbi Hirschfield also conceived and is featured in a holiday special, *Sacred Coincidences*, which aired on Bridges TV this past winter. The program looks at the strange occurrence of the three Abrahamic holidays: Muslim Eid, Jewish Hanukkah, and Christian Christmas, all falling within the same month — an event that only happens every 30 years. Rabbi Hirschfield visited mosques, churches and synagogues to ask religious leaders about the significance of the holidays and what it meant to celebrate today. In *Sacred Coincidences* Rabbi Hirschfield looks at the common path during this uncommon crossroads of faith.

HIRSCHFIELD AND KULA: CLAL ON THE RADIO

Since December, CLAL's exciting new radio show has really taken off, bringing provocative new thinking to the airwaves. Called *Hirschfield and Kula: Intelligent Talk Radio*, and available on KXL on Saturdays at midnight (Sunday morning) in Portland, Oregon, the program offers listeners a fresh way to think about the issues stirring America, providing today's newsmakers as guests. Topics covered include the abortion debate, the Super Bowl as a sacred event, Hollywood and the Academy Awards, the 4th anniversary of the war in Iraq, and global warming. Guests have ranged from Jed Babbin, Deputy Secretary of Defense during the first Bush administration, to Marjorie Dannenfelser, President of the Susan B. Anthony list, to former Representative Jeff Kropf (OR).

A website, www.hirschfieldandkula.com, has been created for the show. In addition to a complete archive of shows, it offers information about upcoming programs, and provides an 800 number for people who wish to call in during the tapings.

RABBI BRAD HIRSCHFIELD, JCCA SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE

The Jewish Community Centers Association of North America (JCCA), serving millions through its network of Jewish community centers, YM-YWHA's, and camp sites, has named CLAL's President Rabbi Brad Hirschfield as its national Scholar-in-Residence for the next two years. The honor, beginning in the fall of 2007, recognizes

Rabbi Hirschfield's unique abilities as a teacher, thinker and lecturer on contemporary Jewish life. Teaching JCCA board members, and speaking both in America and in Israel, he will offer a fresh perspective on issues touching the widest range of Jews connected to any national institution.

"When selecting a Scholar-in-Residence, we bring someone who has the potential to speak to the heart and head of our senior leadership," said Rabbi Alvin Mars, Director of the Mandel Center for Jewish Leadership, at the JCCA.

Rabbi Hirschfield, a respected expert on leadership development and interfaith issues, will teach in a variety of settings, including board meetings and leadership retreats. He replaces Dr. Deborah Lipstadt, the noted academic and author, as the JCCA's Scholar-in-Residence. Previous scholars include CLAL Senior Associates Rabbis Joseph Telushkin and Reuven Kimelman.

RABBI KULA JOINS WORLD BUSINESS LEADERS IN PARIS FORUM

In May, Rabbi Kula went to Paris to participate in a two-day conversation on transforming business with a group of 15 world business leaders. Invited by Unfrozenmind, a new business enterprise with the goal of "putting the mind back in business," the meeting focused on the relationship among business, religion and spirituality, offering participants a new way to see how business can both grow and transform the human spirit.

"Business is the single most important force in our world," said Rabbi Kula. "It is often thought of as a drain on the human spirit, but it can actually generate growth, profound self-awareness, and cultural renewal, as it creates economic value."

Rabbi Kula first came to the attention of Unfrozenmind through his book, *Yearnings: Embracing the Sacred Messiness of Life*. While in Paris, he continued his book tour and did some speaking engagements.

RABBI TSVI BLANCHARD AT HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY, GERMANY

In April, Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard, Ph.D., CLAL's Director of Organizational Development, was invited to teach and lecture on the subject of Jewish and comparative law at Humboldt University's School of Law in Berlin — one of the premier legal institutions throughout Europe. Many of its students have gone on to become leaders in German and European legal, political and social institutions.

Invited by Professor Bernhard Schlink, the pre-eminent German lawyer, judge and jurist, who is also the author of the internationally acclaimed novel, *The Reader*, Rabbi Blanchard taught a course and an advanced seminar on the special model of pluralist legal practice that Talmudic and rabbinic law offers to Western legal systems.

Singled out as a leading authority on Jewish law and contemporary culture, Rabbi Blanchard gave university sponsored public talks and collaborated with Professor Schlink on an article to be published next year.

Upon returning to the U.S., Rabbi Blanchard will give lectures about his work in Germany at Fordham and Cardozo law schools. His research will also serve as the basis for a series of Continuing Legal Education (CLE) courses to be offered in cooperation with Fordham and Cardozo. These courses will enroll a significant number of American lawyers interested in Jewish law and its implications for legal theory and jurisprudence.

“CLAL’s traditional association with pluralism finds expression in many areas of human life, and the law is one example,” said Rabbi Blanchard. “The genius of Jewish law lies in its ability to draw power from opposing positions. Western legal systems can benefit from just such a model.”

RABBI HIRSCHFIELD LEADS MISSION TO ETHIOPIA AND ISRAEL

In March, CLAL President Rabbi Brad Hirschfield traveled to Ethiopia and Israel in his role as spiritual guide for United Jewish Communities’ Flight Initiative, which is designed to inspire the next generation of major Jewish philanthropists. The trip, which included escorting 53 Falas Mura, Ethiopians of Jewish origin, to their new homes in Israel, began in Tel Aviv, continued to Gondar Province, then on to Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital. From there, both the mission participants and the new immigrants returned to Israel, spending Shabbat in Jerusalem, and a day on Israel’s northern border.

“It is not a coincidence that this mission occurred just before Passover,” said Rabbi Hirschfield. “We have rehearsed for 3,000 years to be able to do this. None of us has a right to eat *matzah* and talk about liberation if we have passed over the opportunity to liberate our own brothers and sisters.”

The mission provided an opportunity for the next generation of key figures in Jewish life to explore first-hand how they could make a difference in improving the lives of the most vulnerable, and to meld the gift of peoplehood with philanthropy. It also helped group members to expand their understanding of the Jewish people, and to find a meaningful place for themselves in Jewish life.

The Flight Initiative is the third part of a UJC next generation program for building leadership. The program addresses the need for fresh thinking and new experiences for an emerging generation of major philanthropists. Recognizing CLAL as the place for innovative ideas and approaches, the UJC invited Rabbi Hirschfield to work with them in creating inspired leadership.

IRWIN KULA LEADS TOP BUSINESS ORGANIZATION'S RETREAT

In February, Irwin Kula was invited by Chicago's Young President's Organization (YPO), a prominent network of global business leaders, to be the Resident Resource (Scholar-in-Residence) at their Aspen retreat. The group of presidents and chief executives gathered to explore how to find a better balance between work and life. Meeting over three days, Rabbi Kula led the group in a series of workshops looking at the key areas of life — work, family, and leisure — and the time each claimed. He stressed that there is no such thing as perfect balance, and that we live in a space between the balance we yearn for and the balance we get.

Throughout the program, he focused on the relationship between finding balance and taking responsibility for choices made in life. Many found that the sessions challenged their notions about themselves, which was enlightening. Participants looked at the rationalizations they used to explain their choices. They became more conscious of the decisions they made, and how those decisions, while having led to success, also helped them to avoid certain uncomfortable truths. By the end, many said that they had a greater insight into their lives, and saw that they had the freedom and responsibility to make changes. As CEOs, they recognized that they had the power to shift the balance to create more satisfying and richer lives.

RABBI STEVE GREENBERG AT SUNDANCE

In January 2007, Rabbi Steve Greenberg, Director of CLAL's Diversity Project, went to the Sundance Film Festival for the premiere of "For the Bible Tells Me So," a new film which explores the challenges Christian families with gay children face in their relationship to the Church and their faith. The film attempts to confront the Religious Right's efforts to portray gays as being a disgrace against God and nature, and to help people of faith to find new ways of looking at Christian theology. Rabbi Greenberg appeared in the film with leading historians and religious figures, including Bishop Gene Robinson and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

While at Sundance, Rabbi Greenberg joined a panel on the use of media to address the conflicts of faith, scripture, and homosexuality. Other sessions included new ways of reading the biblical texts. Rabbi Greenberg suggested that instead of thinking of ourselves as having outgrown the verses, we can glean wisdom as long as we are able to read them in fresh ways. Traditional methodologies of interpretation can be employed creatively to find practical options that were not available in ancient times.

Discussing the film's appeal to Jewish audiences, Rabbi Greenberg said, "Jewish families struggling with these issues may want to see how others deal with the feelings of loss and confusion....While every family is different, this film can help families embark on a journey of reconciliation and understanding. At the very least, it offers a dose of reassurance to the families dealing with this conflict that they are not alone — that with time and patience, they can repair the breach and be stronger and more loving for it."

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP

Working with federations, Jewish community centers, and other institutions throughout America, CLAL continues to bring its skills, techniques, and unique training to communities everywhere. Helping new and established leaders reinvigorate Jewish life and promote inclusiveness, CLAL faculty offers new approaches for community building. Recent highlights include:

St. Paul, MN: Rabbi Irwin Kula gave a talk on “Re-imagining Judaism in the 21st Century” at the Jubilee Celebration at the Temple of Aaron.

New York, NY: Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard joined Archbishop Celestino Migliore and Dr. Peter Steinfelds for a discussion on Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare Movement. Held at Fordham Law School, it was co-sponsored by the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the U.N.

Morris Plains, NJ: Rabbi Brad Hirschfield was the Scholar-in-Residence at Adath Shalom Synagogue.

Scarsdale, NY: Rabbi David Kalb provided an introduction to “Judaism for Adults,” as part of a *Derekh Torah* program.

Boca Raton, FL: Working with his brother, Aaron Kula, conductor of the Klezmer Company Orchestra, Rabbi Kula presented “Beyond the Tribes,” a 9/11 memorial with chants. In addition, B’nai Torah Congregation and Florida Atlantic University held book events for Rabbi Kula.

Lexington, MA: Rabbi Steve Greenberg led a *Shabbaton* at Temple Emunah.

Palm Springs, CA: Rabbi Hirschfield gave a Valentine’s Day talk on following your heart at the Women’s Division Luncheon at the Jewish Federation of Palm Springs and the Desert Area.

Woodbridge, CT: Rabbi Kalb gave a presentation on the “Rabbinic Revolution” at the Federation of New Haven.

Atlanta, GA: Rabbi Steve Greenberg conducted an intrafaith dialogue at Congregation Bet Haverim.

Los Angeles, CA: Rabbi Kula led a Young Leadership Development program on Jewish leadership for the Jewish Federation, and a *Shabbaton* at Sinai Temple.

Overland Park, KS: Working with the Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City, Rabbi Hirschfield provided leadership development.

San Francisco, CA: The JCC of San Francisco held a book event for Rabbi Kula.

Boston, MA: Rabbi Blanchard led a program on Jewish palliative care and pastoral care at the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center.

Lake Worth, FL: Rabbi Kula provided the closing plenary on strengthening community at the annual conference of the Association of Jewish Family and Children’s Agencies.

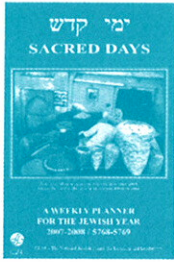
Portland, OR: Rabbi Greenberg led a series of lectures on gender issues, which were set up through the Judaica Studies Program at Portland State University,

Palm Beach, FL: Rabbi Kula was the Scholar-in-Residence for the Commission for Jewish Education of the Palm Beaches.

CLAL IN THE NEWS

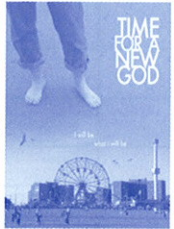
CLAL faculty continues to appear in a wide variety of publications, and on a host of issues. Rabbi Kula has become a regular on NBC-TV's *The Today Show*, appearing almost monthly on this popular national morning show. Rabbi Hirschfield is now a frequent commentator for Court TV, offering insightful analysis on a variety of cases. Other media highlights include:

- *The O'Reilly Factor*, Fox News, interviewed Rabbi Irwin Kula on slander and former Governor Tommy Thompson's remarks.
- *Time Magazine*, Rabbi Hirschfield wrote a letter to the editor on the God vs. science debate.
- *The New York Times*, Rabbi Irwin Kula was featured in a lengthy story about the sanctity of mess in the home.
- *The Lars Larson Show*, Westwood One, Rabbi Kula was interviewed on the Virginia Tech tragedy.
- *The Washington Post*, Rabbi Kula wrote a letter to the editor on the Conservative movement's decision to include homosexuals.
- *Post Tribune* (Southern IL), Rabbi Hirschfield was quoted on the Super Bowl as a sacred event.
- *New Morning*, the Hallmark Channel, interviewed Rabbi Kula on intimacy and relationship. He is a repeat guest on the show.
- "America Abroad Town Hall Meeting," WHYY (Philadelphia Public Radio) aired a special with Rabbi Hirschfield on the religious divide between East and West.
- The Conversation with Maria Sanchez (KKZZ, Southern CA radio) interviewed Rabbi Kula twice: once on *Yearnings*, and the other on love and relationships.
- *Culture Shock*, BBC Radio interviewed Rabbi Kula on trends.
- *The Jewish Review* (Portland, OR) published an article about CLAL's radio show, *Hirschfield and Kula*.
- Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Rabbi Blanchard was quoted on Orthodoxy and International Human Rights Day.
- *The Jewish Standard*, Rabbi Kalb was quoted in an editorial on leadership.
- Beliefnet, the web's largest spirituality site, solicited Rabbi Hirschfield to contribute to its special "spiritual parenting week" section.



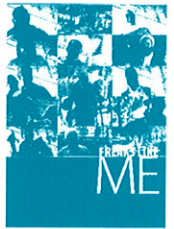
Sacred Days
5768-5769
2007-2008
Calendar
& Daily Planner

Featuring the artful and engaging international photographs of Helen Nitkin, paired with insights from the full spectrum of Jewish tradition, this weekly engagement calendar (Sept. 2007-Dec. 2008) celebrates the deep meaning and rich possibilities found in our relationship with food. The calendar includes all Jewish holidays, Torah and Haftarah readings for Shabbat and holidays and candlelighting times for 14 cities in North America and Jerusalem.
Advance orders. Price: \$18.00



**Time for
a
New God**

Time for a New God, a documentary featuring Rabbi Irwin Kula, shows how the events in everyday life are often what is truly sacred and spiritual, and that our experience of God is frequently found not in our houses of worship, but in our daily moments. With Coney Island as the backdrop, the film offers a moving *midrash* on the images of life, creating a relationship between God and human experience.
Price: \$18.00 (DVD)



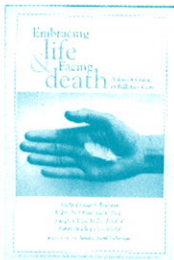
**Freaks
Like Me**

Freaks Like Me, a provocative documentary featuring Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, examines religion in the age of terrorism. Filmed in Barcelona at the 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions, the pre-eminent interfaith gathering, it explores the tension between faith and violence, and confronts our fears of the "other." Interspersed throughout are conversations with swamis, imams, monks, yogis, rabbis, priests and other earthly wanderers, all seeking a higher truth.
Price: \$18.00 (DVD)



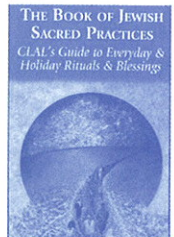
**"Simple
Wisdom
with
Irwin Kula"**
13-part series

"Simple Wisdom with Irwin Kula", a public television series with Rabbi Kula, brings an ancient wisdom to the challenges of daily living. Informed by Jewish thought, this 13-part series addresses the broad issues of life such as work, love, money, sex, family, community, the body, forgiveness, connection, conversation, identity, spirituality, and death.
Price: \$76.00 for the series (VHS)



**Embracing Life
&
Facing Death**
A Jewish Guide
to
Palliative Care

Invaluable for patients, their families, care givers, chaplains and health care professionals working with the seriously ill, this book addresses such critical topics as creating a living will and designating a health care proxy. This guide covers many difficult issues regarding serious illness: coping with pain, facing loss, finding hope and making peace. It is the first book to directly address the issues of palliative care from a Jewish perspective.
Price: \$18.00



**The Book of Jewish
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This book will show you how to make any moment in your daily life more holy. Offering meditations, blessings, Jewish teachings and rituals for more than one hundred diverse everyday events and holidays, it draws from both traditional and contemporary sources.
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**REMEMBERING
for
LIFE**

Edited by Rabbi Brad Hirschfield and created especially for rabbis, educators and synagogues, *Remembering for Life* is a moving volume organized as a beautiful addition to the weekly Torah readings and holiday celebrations. These stories from survivors of the Shoah illustrate the importance of memory in ways that point as much to the future as to the past and help us celebrate life . Price: \$18.00

To order, please complete the form on the reverse side.



CLAL - The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership

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___ Time for a New God (DVD)(\$18.00)
___ Freaks Like Me (DVD) (\$18.00)
___ "Simple Wisdom with Irwin Kula" Series (\$76.00)
___ Embracing Life and Facing Death: A Jewish Guide to Palliative Care (\$18.00).
___ Remembering for Life (\$18.00)

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