



INSTITUTE FOR  
Jewish  
Spirituality

## Impact Report 2025



Light the Way  
*Forward*

## DEAR FRIENDS,

Nearly three decades ago, IJS began as an idea around a kitchen table. Rabbi Rachel Cowan, Rabbi Nancy Flam, and other luminaries of Jewish contemplative practice dreamed up an organization to spark light in Jewish hearts. In the 25 years since our first retreat in 2000, IJS has grown into a major institution of contemplative Jewish spirituality, igniting thousands of Jewish minds, bodies, souls, and spirits.

**Today, IJS is thriving as a place of deep and transcendent mindfulness practice.**

We gather daily by the hundreds to sit in powerful silence. We study the Torah of Jewish mysticism, finding meaning for our modern lives in the wisdom of our ancestors. We go on retreats and reach across screens and miles to be in community together. And through the anxiety and wrenching grief of recent years, the light of this community has guided our way.

The authors of Proverbs wrote that *“ner YHVH nishmat adam*—the flame of the Holy One is the human soul” (Proverbs 20:27). Each of us has Divine light that can illuminate even the darkest places, inside ourselves and out in the world.

**As we enter this next chapter in IJS’s history, we are committed to lighting the way forward together.**

In the coming years, we plan to grow our offerings to meet the pressing needs of our time and increase access to all who seek a Judaism that speaks to them deeply today. We’re expanding our outreach

to young adults into new cities, offering a model of Judaism that speaks to the next generation’s spirit. We’re growing our new initiative for a trauma-informed, mindfulness-based approach to confronting antisemitism. And, we’re training hundreds of Jewish leaders to bring mindfulness practices to their communities at a time when they’re profoundly needed.

**This report highlights what we’ve accomplished in 2025 and our plan for the future.**

To all of you who have supported our work and practiced in this sacred community in 2025: we thank you. Together, may we go from strength to strength — and from flame to flame.

With gratitude and hope,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rex D. Perlmeter'.

**RABBI REX D. PERLMETER**  
*Chair, Board of Directors*



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josh Feigelson'.

**RABBI JOSH FEIGELSON, PhD**  
*President and CEO*



**Over the past 25 years, IJS has been a *makom* or—  
a place of light, for tens of thousands of seekers.**

In Jewish mystical tradition, light has tremendous resonance. It's the first act of creation. It's revelation at Sinai, the flicker of insight, the fire of the heart. It's what we kindle in others when we show up with presence, with compassion, with love.

**“** *IJS has shined a bright light of love throughout the Jewish world. Over the past two and a half decades, it has deepened the spiritual awareness, wisdom, and compassion of Jewish leaders; brought meaning into our lives from Jewish texts from across the ages; and created communities where participants feel safe and seen in their deepest authentic selves.”*

—RABBI SHEILA PELTZ WEINBERG, LONGTIME IJS FACULTY





# YEAR IN REVIEW

To increase the light in 2025, we invested in the next generation, fostered healing, engaged a strong pipeline of leadership, and welcomed more people into our sacred spiritual community.

## Fostering New Pathways for Young Adults

This year, our **Shevet Jewish Mindfulness Community for 20s & 30s** continued to **expand**, sparked by the visionary leadership of Rebecca Schisler and Kohenet Keshira haLev Fife.

Shevet has more than 650 subscribers, an active Instagram community of more than 5,000, and a dedicated base of participants. The weekly Zoom sit now attracts 20-30 people each week (up 14% from 2024). A vibrant group meets in person in the Bay Area—and this summer, we added groups in Brooklyn and Cambridge. In the coming year, we plan to **expand to more communities**, laying the foundation for a national network of next-gen Jewish mindfulness hubs.

**Shevet provides an essential on-ramp to Jewish connection** for a generation whose affiliation is declining rapidly in other spaces. As a result of being part of IJS, more than 75% report feeling more engaged in Jewish life—and some have even joined synagogues. Shevet provides a haven young people crave: a space where they can have spiritually rich conversations, transcend politics, and find deep connection that's often absent in our digitally-focused world.

We recently **held our second annual (sold-out) retreat for 30 young adults** in beautiful Mill Valley, California. One participant said: *"I didn't realize I had been holding my breath through life... This retreat was oxygen and medicine for my soul. It brought me back to life."*



**“** Being part of the Institute of Jewish Spirituality is the best thing that can happen to anyone, and especially young adults who are trying to find their place in the fast-paced world.”

—JACKSON MICHEAL KATSIGAZI, A SHEVET PARTICIPANT FROM KAMPALA, UGANDA



“ I’ve been blessed, through my mindfulness practice, to be able to actually step back and say, ‘OK, I have a choice here about how I want to be in the world.’ I don’t want to be operating from that (agitated, reactive) place. I want to be operating from a place of understanding and care and love and universal compassion.”

—PARTICIPANT IN THE PILOT RESPONDING TO ANTISEMITISM PROGRAM

## Responding to Antisemitism with Mindfulness

The alarming rise in antisemitism globally has shaken the Jewish community. It’s taken an especially grave toll on our clergy, Jewish professionals, and lay leaders. They express feeling overwhelmed, traumatized, and ill-equipped to address the complex emotional, spiritual, and communal challenges that have emerged.

Many of us are stuck in a constant state of fight-or-flight, which is only aggravated by reactive and militarized language like “combating” or “fighting” antisemitism.

Jewish mindfulness practice can be a remarkable tool at times like these, so IJS’s Rabbi Miriam Margles **piloted a course this year to meet the pressing need.**

The course teaches Jewish leaders a trauma-informed approach that helps them respond rather than react and begin to heal our hurting communities.

### Participants in the pilots in Toronto and online reported:

- ✓ Reduction in stress, anxiety, and feelings of burnout
- ✓ Deeper ability to draw on Jewish spiritual practices for strength and meaning in times of adversity
- ✓ Enhanced ability to facilitate constructive dialogue
- ✓ A ripple effect as participants brought the practices into their communities



Building on the success of the pilot, IJS will be offering the program publicly as an online course (in February of 2026) to help Jewish leaders around the country meet this moment with courage, groundedness, and heart.

## Catalyzing Jewish Leaders of the Future

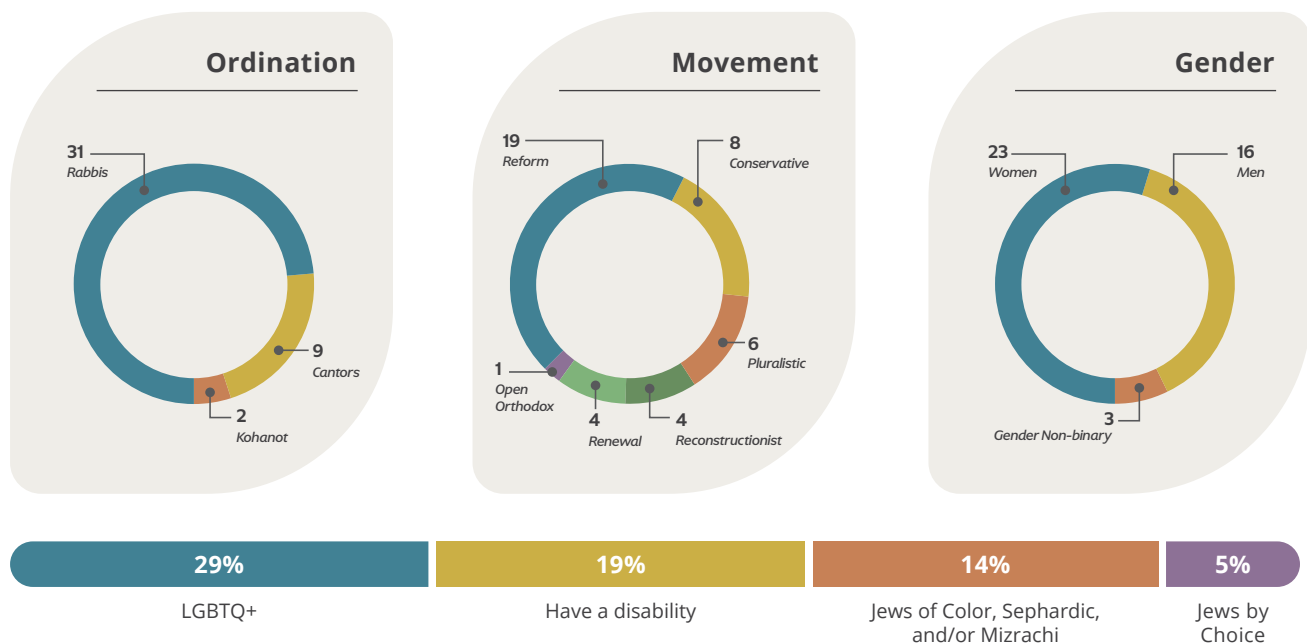
In 2025, more than 1,000 clergy, Jewish educators, and communal professionals engaged in IJS's programs. They become multipliers of impact, sharing IJS tools widely and helping integrate spiritual practice into mainstream Jewish life.

We invested heavily this year in cultivating spiritual leaders: We **rebooted Kivvun, our 10-month intensive for volunteer leaders**, and **graduated the first cohort of our new Kol Dodi training program for spiritual directors**, founded by Rabbi Myriam Klotz and led by Rabbi Elisa Goldberg. The 29 graduates are ready to guide Jewish seekers to hear the still, small voice within and cultivate awareness of mind, body, and heart.

One of the new spiritual directors noted: *"The Kol Dodi program has renewed my vocation as a spiritual caregiver. I've discovered what a life-giving gift spiritual direction is, how simple the premise and yet so profound the results."*

In 2025, we also **launched the latest cohort of our flagship Clergy Leadership Program (CLP)**. With 600+ alumni of our clergy training programs now bringing mindfulness practices to communities around the country, IJS has been reshaping the landscape of American Judaism and helping clergy navigate the immense stress of leadership today.

The new Clergy Leadership cohort reflects the wide range of people who seek out IJS:



**“** I think being in a cohort of mindful Jewish clergy at this moment is what we ALL NEED. Cultivating mindfulness of our strengths, our weaknesses, and our leadership could not be more critical for me personally at this very moment in time and history.”

—KOHENET AMANDA NUBE, JEWISH EDUCATOR AT CHOCHMAT HALEV CONGREGATION IN BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA



“*In a time of so much uncertainty, it means the world to me that there is such a capable, devoted, inspiring community of meditation teachers among the Jewish people, thanks to the sacred work of IJS.*”

—YAAKOV GINSBERG-SCHRECK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RUACH

## Investing in a new generation of master teachers

The vitality of the Jewish mindfulness and spiritual practice field depends on the cultivation of skilled, visionary senior educators to set a standard of excellence and teach future generations. Many of the original torch-bearers of this movement have retired or passed on, and we are committed to perpetuating their legacy by training a new generation to carry this work forward.

Thanks to the generous support of lead donors, IJS has secured \$1 million to **launch Marbeh, an intensive program to ensure the sustainability of exceptional leadership.** The name Marbeh comes from *Pirkei Avot*: “*Marbeh yeshiva, marbeh chochma*—The greater the sitting, the greater the wisdom.”

Led by Rabbi Jordan Bendat-Appell alongside a multi-disciplinary advisory council including mindfulness pioneers like Rabbi Nancy Flam, Tara Brach, and Gil Fronsdal, Marbeh will train teachers through an intensive three-year program, shaping new pedagogical approaches, publishing new works, and seeding new Torah for future generations.



One of our core faculty, Rebecca Schisler (who leads IJS’s young adult programming), won the **Covenant Foundation’s prestigious Pomegranate Prize** in 2025 for her extraordinary work to engage the next generation in Jewish mindfulness!

# LIGHT THE WAY FORWARD: OUR CAMPAIGN FOR THE FUTURE

What began nearly three decades ago as the vision of a small, committed group of leaders has grown into a global community of a truly revitalized Judaism, touching the lives of tens of thousands of people each year.

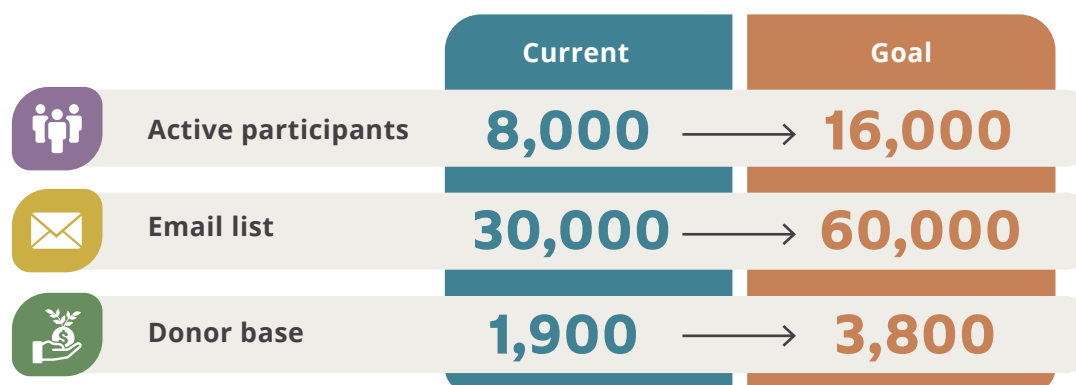
## We have ambitious goals for the future.

Over the coming years, we plan to build on our recent growth to bring Jewish spiritual practices grounded in mindfulness to the very center of Jewish life.





**Over the next five years, we aim to double in size:**



## New Audiences

We're expanding our outreach to meet emerging needs:



### Young Adult Spiritual Explorers

(20s & 30s seeking a  
new kind of Jewish  
connection)



### Life-Juggling Spiritual Seekers

(Parents of young  
children balancing work  
and childcare)



### Legacy Learners

(Engaged & curious  
older adults)



## New digital frontiers

To reach these new demographics, we're developing programming that meets their lifestyle: asynchronous learning and 15-minute podcasts for busy parents, spiritual reels for Instagram followers, courses designed to appeal to young adults, grandparents, and more.



## New digital business plan

We know from our research that the #1 reason given by people who don't yet participate in IJS's programs is that they simply didn't know about us. To reach more people who crave Jewish mindfulness, we've launched a cutting-edge new business plan, thanks to a \$1.25 million, 5-year investment from an anonymous foundation.

## IJS By the Numbers in 2025

**201,585**

program engagements  
by 38,390 unique  
participants



**60,908**

participants in IJS Daily Sit and  
Weekly Yoga Studio\*



**1,103**

registrants in monthly  
meditation sits for LGBTQ+  
folks and Jews of Color



**7,582**

followers on Facebook



**5,382**

followers on Instagram

**9,490**

hours of IJS content  
viewed on YouTube



**2,347**

participants in 15  
online courses

**106,281**

downloads of our Soulful Jewish  
Living podcast (50 episodes)



**655**

members of our clergy  
alumni community

## 2025 Program Impact

**32%**

increase in  
IJS program  
participants

**118%**

increase in  
young adult  
participants

**91%**

of participants  
agree IJS programs  
support their  
learning and  
growth

**87%**

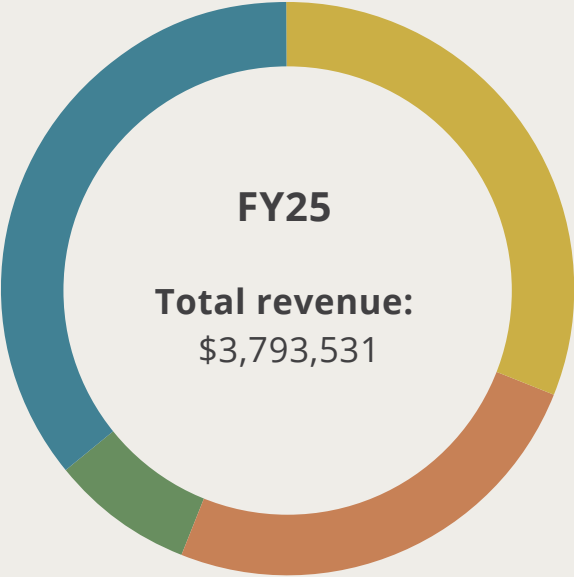
recommend IJS  
programs to  
others

**46%**

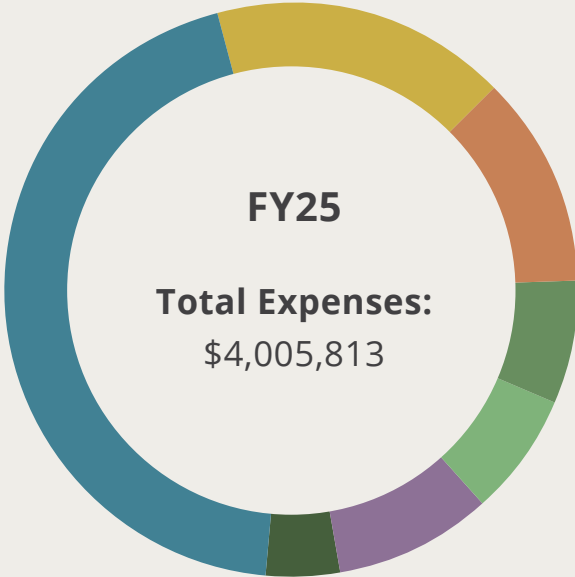
took an online  
course with  
IJS for the very  
first time

*\*Total, not unique users*

# 2025 Financials



- Earned Program Revenue** - \$979,797
- Foundation Support** - \$1,210,000
- Individual Donations** - \$1,395,305
- Other** - \$208,429



- Personnel & Personnel Related** - \$1,836,139
- Faculty & Program Consultants** - \$702,283
- Operational Consultants** - \$488,905
- Professional Services** - \$272,319
- Program Delivery Costs** - \$223,791
- Office & Business Operations** - \$365,223
- Technology** - \$117,153



## Growth over the past five years:

**69%**

growth in total  
budget size

**178%**

increase in number  
of donors

**More than 3X**

growth in audience size



## Leadership\*

### BOARD

Rabbi Rex D. Perlmeter, *Chair*  
William Klingensmith, *Treasurer*  
Marte Singerman, *Secretary*  
Marvin Israelow, *Immediate Past Chair*  
Eloge Butera  
Havi Carrillo-Klein  
Lisa Colton  
Sue Ellen Corning  
Aliza Kline  
Keith Krakaur  
Lena Kushnir  
Rabbi Ellen Lippmann  
Benjamin Richman  
Rabbi Benjamin Ross  
Robert Schechter  
Mitchell Shames  
Howard Sharfstein  
Jonathan Silver  
Madison Slobin  
Rabbi Jenny Solomon  
Rabbi Aaron Weininger  
Rabbi Chloe Zelkha  
Dorian Goldman, *Emerita*  
Larry Schwartz, *Emeritus*

### PRESIDENT & CEO

Rabbi Josh Feigelson

### ADVISORY COUNCIL

*The Advisory Council is a diverse group of influential leaders who provide IJS with perspective and expertise and help develop relationships with partners and supporters in order to advance the Institute's mission.*

Alisa Doctoroff  
Jane Eisner  
Sharna Goldseker  
Sarah Hurwitz  
Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie  
Dr. Lisa Miller  
Abigail Pogrebin  
John Ruskay

### WISDOM COUNCIL

*The Wisdom Council is composed of people who, by virtue of their long experience with and personal investment in IJS, have developed an exceptional understanding of the Torah, history, and soul of the Institute. They provide guidance to IJS's President & CEO, Board, and Staff.*

Rabbi Nancy Flam  
Ann Greenstein  
Terry Rosenberg  
Larry Schwartz  
Rabbi Sheila Peltz Weinberg

*\*IJS leadership as of October 2025*

“In these challenging times, we are constantly buffeted by events that make it difficult to maintain our equanimity. Based on our tradition's ancient wisdom and practices, IJS helps create shelters from the storm. We practice mindfulness and learn to look for and find the Divine in each other and in our lives. We are privileged to support IJS and the Campaign for the Future to make the IJS Torah ever more accessible.”

—IJS SUSTAINERS SUSAN SCHECHTER AND ROBERT SCHECHTER (BOARD MEMBER)

## Staff\*

### LEADERSHIP TEAM

Rabbi Josh Feigelson, *President & CEO*

Alyse Erman, *Chief Operating Officer*

Shari Bayer, *Senior Director of Communications & Marketing*

Maidelle Goodman Benamy, *Chief Development Officer*

Firkins Reed, *Senior Director of Programs*

Laura Sullivan, *Director of Finance & Administration*

### STAFF, CORE FACULTY, & PROGRAM CONSULTANTS

Jett Bachman

Rabbi Jordan Bendat-Appell

Elizabeth Cohen

Molly Easton

Vanessa Efoe

Rabbi Sam Feinsmith

Harry Gilboa

Rachel Huggett

Kohenet Keshira haLev Fife

Rabbi Miriam Margles

Rabbi Marc Margolius

Natalie Russianoff

Rebecca Schisler

Andrew Schuman

Tamar Yanay

### FACULTY & TEACHERS FOR 2025 ONLINE & COHORT PROGRAMS

Rabbi Nicole Auerbach

Elana Bell

Rabbi Angela Buchdahl

Aviva Chernick

Cantor Ellen Dreskin

Kimmy Dueñas

Rabbi Tirzah Firestone

Rabbi Nancy Flam

Rabbi Elisa Goldberg

Jes Golden

Melila Hellner-Eshed, PhD

Rabbi Dr. James Jacobson-Maisels

Rabbi Jonathan Kligler

Rabbi Myriam Klotz

Rabbi Dan Liben

Rabba Dr. Mira Neshama Niculescu

Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner

Rabbi Rex D. Perlmeter

Ashley Plotnick, LCSW

Rabbi Dorothy Richman

Cantor Lizzie Shammash

Yael Shy

Yoshi Silverstein

*\*IJS staff as of October 2025*

*We also express our gratitude to the dozens of additional teachers who lead our free Daily Sit and various affinity sits, and teach in our programs.*



## Our Gratitude—and an Appeal

IJS's impact in 2025 and our ambitious plans for the future are only possible because of you—our dedicated community of donors.

If you supported us in 2025, we are immensely grateful. **And now we're asking you to give once again:**

**Please join us to light the way forward.**

At this pivotal moment for IJS and in our world, we need your support more than ever to sustain the light of Jewish spirituality for future generations.

**To become part of our Campaign for the Future, visit [www.jewishspirituality.org/donate](http://www.jewishspirituality.org/donate).**

If you have any questions, contact [maidellegb@jewishspirituality.org](mailto:maidellegb@jewishspirituality.org) or 646.863.5233.



**“** *IJS has helped me transform my life and my Jewish life. I donate to IJS so others will have the same opportunity to enrich their lives with greater clarity, purpose, and joy. Through IJS, I've learned how to live more mindfully, authentically, and spiritually. This increases the clarity and wisdom that guides my actions and increases my resolve to help heal our fractured world.”*

—MARTE SINGERMAN, SECRETARY OF THE IJS BOARD





# This is the Judaism so many are yearning for. Support IJS to make it accessible to all.

Tuition covers only a portion of the cost of running a world-class hub of Jewish mindfulness. We rely on generous donors to help sustain our programs, retreats, free offerings, and the many ways the IJS community is revitalizing Jewish life for the 21st century.

## Join one of our giving communities!

### SUSTAINERS CIRCLE

*A sacred community of supporters who invest in IJS as a home for Jewish spiritual practice.*

Sustainers include alumni of our Kivvun program and those who make annual gifts of \$10,000 or more. You will be invited to special events throughout the year to nourish your own spiritual journey.

### LEGACY SOCIETY

*Ensuring Jewish mindfulness for generations to come.*

By naming IJS in your estate plan or as a beneficiary of a retirement account, you'll help make sure this community continues to thrive long after you. Legacy giving is a powerful act of *chesed* that benefits future generations of Jewish seekers.

### ROSH CHODESH COMMUNITY

*A dedicated circle of monthly giving.*

When you join the Rosh Chodesh Community by setting up an automatic monthly gift, the steady support allows IJS to meet ongoing needs, plan for the future, and innovate to meet the challenges of a constantly changing world.

### GIVE A GIFT FOR MINDFULNESS

Visit [www.jewishspirituality.org](http://www.jewishspirituality.org)  
to support IJS today



## Join Us!

- **LISTEN** to our podcasts
- **PRACTICE** with our free Daily Sit for everyone and affinity groups for young adults, LGBTQ+ folks, Jews of Color, and people with disabilities
- **LEARN** with our latest course offerings
- **SUBSCRIBE** to Josh's Friday Reflections
- **FOLLOW US** on Facebook & Instagram to continue the conversation

- **CONTACT US**

**Phone:** 646.461.6499

**Email:** [info@jewishspirituality.org](mailto:info@jewishspirituality.org)

- **DONATE**

[www.jewishspirituality.org/donate](http://www.jewishspirituality.org/donate)

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