



# The Shofar

Website: [oraynu.org](http://oraynu.org)

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Happy  
5779

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Shalom everyone —

Hope you've all had a great summer, whatever you did and wherever you were, in spite of the sweltering heat and rain.

Oraynu staff has been busy planning for the fall. We hope you have all renewed your memberships by now and reserved your tickets for the High Holidays.

Sept 9th is the Children's School first day, with the annual Welcome Family Brunch. Music teacher Mendy Bisk will lead a sing-along with everyone, followed by a bagel brunch.

The High Holidays are early this year—on Sept. 10, 18 and 19 at our usual location, The Avenue, at Steeles and Dufferin. As you may be aware, we debuted our new Rosh Hashanah service last year. We had a lot of feedback from our members and staff, and as a result it has been revised. Come experience our new-and-improved RH and other wonderful holiday services featuring, as always, insightful commentaries from Rabbi Denise and our amazing musical ensemble.

The Family Sukkot Festival and Apple Picking Tzedakah Event, organized by the School, are on Sept. 23 and 30 respectively this year. All members and their extended families are invited to attend either or both of these fun-filled events.

Two Shabbat programs are on tap for the next two months, the first, on Sept. 28, will have Rabbis Denise and Eva Goldfinger

discussing how "Intermarriage Can Build Our Jewish Future," which is contrary to what many in the Jewish community believe. The second program on Oct. 26 will examine the #MeToo issue, including from a Jewish context.

Rabbis Denise and Eva will also give a Sunday morning talk at the School on Nov. 4 on the topic of "The Kids are Alright: Parenting and Grandparenting in Intermarried Families." This program promises to be an insightful conversation, of interest to many.

Lastly, our book discussion group gets going again on Sept. 27. The first book is "Shylock is My Name: The Merchant of Venice Retold" by Howard Jacobson. It should be a fascinating evening, so start reading now!

Be sure to check out the messages from Rabbi Denise, School Principal Steve Shabes and President Mark Brender, as well as the upcoming events and notices. There is a provocative article from Paul Golin, entitled "Yom Kippur Made Me an Atheist," and a report on Oraynu's recent car rally from Evelyn Goldstein.

We look forward to seeing you all at the High Holidays and our other upcoming events. May I wish you all *L'shono tova tikosayvu*—a sweet New Year!

**Sandi**

*Sandi Horwitz, Editor*

**Members are welcome to submit articles, letters and photographs. Please email to: [sandi@oraynu.org](mailto:sandi@oraynu.org)**

Generally submissions should be no more than 750 words and reflect a secular humanistic perspective. Please note that Oraynu reserves the right to decline or edit submissions in order to maintain the mutual respect our members enjoy and our reputation for fairness.

*Letters and articles printed in this newsletter reflect the opinions of their writers and are not necessarily those of Oraynu Congregation.*

## RABBI'S MESSAGE

Rabbi  
Denise  
Handlarski



### What went right?

A colleague who is part of my cohort at Rabbin Without Borders shared that she is doing a high holiday sermon that goes against the grain. Typically, we talk about what we wish to let go of from the previous year; things that were done to us or things we did that caused hurt; ways we didn't live up to expectations, our own or those of our loved ones; negative feelings and experiences. In the act of teshuvah, the turning and soul-searching we do at the high holidays, we are often thinking about what we'd like to change about ourselves or our experience of the world.

This year, inspired by my colleague, I'm going to think about what went right instead. She said she is going to ask her community to use every blast of the Shofar to "wake up," not from what they'd like to change but what they should recognize as a job well done.

It is easier for many of us to be aware of our own faults. We are often our own worst critics. I see this all the time with the students I teach. Part of my job is to watch them teach a group of students and then to give them feedback. I always start with the positive feedback: what went well, what they did that was awesome. They are almost always waiting for the "but." I teach them that it is not a "but," it is an "and." You did x, y, z really well *and* next time you might want to tweak it or add something. We all have stuff we'd like to improve about ourselves, but those aspects don't cancel out or outweigh the good in us. We need to train ourselves to be awake to what is going right as well as what is going wrong in our behaviour and in our lives.

So this year let's use the shofar to wake us up. With each blast you'll hear (I hope you're joining us for services!), consider one thing that you did well; one part of yourself that you're happy with; one act of kindness, generosity, or empathy you did this past year. Be awake to what went right.

This is not simply a feel-good exercise, although I'd love if you'd feel good going into the new year! This is about recognizing what you are doing that is worth doing. If we only focus on what we'd like to change, we may throw out the baby with the bathwater, so to speak. We need to be equally protective of that which we'd like to retain.

Every year I practice tashlich, which means casting away. It is the tradition of throwing breadcrumbs into flowing water like a river (our friends at Shoresh remind us that this can cause problems for the eco-system. I have started simply collecting sticks and leaves and throwing them in the water instead). The symbolism is that you cast away that which you'd like to let go of from the previous year. I will do tashlich as always, but this year I'm planning a creative add-on. I'm going to cast away and I'm also going to choose a couple of river pebbles/stones and bring them home. I'm casting away and I'm also gathering in, so that I can remind myself of what was precious and what I'm proud of from the year that has passed.

I don't know about you, but time seems to be speeding up. The weeks and months fly by. With each passing year, it is really worthwhile to consider what made the year great. Let's focus on what went right. This way, we can make sure our next year is just as good and, we hope, even better.



- **Make sure to reserve to your High Holiday tickets ASAP**
- **Membership renewals and school registrations are now due**
- **Donations sent with renewals will be acknowledged in our NEXT issue**

### 50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IN THE WORKS!

In November 2019, we're having a party to celebrate Oraynu (and its predecessor, the Secular Jewish Association). Come volunteer and help us plan this momentous event!!

Contact Mark Brender at [mbrender11@gmail.com](mailto:mbrender11@gmail.com)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### High Holidays 5779

*Be inspired by meaningful readings, evocative poetry and wonderful music*



#### **ROSH HASHANAH: Monday, Sept. 10 at 10:30 am**

*Our uplifting ceremony features our choir, musicians and virtuoso Shofar blower.*

Rabbi Denise's commentary asks "Can Humanists Be Happy?"

**Adult Service. Children's program, babysitting has limited capacity—kindly reserve.**

Refreshments offered following the observance

#### **EREV YOM KIPPUR: Tuesday, Sept. 18 at 8 pm**

*Experience the Kol Nidrei sung by Lenka Lichtenberg coupled with our meaningful liturgy, Nizkor (memorial) service, choir and musical ensemble.*

**Adult service only; no children's program or babysitting offered.**

#### **YOM KIPPUR: Wednesday, Sept. 19 at 10:30 am**

*Our Stories of Transformation profile U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Jacobo Timerman. Commentary on: "Civility, Certainty, Divinity, Diversity"*

**Adult Service. Children's program, limited babysitting—kindly reserve.**

#### **TICKETS REQUIRED FOR ALL EVENTS; GUESTS WELCOME**

**Non-Member Tickets: Adults \$90 (RH & EYK)/\$70 (YK); Students: \$45/\$35**

**Children's Program \$30; Babysitting \$20**

**Combo Ticket (three events) available: \$200 adults, \$100 students**

Tickets are not automatically set aside even for members, i.e. you must reserve.

Use the link sent by email or go online to our website and find the HH link or call Roby.

**ALL TICKETS WILL BE HELD AT THE DOOR.**

**For further info, contact Roby.**

All 3 events at:  
The Avenue  
Banquet Hall  
1600 Steeles Ave. W.  
(just west of Dufferin)

Sunday, Sept. 23  
10:00 am

Borochov Cultural  
Centre  
272 Codsell Ave.  
(Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

### FAMILY & SCHOOL SUKKOT FESTIVAL

Decorate our Sukkah ☆ Music ☆ Presentations ☆ Treats

#### **SUKKOT TZEDAKAH PROJECT**

- BRAND NEW hats, gloves, mittens, scarves and winter coats for CHILDREN to be distributed to Jewish immigrant children through JIAS
- GENTLY USED CHILDREN'S clothing to be distributed via Jewish Family & Child Service

**Families are also asked to bring refreshments** (no nuts/shellfish) such as whole, pre-washed fruit/veggies, or cheese, crackers & nut-free baked goods for the Oraynu crowd to share. **Beautiful decorations for our Sukkah** are much appreciated, too!

**Guests welcome:**

**\$8/Adult, \$4/Child, \$20/family**

*With funding support from*



**Unless otherwise indicated, kindly RSVP for ALL EVENTS:  
416-385-3910 | roby@oraynu.org | via Oraynu website Event link**

Thursday, Sept. 27  
7:30 pm

Member's home  
(Wilson/Avenue Rd area)

## ORAYNU BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

We are getting going again for this year. Rabbi Denise will facilitate the first discussion, with group members alternating hosting and leading responsibilities for subsequent sessions.

### "Shylock is My Name: The Merchant of Venice Retold" by Howard Jacobson

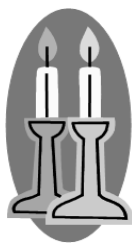
*Man Booker Prize winner and our great chronicler of Jewish life retells the powerful, controversial story of Shylock.*

Howard Jacobson takes the great tale of vengeance and cruelty and propels it through space and time to the shiny modern world of Cheshire's Golden Triangle, where we meet a funny, love-driven, vindictive cast of characters very much from our world, confronting Shakespeare's timelessly urgent questions in the 21st century. *Non-members welcome: \$15*



Friday, Sept. 28  
7:30 pm

Borochov Centre  
272 Codsell Ave  
(Wilson Hts/Sheppard)



## SHABBAT & DISCUSSION

Our first Shabbat celebration of the fall season offers a short service led by Rabbi Denise with music by Mickey Lewin followed by a conversation on:

### "How Intermarriage Can Build Our Jewish Future"

Join **Rabbi Eva and Rabbi Denise** as they share their insights and experiences about intermarriage and the Jewish community. This summer a new study came out with stats on intermarriage that rocked the Jewish world. Come learn why what we're doing is working, how we can do it better, and what it all means for Judaism as a changing civilization. *Non-members welcome: \$15*

Sunday, Sept. 30  
9:45 am (sharp!)

Applewood Farm  
Winery, 12416  
McCowan Road,  
Stouffville (just n. of  
Stouffville Rd)

## FAMILY APPLE-PICKING TZEDAKAH OUTING

*Kids, parents, grandparents, non-school families & friends welcome!*

- Our School will be picking apples as a tzedakah project for the North York Harvest Food Bank. Teachers will collect \$5.00 from each student for the apple donations.
- Pick your own apples for munching or those yummy fall recipes
- Playground area, cornfield maze, tractor ride, pumpkins, winery, etc.



**ADMISSION:** \$10.00 per person; children under 3 and seniors are FREE  
Apples that you pick for your own use are \$20/20 lb. bag (40-50 apples)  
**MEETING PLACE:** Hay bales (at north end of the playground)

**\*\* THIS EVENT GOES ON RAIN OR SHINE (EXCEPT IF EXTREME WEATHER). NO RSVP. \*\***

## LIMMUD TORONTO 2018



Sunday, Oct. 28 | 10am-6pm | Univ. of Toronto Law Bldg, 78 Queen's Park Circle

Rabbi Denise will speak on "Jewish Pregnancy, Labour and Birth" Time: TBA

We eat Jewish, talk Jewish, do Jewish, but can we birth Jewish? This session explores Jewish texts/traditions of pregnancy and birth, and workshops ways to "birth Jewish".

*This day-long festival of Jewish learning, culture and the arts brings people of all backgrounds together to experience the rich diversity of Jewish heritage and contemporary thinking.*

**For ticket info/schedule: [www.limmud.ca](http://www.limmud.ca)**

<p>Friday, Oct. 26 7:30 pm</p> <p>Borochov Cultural Centre</p>	<p><b>SHABBAT &amp; DISCUSSION</b></p> <p><b>"#MeToo: Jewish Text, Pretext, and Context"</b></p> <p>Following a short Shabbat ceremony with music, we will discuss texts that involve women and sexual coercion or violence, gender-based violence in the Jewish community, and what we can do to prevent and end it.</p> <p>The Shabbat portion will be livestreamed via Oraynu's Facebook page. If you can't attend the event, "Like" the page to be able to access it. It will also be up on the page for later viewing.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Non-members welcome: \$15</i></p>
<p>Sunday, Nov. 4 10:15 am</p> <p>Oraynu Children's School 131 Fenn Ave. (Bayview/York Mills)</p>	<p><b>THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT: PARENTING AND GRAND-PARENTING IN INTERMARRIED FAMILIES</b></p> <p>Join Rabbis Eva and Denise to discuss strategies and success stories about parenting and grandparenting. We will share from our experiences working with families — Eva having counselled and officiated hundreds of intermarrying couples, and Denise working in the community and being intermarried herself. Hot topics may include: how to address family concerns/kvetches, hot-button issues such as circumcision, how to create "shalom bayit" - peace in the home, and much more.</p>  <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Everyone welcome; no charge to attend.</i></p>
<p>Tuesday, Nov. 6 7:30 pm</p> <p>Borochov Centre 272 Codsell Ave</p>	<p><b>HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK EVENT</b></p> <p><i>Co-sponsored with Don Heights Unitarian Congregation</i></p> <p><b>"In The Name of the Humanity: The Secret Deal to End the Holocaust" with Max Wallace</b></p> <p>A previously-unknown audacious scheme, a surprising Toronto connection, and a daring rescue by a committee of ultra-Orthodox Jews led by a remarkable woman named Recha Sternbuch. Holocaust historian Max Wallace will reveal newly discovered archival documents proving that the Orthodox Committee enlisted a former Swiss President to deceive SS chief Heinrich Himmler into terminating the Final Solution in November 1944, a full six months before the end of the war, thus saving approximately 300,000 Jews.</p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Filmmaker and a New York Times bestselling author Max Wallace worked for Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation. The CJN described his book <i>In the Name of Humanity: The Secret Deal to End the Holocaust</i> as "an impressive piece of historical scholarship and a very compelling chapter of Holocaust history."</p> <p><b>Everyone welcome; no charge   Kindly RSVP to Roby</b></p> 

**Unless otherwise indicated, kindly RSVP for ALL EVENTS:  
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## A NOTE FROM ORAYNU'S PRESIDENT

Dear Members -

Last year, we introduced a new membership category—**SUSTAINING MEMBERS**. A voluntary Sustaining Membership is a wonderful option for individuals or families who have both the financial means and the emotional attachment to make a greater commitment to Oraynu than you may have done in the past. You will be helping our community and the values we stand for to remain vibrant and strong for years to come.

For those who have already renewed your membership, thank you so much for your support. For those who may be renewing over the next month, our hope is that more Sustaining Members will allow us to maintain current fee levels for other membership categories going forward. As such, you will be making an invaluable investment in Oraynu's values and long-term prosperity for all who seek a welcoming and diverse secular Jewish community. With stronger support of Oraynu, we can make sure the best things about Oraynu get stronger as well.

The full amount of a Sustaining Membership is eligible for a charitable tax receipt, and both Sustaining Members and those who have generously included donations with their membership renewals will be recognized in the next edition of *The Shofar*.

With deep appreciation, and looking forward to seeing you at High Holidays,



Mark Brender  
President, Oraynu Congregation

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

Plan to join us as Oraynu presents a special public event with

### Jesse Wentz

*Broadcaster, Advocate & Pop Culture Philosopher*

### "Indigenous Peoples, Minorities, and Multiculturalism"

**Friday, Nov. 30 at 7:30 pm | Borochoy Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave.**

Rabbi Denise will begin the evening with a Chanukah candlelighting and brief discussion of the holiday and what it teaches us about minorities and multiculturalism.

Mr. Wentz will discuss Indigenous and Newcomer relations in Canada, including the complexities for minority groups, such as Jews, who have their own histories of oppression. He will enlighten us about challenges facing Indigenous communities and some ways we can work to foster reconciliation. His talk will be followed by a Q+A.

*Jesse Wentz has appeared on CBC Radio's Metro Morning as film and pop culture critic for 20 years. He previously served as Director of Film Programmes, at TIFF Bell Lightbox, where he oversaw theatrical, Cinematheque and Film Circuit programming. A self-described 'Ojibwe dude' with a national and international lens, he encourages audiences to consider diversity and inclusion into the future view of their organization, industry and country.*



**This event is generously sponsored by Susan and Roderick McLeod**

*Non-members welcome: \$20*

# Yom Kippur Made Me an Atheist

By PAUL GOLIN, SHJ Executive Director

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Yom Kippur made me an atheist. Or at least it confirmed for me that I already was one. By age 10, it was clear to me that the persona of a God that punishes the wicked and rewards the good — and the corresponding High Holiday liturgy — was a false explanation of how the world works.

I knew that a God who rewarded the good and punished the evil was false because I was close to my grandmother, and was aware of the terrible suffering she endured during the Holocaust. There was nothing she could've possibly done to deserve the punishment of losing her parents, siblings, and two young children.

I now know that our tradition is full of “answers” to this problem of theodicy. I'm aware of the nuanced debate about reward and punishment that exists over millennia of Jewish thought. Whether the sins of the parents are visited onto the children; whether we lack free will or genuinely choose between right and wrong; whether divine punishment and reward happens in our own lifetimes or in a here-after; whether it's individual or collective punishment—fascinating philosophical queries that ultimately have not altered my conclusion from childhood, that it is all backfill for a story that doesn't hold up.

I am convinced that human misery is not due to humanity's sins. Our pain and suffering is not fair punishment, to be received as a gift from a supposedly benevolent God who will make it up to us when we're dead.

But my problem with Yom Kippur isn't simply about enduring a few squeamish feelings during an otherwise interminable day of prayer. The ideas expressed so clearly in the High Holiday liturgy have real world consequences. The superstitious notion that suffering is divine retribution, which people bring upon themselves through immoral behavior, has been used as an excuse to enslave and brutalize throughout history.

This is not to say that liberal Jews themselves believe in these justifications. Quite the opposite in fact: Liberal Jews scoff when alleged faith leaders (Jewish or Christian) claim hurricanes are God's punishment for “sins” ranging from not supporting Israel to homosexuality. In other words, though they repeat the verses that make similar claims in synagogue, like me, they do not believe them to be true.

The simplistic reward/punishment relationship is obsolete to most Jews' understanding of the world. Nevertheless, it remains such a powerful feature of the holiday liturgy in most congregations.

That won't be changing anytime soon. For starters, the folks who are most turned off by this and other untenable aspects of Jewish religion have walked away. At any given time, less than a third of Jewish households are affiliated

with a synagogue. Large crowds during the High Holidays may seem like everyone in the Jewish universe is packed into your Temple, but all the services combined likely touch less than half of American Jewry. This widespread disengagement should be registered as a vote against business-as-usual Judaism.



The folks who stick around obviously have the larger say, and they are more likely to believe the story as it's told. Those who make decisions about liturgy are even more likely to believe. That's all fine. I'm not the kind of atheist that wants to burst believers' bubbles. If it provides you with comfort and doesn't hurt others, by all means pray for eternal reward. You should know, though, that you are in the minority of Jewish belief. The 2013 Pew survey of American Jewry found that 66% of Jews do not believe in God with “absolute certainty,” almost the mirror opposite of the 68% of our fellow Americans who do believe with certainty.

Another objection to moving past this liturgy, even by those who don't believe it, might be that this is “how we're supposed to do it.” And “who are we to change Judaism?” Well, we're the Jews. We are constantly changing Judaism. Or have you recently ripped open a goat to appease your God? Judaism survived thanks to evolution, not calcification.

I've had the honor of asking rooms full of some of the most affiliated Jews, “Who here expresses your Jewish identity exactly as your grandparents did?” Almost no hands go up. Sure, the “right way” to wrap teffilin or chant Torah may remain unchanged over many generations. What changes is whether it's right for us. When it isn't, most people stop doing it.

Despite the innovation coursing through Jewish communities across the country, the reality is that most people are not attending High Holiday services for the words, one way or the other. That may be the most powerful inertia keeping the reward/punishment liturgy in place. Many Jews simply overlook what they're saying because they're at synagogue for other reasons: to connect to community, to express their Jewish identity (or support their family members who are Jewish), to maybe learn something from the accessible (i.e., English) parts of the service, and to feel moved by the music, or thinking of something larger than themselves, or remembering lost loved ones.

Does it work? Do the High Holidays provide meaning? Regardless of denomination, results vary from congregation to congregation, person to person. I've always been a bit baffled by the folks who only connect with organized Judaism these few days a year. My theory is that 12 months is exactly the right length of time to forget how unfulfilled and

bored-out-of-your-skull you were last time and come back for more.

The thing is, all of those benefits can be attained without also having to recite statements many of us find untrue and offensive. Rabbi Sherwin Wine for example rewrote Jewish liturgy for a modern sensibility. The movement he founded over fifty years ago, Humanistic Judaism, was an attempt to keep the meaning in Jewish congregational life—holiday celebrations, lifecycle rituals, youth and adult education, social justice, cultural expressions—while swapping the appeals to supernatural intervention with a Humanistic philosophy.

A Yom Kippur in this tradition – which is also my chosen tradition – contains many elements linking past to present. Remembrances of loved ones lost, reflections on how we might do better in the coming year, and music (including shofar blowing) are all recognizable to Jews who grew up in

any movement. Yet the Humanistic Judaism liturgy allows us to commemorate the holiday while “saying what we mean and meaning what we say,” reworking traditional Jewish texts non-theistically and incorporating additional modern voices from Carl Sagan to John Lennon.

Until I experienced it, I hadn’t fully realized the kind of mental gymnastics I’d been doing at traditional services around the words I didn’t believe; agreeing with what I was reading was like having a weight lifted.

This is how I now observe Yom Kippur, the right way—for me—and it makes me a better Jew. I hope we can open up many more right ways, so that the other half of American Jewry might also find benefit in Jewish communal participation during the High Holidays.

*This article originally appeared in the Forward, September 28, 2017*

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## ORAYNU’S AMAZING RACE

By EVELYN GOLDSTEIN

On Saturday, August 11, thirteen adventurous souls participated in the Oraynu Car Rally. Its theme was Historical Jewish Presence in Toronto. There were four teams:

- Eva Goldfinger, her daughter (Jodi), and her friend (Paulette)
- Joe Goldfinger, his friend (Joan), and Ann and Ron Bobker
- Sandi and Robert Horwitz and their friends (Paul and Barbara)
- Roby and Jim Sadler

At each destination, a picture of one of the team participants needed to be emailed to Rally Central, manned by Evie and Stan Goldstein. When the picture was verified, the next clue was sent by email. Bonus points were also available if destination-related questions were correctly answered. Participants were sent to seven locations, all of which had some significance for the Jewish community of Toronto. These locations included the Holy Blossom Pape Cemetery, Nathan Phillips Square, the Gelber Building on Richmond St. W., the AGO, Anshei Minsk Synagogue, Holy Blossom Temple, and United Bakery.

Afterwards we joined together for a wonderful pot-luck BBQ at the home of the Sadlers, who had generously offered their home as the location for Rally Central. While enjoying our dinner, we celebrated the tied-winners of the rally, the teams of the Sadlers and Eva Goldfinger and her gang.

(On behalf of all the participants, special thanks to Evie and Stan for all their research and organization. It was a blast!)



Eva at Holy Blossom ↑

Sandi and the Gelber Brothers  
Ghost Sign on Richmond St. →



Robert at United Bakers ↑  
Dairy Restaurant



Ann at the Pape Avenue ↑  
Holy Blossom Cemetery



# ORAYNU CHILDREN'S SCHOOL

## Principal's Report

Steve Shabes

Shana Tova! A happy, healthy New Year to you all!

An age old tradition in Jewish communities around the world has been to share our good fortune with others at our holidays and festivals. From JK through to the B'nai Mitzvah year, our children are taught that acts of loving kindness—*g'milut chasadim*—can be achieved for the self, family, friends, school and community. This year, we will direct our vibrant imaginations and compassionate energies to fuel a *tzedakah* theme of supporting projects for children and youth. (For the uninitiated, at Oraynu we define *tzedakah* as a concern for social justice which we show through the performance of acts of loving kindness.) Our hope is for our children to develop a sense that they are improving the world through their own actions—children reaching out to help other children.

**Fall *tzedakah* project:** During the high holiday and fall festival period encompassing Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot, the school will be collecting new and gently used warm clothing for children. We will be encouraging our families to donate new children's hats, gloves, mittens, scarves and coats to our collection for *JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Service)*. We will also collect gently used warm clothing for children, which will be donated to *Jewish Family and Child Services*.

**Apple-picking field trip:** Living in a community where many of us experience an abundance (and, sometimes an overabundance) of food, it becomes that much more important to remind ourselves that there are people among us who are hungry. We will be inviting our children and their families to participate in a *children helping children* *tzedakah* project—picking apples for children who need fresh produce and receive it through the *North York Harvest Food Bank*. Apple-picking will take place on Sunday, Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>. Friends and extended family are welcome.

**Welcome back brunch:** Our first day back, September 9<sup>th</sup>, will feature our *Welcome Back Brunch!* This is a fun opportunity for you to meet your child's teachers, make new friends and reconnect with your old ones. It will be preceded by a *Family Sing-Along* led by our magnificent music teacher, Mendy the Musical Mensch. Brunch will follow. The staff and I look forward to refamiliarizing ourselves with old friends and welcoming the newest families with the spirit and energy of our warm and creative Humanistic Jewish community.

**OraynuTots—toddler and parents learning together:** Our program for the littlest (and cutest) students and their parents is expanding its preschool calendar and curriculum. Under the guidance of their dynamic "tots" teacher, Dinah, our preschool toddlers and their parents/grandparents/caregivers will now be with us every 3 weeks. They will continue to have holiday and festival-themed lessons which include lively music and movement with Sandi Horwitz, and, of course, lots and lots of meaningful and enjoyable hands on activities with Dinah. The "tots" group will join the school community for our *tzedakah* apple picking field trip and at our festivals and seder.

**In our K-Grade 7 classes:** Whether it is in Garry's experiential approach to exploring the history of Jewish communities, Jenny's talent for instilling a sense of belonging to contemporary Jewish community, Miriam's ability to generate deep discussion and imaginative art programs, or Etti's unique aptitude for building group cohesion and calm focus in energetic preteens, our teachers are revving up the '*fun meter*' as they get ready to bring cultural Judaism to life! Oraynu's educational '*fun meter*' is set to maximum!



**Oraynu turns 50!** Well, not quite yet. But, as the school year progresses into 2019, Oraynu will indeed be entering its fifth decade of service to the Secular Humanistic Jewish community in Toronto. The conversation on how to on how to celebrate our achievements has already begun. We invite you to participate in it, to volunteer and to join in on the celebrations. And we have much to celebrate as we have become a viable secular Jewish voice; a place to identify with Jewish history and values, and a humanistic model through which our congregation can participate in the broader Jewish community, and indeed, the world at large. I hope you'll join me, our

teachers, school committee and board members as we plan our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday bash!

While most of us struggle to wrap our heads around the shift from a mellow summer family routine to the hectic pace of fall, Oraynu's school and congregational staff will be there to cheer you through the transition and point the way towards Jewish cultural exploration in a positive, inclusive and experiential environment.

See you at the school on September 9<sup>th</sup>!

## Steve

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** Besides the Sunday morning classes, we hope you will join us for the school and congregational events listed below (OCS=Oraynu Children's School):

- Sunday, Sept 9: *Welcome Brunch & Sing-along*. 11:15 am – 12:00 pm. OCS Staff Room.
- Monday, Sept 10: *Rosh Hashanah Children's Program*. 10:30 am. The Avenue.
- Sunday, Sept. 16: *Parent-Teacher Meetings*. Time TBA. OCS Staff Room.
- Wednesday, Sept. 19: *Yom Kippur Children's Program*. 10:30 am. The Avenue.
- Sunday, Sept. 23: *Family Sukkot Festival*. Borochoy Cultural Centre (See p. 3)
- Sunday, Sept. 30: *Apple Picking for North York Harvest Food Bank*. 9:30 am. Applewood Farm (See p. 4).
- Sunday, Oct 21: *Rabbi Day*. Life cycle lessons by Rabbi Denise for students in Grades 3-6
- Sunday, Oct 28: Grades 5, 6 and 7 *Field Trip*. Details TBD.
- Friday, Nov 9 *Tots, JK, SK, Grade 1 & 2 Oneg Shabbat Pyjama Party*. 7-9 pm. Borochoy Cultural Centre

### EVENT STARTING TIMES

- Kindly note that any given program, scheduled to start at 7:30 pm, or 11 am, or whatever, WILL START AT THAT TIME.
- We know many of you like the shmoozing and snacking before-hand, and by no means are we eliminating that from our events!
- We just hope you will come EARLY, as much as 30 minutes if you like, and do all the shmoozing and snacking you wish.
- And then, we can still begin the program on time!



### For more Oraynu news and conversation, log onto our Facebook page



FB is a great place to connect with fellow members, share ideas, and stay up-to-date on events. We'll be posting thoughts frequently and hope you chime in with opinions and relevant links of your own. Please 'like' the page, share it with friends and keep it lively.

## THEMES OF OUR HUMANISTIC HIGH HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Self-reflection • New beginnings • Forgiveness • Resolutions for new behavior • Change  
Renewal of commitment to Humanistic values and ethics and putting them into action

## High Holidays from a Humanistic Perspective

With notes from  
shj.org



Humanistic Jews see **Rosh Hashanah** as a time for renewal, reflection, and new beginnings. Our focus is on the affirmation of human power and human dignity. Rosh Hashana is a time to consider the possibilities for change, improvement, and happiness that we can create for ourselves as human beings. Acknowledging human courage and independence, we can achieve human dignity.

As the first day of the Jewish year, Rosh Hashanah marks a turning point, a separation between what was and what will be. It offers a time for Humanistic Jews to pause in their daily lives and reflect on their behavior and renew their commitment to their highest values. The creative liturgies used by Humanistic Jewish communities on Rosh Hashanah reflect these themes. Sounding the shofar on Rosh Hashanah evokes memories of a time when the blasts of the ram's horn called the Jewish community together in times of danger. Today, the shofar summons Jews around the world to a celebration of renewal, reflection, and commitment to values in action.

For Humanistic Jews, **Yom Kippur** is a time of continued reflection, a time to examine human behavior. History has taught human beings to rely on themselves for creating change in our society. Humanistic Jews make Yom Kippur a celebration of inner strength and a time of self-forgiveness. It is also the culmination of our examination of our behavior begun on Rosh Hashana.

There are three key elements to the Humanistic and rabbinic liturgies for Yom Kippur: *teshuva*, *tefilla*, and *tzedaka* which represent a return to our ideals, self-reflection, and putting our ethics into action. There are the cornerstones of the Humanistic celebration of Yom Kippur.

Kol Nidrei is sung at our Humanistic Yom Kippur evening celebration. For Humanistic Jews, as for other Jews, Kol Nidrei serves as a reminder of our humanness, our fallibility, our *menschlichkeit*, and our connection to all humanity. Many Humanistic Jewish communities hold a memorial service on Yom Kippur, called a Niskor ("we will remember") observance. This offers each of us a time to remember our traditions and our ancestors. It reinforces the belief that it is through our actions that our loved ones and our heritage will be remembered and preserved.

### **Todah Rabah**

Special thanks to member **Linda Beck** who did a fabulous talk for Oraynu in June on the Jewish connections to Tin Pan Alley and then generously donated her speaker's fee back to us. What a mensch!



### **IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT FRAGRANCES AT EVENTS**

We ask that all members kindly limit the use of perfumes, colognes or scented products when attending Oraynu events. Several members who have allergies or sensitivities to fragrances have made this request. We count on your support and consideration for others.

**Rayna Morris B.A., B.S.W., B.Ed., M.S.W.**  
*Registered Social Worker*

**Counselling services for individuals and families**

**416.421.5300** East York Chiropractic Clinic  
45 Overlea Blvd., Suite B28  
Toronto ON M4H 1C3

[raynadmorris@hotmail.com](mailto:raynadmorris@hotmail.com)

## ORAYNU CHILDREN'S SCHOOL — PARKING LOT SAFETY

Parking is available at the rear of the St. Andrews school building. Enter the school via the doors nearest the parking lot.

Please honour the Handicapped Parking restrictions. Our community members depend on the access they provide to the school.

**Our children's safety is paramount. As parking lots can be dangerous places for young children, please:**

- **Circulate in the counter-clockwise direction** through the parking lot, as indicated by the arrows on the pavement.
- **Park your vehicle in a designated, marked area.** Do not park or idle vehicles near the doors as this causes a visual obstruction at the point where children (and adults) enter the parking lot from the school. Drivers may not see them.
- **Do not park beside the grassy area at the north side of the lot.** This zone is marked as a lane for cars circulating to pick up and drop off children. Parking is available in the centre area of the lot only.
- **Inform your children that the lane at the north side of the lot is reserved for vehicular traffic only and not for pedestrians.** Encourage all children to walk on the grass instead of across the parking lot or in the pick up lane.
- **Walk with your children any time they are in the parking lot.** Adults are easier to see than little ones, especially behind SUV's and vans. Hold the hands of younger children.
- **Be especially vigilant while backing out of your parking spot.** As noted above, young children may not always be seen, especially from large vehicles. Don't rely on your mirrors to give an adequate view of what is behind.
- **Walk and drive with care at all times.**
- **Apply these principles, as appropriate, at other venues as well and while transporting children on field trips.**



Your co-operation is very much appreciated.

*The School Committee*



## ORAYNU BOOKSTORE

Just a reminder, especially for our newer members, about items that are available through Oraynu:

**Judaism in a Secular Age, An Anthology of Secular Humanistic Jewish Thought**, edited by Renee Kogel and Zev Katz, paperback **\$25**

**Life of Courage: Sherwin Wine & Humanistic Judaism** compiled by Dan Cohn-Sherbok, Harry Cook & Marilyn Rowens, **\$40** paperback

**Epicurus and Apikorsim** by Yaacov Malkin: **\$25**, hard-cover

**Let Justice Well Up Like Water** by Bennett Muraskin, **\$30**; paperback

**Celebrating Jewish Holidays: An Intro for Secular Jewish Families**, published by CSJO **\$30**

**Basic Ideas of Secular Humanistic Judaism**, compiled by Eva Goldfinger **\$27**

**The Early Modern Roots of Secular Humanistic Judaism**, compiled by Karen Levy **\$27**

**Holiday Booklets**, published by Society for Humanistic Judaism: Sukkot, Tu B'Shevat, Purim, Shavuot **\$10 each**

**Roots and Branches: A Humanist Haggadah for Passover** by Sandi Horwitz, Barry N. Olshen and Lisa Wright **\$10** Published by Oraynu.

**Oraynu Family Haggadah (\$20/1st copy, \$5/add'l)**

**ORAYNU SINGS CD** with 18 selections sung by the Oraynu Congregation Choir and Sandi Horwitz. The CD makes a wonderful gift for your holiday or Shabbat dinner host. **\$20**



**You may find these publications and others on display during our Holiday celebrations, or by calling Roby at the office at 416-385-3910.**

## ORAYNU CONGREGATION FOR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM

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DENISE HANDLARSKI rabbidenise@oraynu.org

#### **RABBI EMERITA**

KAREN LEVY klevy@rogers.com

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evagoldfinger007@rogers.com

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STEVE SHABES stevenshabes@yahoo.com

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ERIN WINOCUR (Chair) ewinocur@rogers.com

TRACEY BARDELL

DAVE CHERKASSKY

YUVAL GRINSPUN

#### **OFFICE MANAGER/CONTACT US**

ROBY SADLER roby@oraynu.org

416-385-3910

#### **MAILING ADDRESS**

156 Duncan Mill Rd., Suite 14

Toronto ON M3B 3N2

#### **WEBSITE**

www.oraynu.org

## WHAT WE BELIEVE ...

- ◆ A Jew is someone who identifies with the history, culture, and fate of the Jewish people.
- ◆ Judaism encompasses the civilization created by the Jewish people. It includes art and music, folk culture, and the treasured masterpieces of our great writers and thinkers, from the Bible to the present.
- ◆ We have the power and responsibility to shape our own lives independent of supernatural authority.
- ◆ Our ethics and morality serve human needs. We participate in *tikkun olam* (building a better world) for all people.
- ◆ We strive to express our Jewishness in a manner consistent with our beliefs.
- ◆ We stand in solidarity with the State of Israel and with Jewish communities in Toronto and around the world.
- ◆ The freedom and dignity of the Jewish people must go hand in hand with the freedom and dignity of all people.
- ◆ We warmly welcome into our community all those who share our values and who are connected to the Jewish people, whether by birth, adopted identity or by family relationship.

## ORAYNU TRIBUTE DONATIONS/CARDS

Members and friends can choose to honour a person or an event (memorial, birth, birthday, bar/bat mitzvah, marriage, anniversary, achievement, etc.) by making a tax-receiptable donation of \$18 or more to Oraynu. An **Oraynu Tribute Card** will be sent to the person or family of the honouree and the donation will be also recognized in *The Shofar*.

To arrange this, please contact Roby at:

**416-385-3910 | roby@oraynu.org**

## PASTORAL AND EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Jewish Guidance is a service that many of our members expect from their congregational leaders. Oraynu provides part-time services of:

- Steve Shabes for guidance about Jewish education for children and youth
- Rabbi Eva Goldfinger, for guidance regarding life cycle transitions and conversion
- Rabbi Eva Goldfinger and Rabbi Denise Handlarski for pastoral guidance regarding intermarriage, Jewish practices, adult education and ethics

Guidance is offered, but not counseling or tutoring, which can be provided on a fee-for-service basis. **For referral to the appropriate person, contact Roby at: 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org/**

## GET INVOLVED!

- Chesed Circle (Sunshine Committee) - Roby Sadler: roby@oraynu.org
- Fund Raising Oraynu (FRO) - Chair, Kevin Fine: kevinfine@sympatico.ca
- Tikkun Olam Oraynu - Rabbi Denise: rabbidenise@oraynu.org
- New Member Welcome – Rabbi Denise: as above
- Syrian Refugee Sponsorship Committee - Chair, Cara Wilkie: caralw@yahoo.com
- School Committee - Chair, Erin Winocur ewinocur@rogers.com

## ***THE SHOFAR* is a bi-monthly publication of Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism.**

**EDITOR: SANDI HORWITZ**

Oraynu Congregation is part of a worldwide movement, affiliated with Society for Humanistic Judaism and the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism.

Oraynu Children's School gratefully acknowledges funding support from:



Check website  
for updates:  
[oraynu.org](http://oraynu.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, Sept. 9 at 10:00 am/11:45 am

**FIRST DAY OF CHILDREN'S SCHOOL/FAMILY SINGALONG AND BAGEL BRUNCH**

**Location:** Oraynu Children's School (at St. Andrew's JHS), 131 Fenn Ave.

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**HIGH HOLIDAYS 5778**

(More info, see p. 3)

**ROSH HASHANAH: Monday, Sept. 10 at 10:30 am**

**EREV YOM KIPPUR (Kol Nidrei/Nizkor): Tuesday, Sept. 18 at 8:00 pm**

**YOM KIPPUR: Wednesday, Sept. 19 at 10:30 am**

**Location:** The Avenue Banquet Hall, 1600 Steeles Ave. W.

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**Sunday, Sept. 23 at 10:00 am FAMILY SUKKOT FESTIVAL**

(p. 3)

**Location:** Oraynu Children's School at St. Andrew's JHS, 131 Fenn Avenue

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**Thursday, Sept. 27 at 7:30 pm BOOK DISCUSSION — "Shylock is my Name"**

(p. 4)

**Location:** Member's home (Wilson/Avenue Rd. area)

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**Friday, Sept. 28 at 7:30 pm SHABBAT & INTERMARRIAGE DISCUSSION**

(p. 4)

**Location:** Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

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**Sunday, Sept. 30 at 9:45 am APPLE-PICKING FOR SUKKOT**

(p. 4)

**Location:** Applewood Farm Winery, 12416 McCowan Rd, Stouffville (just n. of Stouffville Rd)

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**Friday, Oct. 26 at 7:30 pm SHABBAT & DISCUSSION ON #MeToo**

(p. 5)

**Location:** Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

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**Sunday, Nov. 4 at 10:15 am DISCUSSION: THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT**

(p. 5)

**Location:** Oraynu Children's School @ St. Andrew's JHS, 131 Fenn Avenue (Bayview/York Mills)

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**Tuesday, Nov. 6 at 7:30 pm HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK EVENT**

(p. 5)

**"IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY ~ THE SECRET DEAL TO END THE HOLOCAUST"**

**Location:** Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS:**

**Friday, Nov. 30 at 7:30 pm SPECIAL EVENT WITH JESSE WENTE**

(p. 6)

**Location:** Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

For all events,  
unless indicated  
otherwise, please  
use the online links  
or RSVP to Roby:  
416-385-3910 or  
[roby@oraynu.org](mailto:roby@oraynu.org)



## LAST WORD: Topics for Dinner Table or Car Talks

Want to inject a little more Judaism into the life of your family? These are suggestions from Rabbi Denise for a topic of conversation you can have at your next dinner party, around your family table, or in the car.

Here is this issue's topic:

**The Jewish month leading up to Rosh Hashanah is Elul — it is traditionally a time for learning and introspection as we get ready for the new year. What is one thing you can do to be your best self this coming year?**

