GLOBAL DAY OF JEWISH LEARNING

Community Resource Guidebook
Global Day of Jewish Learning
Community Resource Guidebook
www.theglobalday.org

The Torah has a taste for everyone. Everyone, no matter their level of learning, can interact with the Torah.

—Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 16, 2014
For the fifth consecutive year, the Global Day of Jewish Learning will reach every corner of the Jewish world and bring Jews of all beliefs and backgrounds together in a day of study and unity. Thank you for putting your community on the map!

NOVEMBER 16, 2014—A DAY OF LEARNING FOR ALL JEWS
On November 16th, Jews across the world will come together in their communities to study Jewish texts and teachings. The guiding values of the Global Day of Jewish Learning are: fostering Jewish unity, empowering individuals through increased Jewish knowledge, and creating meaningful shared experiences. Our interest is to spark and nourish a love for Jewish learning—and to celebrate the unity that Jewish learning can achieve.

The Global Day is for all Jews regardless of educational background or religious affiliation. The classes have been created for all audiences; no prior knowledge of Hebrew or Jewish text is necessary in order to participate. The curriculum includes a variety of formats and modifications based on local interests and learning levels. The curriculum will be available in English, Hebrew, Russian, and Spanish.

The theme for this year’s Global Day of Jewish Learning and curricular materials is Heroes, Villains, Saints and Fools: The People in the Book. Each curricular unit will explore a Biblical character and use a variety of Jewish texts.

HISTORY
A project of the Aleph Society, the Global Day was originally created as a one-time event to mark the completion of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz’s monumental translation and commentary on the Talmud. However, the survey results spoke of a communal desire to continue Rabbi Steinsaltz’s mission of “Let my People Know” through an annual Global Day of Jewish Learning. This past year, 420 communities joined the fourth annual Global Day of Jewish Learning on November 17, 2013—an outstanding success.

IN PARTNERSHIP
The Global Day project is spearheaded by the Aleph Society together with American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, the Jewish Federations of North America, and Shefa Institute. Partnership2Gether: The Jewish Agency Peoplehood Platform is a Community Partner. Additionally, over 20 supporting partner organizations, representing a broad spectrum of Jewry, encourage their members to organize or attend local events.

Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz
Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz is internationally regarded as one of the leading scholars and rabbis of this century, and of the last. As described in Newsweek, “Jewish lore is filled with tales of formidable rabbis. Probably none living today can compare in genius and influence to Adin Steinsaltz, whose extraordinary gifts as scholar, teacher, scientist, writer, mystic and social critic have attracted disciples from all factions of Israeli society.”

Born in 1937 to a secular family, Rabbi Steinsaltz has authored more than 60 books and hundreds of articles on Jewish mysticism, religious thought, sociology, biography, and philosophy. The best known of these is his interpretation of the Talmud, the seminal work of Jewish culture. His Thirteen Petalled Rose is considered a modern classic of Jewish mysticism. Rabbi Steinsaltz completed his monumental 45-volume translation of and commentary on the Talmud in 2010. This historic achievement was commemorated in November 2010 with the Global Day of Jewish Learning, now an annual international event.

Koren Publishers Jerusalem has released the initial volumes of the Koren Talmud Bavli, an English edition of the Steinsaltz Hebrew Talmud. PBS broadcast a profile of the Rabbi in April 2012, featuring the new English Talmud edition on their Religion and Ethics Newsweekly program (www.pbs.org/religion). In 2013, this work won the 2012 National Jewish Book Award for Modern Jewish Thought.

Over 1,000 girls and boys are part of the Rabbi’s Mekor Chaim network of schools in Israel, which attracts students from a wide spectrum of Israeli society, beginning at preschool, classes climb to post-army, graduate Jewish studies.

Rabbi Steinsaltz travels frequently to the Former Soviet Union. He founded the Institute for Jewish Studies in the CIS, composing Melamedia College, Lamed, the national Jewish teacher’s organization, Chaverim, a leadership movement, and an extensive publishing program.

Rabbi Steinsaltz has served as resident scholar at Yale University, the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, Columbia University and The Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. He received the Israel Prize, his country’s highest honor, and in 1995 was also awarded the Legion d’Honneur, the French Order of Arts and Letters. In 2002, Rabbi Steinsaltz received the Zalman Shazar Memorial Prize for his pioneering work in the Talmud. In 2012, Rabbi Steinsaltz received Israel’s first Presidential Award of Distinction.
GLOBAL DAY COMMUNITY COMMITMENT & REGISTRATION

The goal of the Global Day of Jewish Learning is to enable all Jews to engage with our Jewish texts. Rabbi Steinsaltz began this process close to fifty years ago through his translation and commentary on the Talmud. We continue it today in our communities by learning our Jewish texts together on the Global Day of Jewish Learning and throughout the year.

WHY PARTICIPATE IN THE GLOBAL DAY OF JEWISH LEARNING?

Communities small and large mark one day on their calendar when differences can be left at the door and communities can come together to learn our shared Jewish texts. The Global Day is a non-threatening event where individuals have the ability to engage in Jewish learning—regardless of background or Jewish knowledge.

On November 16th, 2014—the Jewish people will take some time out of their day to engage with the texts that unite us.

GLOBAL DAY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

For the Global Day of Jewish Learning we encourage communities to:

- Create community-wide learning experiences by involving local JCCs, synagogues, federations, Hillels and schools;
- Stage Global Day events in a communal environment;
- Engage teachers and facilitators of various backgrounds and denominations;
- Involve different partners and collaborators in the planning process.
- Participate no matter the size or form of your community!

TO BECOME AN OFFICIAL GLOBAL DAY EVENT SITE

Your community must register online at www.theglobalday.org and follow the “Register for 2014!” link. Following registration, you will receive a user name and password that will allow you to access the online toolbox which will contain the curricular materials, template marketing and PR material, as well as other tools to help you plan a successful day.

Curricular Highlights and Content

CURRICULAR HIGHLIGHTS: HEROES, VILLAINS, SAINTS AND FOOLS

Torah is the shared inheritance of all the Jewish people.

—Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

As its name suggests, the Global Day of Jewish Learning is a day of world-wide encounters with Jewish ideas and sacred texts. The Global Day of Jewish Learning reaches every corner of the Jewish world and brings Jews of all beliefs and backgrounds together in a day of study and unity.

This year’s Global Day of Jewish Learning will focus on Heroes, Villains, Saints and Fools: The People in the Book. As Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz has explained in Biblical Images:

- The Bible is not a book to be idly read in passing, and the men and women of the Scriptures are more than mere life portraits: they continue to live and function long after their deaths in this world. The ancient Jewish custom of speaking of biblical characters in the present tense is an expression of a genuine experience. These are not ordinary historical figures but archetypes; as such, their lives are carried on and continue not only in literature and philosophy but in the lives of their descendants throughout the generations. In a sense, they continue to live and also to evolve throughout Jewish history, in its psychic experiences, and as a part of the collective personality of the Jewish nation.

- They are biblical-historical characters and also archetypal figures in some way relevant to the inner life of the modern individual, and to modern society and politics as well. Not all these people were model characters, they include the good and the bad, those whose acts we perpetuate today and those who have served as a warning and a deterrent to repeating the mistakes of the past.

Biblical figures provide an accessible entry point to Jewish texts for the beginners in your community and represent a deep well of wisdom for all. What do the heroes and villains of our stories have to teach us about ourselves, today? Focusing on Biblical characters will allow you to explore topics like human nature, family dynamics, and leadership.

Centered on our theme, the Global Day Curriculum Guide will offer topics, source materials and questions for conversation. Facilitators will want to adapt this material to suit the educational background and interests of their groups. Far from being frontal lectures, the Guide’s classes are meant to spark provocative and thought-provoking conversations. Each facilitator is free to construct discussions as s/he sees fit. In keeping with Rabbi Steinsaltz’s diverse works, we will be drawing from a variety of primary texts and other sources. This year there will be 6 curricular units for adult learners, and one each for elementary school and middle schools students.

The curriculum will available in English, Hebrew, Russian, and Spanish. Again, PJ Library will join us to offer a resource for family programming: this will be based upon books that address an aspect of this year’s theme and will be available in English. Curricular materials will be available in the summer.
You may want to begin by creating a team of community professionals, lay leaders, rabbis and educators. This team can assist in beginning discussion about the Global Day in your community. The questions provided here can help guide your planning and focus your discussions.

- What are our goals for the Global Day of Jewish Learning? Will we use this to launch, strengthen or conceptualize other Jewish study initiatives within our community? Can it initiate or strengthen bonds among local organizations?
- Who is our target audience? What is our target number of participants?
- Which organizations would serve as viable partners to further these goals and objectives?
- What resources, experience and strengths can each of our partners offer?
- Do our community partners have the facilities to host our event? Will we need more than one host location?
- What will the schedule for our community’s Global Day entail? What model would work best for our community?
- What does our budget look like? What are our sources of funding?
- Will a lay committee help further our goals?
- What role can volunteers play in planning, preparation and execution?
- Which community professionals, educators and lay leaders can help plan and execute the event? Do we need to bring in outside educators?
- How will we register participants for our event (phone, email or web)?
- How will we market our event? What will work best for our community—press releases, ads in the local papers, emails, flyers, mailings, announcements, social media?
- How will we know we have been successful? What criteria will we use to judge success?
- How will we capitalize on the experience of the Global Day? What will be our follow-up? Will we have an evaluation?
- What assistance will we need from the Global Day office in order to help support our community initiative? Guidance via meeting and phone calls, connecting to other communities, etc?

If you have any further questions, please contact Danny Drachsler, Global Day Community Coordinator. He can be reached at 212-840-1166 or danny@theglobalday.org.

Since every Global Day of Jewish Learning event and every community’s resources will differ, it is impossible for us to provide “standard” estimated event costs. Below are some expenses that you might consider for your Global Day event.

**NOTE:** There is no cost to register for the Global Day of Jewish Learning.

**EXPENSES TO CONSIDER:**

- Reproduction of curricular material and program brochures
- Venue
- Food at the event (you may choose to provide snacks or meals—depending on your schedule—for purchase, or include the cost in Global Day registration)
- Audio visual equipment
- Advertising and marketing
- Optional: Keynote speaker honorarium
PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE DAY

For some, the Global Day will be a first-time learning experience; for others who learn regularly, this may be their first opportunity to learn in a large group setting. For still others, communal learning may be a regular practice and it will be the international achdut, or unifying aspect, that provides meaning. The structure of your event will depend on audience, resources and local interests. Included in the following pages are a number of sample event schedules from communities who participated in prior years.

MODELS

There are three main models that we recommend for the Global Day of Jewish Learning (communities might choose one or a combination of two or three models):

- **ROUND-ROBIN**: Each session features several simultaneous classes on a specific theme. Teachers may repeat classes during subsequent sessions as participants switch classes.

- **BEIT MIDRASH**: The beit midrash model is a good choice if you envision your entire community learning together in the same room.

- **TOPIC FOCUSED**: Your day will focus on one of the provided themes and your classes or a keynote speaker would focus on that theme.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Regardless of the model you choose, keep in mind these resources that can be included in your event:

- Curricular material based on the theme, Heroes, Villains, Saints and Fools: The People in the Book (curricular materials will be available in the summer);

- Family and children programming through a PJ Library unit;

- A video class on the theme given by Rabbi Steinsaltz;

- Live online video learning through 24x24
EVENT SCHEDULES
- Beer Sheva, Israel (2013)
- Buenos Aires (2013)
- Austin, Texas (2010)
- Brazil (2010)
- Buffalo, New York (2012)
- Greensboro, North Carolina (2013)
- San Diego, CA (2013)
- Eugene, Oregon (2012)
- Portland, Oregon (2010)
- St. Petersburg, Russia (2010)
- Winnipeg, Canada (2013)

COMMUNITY REPORTS
- Cape Town, South Africa (2013)
- Kiryat Malachi, Israel (2013)
- Knoxville, Tennessee (2013)
- Trancoso, Portugal (2013)
- Nikolaev, Ukraine (2013)
- Tzfat, Israel (2012)
- Shanghai, China (2011)

ARTICLES
- The Jewish Week, “The Longest Translation”
- Los Angeles Jewish Journal, “Jewish Learning Goes Global”

Appendix
Reporte: Día Mundial de Estudios Judaicos de mujeres –Buenos Aires Argentina
NOV17-2013 (In Spanish and in English)
El domingo 17 de noviembre se realizó en Buenos Aires el Día Mundial de Estudios Judaicos para mujeres en el Centro Ana Frank Argentina. El clima de estudio y de espiritualidad que se fue generando en el transcurso de la jornada hizo que la Torá, la creatividad, la tefilá y la amistad fueran los pilares de un hacer colectivo. El Rabino Adin Even Israel Steinwaltz, mentor de esta propuesta mundial disertó por medio de una video conferencia. Los talleres fueron dirigidos por la Dra. Diana Sperling (Filosofía), la Lic. Fany Gerson (Educación Judaica), la Rabina Graciela Grymbarg y la Rabina Judy Nowominski. La Arq. Edit Shmukler y Edith Krasnob colaboraron en el proyecto. Mujeres con diferentes ideologías e instituciones se reunieron para estudiar Torá y disfrutar del estar en comunidad y aprender de las diferencias y de la diversidad. El desafío para el próximo año podría ser, 8H organizar grupos de 70 personas cada uno – en referencia al principio “70 rastras tiene la Torá”.

Ver los datos del reportaje realizado por RADIO JAI el 19/11/2013 a Fany Berta Gerson quien lideró el diseño y el desarrollo del proyecto comunitario “Día de Estudios Judaicos 2013 para mujeres” como una experiencia piloto y participativa. Los resultados y el impacto fueron muy positivos. Agradecemos la oportunidad de haber podido ser parte de una comunidad de aprendizaje.

On Sunday Nov.17, the Global Day of Jewish Learning for Women took place in the “Argentina Ana Frank Center” in Buenos Aires.
Along the day, a learning and spiritual atmosphere was arising among the participants.
The Torá, the creativity, the tefilá and the friendship were the pillars of a collective construction. Rabbi Adin Even Israel Steinsaltz, mentor of this global proposal lectured through a video conference. The workshops were led by Dr. Diana Sperling (Philosophy), Ms Fany Gerson (Jewish education), Rabbi Ms Graciela Grymbarg and Rabbi Ms. Judy Nowominski. Arch, Edit Shmukler and Ms. Edith Krasnob cooperated with the project. Women from different ideologies and institutions got together to study the Torá and enjoyed being in community and learning from the differences and the diversity. The challenge for next year could be, 8H, to make groups of 70 people each one - in reference to the principle “shibim panim la Torá” – 70 faces to the Torá.

The radio interview report that took place on 19/11/2013 in RADIO JAI BUENOS AIRES was about our global day and about Rabbi Adin Even Steinsaltz’s work. Please, go to the following link to listen to it – (it’s in Spanish)

I led the planning and the development processes of the educational and the community project “Día Mundial de Estudios Judaicos de mujeres”2013- Buenos Aires -as a pilot and a participative experience. The results and the impact were very positive.
Thank you for giving us the opportunity of taking part of a large learning community.

Fany Berta Gerson
Educational community project planner and managing director
In the spirit of learning and doing Torah, event registration is free. However, we ask that you please bring non-refundable items (think healthy, think protein and think ethnic) for the Capital Area Food Bank and/or diapers, baby items and personal care products for SafePlace. Books by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz will be available for sale courtesy of Barnes & Noble. Pre-paid box lunches are also available for $12.

EVENT SCHEDULE

(All events are located at the Dell-Jewish Community Campus, 7300 Hart Lane)

11:30 AM-12:30 PM: Registration and pick up pre-ordered kosher box lunches.

12:30-1 PM: Welcome and introduction. Putting the Global Day of Jewish Learning in context.

1-1:45 PM: SESSION ONE
Theme: Leadership
Topic: Models of Leadership
Educator: Rabbi Alan Freedman
Code # 100

Theme: God
Topic: Arguing with God
Educator: Rabbi Kerry Baker
Code # 101

Theme: Environment
Topic: Tress, Life and War
Educator: Rabbi Rick Brody
Code # 102

Theme: Love
Topic: Love and Marriage
Educator: Rabbi Robert Kirzner
Code # 103

11:30-12:30 PM: SESSION TWO
Theme: Environments
Topic: The World is a Human Responsibility
Educator: Rabbi Noa Brumof
Code # 200

Theme: Teshuva
Topic: The Man Who Would Give Too Much
Educator: Rabbi Moshe Trespf
Code # 201

Theme: Love
Topic: Beauty: Asset or Liability
Educator: Rabbi Rachel Kronin
Code # 202

Theme: Miracles
Topic: Miracles at Signs and Wonders
Educator: Cantor Marie Burch
Code # 203

2-2:45 PM: SESSION THREE
Theme: Leadership
Topic: Title of Two Rabbis
Educator: Cantor Yehoshua Ben Moshe
Code # 300

Theme: Miracles
Topic: What's in a Miracle
Educator: Rabbi Israel Lerman
Code # 301

Theme: Prayer
Topic: Prayer Book
Educator: Rabbi Zev Slinger
Code # 302

Theme: Teshuva
Topic: Keeping Commitment & Teshuva
Educator: Rabbi Susan Lippe
Code # 303

3-3:45 PM: Wrap-up and Shivah (conclusion of study) broadcast from Jerusalem, Reception.
**The Global Day of Jewish Learning 2013**
A great way to study with scholars and Rabbis from across Greensboro’s Jewish spectrum

**Sunday, November 17, 10:00am – 12:00 noon**
**Temple Emanuel, 1129 Jefferson Road**

**Schedule of Learning Opportunities:**
10:00am - Opening Blessing for all – Main Sanctuary

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<th>Time</th>
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| 10:10-11:00am | “Creating Friendship: Acquire for Yourself a Friend”  
Rabbi Eli Havivi, Beth David Synagogue  
1st Floor Youth Lounge |
|              | “Creating Shabbat: Rest as a Creative Act”  
Rabbi Drorah Setel, Reform Rabbi at AHA  
Room 211 | “Creating Connections: The World of the Vav”  
Rabbi TZPI Radonsky, The Society of the Vav  
Room 101 |

11:00am-11:10am – BREAK
Refreshments will be available in the Lobby. All proceeds benefit the Temple’s teen service learning trips to New Orleans and Washington D.C.

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<th>Time</th>
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| 11:10am-12:00noon | “Creation and Creativity”  
Rabbi Fred Guttman, Temple Emanuel  
1st Floor Youth Lounge |
|              | “Creating Community around the Study of Texts”  
Rabbi Andy Koren, Temple Emanuel  
Room 211 | “Creativity and Torah Study”  
Amanda Mbuvi, writer and scholar  
Room 101 |

Temple’s regular Sunday morning adult classes are also open for participation:
- **Foundations of Jewish Family**  
  Adult Hebrew – 10:00am-12:00 noon
- **Living**  
  10:00-11:30am Susan Siegel, B’nai Shalom Day School  
  noon, Samra Nissan, American Hebrew Academy

This program is a joint effort of Beth David Synagogue and Temple Emanuel. Greensboro is one of 400 communities worldwide taking part in this year’s Global Day of Jewish Learning. This year’s theme is Creating Together: Jewish Approaches to Creativity and Collaboration. The Global Day of Jewish Learning brings the Jewish people together once a year to celebrate our shared Jewish text through community based learning.
The Global theme this year is Jewish Creativity. Children will meet by grade, in classrooms, to explore Jewish creativity through a variety of media. Adults will have the opportunity to participate in two of four presentations and discussions led by Rabbi Castiglione and Caine, Cantor Frank, and David Barzilai, West-Coast Director of ARZA, an organization dedicated to the just, religious freedom of all facets of Jewish expression in Israel.

- **CREATIVITY OF PRAYER THROUGH MUSIC** - Cantor Lori Willinsky Frank
  The universal language of music is a powerful medium in our prayer service. It can transcend all tests. The chanting of Kaddish or a simple wordless niggun or melody can touch us deeply. We will explore how Jewish worship music can connect us to our past and future: how effective use of music can transform a worship experience and enhance a prayer text to bring out a variety of different interpretations—allowing the worshipers to connect on many different levels of meaning and emotion. We will discuss what this means, and why; how Jewish worship music has evolved and how it continues to evolve. If you’ve ever wondered how Jewish music plays a vital role in our worship services, you’ll want to take part in this exciting discussion. **Session 2 Only.**

- **CREATIVITY AND REVELATION** - Rabbi Nadav Caine
  The traditions of Torah, Talmud, and Jewish values in our world are some of the greatest creative acts in history. To what extent are revelation, prophecy, and dialogue with God “creative” acts, or are they merely passive monologues? What are the roles of God and the individual person in acts of inspiration and prophecy? How can creativity help us to understand the nature of revelation, and revelation help us to understand the nature of creativity? **Session 2 Only.**

- **CREATIVITY AND THE TRADITION OF PRAYER** - Rabbi David Castiglione
  Prayer has always been our creative attempt to limn, know and commune with the Source of all creation. Through-out our milennia, prayer (H“H/v’dvarash) has changed and evolved. Is there a need to adjust Jewish prayer to meet the 21st century Jewish zeitgeist? Is there permission, within our faith, to do so? How limited should we be by reverence to tradition? Is prayer a noble creative endeavor, efficacious, or an exercise in human control? **Session 2 Only.**

- **CREATIVITY AND THE ISRAELI ENTREPRENEUR** - David Barzilai
  Israel has been the home of modern Jewish creativity and survival. Is it then that the State of Israel still denies equal access and religious protection to all of its Jewish citizens? Learn about current efforts and strategies to bring legitimacy to all of Israel’s Jewish streams of faith, and how you can help to further Progressive Judaism thrive as the most creative religious force in the Jewish homeland.
1 WORLD. 1 PEOPLE. 1 DAY.
The Global Day is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Jews around the world to share in a meaningful day of learning and community building.

NOVEMBER 07, 2010: A DAY OF LEARNING FOR ALL JEWS.

Jews around the globe will be learning the same text on the same day, all curricular materials are based on the teachings of a single volume of Talmud, tractate Ta'anit. Classes will focus on the following: environment, God, leadership, and love. There will be something for everyone.

The Global Day is for all Jews regardless of educational background or religious affiliation. No prior knowledge of Hebrew or Jewish text is necessary in order to participate.

PORTLAND SPONSORING AGENCIES
Chabad Lubavitch of Oregon, Congregation Ahavat Achim, Congregation Beth Israel, Congregation Kesser Israel, Congregation Kish Ami, Congregation Neveh Shalom, Congregation Shaarie Torah, Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, Mittleman Jewish Community Center, Oregon Board of Rabbis, Oregon Jewish Community Foundation, PJ Library, Pnai Or, Portland Area Jewish Educators, Portland Jewish Academy, Portland Kollel, Shir Tikvah

CONGREGATION SHAARIE TORAH
www.shaarietorah.org
920 Northwest 25th Avenue
Portland, OR 97229
(503) 226-6131

NOV-07-10
1 WORLD. 1 PEOPLE. 1 DAY.
www.theglobalday.com

REGISTRATION

Please register no later than October 30, 2010.
Return with payment to CST, 920 NW 25th Ave, Portland, OR 97229 4th: Global Day

Name(s): ______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Children(s): ___________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Phone: _________________________________________________________________________
Email: _________________________________________________________________________

Please indicate which lecture you will attend by entering the Registration Code for each Session.

Session 1: _____________________________________________________________________
Session 2: ___________________________________________________________________
Session 3: ___________________________________________________________________

O PJ Library+ O Adult Learning O HS Track

$15 per Adult $ 5 per Child

Total Payment: $________

O Childcare available at no cost from 1:00 - 4:00 pm
O Check included (payable to Shaarie Torah)

O VISA O MasterCard

Card Number Exp. date ______________________________________________________________________
Signature ____________________________________________________________________________

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<td>Models of Leadership</td>
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Lunch 12:30 - 1:15 pm + Childcare begins at 1:00 pm

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We celebrate the massive achievement of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, renowned Jewish teacher, philosopher, social critic and prolific author, as he completes his 45-year project of translation of and commentary on the Talmud.

This once-in-a-lifetime event, presents a full day of panel discussions and a live/delayed broadcast of Rabbi Steinsaltz from Israel.
Take a Step Ahead.

The Global Day of Jewish Learning—November 17, 2013
Asper Jewish Community Campus, 123 Doncaster Street

On November 17th Jews around the world will share a day of Jewish learning, dialogue and exploration, joining together in celebration of all that unites us.

Join us for the Global Day of Jewish Learning.

www.jewishlearning.org

At 10:30 am, choose from:
- "Soulful: A Hesed: Text on the Torah Reading of the Week" – Rabbi Alan Greener
- "Creating the Ashkenazi: How Our Defining Progeny Came into Being" – Chassidic Anbal Hass
- PJ Library Program for Families with Young Children: "Mitzvah Madness"

12:00 pm: Brunch and Live Stream: "Let My People Know" – Rabbi Sternatz
1:00 pm: "Of Roses and Promotions: Creativity, Innovation, and Person(s) Choice in Jewish Thought" – Rabbi Ari Eliyahu (showcased in worldwide satellite broadcast)

1/1/2013 at the door
For information or to reserve your spot call Florence Katz: 204.480.7559
The third Global Day of Jewish Learning will take place on Sunday, November 18th, hosted by Mechin Hadar and Drisha Institute. Last year, we had over 250 participants coming to learn with teachers representing almost 30 institutions from around New York City.

The Global Day of Jewish Learning unites Jewish communities around the globe to celebrate our foundational Jewish texts through community based learning. The inaugural event celebrated the completion of the Steinsaltz Talmud and counted over 400 communities in 48 countries and on six continents – clear evidence of the importance that Jews everywhere place on the shared experience of study.

Recordings of sessions will be posted after the Global Day of Jewish Learning.

- Schedule
- List of Co-Sponsors

Schedule:
Morning at Drisha Institute (37 West 65th Street, 5th floor)

<table>
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<th>10 a.m.</th>
<th>11 a.m.</th>
<th>12 p.m.</th>
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| **Familial Blessings in Genesis**  
Rabbi David Silber  
Lecture Hall | The Blessings on Food: A Haskama-Theological Exploration  
Rabbi Nathaniel Helgott  
Lecture Hall | "When God Prays": A Literary Analysis of a Provocative Talmudic Story  
Professor Michael Charnick  
Lecture Hall |
| **Our Avot: How Religiously Obsess...**  
Rabbi Stephen Friedman  
Room 4 | "And a Man Came Upon Him": Mystery Men in Genesis  
Shuli Taubes  
Room 4 | The Power of Advocacy: Action That Leads To Study (That Leads To Action)  
Ilan Kaplan  
Room 4 |
| **Communicating Empathy in One Word: Amen**  
Jonah Gelfen  
Room 2 | Grateful For and Grateful To: Some Philosophical Underpinnings of a Gratitude Infused Relationship  
Joe Sartes  
Room 2 | God of Whose Fathers? Converts to Judaism and the Language of Prayer  
Rabbi Furst  
Room 2 |

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Afternoon at Mechin Hadar (190 Amsterdam at 69th)

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<th>2 p.m.</th>
<th>3 p.m.</th>
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| Yehezkel Bracha: Being Blessed, Becoming Blessers  
Rabbi David Ingber | Placing the Name on Israel: Theory and Practice of Birkat HaKohen ("Priestly Blessing")  
Rabbi Jeremy Kainanofsky | Or Else! Lighting Shabbat Lamps and the Danger of Chidush - A New Interpretation of Mishnah Shabbat 2b  
Rabbi Judith Hupman |
| The Blessings of Shifting From Positional Power to Shared Leadership  
Shiffa Bronnick | Hannah’s Prayer: When Prayer Meets Activism  
Rabbi Aviva Richman | Blessings Remixed  
David Wolkin |
| The Jewish Blessings of Intermarriage: How Interfaith Couples and Families Can Contribute to a Jewish Renaissance  
Rabbi Ari Fridkis | Arami Oved Avi: From Text of Gratitude to Text of Redemption  
Rabbi Scott Bolotin |
| Mindfully Cultivating Gratitude Through Tikun Middot  
Rabbi Marc Margolis | The Rock Whose Ways are Great: Blessing God in Times of Tragedy  
Wendy Amrhein | Co-sponsors include:  
Advancing Jewish Women Professionals  
American Jewish World Service  
Columbia/Barnard Hillel  
Congregation Ansche Chesed  
Congregation B’nai Jeshurun  
Congregation Da’at Echad/Temple of Universal Judaism  
Congregation Ramath Orah  
Congregation Shaare Zedek  
Darkhei Noam  
Drisha Institute  
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion/New York School  
Jewish Theological Seminary  
LimmudNY  
Mechin Hadar  
NYU Hillel  
Oheh Alyaah  
Prospect Heights Shul  
Rabbits for Human Rights - North America  
Romenu  
Uji LT’Zedek  
West End Synagogue  
Yeshivat Chovevei Torah  
Yeshivat Maharat |
Along the way he did nothing less than free the Talmud from the province of a small number of scholars and make it available to a new generation of learners.

One of those learners was Rabbi Andy Bachman. During his student days at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in the early 1990s, the future rabbi taught an adult education course at Congregation Beth Elchim in Park Slope, where he now serves as spiritual leader. The course included study of the Talmud’s Berachot tractate, and he had the choice of three texts: the standard Aramaic version popularly known as the Vilna Shas, an English translation published by Soncino Press two generations earlier, and a more recent translation by Rabbi Steinsalz.

Rabbi Bachman chose the Steinsalz Talmud.

“It seemed a good tool,” he said. It introduced basic Talmudic concepts to students who had scant background in Talmud. Unlike the other versions, the text in Steinsalz’s was in contemporary Hebrew, with vowels and punctuation marks, and it made Talmud study easier, Rabbi Bachman said.

This weekend, the decades-long Talmud project that has come to define Rabbi Steinsalz’s life, that “good tool” as Andy Bachman understatedly put it, will culminate with the publication of the final tractate in the series, Ta’anit. The day, Sunday, Nov. 7, will be marked by a “Global Day of Learning.” Dozens of communities across the world will take part in what is both a celebration of Rabbi Steinsalz’s work and, in keeping with his vision, an opportunity for Jews everywhere to grapple with life’s “Big Questions,” as he put it, ones the rabbis who compiled the Talmud wrestled with themselves.

In an interview with The Jewish Week from his office in Jerusalem, Rabbi Steinsalz, now 73, looked back over his Talmud project, what observers term an “extraordinary” achievement, one that revolutionized and popularized Talmud study — and also led to serious criticism in some Orthodox circles.

“Jewish knowledge belongs to everyone,” the rabbi said. “Our goal is not so much to ‘spread’ knowledge, but to give it back to its owners.”

Rabbi Steinsalz, who grew up in a secular Jerusalem family and has written some 60 books and established educational institutions in Israel and the former Soviet Union, said he embarked on the Talmud project because “the world needs it,” referring to a knowledge of the Talmud’s wisdom and insights.

“Jewish learning is not a pastime — it is one of the essential ways that connects us to our ancestors,” he said. His goal: make the Talmud “more accessible” and take away “the stigma” of the text as irrelevant to the contemporary reader. “Everything [that is not readily apparent] should be explained.”

Over the years, Rabbi Steinsalz’s explanations have had a global reach, in Orthodox and non-Orthodox circles alike.

Forty-five years after he began his revolutionary reworking of the Talmud, Rabbi Adin Steinsalz takes time to celebrate its completion — through learning.

Wednesday, November 3, 2010
Steve Lipman
Staff Writer

When Rabbi Adin Steinsalz began his monumental project of translating the Talmud into contemporary Hebrew, piercing the dense layers of wisdom and commentary contained in the ancient text, Levi Eshkol of the now-defunct Mapai party was Israel’s prime minister, the young country’s population stood at a mere 2.5 million, and when a Beatles concert there was canceled, it was assumed the country’s leaders thought the Fab Four would corrupt its youth.

It was 1965. And for the next 45 years, working at first out of a cramped office in Jerusalem, Rabbi Steinsalz, an Israeli scholar and author, would churn out tractate after tractate, translating by his own estimate “millions” of words from Aramaic into modern Hebrew and then English.

When he began the project, Rabbi Steinsalz, then only 28, thought it would take a decade or two “at most.” JTA
At Congregation Or Zarua, a Conservative synagogue on East 84th Street, Rabbi Harlan Wechsler said some members of his weekly Talmud class learn exclusively from the Steinsaltz Talmud, and he will often ask them about Rabbis Steinsaltz’s commentary on certain passages.

Herbert Shapiro, a member of the Or Zarua Talmud class for more than a decade, said he prefers the Steinsaltz Talmud. “For me” — someone without an extensive background in Talmud study — “it’s more comfortable.”

He and his wife donate a volume of the Steinsaltz Talmud to the congregation’s library every year.

In Silver Spring, Md., Zach Dyckman, a Modern Orthodox Jew who has been part of a small weekly Talmud class for more than 25 years, also said he favors the Steinsaltz Talmud, because of the Hebrew translations and the accompanying interpretations. “For me, it’s helpful.”

The Steinsaltz Talmud, according to Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, president of Clal — The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, “is used all over the place. I’ve seen it everywhere, from the offices of liberal rabbis to the offices of secular business leaders.”

Rabbi Steinsaltz’s approach of guiding learners, like an insightful grad school professor, through the thicket of legal and ethical teachings in the Talmud, has won praise.

“It’s like having a teacher explain [the text] to you,” said Rabbi Yitzchak Rosenbaum, associate executive director of the National Jewish Outreach Program. He calls Rabbi Steinsaltz’s Talmud project “a tremendous accomplishment. It’s extraordinarily impressive. It’s very creative.”

The Steinsaltz Talmud, Rabbi Rosenbaum continued, “is taking Talmud public,” so that it is no longer the exclusive domain of scholars. “The single greatest accomplishment is continuing to expand the popularity of Talmud study.”

Rabbi Steinsaltz’s Talmud, which includes his accompanying commentary and other related remarks from science or contemporary thought, marked a major departure from accepted tradition when it was first published nearly a half-century ago. Perhaps not surprisingly it often drew criticism from some Orthodox Jews because of its novel content and style. And there were those scholars who felt it was becoming too accessible to laymen.

The Talmud — both the larger, more-authoritative Babylonian Talmud, and the smaller Jerusalem Talmud — is a compilation of debates and discussions that took place in rabbinical academies after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. Fearing that the oral tradition would be lost, the generation’s religious leaders decided to record the teachings that can be traced, according to Jewish tradition, to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Rabbi Steinsaltz’s decision to, in essence, offer a new text of the Babylonian Talmud (the 1,500-year-old basis of Oral Law that is the foundation of advanced Jewish study) instead of the accepted Vilna Shas (nearly 6,000 pages of vowel-less, punctuation-less Aramaic surrounded by commentary in Hebrew, and other reference notes), was seen by critics as a slap at Jewish tradition.

Rabbi Steinsaltz says he did not pay attention to the “ad hominem” attacks on his role in changing the character of Talmud study; if people could not find fault with the writing, they criticized the writer, he says.

While the Steinsaltz Talmud has sold some 3 million copies over the years, it hasn’t been without competition.

In the 1990s, around the time that Andy Bachman was teaching his adult education course, Mesorah Publications in Brooklyn introduced its ArtScroll Talmud, with the Aramaic text and an annotated English translation. Rabbi Bachman eventually began using that version for the subsequent Talmud courses he taught. He was not alone.

While ArtScroll, whose Talmud publication coincided with the increasingly popular Daf Yomi page-a-day Talmud study program, has largely become the Talmud of choice in Orthodox institutions, especially haredi ones, the Steinsaltz Talmud remains a book for intensive study for many other parts of the community, experts say.

Sunday’s Global Day of Learning will be both a standard siyum, the completion ceremony that takes place whenever a tractate of Talmud or another significant text is finished, and a vindication of Rabbi Steinsaltz’s vision.

“It’s more than my own personal celebration,” he says.

The event, coordinated by the Aleph Society (the 15-year-old organization that supports the rabbi’s educational activities), and organized by The Jewish Federations of North America, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the JCC Association of North America, will include, via the Internet, Jewish communities around the world from A (Albania and Azerbaijan) to Z (Zaporozhe and Zhitomir, in Ukraine).

Some 260 locations, including several in the Greater New York area, will participate in the event. Many have also initiated long-term educational programs in recent months.

“Even before the Global Day, you may also want to engage in some of the Big Questions that are part of our communal study, such as: “Does God hear prayer? What is my responsibility to Tzedakah? What is sex for? When we say ‘do unto others’ ... who are the others,” Rabbi Steinsaltz wrote in an e-mail message.

“Each community ... will decide what their day will look like — the Global Day team will provide each community with curricular materials, promotional materials and a handbook to assist with planning the day,” according to a statement from the JFNA.

The main ceremony, led by Rabbi Steinsaltz, will take place in Jerusalem’s City Hall.
The 45-year journey to complete the Talmud translation was “an enormous task,” the soft-spoken Rabbi Steinsaltz acknowledged. “The work wasn’t as easy as I had thought. I am not a fast writer by any means.”

With modern-day technology, he added, the project may have taken one-fifth as long.

When, back in 1965, the 28-year-old rabbi decided to do his own take on the Talmud, he estimated the project would take a decade or two. “At most,” he said, “20 years would be the maximum.”

Despite the drain on his time and energy, Rabbi Steinsaltz says he never thought of stopping. He kept going, he said, “in the merit of my ancestors,” the dedicated scholars who preceded him.

Now that the Steinsaltz Talmud is complete, is the rabbi ready to slow down?

“No,” he said. “I have much more work to do, a whole list of books that I have to write.”

The rabbi said he has “two or three” major projects in mind. He offered no details.

“My plan is to live 170 years,” Rabbi Steinsaltz said. “The time is not allocated by me. The time is allocated by the Big Boss. I have lots of things to do.”

And so the next chapter — no, tractate — of his life has already begun.

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November 13, 2013

**Jewish learning goes global**

BY SALVADOR LITVAK

http://www.jewishjournal.com/los_angeles/article/jewish_learning_goes_global

A global conference of Jewish learning, including music and art performances, will take place online over a 24-hour period on Nov. 17. The Global Day of Jewish Learning will broadcast “24x24” — 24 classes from 24 speakers around the globe — free of charge and live using Google Hangouts On Air and YouTube. Scholar Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz will speak at 10 a.m.

The Global Day will unite 400 communities in 40 countries through the study of Jewish texts. Sponsored by the Aleph Society, the Global Day will be supervised by Rabbi Steinsaltz, who recently completed a 45-volume Hebrew translation and elucidation of the Talmud, the first such commentary since the 11th century. He is also the author of 60 books on philosophy, language, mysticism and history.

Rabbis, scholars, artists and professors will engage with this year’s Global Day theme, “Creating Together: Jewish Approaches to Creativity and Collaboration.”

Sinai Temple’s Rabbi David Wolpe will teach “How Moses Learned to Speak,” and Rabbi Elie Kaunfer, executive director of Mechon Hadar in New York, will challenge viewers with his talk, “How Can I Pray What I Don’t Believe? Creativity and Prayer Interpretation.” The band Stereo Sinai will perform songs and discuss their Jewish-text-based lyrics in their session “We Steal Lyrics From God.” Multimedia artist Henri Harochel of Jewish Food for Thought, in his hour on “Making Jewish Wisdom Accessible Through Art,” will screen two episodes from his animated series and give a tour of his current exhibition. Novelist Dara Horn will describe the “The Theological Art of Storytelling.”

Viewers around the world will be able to sit in on classes broadcast from in-person community events worldwide. Virtual communities and individuals at home will be able to ask questions live on Twitter, Facebook and Google+.

These videos will also be available on YouTube.

Karen Sponder, Project Director, explained that “our use of Google Hangouts On Air marks the first time this platform will be used for Jewish learning on a global scale. We hope that 24x24 will inspire others to use the Internet to unite the worldwide Jewish community and make it easier to access Jewish learning.”

I will be participating from Gettysburg, Penn., where I will be attending the festivities connected to the 150th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address.”

Salvador Litvak wrote and directed the Passover comedy and cult hit “When Do We Eat?” His newest film, “Saving Lincoln,” explores Abraham Lincoln’s fiery trial as commander-in-chief through the eyes of his closest friend, Ward Hill Lamon. Continue the conversation at Facebook.com/AccidentalTalmudist.

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Melton Schools Participate in Global Day of Jewish Learning

In Cape Town, South Africa, the Melton Schools participated in the 2013 Global Day of Jewish Learning, held on November 17, 2013. Several Melton Schools participated and offered lessons. Viv Amery and Laureen Bekker created a multi-generational setting for the Global Day of Jewish Learning in Cape Town.

The theme of the lesson was “Etithe Hazzelah” (a reference to Genesis 33:17). They taught children about the story of Jacob and his role in the formation of the Jewish people. The lesson included discussions on the significance of the story and its relevance to contemporary issues.

The lesson was well-received, and the children were actively engaged throughout the activity. The teachers received positive feedback from the students and their families.

Soup, Partnership and the Global Day of Jewish Learning

Partnership2Gether, Kiryat Malachi

November 24, 2013

November 17th was a special day. The “Global Day of Jewish Learning” (GDJL) was celebrated across the world. This year, the theme was “Creating Together.” The event aimed to bring Jewish communities together to learn and celebrate Jewish culture.

This year, our Partnership2Gether event was held on November 17th. The day started with a special ceremony, followed by a series of educational sessions focused on various aspects of Jewish culture and history.

The event was attended by over 400 people, including children, parents, and community leaders. The day was filled with activities and workshops that engaged participants of all ages.

This year’s theme was “Creating Together,” which reflected the spirit and core meaning of our Partnership2Gether initiative. The day was marked by a collaborative atmosphere, with leaders and professionals sharing ideas and experiences.

The day was a success, and we hope to continue building on this momentum in the future. The event was a great opportunity for our community to come together and celebrate our shared heritage.

The day ended with a delicious meal, and everyone went home with a greater appreciation for our shared culture and heritage. We look forward to continuing our work in the coming year and building on the success of this year’s event.
Global Day was great! I created a bunch of different programs centered around the theme of creation and there were kids from pre-k through high school working on all sorts of different activities and rotating through them. There was also a track for adults.

The event was held at Temple Beth El, the congregation that I work with, but we were joined also by Heska Amuna Synagogue and the Knoxville Jewish Day School.

Below is a picture of one of the projects -- a massive Jewish star that was broken up into many pieces, with each triangle representing a different day and the center representing Shabbat. They all got a chance to decorate and at the end we put it all together. The idea now is that the star will rotate between Beth El, Heska Amuna, and the Jewish Day School.

Alachua Haskins
Education Fellow, Institute for Southern Jewish Life

November 17, 2013

The Isaac Cardoso Interpretation Center of Jewish Culture in Trancoso today welcomed more than three dozen Jews and descendants of Jews forcibly converted or persecuted by the Inquisition from all over the country and Spain who participated Trancoso's Global Day of Jewish Learning event.

Rabbi Elisha Salas, Sheliach (emissary) to Portugal of Shavei ISRAEL (worldwide Jewish organization based in Jerusalem) guided the work.

Participants had the opportunity to learn a bit about the Jewish personalities of Trancoso and the Jewish roots of this historic city, and also about its borders - especially the border region with Spain and Tras-os-Montes.

Participants viewed the live internet broadcast of the lecture by Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz Avin on "Creativity" and then engaged in a group discussion.

The Jewish studies performed today in Trancoso today addressed the themes of "Creating Bonds of Friendship: Acquire a Friend" and "Creation of Shabbat: Rest as a Creative Act."

The symposium dealt with issues and questions concerning "how each person has their own contribution to the world of creativity", "Is there no room for creativity in prayer or Jewish learning?" and "What role the arts play in Jewish life".

Rabbi Elisha Salas and Jose Levy Dominic chose to facilitate a Global Day event in Trancoso and at the Cardoso Center (which integrates Bet Mayim Hayim Synagogue) on behalf of Shavei ISRAEL due to "the meaning and impact that Jewish presence and heritage have had in Trancoso and its region, as well as the fact that many "beini anusim" (descendants of Jews forcibly converted out of the Jewish faith) are increasingly in search of their roots of faith and blood and strongly wish to regain a vibrant Jewish identity.

"The Global Day of Jewish Learning exhorts us as individuals to increase our knowledge as communities, strengthening our communal efforts, and helps to unify us as part of the Jewish

The Global Day of Jewish Studies in Trancoso had major support from Shavei ISRAEL, chaired by Michal Freund, and collaborated with Jewish researcher luiza Lyra Metzker, the Jewish Community of Belmonte, the City and the town of Trancoso, and Trancoso company EEM Events.

Rabbi Elisha Salas
Sheliach, Shavei ISRAEL
Nikolayev Jewish Community

In Nikolayev Jewish Community the Global Day of Jewish Learning was held in the Jewish Community Center. This Day of Jewish knowledge touched people of all ages - students, young people and parents. We conducted classes in the library, and discussed: “The community and its role in Jewish life – sages’ statements on this issue”; “The Talmud as a collection of Jewish thought”; and "Beit Midrash as a continuation of the traditions of the Oral Torah.” The interactive discussion topics impressed all the participants. The texts that were handed out to everyone caused a lot of debate and discussion.

The PJ Library program, “Creating Intergenerational Community Together” contributed greatly to our Global Day event. It was led by one of our educational programming leaders, Irina Korsun.

Mr. Michael Goldenberg
Chairman of the Community

Livnot U’Lehibanot – Global Day in Tzfat, Israel

Global Day of Jewish Learning 2012

You Are Here: Home » Blog » Global Day of Jewish Learning 2012

Dear Friends,

I want to send you all a quick update about the Global Day of Jewish Learning event we held last week. The idea was put forth by Rav Adin Steinsaltz and has developed over the last three years into a worldwide event. There were some 300 communities around the globe from 40 different countries that participated. Livnot participated for the first year and represented Tzfat. For more details you can visit www.theglobalday.com.

This year’s topic was Gratitude and Blessings and we tried to bring the best of Tzfat into the learning and evening activities. The International Center of Tzfat Kabbalah, the Tzfat Heder Yeshiva and Livnot educators led the learning. The event was focused on the community and the evening was conducted in Hebrew. While attendance was just over 30 for this first event, Tzfat was well represented. We had college students, medical students from the New Medical School in Tzfat, those from Shemot Sherut (a year of volunteering before the army), professionals, religious, and secular; anywhere between the ages of 18 through 90. I was moved by the 18 year old and 80 year old learning together in chevuta, the observant and non-observant studying and listening to each other and from everyone signing together. Finding gratitude in all that we had.

I see that as we develop the Tzfat Project and connect it with our educational programming that we will reach ever greater numbers with the Livnot way and I think that is a good thing for the Jewish people.
The Global Day of Jewish Learning in Shanghai
An insight into the Shanghai Jewish Community

Jeanine Buzali
JDC JSC in Shanghai
November 14, 2011

The Jews in Shanghai are redefining the meaning of community. This city, like many other Asian cities with a substantial expat population, attracts a wide range of ages, nationalities, occupations, and personalities. Most people are here on a long-term temporary basis, but everyone seeks to make this place home. People are committed to socializing and building healthy support systems. Even though community-building has happened in a rather top-down fashion so far (there are five rabbis for about 2000 people), Jews are taking their individual responsibility to contribute to their community quite seriously. The question is, what will this community look like?

Through planning, and executing the first-ever Global Day of Jewish Learning in Shanghai, I learned a lot about what “the community” – used here as the population of people who self-identify as Jewish - wants and needs. It started out as a small thing, in my mind. I have been here for less than two months, networking solidly within the expat world and building a relationship with the all-Chinese staff at the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum. As the first JDC person in the region in a very long time, and the first long-term foreign volunteer the Museum has ever had, the time was still ripe for me to swoop down on the Museum with an event that centers around discussing Jewish prayer (another layer of complication is the fact that Judaism is not recognized as a religion in China).

Or so I thought. I had called and texted about fifteen people whom I thought would be interested in the event. Word got around, and on Sunday morning, my Chinese colleague (who very kindly ignored all the less-precise details about what was happening) and I watched as 25 people poured into what used to be the Women’s Gallery of the Ohel Moshe Synagogue, in the Hongkou District of Shanghai.

Brunch was a great success, a mixture between a family-style breakfast and a buffet. As we started the session and I read the Shema prayer out loud, I still went through me. I had been so busy with the preparations for the event, with worrying who would come and how it would go, that I had barely stopped to think about what it was that I was organizing. I had planned the session and had read the texts and the facilitator’s guide, but it was only in that moment when I said the prayer that I realized how many people in the last century, under a wide-variety of conditions, had said that prayer in that same building.

The interconnected nature of the Jewish world is truly remarkable. Here I was, sitting in an old synagogue that once was the heart of a ghetto of Holocaust refugees, in China, reading Rashi and Maimonides, with 25 other Jews, ages 20 to 75, from Australia, Israel, France, the US, Mexico, Brazil, the UK, Turkey, Canada, and South Africa. We had some Chinese guests who participated in the session and kept us entirely aware of where we were.

It was such an unexpected success that I had to wonder: all other things aside, what is the Global Day offering that people are craving so much? Expat communities tend to focus on the basics.

Holidays, Shabbats and births are the predominant things that unite people here. The community is based on religious aspects of Judaism. But Shanghai Jews want to interact on a much more social level. This is what is missing in the community, an outlet for cultural Judaism, an exploration and questioning of Judaism with other Jews. And that is exactly what the Global Day of Jewish Learning helped to provide.

After the session, my colleague gave the group a tour of the Museum. Many of the participants had never been to it before. It was wonderful to learn the history of the place where we had the session, and it gave the event additional depth.

On my part, I learned a lot about the community, about my strengths and weaknesses as a community organizer, about what is difficult and what is easy in the situation I am in. Above all, I realized that I am in a position to collide worlds. Yesterday I felt the potential of that, the magnitude of being in such a position.

There are things to be done.
The Global Day of Jewish Learning
A project of the Aleph Society

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Photograph of Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz by Erik Tischler

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www.steinsaltz.org       www.theglobalday.org